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On the Origin and Development of the Liturgical Year: Tendencies, Results, and Desiderata of Heortological Research

by

Harald Buchinger*

The Societas Liturgica already devoted one Congress to the theme “Liturgical Time” at the 1981 meeting in Paris. Some of those papers have in the meantime become classics.¹ Two years later (1983) saw the appearance of the first volume of the German Handbook of Liturgical Studies, *Gottesdienst der Kirche*, which stands, strictly speaking, as the last overall presentation of the *Feiern im Rhythmus der Zeit* (Celebrations in the Rhythm of Time) to come from the pen of a single author.² While Hansjörg Auf der Maur in his work reduced the classical state of research down to a theological overview whose thoroughness, despite all its needs for

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¹ Along with individual publications in the different official languages of the Congress: in *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 31 (1981)–32 (1982); *Studia Liturgica* 14 (1982); and *La Maison-Dieu* 147f (1981); cf. also Wiebe Vos and Geoffrey Wainwright, eds., *Liturgical Time. Papers Read at the 1981 Congress of Societas Liturgica* (Rotterdam: Liturgical Ecumenical Center, 1982). From the same time we have the notable contribution of Robert Taft, “The Liturgical Year: Studies, Prospects, Reflections,” *Worship* 55 (1981) 2-23, repr. Maxwell E. Johnson, ed., *Between Memory and Hope. Readings on the Liturgical Year* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000) 3-23.

² Hansjörg Auf der Maur, *Feiern im Rhythmus der Zeit. I: Herrenfeste in Woche und Jahr*, Gottesdienst der Kirche: Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft 5 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1983); the description of the feasts of the Lord was complemented in 1994 by *Feste und Gedenktage der Heiligen*, in Hansjörg Auf der Maur and Philipp Harnoncourt, *Feiern im Rhythmus der Zeit II/1. Der Kalender. Feste und Gedenktage der Heiligen*, Gottesdienst der Kirche: Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft 6.1 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1994) 65-357. A fundamental reworking of the volume on the feasts of the Lord was interrupted by Auf der Maur’s death; a fragment was published posthumously as *Die Osterfeier in der alten Kirche*, ed. R. Messner and W. G. Schöpf, with a contribution by Clemens Leonhard (Münster: LIT, 2003).

amplification and correction, remains irreplaceable,³ the year 1986 saw the first edition of Thomas J. Talley's monograph on *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*,⁴ a milestone of innovative research. He not only asked many new questions and opened up perspectives for the construction of far-reaching hypotheses,⁵ but also gave unexpected answers that have themselves been handed on as textbook knowledge. Accumulating research continues to make it clear where open desiderata lie. Thus, even after these epochal works, the theme, as a necessarily selective overview of a vast field of specialized works of the last generations will show, was anything but exhausted.

All kinds of feasts have since been worked on monographically.⁶ To be mentioned in this connection are also unpublished theses from Roman institutions like the Pontificio Istituto

³ At the same time appeared the somewhat briefer overview by Pierre Jounel, "L'année," in *La liturgie et le temps*, ed. Aimé Georges Martimort et al., *L'Église en prière* 4 (Paris: Desclée, 1983) 43-166. In the same year, the Italian liturgical scholars devoted their meeting to the church year: *L'anno liturgico. Atti della XI settimana di studio dell'Associazione Professori di Liturgia, Brescia, 23-27 agosto 1982* (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1983).

⁴ Thomas J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1986, 1991).

⁵ Compare, for example, Martin F. Connell, "Just as on Easter Sunday: On the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord," *Studia Liturgica* 33 (2003) 159-74; and Thomas J. Talley, "Further Light on the Quartoeciman Pascha and the Date of the Annunciation," *Studia Liturgica* 33 (2003) 151-58, repr. Maxwell E. Johnson and L. Edward Phillips, eds., *Studia Liturgica Diversa* (Portland, Ore.: Pastoral Press, 2004) 71-77.

⁶ On the feast of Easter in the early patristic period, see: Harald Buchinger, *Pascha bei Origenes*, 2 vols. (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 2005); G. A. M. Rouwhorst, *Les hymnes pascales d'Ephrem de Nisibe. Analyse théologique et recherche sur l'évolution de la fête pascale chrétienne à Nisibe et à Edesse et dans quelques Eglises voisines au quatrième siècle*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1989); and the attempt at a synthesis by Karl Gerlach, *The Antenicene Pascha. A Rhetorical History* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998). On the Paschal vigil in the Latin West, see Robert Amiet, *La veillée pascale dans l'Église latine. I: Le rite romain. Histoire et liturgie* (Paris: Cerf, 1999). On the celebration of light: Alistair J. MacGregor, *Fire and Light in the Western Triduum. Their Use at Tenebrae and at the Paschal Vigil* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992); Heinrich Zweck, *Osterlobpreis und Taufe. Studien zu Struktur und Theologie des Exsultet und anderer Osterpraeconien unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Taufmotive* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1986); Thomas Forrest Kelly, *The Exsultet in Southern Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); and Anthony Ward, "An Exsultet Bibliography," *Notitiae* 35 (1999) 374-97. The dissertation of Peter Maier (*Die Feier der Missa chrismatis. Die Reform der Ölweihen des Pontificale*

Liturgico⁷ and the Pontificio Istituto Orientale,⁸ to say nothing of the documentation of congresses that have been held on the *triduum sacrum* or Holy Week.⁹ Of high relevance for the

Romanum vor dem Hintergrund der Ritusgeschichte [Regensburg: Pustet, 1990]), also contains an overall presentation of the development of Holy Thursday in the West. The most comprehensive work on Good Friday is unfortunately not published: Ewald Volgger, *Ad memoriam reducimus suam passionem ad nostram imitationem* (*LOff* 1, 13, 6). *Die Feier des Karfreitags bei Amalar von Metz (775/780–850)* (diss., University of Vienna, Catholic Theological Faculty, 1993). On Christmas and Epiphany, see the work of Susan Roll und Hans Förster recorded in footnotes 33-35. On the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, see Louis van Tongeren, *Exaltation of the Cross. Toward the Origins of the Feast of the Cross and the Meaning of the Cross in Early Medieval Liturgy* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000). On the Transfiguration: John Anthony McGuckin, *The Transfiguration of Christ in Scripture and Tradition* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1986); and Kenneth Stevenson, *Rooted in Detachment. Living the Transfiguration* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007). On Corpus Christi: André Haquin, ed., *Fête-Dieu (1246–1996). 1. Actes du Colloque de Liège, 12–14 septembre 1996*, Publications de l'Institut d'Études Médiévales. Textes, Études, Congrès 19.1 (Louvain: Institut d'Études Médiévales, 1999); Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 2004); and Barbara R. Walters, Vincent J. Corrigan, and Peter T. Ricketts, *The Feast of Corpus Christi* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University, 2006). On this and other processions: Sabine Felbecker, *Die Prozession. Historische und systematische Untersuchungen zu einer liturgischen Ausdruckshandlung* (Altenberge: Oros, 1995). On Christ the King: Christoph Joosten, *Das Christkönigsfest. Liturgie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Frömmigkeit und Politik* (Tübingen: Francke, 2002). Located in the border region between the feasts of the Lord and the sanctorale (that we are not taking up here) is Corrado Maggioni, *Annunciazione. Storia, eucologia, teologia liturgica* (Rome: C.L.V / Liturgiche, 1991).

⁷ In chronological order, among others: Kazimierz Mankowski, “*Fulgit crucis mysterium.*” *Teologia liturgica della celebrazione dell'Esaltazione della Croce* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum S. Anselmi; Pontificium Institutum Liturgicum, 1982); Varghese Pathikulangara, Qyamtâ w-Hayyê w-Hudâtâ: *Resurrection, Life and Renewal. A Theological Study of the Liturgical Celebrations of the Great Saturday and the Sunday of Resurrection in the Chaldeo-Indian Church* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Anselmianum; Pontificium Institutum Liturgicum, 1982); Fiorenzo Salvi, *L'Ufficio del “Corpus Domini” nei manoscritti liturgici della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Contributo alla identificazione dei testi* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum S. Anselmi; Pontificium Institutum Liturgicum, 1988); A. G. Kollampampil, *'Rubtâ d-Haşâ. Friday of the Passion in the East Syrian Liturgy. A Source Study* (Rome: Pontifical Liturgical Institute of S. Anselmo, 1994); Oriano Granella, *Le Quattro Tempora nella primitiva tradizione romana* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum S. Anselmi de Urbe; Pontificium Institutum Liturgicum, 1999); Gabriel Antonio Ríos, *Misa para la Fiesta de la Santísima Trinidad* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Liturgico, 2003); and Jaroslaw Superson, *La solennità di Cristo Re nella Liturgia delle Ore* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum S. Anselmi de Urbe; Pontificium Institutum Liturgicum, 2003).

⁸ After the exemplary works of Gabriel Bertonière, *The Historical Development of the Easter Vigil and Related Services in the Greek Church*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 193 (Rome:

formative phase of the church year are dissertations on individual patristic authors¹⁰ or, where bodies of source material from related areas are preserved, dissertations on whole regions like Cappadocia,¹¹ North Italy¹² and, above all, Jerusalem.¹³ Larger contributions to lexicons, which

Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1972); and Sebastià Janeras, *Le Vendredi-Saint dans la tradition liturgique byzantine. Structure et histoire de ses offices* (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 1988). On the Jerusalem and Byzantine liturgy, more recently the unpublished dissertations of Gaga Chourgaïa [Shurgaia], *La tradizione liturgica del sabato di Lazzaro e della domenica delle palme nei manoscritti bizantini dei secoli XI–XII* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientale, 1996); and Mark M. Morozowich, *Holy Thursday in the Jerusalem and Constantinopolitan Traditions. The Liturgical Celebrations from the Fourth to the Fourteenth Centuries* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientale, 2002). On the other Eastern churches, see, for example, John Moolan, *The Period of Annunciation-Nativity in the East Syrian Calendar* (Kottayam: Paurastya Vidyapitham, 1985); Grace Kochupaliyathil, *Monday to Thursday of the Holy Week in the East Syrian Liturgy. A Liturgico-Theological Study* (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1996) [unpublished; non vidi]; Kuriakose Thadathil, *The Feast of the Epiphany in the Malankara and the West Syrian Traditions* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2001); Thomas Thankachan, *The Feast of the Epiphany in the Church of the East (Assyrian, Chaldean and Syro-Malabar)* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2004); Antoine Gebran, *Il venerdì santo nel rito siro maronita* (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 2002); and Kurian Joseph Vellamattam, *Sunday of Hosannas in the Church of the East* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientale, 2005).

⁹ Ildebrando Scicolone, ed., *La celebrazione del Triduo Pasquale. Anamnesis e mimesis. Atti del III Congresso Internazionale di Liturgia. Roma, Pontificio Istituto Liturgico, 9–13 Maggio 1988* (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 1990); and Antonius Georgius Kollampampil, ed., *Hebdomadae Sanctae Celebratio. Conspectus Historicus Comparativus. The Celebration of Holy Week in Ancient Jerusalem and its Development in the Rites of East and West. L'antica celebrazione della Settimana Santa a Gerusalemme e il suo sviluppo nei riti dell'Oriente e dell'Occidente* (Rome: C.L.V.-Liturgiche, 1997).

¹⁰ Especially well accessed are the North Italian homily corpora: Franco Sottocornola, *L'anno liturgico nei sermoni di Pietro Crisologo. Ricerca storico-critica sulla liturgia di Ravenna antica* (Cesena: Centro studi e ricerche sulla antica provincia ecclesiastica Ravennate, 1973); Carlo Truzzi, *Zeno, Gaudenzio e Cromazio. Testi e contenuti della predicazione cristiana per le chiese di Verona, Brescia e Aquileia (360–410 ca.)* (Brescia: Paideia, 1985); Gordon P. Jeanes, *The Day Has Come! Easter and Baptism in Zeno of Verona* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1995); Vittorio Cian, *L'anno liturgico nelle opere di S. Cromazio di Aquileia* (Trieste: Centro Studi Storico-Religiosi Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 1996); Flavio Placida, *Aspetti catechistico-liturgici dell'opera di Cromazio di Aquileia* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2005) 98-154; and Andreas Merkt, *Maximus I. von Turin. Die Verkündigung eines Bischofs der frühen Reichskirche im zeitgeschichtlichen, gesellschaftlichen und liturgischen Kontext* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

¹¹ Jill Burnett Comings, *Aspects of the Liturgical Year in Cappadocia (321–430)* (New York: Lang, 2005). For more detail on Gregory of Nyssa, see the earlier work of Jochen Rexer, *Die Festtheologie Gregors von Nyssa. Ein Beispiel der reichskirchlichen Heortologie* (Frankfurt: Lang, 2002).

at times achieve more than just a summary of previous research, make the results accessible.¹⁴ In some languages there have also been some overall presentations directed to a wider reading public.¹⁵ However, in contrast to this impressive progress in individual questions, we find that in the past few decades not much has been produced in the way of comprehensive syntheses. For example, the Italian-English *Scientia Liturgica / Handbook of Liturgical Studies*,¹⁶ although designed with an ecumenical breadth hitherto not yet achieved in comparable works, remains somewhat summary in details; and its bibliographies are at times quite meager.¹⁷ The best that we do have, the extensive collection of essays edited by Maxwell Johnson entitled *Between*

¹² Martin Connell, *The Liturgical Year in Northern Italy (365–450)* (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1994).

¹³ After Randall Merle Payne, *Christian Worship in Jerusalem in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries: The Development of the Lectionary, Calendar and Liturgy* (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1980); and Hierodeacon Job (Getcha), *Les grandes fêtes dans l'Église de Jérusalem entre 381 et 431* (Paris: Institut de théologie orthodoxe Saint-Serge, 1998). Cf. above all Stéphane Verhelst, *La liturgie de Jérusalem à l'époque byzantine. Genèse et structures de l'année liturgique* (PhD diss., Hebrew University, 1999). Excellently commented is the edition *Les homélies festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem*, ed. Michel Aubineau (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1978–80).

¹⁴ Solid scholarly contributions on individual feasts can be found in, among others, the *Theologischen Realenzyklopädie* and the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*.

¹⁵ For example: the seventh edition (2005) of the bestseller by Karl-Heinrich Bieritz, *Das Kirchenjahr. Feste, Gedenk- und Feiertage in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1987); the stimulating two-volume development by Martin Connell, *Eternity Today. On the Liturgical Year* (New York: Continuum, 2006); Augusto Bergamini, *Cristo Festo della Chiesa. Storia-teologia-spiritualità-pastorale dell'Anno Liturgico* (Rome: Paoline, 1982, 1983); Julián López Martín, *El año liturgico. Historia y teología de los tiempos festivos cristianos* (Madrid: Biblioteca de autores cristianos, 1984) [Italian translation Milan: Paoline, 1987; non vidi]; and Philippe Rouillard, *Les fêtes chrétiennes en occident* (Paris: Cerf, 2003). The list could go on.

¹⁶ “The Liturgical Year” (pp. 133-330), is only part of the *Liturgical Time and Space*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol. 5 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000); the earlier work by Matias Augé et al., *L'anno liturgico. Storia, teologia e celebrazione* (Genova: Marietti, 1988, 1989), was in many respects even more thorough.

¹⁷ Very succinct are also the articles of Peter G. Cobb, “The History of the Christian Year,” in *The Study of Liturgy*, ed. Cheslyn Jones et al., rev. ed. (London: SPCK; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 455-72; and Karl-Heinrich Bieritz, “Das Kirchenjahr,” in *Handbuch der Liturgik. Liturgiewissenschaft in Theologie und Praxis der Kirche*, ed. Hans-Christoph Schmidt-Lauber, Michael Meyer-Blanck and Karl-Heinrich Bieritz), 3rd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003) 355-90.

Memory and Hope: Readings on the Liturgical Year, offers a somewhat comprehensive orientation to the state of recent research.¹⁸ What is there presented in at times masterful clarity need not be repeated here.

In this situation, what I present here cannot, of course, offer anything like a full heortology, even *in nuce*. I will rather attempt, in a quite subjective selection, to characterize some significant tendencies in recent research, address epochal results, and list open desiderata. Part One will present the new evaluation of well-known and much-discussed sources on the origin of some feasts. Part Two will sketch out which hitherto neglected witnesses to the origin and development of the feasts deserve more attention in the future, and what the questions are that could come from doing so. Part Three takes as its starting point the patristic evidence on the fundamental-liturgical meta-level, and offers reflections on liturgical hermeneutics.

I. Between Classical Hypotheses and New Minimalism: On some Open Questions of Origin

1. “Root,” “Mother,” “Twin Sister” . . . ? Changing Paradigms of the Oldest Celebration of Easter in Their Relationships to the Bible, Judaism, and Christianity

Factually and historically, the first question to ask is about the celebration of Easter; and right away we encounter revolutionary developments in recent research. It has, of course, become a commonplace to refer to the problem of the dating of rabbinic sources. But only in the last decades does the significance of this problem, not only for the question of the origin and early history of Easter, but also for the liturgical-historical and theological conceptions connected with it, seem gradually to have penetrated into the consciousness of liturgical scholarship.¹⁹ A

¹⁸ Johnson, ed., *Between Memory and Hope*; a part of the reprinted article of Taft (“The Liturgical Year”) in that collection goes back to the 1981 Societas Liturgica Congress in Paris. An extremely brief but outstanding overview of the most important questions of origin is given also by Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship. Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 2002) 178-91.

¹⁹ After the literature report by Joshua Kulp, “The Origins of the Seder and Haggadah,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 4.1 (2005) 109-34; cf. now Gerard Rouwhorst, “Christlicher Gottesdienst

fundamental contribution by Günter Stemberger in 1987 pointed out that many elements of the Pesach Haggadah that people would introduce as background for the Last Supper accounts (and the early Christian celebration of Easter) are to be located demonstrably late in the development of the Pesach Haggadah, and often remain unstable.²⁰ In a second step, Israel Yuval introduced a fundamental change in perspective and assembled a series of indications that the Pesach Haggadah itself was reacting to challenges from the Christian theology and celebration of Easter:²¹ the emphasis of the Haggadah that God himself and “not an angel . . . and—according to the version of the Saadya Gaon—not a Word (Logos?!)” led Israel out of Egypt is best understood as a reaction to Christian-theological concepts;²² the *dayenu* (“it would have been enough”) could be a Jewish reaction to Christian accusations of ingratitude, as can be found from the oldest surviving Easter homily of Melito of Sardis right up to the developed liturgies of the East and West. Even the central biblical text of the Haggadah, Deuteronomy 26, could have come to hold this position because Exodus 12 had already been appropriated by the Christians. The Jewish-Christian interaction, therefore, was anything but a one-way street, and that holds not just for the early period in which the Quartodeciman Paschal celebration—to take up a classical formulation from Gerard Rouwhorst—as “a kind of anti-Pascha” (“une sorte d’anti-Pâque”)²³

und der Gottesdienst Israels. Forschungsgeschichte, historische Interaktionen, Theologie,” in *Theologie des Gottesdienstes, Gottesdienst der Kirche. Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft* 2.2, ed. Karl-Heinrich Bieritz and Gerard Rouwhorst (Regensburg: Pustet, 2008) 491-572, esp. 539-45.

²⁰ See Günter Stemberger (“Pesachhaggada und Abendmahlsberichte des Neuen Testaments,” *Kairos* 29 [1987] 147-59, reprinted in his *Studien zum rabbinischen Judentum* [Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990] 357-74), among others, on the phrase “This is the bread of poverty,” on the Four Questions, on the Hallel, and Afiqoman, etc.

²¹ Israel Yuval, “Easter and Passover as Early Jewish-Christian Dialogue,” in *Passover and Easter. Origin and History to Modern Times*, ed. Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence Hoffman (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999) 98-124, and idem, *Pessach und Ostern: Dialog und Polemik in Spätantike und Mittelalter* (Trier: Arye-Maimon-Institut, 1999).

²² Cf. Stemberger, 153 [367].

²³ Rouwhorst, *Les hymnes pascales*, 1:192, 197.

clearly makes its connection to the Jewish celebration precisely by way of elements of separation and polemic.²⁴ Israel Yuval surmises, by no means incorrectly, that the role played by the mazza in word and ritual show the influence of medieval eucharistic piety.²⁵ It was Clemens Leonhard, finally, who pushed these initial steps to their logical conclusion and, by the way he attended both to minute detail as well as to his reconfiguration of the familiar overall model, achieved a genuine paradigm change in the history of Pesach and Pascha.²⁶ If indeed the Pesach Haggadah dates from after the rabbinic period, in which the symposion-influenced Pesach Seder was already influenced by the study and discussion of the laws of sacrifice (*Tosefta Pesachim* 10, 12), before this had been overlaid and finally replaced by the increasingly ritualized account “from the disgrace to the glory” (*Mishna Pesachim* 10, 4)²⁷—then any search for Christian equivalents becomes superfluous. The establishing (beginning in the post-Talmudic period) of the Haggadah as text represents a qualitative step in the history of the Pesach liturgy. This observation is not only of liturgical-historical, but also of fundamental-liturgical significance: what happens is that the rules for celebration that are discussed in the rabbinic literature of late antiquity—i.e., a metaliturgical text—become in the early Middle Ages a liturgical text that is ritually recited. The re-evaluation of the expansion of the *Palestinian Targum* on Exodus 12:42 is also of relevance.²⁸ Leonhard not only questions the labeling of the genre as the “Hymn of the Four Nights,” he can also demonstrate, both on internal and formal grounds, that the text is to be dated late and,

²⁴ Meanwhile, a clear scholarly majority seems to be developing regarding the priority of the Quartodeciman over the dominical celebration; cf. Rouwhorst, “Christlicher Gottesdienst,” 541.

²⁵ Cf. also Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb. Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California, 2006) 205-56.

²⁶ Clemens Leonhard, *The Jewish Pesach and the Origins of the Christian Easter. Open Questions in Current Research* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006). Especially helpful among the shorter contributions is also Leonhard’s “Die älteste Haggada. Übersetzung der Pesachhaggada nach dem palästinischen Ritus und Vorschläge zu ihrem Ursprung und ihrer Bedeutung für die Geschichte der christlichen Liturgie,” *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 45 (2003) 201-31.

²⁷ Leonhard, *The Jewish Pesach*, 73-118.

despite its numerous witnesses, remained marginal in Judaism. The “four night” contents of the hymn (creation, Abraham, Exodus, future coming of the Messiah) that are found in this combination nowhere else in the rabbinic literature can therefore not represent the historical core of a Christian order of readings for the celebration of the Paschal vigil. In this connection, a further hypothesis of Clemens Leonhard seems to me to be worthy of discussion: the striking commonalities in the order of readings of the different liturgies raise the question whether we might be dealing here with the contents of the oldest Easter celebration of the church which—prescinding from Exodus 12 and the memorial of the Passion—can be only quite hypothetically conjectured. Leonhard now thinks that the order of readings of the Easter vigil, witnessed for the first time in Jerusalem of the fifth century, is not to be understood as an old relic. It came about as a secondary filling up of a liturgical vacuum in the Easter night celebration. For with the development of Holy Week and the shifting of the Passion memorial to Good Friday, the Easter night celebration had been deprived of what had been its principal contents.²⁹ Still further important observations of detail and fundamental questions can be added, such as the observation by Gerard Rouwhorst that the thesis of a “highly eschatological paschal celebration” that was popular in the twentieth century has no basis in the sources (which, of course, not only requires a new assessment of one element of a particular feast, but also demolishes widely held models of the liturgical history of the early church).³⁰

It should now have become clear that the discussion of the Paschal celebration of the early church has wide-ranging consequences not only for the history of the Christian celebration of Easter but also for global theories of liturgical development, and not least for determining the

²⁸ Ibid., 317-423.

²⁹ Ibid., 293-314.

³⁰ Gerard Rouwhorst, “How Eschatological Was Early Christian Liturgy?” *Studia Patristica* 40 (2006) 93-108.

relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Gerhard Rouwhorst's (among others) recently argued change from the "mother-daughter" paradigm to the "twin-sisters" paradigm³¹ hopefully also stimulates a new sensitivity for the theological significance of the new inner-Jewish theological orientation after the destruction of the Temple, since one can no longer start simply from a parting of the ways before the beginning of the history of the Christian liturgy. Liturgical studies and Jewish studies are more than ever dependent on each other.³²

2. *Examples of Inculturation? Christmas and Epiphany*

a. The Origin of Christmas in the System of Coordinates of Classical Hypotheses

With this question of the origin of Christmas and Epiphany, the situation in liturgical studies is similar to that of Pentateuch criticism in biblical studies. Certain models established several generations ago recur cyclically, and a definitive investigatory consensus is apparently not to be expected. Thus, the history of religions hypothesis and the calculation hypothesis remain to this day relatively unreconciled with each other. The calculation hypothesis that Thomas Talley brought to a new popularity in Anglo and Anglo-American research is widely rejected in the other language areas. Since Susan Roll worked through the discussion in exemplary fashion, not only in her comprehensively constructed and clearly argued dissertation, but also in repeated and accessible summaries,³³ the history of this research need not be reported again here. The

³¹ Rouwhorst, "Christlicher Gottesdienst," 506-10.

³² Cf. the authoritative initiative of Paul Bradshaw and Lawrence Hoffman with their—unfortunately since then discontinued—publications series *Two Liturgical Traditions*, 6 vols. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991–1999).

³³ Susan K. Roll, *Toward the Origins of Christmas* (Kampen: Kok, 1995); her "The Debate on the Origins of Christmas," *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 40 (1998) 1-16, which was revised and reprinted as "The Origins of Christmas. The State of the Question," in Johnson, ed., *Between Memory and Hope*, 273-90; and her "Weihnachten/Weihnachtsfest/Weihnachtspredigt. I. Geschichte, Theologie und Liturgie," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 35 (2003) 453-68.

calculation hypothesis was recently attacked (once again) in the dissertation of Hans Förster.³⁴ But it is remarkable that Förster in his most recent monograph on *Die Anfänge von Weihnachten und Epiphaniäs* (2007),³⁵ despite his repeated criticism of the calculation hypothesis, has now come in with clear reservations against the history of religions hypothesis. After Thomas Talley had already in 1987 raised questions about the significance of the role of Constantine in the introduction of Christmas,³⁶ Martin Wallraff in his 2001 Habilitation on *Sonnenverehrung und Christentum in der Spätantike*³⁷ made clear that the evidence for the cult of Sol Invictus on December 25 is also more problematic than widely assumed; “in particular, nothing points to archaic traditions of sun worship. The earliest sure witness for the *natalis invicti* is only from the middle of the fourth century. . . . As a result, the introduction of the Christian feast can no longer be represented one-sidedly as the reaction to an already existing pagan feast. Instead, we are apparently dealing with parallel appearances”;³⁸ and the propagation of the Helios festival by Emperor Julian could have been a “conscious counter proposal against the Christian celebration of Christmas,” the spread of which indirectly caused it.³⁹ Förster goes even farther and surmises, in view of the weak witness of the sun festival at the winter solstice, that “precisely the lack of that kind of a so popular festival [seems] to have set up the possibility of occupying this solar

³⁴ Hans Förster, *Die Feier der Geburt Christi in der Alten Kirche. Beiträge zur Erforschung der Anfänge des Epiphanie- und Weihnachtsfestes* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2000).

³⁵ Hans Förster, *Die Anfänge von Weihnachten und Epiphaniäs. Eine Anfrage an die Entstehungshypothesen* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2007).

³⁶ Thomas J. Talley, “Constantine and Christmas,” *Studia Liturgica* 17 (1987) 191-97; reprinted in Johnson, ed., *Between Memory and Hope*, 265-72.

³⁷ Martin Wallraff, *Christus verus sol. Sonnenverehrung und Christentum in der Spätantike* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2001) especially 174-95.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 194: “insbesondere deutet nichts auf archaische Traditionen der Sonnenverehrung. Der *natalis invicti* ist zum ersten Mal sogar erst Mitte des vierten Jahrhunderts sicher bezeugt. . . . Aus dieser Sachlage resultiert, dass die Einführung des christlichen Festes nicht mehr einseitig als Reaktion auf eine vorgängige pagane Tradition dargestellt werden kann. Vielmehr handelt es sich offenbar um parallele Erscheinungen.”

³⁹ Wallraff, 182, 194.

date with a Christian feast.”⁴⁰ Förster’s fundamental reflections on the plausibility of the Christian inculturation of a pagan festival in the fourth century are also worthy of consideration. Such a concept, first of all, contradicts the strategy with which the church usually countered the temporally proximate calendar feasts; it opposed them with fasting, not with appropriation.⁴¹ Second, the integration of pagan elements would have offered a welcome point of attack for the polemic between various groups in the church; but we detect no sign of that kind of a protest.⁴² In view of the old and new criticism of both classical hypotheses, it is likely that the solution is to be sought in a different place than before. Nevertheless or perhaps precisely because of the historical aporias, we should ask, following Susan Roll, whether and to what extent the two explanations necessarily exclude each other.⁴³ On the historical level, it has become, on the one hand, unlikely that the origin of Christmas is to be explained as a Christian reaction to the birth feast of the unconquered sun, and on the other hand, the early calculations of the birth date of

⁴⁰ See the pointed essay of Hans Förster, “Zwischen Inkulturation, Integration und Isolation. Die Christen und ihre Liturgie im 4. Jahrhundert,” *Heiliger Dienst* 63 (2009) 26-42, esp. 35.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 35, with reference among others to Augustine: “Even for the early Christians it really must have been incomprehensible to be fighting against the pagan feast of December 25 with a competing feast, while, in reaction to the pagan feast of January 1, one fasted.” On the Christian reaction to the calends of January, cf. in addition Rudolf Schwarzenberger, “Die liturgische Feier des 1. Januar. Geschichte und Pastoralliturgische Desiderate,” *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 20 (1970) 216-30, esp. 219-22; and, more recently, Françoise Monfrin, “La fête des calendes de janvier entre Noël et Épiphanie (la rencontre de deux calendriers),” in *La Nativité et le temps de Noël. Antiquité et Moyen Âge*, ed. Jean-Paul Boyer and Gilles Dorival (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 2003) 95-119.

⁴² Had the feast of Christmas been introduced according to a “pagan” model, protest from, for example, the Donatists would have been expected; to the extent that it is “astonishing that one finds very little polemic against the ‘pagan doings’ of the Great Church, that raises the question whether the enthusiasm over this achievement of integration by Christianity in the fourth century might not stem from a false understanding of the historical event. Right at a time in which competing groups were struggling for the most Christian profile possible, a time in which there was little hesitation to defame one’s opponent, it is striking that so obvious a move toward the opening of Christianity towards a decidedly pagan society—the introduction of the feast of Christmas—did not come in for more criticism or discussion, while this same feast, a thousand years later, was felt to be so foreign to Christianity that doing away with the feast was felt to be a logical consequence” (Förster, “Zwischen Inkulturation,” 33).

Christ are contradictory and can really no longer be offered as the basis for the introduction of the feast of Christmas. However, with the choice of date and internal development of the feast of Christmas, increasingly popular solar elements in Christology could have converged with those calculations or calendric speculations that, for their part, were strongly influenced by the sun cycle and its symbolism.⁴⁴ The push for a calendar-connected feast of the birth of Christ would, in any case, have come from elsewhere. This is a question perhaps not only for Christmas, but also for Epiphany.

b. Old and New Theses on the Origin of Epiphany

The question of the origin of Epiphany is basically beset by similar controversies as those of Christmas. Here too calculation hypotheses and history of religions hypotheses come up against each other.⁴⁵ In addition, Gabriele Winkler has been able to assemble an impressive wealth of literary and even iconographic points of connection to the baptism theme.⁴⁶ To this day all imaginable possibilities are being represented. For Epiphany, either one or several contents of the feast are being embraced. Begin from one of them, and it is a question of the baptism or the birth of Christ. In view of multiplicity of and, in detail, the lack of clarity in the sources, none of the arguments are without problems: one often notices circular argumentation, arguments from silence, or the devaluation of certain witnesses. This holds also for Hans Förster's most recent

⁴³ Cf., for example, Roll, "Weihnachten," 455.

⁴⁴ Cf. Förster, "Zwischen Inkulturation," 35: "Naming Christ with the familiar prophetic language of the 'Sun of Justice' does then make possible the choice of a solstice; but this happened for inner Christian reasons and not on the basis of any kind of a cuddling up to a presumed pagan feast on this day."

⁴⁵ Cf. Förster, *Anfänge*.

⁴⁶ Gabriele Winkler, "Die Licht-Erscheinung bei der Taufe Jesu und der Ursprung des Epiphaniestes. Eine Untersuchung griechischer, syrischer, armenischer und lateinischer Quellen," *Oriens Christianus* 78 (1994) 177-229, repr. as "The Appearance of Light at the Baptism of Jesus and the Origins of the Feast of Epiphany: An Investigation of Greek, Syriac, Armenian, and Latin Sources," in Johnson, ed., *Between Memory and Hope*, 291-347; see also Winkler's "Neue Überlegungen zur Entstehung des Epiphaniestes," *ARAM* 5 (1993) 603-33.

proposal to understand Epiphany as the birth feast that arose in Palestine in the fourth century. Pilgrim devotion contributed not only to the introduction of the feast but also to its rapid dissemination. The history of religions parallels were accordingly more coincidental than significant: Origen's pointing to the dating of the baptism of Jesus in January as an interpolation of Jerome, and the Canons of Athanasius—a crown witness for baptism as the unique content of the feast—to be dated not in the fourth but in the fifth century.⁴⁷ The discussion around Epiphany thus remains open and tense, and, just as with Christmas, the question is raised whether an integration of the different arguments is to be sought on other than the historical level.

3. “Traditional” and “Modern” Explanations: The Sole Alternative on the Early History of Quadragesima?

Even more sharply than on the question of the origins of Christmas do we find that the language groups [i.e., English versus Continental] are separated on the question of the early history of Quadragesima.⁴⁸ Here two models stand directly opposed to each other. The traditional liturgical handbooks start with a gradual growth of the time of preparation for Easter. After the extension of the Paschal fast to the whole week before Easter that is evidenced in the sources of the third century, the church historian Socrates claims a three-week preparation time for the Roman Church.⁴⁹ While at the time of Socrates towards the middle of the fifth century this

⁴⁷ Förster, *Anfänge*, 39-56; 67-88, and other places; and cf. Wilhelm Riedel and Walter E. Crum, *The Canons of Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria* (London: 1904; repr. Amsterdam: Philo, 1973), § 16: ʾ [21; Arabic]; 27 [English]; Förster, *Anfänge*, 120-26 among others on Origen, *Hom. 1, 4 in Ezech.* (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller. Origenes Werke 8, 329, 7-9, ed. Baehrens).

⁴⁸For an overview of the most important sources and secondary literature, cf. Harald Buchinger, “On the Early History of Quadragesima. A New Look at an Old Problem and Some Proposed Solutions,” in *Liturgies in East and West. Ecumenical Relevance of Early Liturgical Development? First International Symposium Vindobonense, Vienna, November 17–20, 2007*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Feulner (Vienna: LIT, 2010); see also Bradshaw, *Search*, 183-85. For a detailed new examination of the question, see Nicholas V. Russo, “The Origins of Lent” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2009).

⁴⁹ Socr., *Hist. eccl.* 5, 22, 32 (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller 300, 11f, ed. Hansen).

assertion is obviously false, it has nevertheless induced scholarship to look for indications of a three-week intermediate stage of the Quadragesima not only in Rome, but also in other liturgies such as that of Jerusalem, for example.⁵⁰ Then in the fourth century general overall acceptance was finally given to a forty-day period, for which, then, the technical term Quadragesima was soon coined.

This growth model of a pre-Easter time of fasting was opposed by Thomas Talley, whose explanations were based on medieval Syriac and (Coptic-) Arabic sources which understood the Quadragesima to be not the result of a gradual extension of the preparation time for Easter, but as a forty-day period originally independent of Easter, a period that had arisen in Egypt in connection with Epiphany as feast of the baptism of Jesus.⁵¹ The motif of this Quadragesima was at first connected with the temptation of Jesus in the desert, but at the same time serving as preparation for the baptism celebrated thereafter in the middle of February. Only after the Council of Nicea would it be pushed up to before the Pascha, while at the same time Easter won out as the preferred time for baptisms.

While this theory found such broad acceptance in the English-speaking literature that it could even be spoken of as a “standard answer to this question,”⁵² outside of the English-speaking

⁵⁰ After Mário Ferreira Lages, “Étapes de l’évolution du Carême à Jérusalem avant le V^e siècle. Essai d’analyse structural,” *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 6 (1969) 67-102; cf. Stéphane Verhelst, “Histoire ancienne de la durée du carême à Jérusalem,” *Questions liturgiques* 84 (2003) 23-50, esp. 26-30.

⁵¹ After Thomas J. Talley, “The Origin of Lent at Alexandria,” *Studia Patristica* 17.2 (1982) 594-612; cf. idem, *Origins*, 163-230, relying upon René-Georges Coquin, “Les origines de l’Épiphanie en Égypte,” in *Noël – Épiphanie – Retour du Christ. Semaine liturgique de l’Institut Saint-Serge* (Paris: Cerf, 1967) 139-70; and idem, “Une réforme liturgique du Concile de Nicée (325)?” *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des inscriptions et des belles lettres* (1967) 178-92.

⁵² Maxwell E. Johnson, “Preparation for Pascha? Lent in Christian Antiquity,” in *Passover and Easter. The Symbolic Structuring of Sacred Seasons*, ed. Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence A. Hoffman (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999) 36-68, esp. 44; the essay also appears in Johnson, ed., *Between Memory and Hope*, 207-22.

world and despite its dissemination in translations,⁵³ it was, as far as I can see, never positively received. Critics point out that the sources it relies upon are not only late and inconsistent in detail, but that they also bear traces of anachronistic reconstruction.⁵⁴ This surmise is supported by the fact that the earliest clear witnesses are apparently attempting to establish a system of several times of fasting; and where there is witness of a Quadragesima after Epiphany, we can also be dealing with a late development (secondary to the already existing pre-Easter Quadragesima),⁵⁵ which was to be legitimated by the authority of a supposed decision of the early church.⁵⁶ Along with this possibly ideological move, one can observe in the various sources not only historical misunderstandings, but also a terminological confusion. The fact that the

⁵³ Talley's *Origins* has appeared in French (Paris: Cerf, 1990) and Italian (Brescia: Queriniana, 1991) translations.

⁵⁴ For the most detail, see Alberto Camplani, "Sull'origine della Quaresima in Egitto," in *Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Washington, 12–15 August 1992*, ed. David W. Johnson, vol. 2 (Rome: C.I.M., 1993) 105-21; and Buchinger, "On the Early History of Quadragesima."

⁵⁵ The oldest source for a supposed shifting of a Quadragesima originally held after Epiphany to before Easter is also the oldest tangible witness for three forty-day fasting times in the Christian East; on the—falsely attributed to Georg von Arbelo (tenth century)—*Expositio Officiorum Ecclesiae* 1, 13 (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Scriptorum Syri 3/91, 61, 12f. 22–25; 62, 25–27 [Syriac] / 2/91, 51, 16f. 24–30; 52, 19–21 [Latin] ed. and trans. Connolly); cf. Karl Holl, "Die Entstehung der vier Fastenzeiten in der griechischen Kirche," in idem, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte. Band II. Der Osten* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1928; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964) 155-203, esp. 177 [the original in *Sitzungsberichte der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse* 1923/5 (Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1924)]. Has the historicising concept of a Quadragesima observed after Epiphany perhaps been influenced by the contemporary praxis of a Quadragesima ("Apostle Fast") observed after Pentecost? On similar three fasting times in the ancient British church, cf. *ibid.*, 192, as well as Josef Andreas Jungmann, "Advent und Voradvent. Überreste des gallischen Advents in der römischen Liturgie," in idem, *Gewordene Liturgie. Studien und Durchblicke* (Innsbruck: Rauch, 1941) 232-94 [the original in *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 61 (1937) 341-90], esp. 253f, 257f.

⁵⁶ On the argumentation strategy of the anonymous author of *Expositio Officiorum Ecclesiae*, see Leonhard, *The Jewish Pesach*: "The author of the *Expositio* tries to reconstruct ante-Nicene customs on his own. His foregoing discussion of biblical precedents for the Christian fast before Easter Sunday did not yield unequivocal parallels in the gospel on which he could build a system of mimetic representation in the liturgy. Thus, he changes his strategy and explains the existing liturgy as the result of ecclesiastical legislation" (209-10).

discussion alternates between a decision about “the fasting” and “the Quadragesima” makes one suspect that the historical core of the medieval witnesses—if the idea is not to be seen as a totally free invention—is perhaps to be sought in the decision of the Council of Nicea about the Pasch, which at that time meant primarily the time for beginning the fast, but related only to the Pasch fasting and not to a longer time of fasting.⁵⁷ The historical, terminological, and pragmatic textual problems all nourish significant doubt about the historical trustworthiness of the medieval sources and their modern reception.

Is that already a confirmation of the “traditional” handbook wisdom? It seems to me that there are also substantial questions to be put to the growth model. No proof can be found anywhere for a step-by-step extension of a one-week time of preparation for Easter, through a three-week intermediate stage and up to a six- or seven-week Quadragesima. Presumably we are dealing not at all with stages of a successive development, but with four phenomena that are to be distinguished both factually and historically. The extension of the *Pasch fasting* (1) already observable at times in the second century, turns up to be more of an individual ascetic practice; even where it is later institutionalized, it does not become part of the liturgy. Pasch fasting existed long before the rise of a pre-Easter Quadragesima and kept its identity even after the latter had been established. In many liturgies—as in the Alexandria of Athanasius—the last week of the Quadragesima coincides with the “six holy days of the Pasch.”⁵⁸ Elsewhere—as in

⁵⁷ The older witnesses speak of fasting (الصوم/ 'aṣ-ṣawm), without indicating its length, which can thus also mean the Paschal fast: Severus of al-Ashmunein/Hermopolis, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria* (10th c.), 7 & 8 (Patrologia Orientalis 1/4, 402 [138]; 407 [143], ed. Evetts); *East Syrian Chronicle of Seert* (post-9th c.), 18 (Patrologia Orientalis 4, 281 [71], ed. Scher); the translation (ibid., 280 [70]) “Lent” is misleading. Only in the later sources is there talk of a Quadragesima; the theory taken up by Coquin and Talley apparently thus went through a significant development in the course of the Middle Ages.

⁵⁸ Athanasius, *ep. fest.* 6 (from the year 334): *The Festal Letters of Athanasius Discovered in an Ancient Syriac Version*, ed. W. Cureton (London: Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts, 1848; repr. Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2003), ٦ [6; Syriac] / Alberto Camplani, *Atanasio di*

Jerusalem—the Quadragesima ends before the beginning of the “week of the Pasch fasting.”⁵⁹ Both solutions witness in their own way to the self-sufficiency and independence of the two phenomena. The shaping out of *Holy Week* (2) also follows its own, namely liturgical, laws. Even when they coincide in time with the Pasch fasting, we are still dealing with an independent development that, presumably under the influence of pilgrim spirituality in the Jerusalem of the second half of the fourth century, began to celebrate the events of the Passion according to a harmonized gospel chronology. The surviving witnesses suggest that that only began when the Quadragesima was already established;⁶⁰ after the establishment of Holy Week, the Quadragesima was then moved forward by a week. What remains then of the assertion of Socrates about a three-week time of fasting in fourth-century Rome? Literally speaking, it is obviously false; but in the face of indications of a *three-week time of intensive preparation for baptism* (3) in various Western liturgies, one must not simply dismiss it as false information. As Maxwell Johnson has made clear,⁶¹ the fact that this catechumenal phase must not necessarily be

Alessandria: Lettere Festali. Anonimo: Indice delle Lettere Festali (Milan: Paoline, 2003) 296. The fact of the coincidence of the dates of the six day Paschal fasting with the sixth week of fasting remains clear, even if the terminology is developed further in the course of time; see Sever J. Voicu, “Settimana santa, digiuno e Quaresima nelle sottoscrizioni delle *Lettere festali* di Atanasio,” *Augustinianum* 47 (2007) 283-97.

⁵⁹ In the Armenian lectionary, the end of the Quadragesima—§ XIX–XXXII (Patrologia Orientalis 168 = 36/2, 238 [100]-254 [116] Renoux)—with its station service on the Friday of the sixth week, is marked via the rubric in § XXXII: “The canon of the sixth week of the Holy Quadragesima has come to the end” (ibid., 254 [116]); the Monday of Holy Week is, however, in § XXXV (ibid., 258 [120]) introduced as “Monday of the Paschal Fast.” For a full description of further witnesses, see Sebastia Janeras, “Le vendredi avant le Dimanche des Palmes dans la tradition liturgique hagiopolite,” *Studi sull’Oriente Cristiano* 4 (2000) 59-86.

⁶⁰ A Quadragesima is already known by Eusebius of Caesarea (Pasch. 4f [PG 24, 697 C; 700 B–C]), and Cyril of Jerusalem (Procatech. 4 [ed. Reischl 6]; Catech. 4, 3 [ed. Reischl 92]), while the first witness to Holy Week is, as we know, only later with Egeria. In the liturgical documents these two institutions are clearly separate from each other, even if the fasting days of Holy Week are counted in order to come up with the forty days of the Quadragesima.

⁶¹ Maxwell E. Johnson, “From Three Weeks to Forty Days. Baptismal Preparation and the Origins of Lent,” *Studia Liturgica* 20 (1990) 185-200, esp. 194; repr. *Living Water, Sealing Spirit. Readings on Christian Initiation*, ed. Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical

connected genetically and historically with Easter as the time for baptisms shows that we are also not necessarily dealing with a stage in the development of the pre-Easter time of fasting. In my opinion, rather, it is to be reckoned that it was only secondarily connected with the Quadragesima. The indications in the Roman order of readings actually seem to point more in the direction of an inner differentiation of an already existing liturgical time.⁶² Where does that now leave the origin of the *Quadragesima* (4)? The biblical symbolism is so thoroughly constitutive for the forty-day time period that its derivation from shorter periods seems problematic. The historically reliable indications suggest that the Quadragesima was introduced in the thirties of the fourth century as that which the perhaps oldest witness, Eusebius, describes them: as a “forty-day (ascetic) practice before the feast.”⁶³

Interim Conclusion

The examples presented here converge in a tendency of the most recent research, first towards skepticism regarding classical explanatory models, and second towards the late dating of various feasts. And this raises the question whether the historical evidence seems to be only

Press, 1995) 118-36, esp. 133; and idem, *Worship: Rites, Feasts, and Reflections* (Portland, Ore.: Pastoral Press, 2004) 199-213, esp. 209: “However, granted that the indications of this three-week period in the various sources do occur during the final portion of Lent, this period devoted to baptismal preparation need *not* be understood only in relationship to Easter.” Idem, “Preparation for Pascha,” 42: “when we first see whatever evidence there is for this three-week ‘Lent’ (with the exception of Socrates’ general reference to fasting), it is 1. already closely associated with the final preparation of catechumens for baptism, and 2. not always clearly associated with *Easter* baptism” (emphasis in the original). Cf. Jungmann, “Advent,” 246f.

⁶² Cf. already Josef Andreas Jungmann, “Die Quadragesima in den Forschungen von Antoine Chavasse: *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 5.1 (1957) 84-95, esp. 92: “If we shift the Sunday readings by one week, so that the series runs: John 4; 6; 8; 9; 10; 11 (Passion); 12; 13, we end up with an uninterrupted series; but since there is no evidence for that, we would be committing a *petitio principii*. And would that allow us, even if this move were permitted, to project an established series of pericopes even for the weekdays back into the third quarter of the century (‘before 384’)? To explain the situation, it is quite sufficient to assume that, in the time when the Quadragesima was already an established institution, and within this long-established privileged *mediana*-week, Johannine readings were used, which thus became a preliminary step towards the post-Easter Johannine readings.”

factually fragmented, or whether there are also fundamental challenges to be directed to the structure of the development of hypotheses about the pre-history of feasts whose clear witness comes only later. But before returning to this question, we should first shift attention from questions of origin to the unfolding of the established feasts, and make inquiry into the sources and perspectives of our heortological standard works.

II. Festa Fori—Festa Chori: On the External and Internal Unfolding of the Feasts in the Rhythm of Time

Heortological handbooks usually follow a three-step methodology. After checking out the origins of a feast, its codification in the medieval Roman tradition would be investigated—ideally from the oldest sources up to the reforms of the sixteenth century⁶⁴—and finally the present-day celebration according to the renewed regulations would be described. To the extent that this double orientation holds true, on the one hand to the formative key phases of liturgical history, and on the other hand to its normative sources as the backbone of what is described, that justifies the call to expand a liturgical science that proceeds primarily “from top to bottom” and attends to real life, if at all, only in fine-print appendices.⁶⁵ This touches not only upon hermeneutical contexts and methodological sensitivities in modern theology,⁶⁶ but also fundamental perspectives of historical research. Such considerations seem to cry out for a genuine paradigm change towards writing history “from the bottom up.” If the standard works of liturgical studies are to be a mirror of the discipline, they will in the future have to examine more

⁶³ Eusebius of Caesarea, Pasch. 4 (PG 24, 697 C).

⁶⁴ That the reformation liturgies, in contrast with the post-Tridentine reform, are unfortunately given little attention is on account of the broad Catholic dominance of the more extensive standard works of liturgical scholarship.

⁶⁵ A typical example of this is, once again, the handbook of Auf der Maur (see note 2), in which customs, singing, and preaching were regularly addressed and also, by way of suggestion, theologically evaluated, but quite obviously only in small-font appendages to his own exposition.

⁶⁶ Contextual theologies, liberation theology, feminist theology, etc., still draw little attention in the standard works of liturgical scholarship.

clearly than they have how the feasts in the rhythm of time have actually expressed and influenced the life and faith of the church. The question of the unfolding of the feasts in the rhythm of time has to be plumbed in two directions: outwardly—how the feasts of the church were influencing the actual praxis of society—and inwardly—how the liturgical texts themselves, in the course of time, put the contents of the celebration into words. In this section, there are, to be sure, more formal postulates than actual results to be addressed, and a lot of detailed investigation will have to take place before responsible attempts at a synthesis can be undertaken.

1. Festa Fori: Liturgical Structures and Historical Reality

A heortology that is also adopting a perspective “from the bottom up” must direct its gaze not only to whole genres of sources that have hitherto been only inchoatively considered: Robert Taft, for example, has impressively demonstrated the fruits for Byzantine liturgical history of examining hagiographical literature.⁶⁷ For the case of modern Germany, the Bonn Habilitation of Friedrich Lurz on *Autobiographische Schriften als liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen* has made paradigmatically clear how fruitful this innovative investigatory starting point can be.⁶⁸ But even in the strict sense, the liturgical sources of the centuries after the “formative phase” of the early Middle Ages are still not close to being exhaustively made accessible. Both the Byzantine *Typica*⁶⁹ and the *Libri Ordinarii* of the Western Middle Ages, apart from specialized attention to

⁶⁷ Cf. Robert F. Taft, *Through Their Own Eyes. Liturgy as the Byzantines Saw It* (Berkeley, Cal.: InterOrthodox, 2006), as well as the methodology chapter and account of the literature in *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. Volume VI: The Communion, Thanksgiving, and Concluding Rites* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2008) 66-79. In heortology we still do not have anything like this.

⁶⁸ Friedrich Lurz, *Erlebte Liturgie. Autobiografische Schriften als liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen* (Münster: LIT, 2003).

⁶⁹ Exemplary is the Theotokos Evergetis Project at Queen’s University Belfast: Robert H. Jordan, *The Synaxarion of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis* (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, the Institute of Byzantine Studies, the Queen’s University of Belfast, 2000–2005); cf. John Eugene Klentos, *Byzantine Liturgy in Twelfth-Century Constantinople: An Analysis of the Synaxarion of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis (codex Athens Ethnike Bibliothek)*

this or that part of them, have been little studied.⁷⁰ It seems at times that musicology and art history make more extensive use of these sources, even though these sources are still the direct sources of that history of liturgy that is always and only carried out in quite concrete space-time actualizations. How seriously do we ask the question what it is that medieval Christian women and men actually celebrated when they, because of language, social, or cultural reasons, were unable to perceive the content of those sources from which traditional liturgical studies drew the theology of liturgical celebration? Must not a liturgical science that claims to reflect the faith of the church try, out of genuine theological interest, to bring light to the darkness of everyday history?⁷¹ This of course concerns not just the absorbing question about what the Christian feasts meant for the less educated who had no access to the liturgical texts. Along with attempts to appropriate liturgical contents in art⁷² and customary practice, phenomena like the medieval

788) (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1995). The Dumbarton Oaks Typikon Project (*Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents. A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, ed. John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero, 5 vols. [Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000]), also investigates liturgical sources.

⁷⁰ In the *Libri-Ordinarii* research, a change in trend has recently been observed: while numerous older editions had been accompanied by excellent commentaries, in more recent times some exemplary detailed studies, including some on the celebration of Easter, have appeared: Jürgen Bärsch, *Die Feier des Osterfestkreises im Stift Essen nach dem Zeugnis des Liber Ordinarius (zweite Hälfte 14. Jahrhundert). Ein Beitrag zur Liturgiegeschichte der deutschen Ortskirchen* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1997); Peter Wünsche, *Kathedralliturgie zwischen Tradition und Wandel. Zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte der Bamberger Domliturgie im Bereich des Triduum Sacrum*. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1998); and the list could go on. Cf. the report on research by Jürgen Bärsch, "Liber ordinarius – Zur Bedeutung eines liturgischen Buchtyps für die Erforschung des Mittelalters," *Archa Verbi* 2 (2005) 9-58 [with an extensive bibliography of the older literature].

⁷¹ Exemplary, on account of the wealth of material treated and the profound theological evaluation (with some assistance from the category of "archaic religiosity") is the—although only seldom related to the feasts—study by Arnold Angenendt, *Liturgie im Mittelalter. Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, ed. Thomas Flammer and Daniel Meyer (Münster: LIT, 2004, 2005).

⁷² For a work quite relevant to liturgical scholarship, see the art-historical Habilitation of Johannes Tripps, *Das handelnde Bildwerk in der Gotik. Forschungen zu den Bedeutungsschichten und der Funktion des Kirchengebäudes und seiner Ausstattung in der Hoch- und Spätgotik* (Berlin: Mann, 1998, 2000). From the perspective of liturgical scholarship,

drama connected with the liturgy of the feast and eventually growing out of it,⁷³ or those secondary musical genres that were themselves immediate liturgical texts—tropes, sequences, prosulas, etc.—these phenomena should be taken just as seriously by liturgical studies as they are by scholarly medieval studies.⁷⁴ A liturgical studies that is theologically engaged and responsible will surely not restrict itself to the discoverer’s joy of tracking down unnoticed texts and rites, art works and usages. Scientific distance in the observation of historical phenomena is not to be confused with postmodern arbitrariness in judgment. Not least in the interest of the critical evaluation of analogical processes in contemporary celebratory praxis, the heortological fundamental question gets raised about the relationship of mimesis and anamnesis in the celebrations in the rhythm of time. What theological meaning does the ritual, and sometimes even dramatic unfolding of the content of the celebrations, have in space and time? What

see, for example, Justin E. A. Kroesen, *The Sepulchrum Domini through the Ages. Its Form and Function* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

⁷³After the classical works of Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933); O. B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages. Essays in the Origin and Early History of Modern Drama* (Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins University Press, 1965); Blandine-Dominique Berger, *Le drame liturgique de Pâque du Xe au XIII^e siècle. Liturgie et théâtre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1976); and Norbert King, *Mittelalterliche Dreikönigsspiele. Eine Grundlagenarbeit zu den lateinischen, deutschen und französischen Dreikönigsspielen und -spielszenen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Freiburg/Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 1979). There do not seem to be larger monographs appearing in recent years; for an overview, see *The Medieval European Stage, 500–1550*, ed. William Tydeman (Cambridge: University Press, 2001).

⁷⁴For a brief overview from the perspective of liturgical scholarship, see Eugenio Costa, *Tropes et séquences dans le cadre de la vie liturgique au moyen âge* (Rome: C.L.V.-Liturgiche, 1979). For access to the contents of the material edited in the *Corpus Troporum* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1975–) (8 vols. completed), cf., for example, *Liturgische Tropen. Referate zweier Colloquien des Corpus Troporum in München (1983) und Canterbury (1984)* (Munich: Arbee-Gesellschaft, 1985), or Wulf Arlt and Gunilla Björkqvall, eds., *Recherches nouvelles sur les tropes liturgiques* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1993). No “dues-paying” liturgical scholars are among the contributors. Explicit border crossings from music scholarship to liturgical scholarship are much more frequent than vice versa; cf., for example, Volker Schier, *Tropen zum Fest der Erscheinung des Herrn* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996); or William T. Flynn, *Medieval Music as Medieval Exegesis* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 1999); and Emma Hornby, *Medieval*

understanding of symbolism and what concepts of the liturgical event of communication are manifested therein? Precisely those attempts that need a differentiated liturgical-theological evaluation, i.e. attempts at celebratory re-presentation (*Vergegenwärtigung*) under circumstances that we today are inclined to problematize, contribute to the shaping of a theological criteriology.

In this sense, heortology can also learn from the criticism and countercriticism experienced in the epochs of Reformation and Enlightenment. Different than it is in the sphere of sacramental liturgy, investigation into the effects of modern-day reform efforts on the feasts is in a relatively early stage, although, for example, Susan Roll and Hans Förster have shown how much modern research is implicitly influenced by feast-critical and apologetic experiences.⁷⁵ In both respects, there seems to be a need to catch up—both in accessing the historical multiplicity of the actual feasts in the rhythm of time, and in the ideology-critical questioning back into our conceptions of the origin, unfolding, and character of the different feasts.

2. Fest Chori: Familiar Old and Newly Discovered Song Repertoires as Key to a Theology of Feasts

The object of heortology consists not just in the origins but also in the unfolding of the feasts. As for the meaning of the feasts, as actually experienced by most of their historical contemporaries, the singing presumably played a greater role than other liturgical texts such as the prayers. Nevertheless, in the liturgiological standard works, one finds an almost total neglect, especially of the liturgy of the hours, in studying the contents of the feasts, although the specific poetry of this or that liturgical tradition does come to the fore with special clarity in the propers of the feasts. One has only to think of the precision and accompanying discretion with which,

Liturgical Chant and Patristic Exegesis. Words and Music in the Second-Mode Tracts (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009).

⁷⁵ Cf. Roll, “Weihnachten,” 462; and Förster, *Anfänge*, 3: “this, for example, is the explanation of the attempt to draw the earliest possible witness to the feast of Christmas from the sources,

say, the Roman liturgy expresses the proper of Christian feasts in Old Testament texts, above all from the Psalms. And the liturgical act makes possible an appropriation beyond that: Christology and soteriology become one. The systematic-theological import of the liturgical use of the Bible has only begun to be reflected upon not only by dogmatics⁷⁶ but also by liturgics.⁷⁷ But not only is the theological richness of individual feasts to be gained from the propers of the feasts—including those of the eucharistic celebration—but a criteriology of liturgical hermeneutics is also to be gained therefrom. That is an especially good place to study the relationship between tradition and innovation. The prayer texts and above all the music texts that were taken over from Rome in the early Middle Ages were indeed handed on for centuries as quasi canonical corpora; but the core repertoire was apparently soon found to be irrelevant and constantly underwent updating by way of additions which did not replace the historical core but expanded it, sometimes overlaying it, while following another hermeneutic. The liturgiological evaluation of these processes has barely begun.⁷⁸ While the sources of the medieval Western tradition have for

and also from the history of the feast since, precisely in the context of the Anglo-Saxon reformation, there were attempts to do away with this beloved feast.”

⁷⁶ Of guiding importance can be the work of Josef Wohlmuth, *Jesu Weg – unser Weg. Kleine mystagogische Christologie* (Würzburg: Echter, 1992); also Alex Stock, in his “Poetische Dogmatik“ of up to eight volumes (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1995–), makes rich, but methodologically not always explicitly clear, use of liturgical texts.

⁷⁷ See Albert Gerhards, “Die Psalmen in der römischen Liturgie. Eine Bestandsaufnahme des Psalmgebrauchs in Stundengebet und Messfeier,” in *Der Psalter in Judentum und Christentum*, ed. Erich Zenger (Freiburg: Herder, 1998) 355-79; cf. Harald Buchinger, “Zur Hermeneutik liturgischer Psalmenverwendung. Methodologische Überlegungen im Schnittpunkt von Bibelwissenschaft, Patristik und Liturgiewissenschaft,” *Heiliger Dienst* 54 (2000) 193-222, in—partly critical—further development of the classical starting points of Balthasar Fischer und André Rose. Up to now a scientifically satisfactory monograph exists only for the psalms of Christ’s Ascension: Franz-Rudolf Weinert, *Christi Himmelfahrt. Neutestamentliches Fest im Spiegel alttestamentlicher Psalmen. Zur Entstehung des römischen Himmelfahrtsoffiziums* (St. Ottilien: EOS, 1987). From the perspective of musical scholarship, see Joan Halmo, *Antiphons for Paschal Triduum-Easter in the Medieval Office* (Ottawa: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1995).

⁷⁸ The research traditions shaped by the Reformation take hymnology more seriously as a genuine theological discipline than do Catholic liturgical scholarship, even if there are some

the most part long awaited their opening up,⁷⁹ the picture of the Oriental liturgies has in the last decades been substantially enlarged by hitherto unknown bodies of sources.⁸⁰ Of preeminent significance is above all the Georgian body of hymns that goes back to the Jerusalem liturgy of late antiquity.⁸¹ After the edition and subsequent translation⁸² of these “missing links,” we can recognize the actual origin of many pieces that have in part ended up in the Roman liturgy.⁸³ It is also to be expected that comparison, say, with the Armenian body of hymns, likewise influenced

notable exceptions, such as Ansgar Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte. Untersuchungen zum literarischen Text und liturgischen Kontext der Tagzeitenhymnen des Ambrosius von Mailand* (St. Ottilien: EOS, 1994); and Alexander Zerfass, *Mysterium mirabile. Poesie, Theologie und Liturgie in den Hymnen des Ambrosius von Mailand zu den Christusfesten des Kirchenjahres* (Tübingen: Francke, 2008). A good example is also the comprehensive source analysis in van Tongeren, *Exaltation*.

⁷⁹ As already indicated above, the material deficiency in liturgical scholarship goes along with a theological-hermeneutical reflection deficit in musicology; a deeper dialogue between the disciplines holds a huge amount of promise!

⁸⁰ Taft (“Liturgical Year”) has already pointed to this (at that time) newly-opened field of investigation.

⁸¹ El. Metreveli, C. Cankievi, and L. Hevsuriani, *Udzvelesi Iadgari* (Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1980).

⁸² Significantly large parts have been translated by Charles Renoux, *Les hymnes de la Résurrection. I: Hymnographie liturgique géorgienne. Textes du Sinai 18* (Paris: Cerf, 2000); idem, “L’hymnaire de saint-Sabas (V^e-VIII^e siècle): Le manuscrit géorgien H 2123. I. Du Samedi de Lazare à la Pentecôte,” *Patrologia Orientalis* 224=50.3 (2008); and Hans-Michael Schneider, *Lobpreis im rechten Glauben. Die Theologie der Hymnen an den Festen der Menschwerdung der alten Jerusalemer Liturgie im Georgischen Udzvelesi Iadgari* (Bonn: Borengässer, 2004). There is, in addition, a series of small, partly isolated contributions, e.g., Charles Renoux, “Les hymnes du Iadgari pour la fête de l’apparition de la croix le 7 mai,” *Studi sull’Oriente Cristiano* 4 (2000) 93-102; and Gaga Shurgaia, “L’esaltazione della croce nello Iadgari antico,” in *L’onagro maestro. Miscellanea di fuochi accesi*, ed. Rudy Favaro, Simone Cristoforetti, and Matteo Comparati (Venezia: Cafoscarina, 2004) 137-88.

⁸³ The most prominent example is the troparion *κατακόσμησον* that got taken up even in the medieval West. Important contributions on the meaning of the Iadgari come from, among others, Peter Jeffery, “The Earliest Oktōēchoi. The Role of Jerusalem and Palestine in the Beginnings of Modal Ordering,” in *The Study of Medieval Chant. Paths and Bridges, East and West*, ed. Peter Jeffery (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 2001) 147-209; and, most recently, Stig Simeon R. Frøyshov, “The Early Development of the Liturgical Eight-mode System in Jerusalem,” *Saint Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 51 (2007) 139-78.

by the Jerusalem tradition, will also reveal theological and liturgical lines of development that have become important in many traditions.⁸⁴

Interim Conclusion

These sketched-out considerations on the unfolding of the celebrations in the rhythm of time can be summed up in three tasks, as banal as they are pressing, for future heortological research. First, the representation of what comes from normative sources is to be enlarged by a change in perspective that directs its gaze not only “from the top down” but also “from the bottom up.” Second, the concrete historical diversity of the interplay between mimesis and anamnesis—and with that a fundamental heortological question—can be grasped only when not just the formative phases of the liturgy are investigated, but also the times of its unfolding, including also times of alienation and the constantly recurring need for reform. Third, the method of comparative liturgy cannot only contribute facets to the overall picture of the different feasts, for the consideration of Oriental traditions also throws a new light on the early history of common important feasts and their contents.

III. Continuity, Inculturation, and Breach: On Metaliturgical Questions of Principle

Our discussion of the open questions of origin has pointed out that recent research shows a clear tendency toward the late dating of feasts. Hypotheses about their early history are encountering increasing skepticism. When many questions of that kind remain open, it may be time to enter into a new level of the discussion. Where can we find the right questions? Is the lack of historical clarity on the origin of many feasts only on account of the lack of sources or are we also to reckon with qualitative waves of development? The first record of an historical

⁸⁴ Cf. Charles Renoux, “Le *Iadgari* géorgien et le *Šaraknoc* arménien,” *Revue des Études Arméniennes* n.s. 24 (1993) 89-112. How promising the investigation of the Armenian hymnal is can be shown by the first studies of Michael Daniel Findikyan, “Armenian Hymns of the Church and the Cross,” *St. Nersess Theological Review* 11 (2006) 63-105.

phenomenon is, of course, not to be confused with its actual origin. Nevertheless, in historical heortology fundamental liturgical questions seem to be unavoidable. To the extent that most ancient feasts are related in one way or another to a biblical basis, special attention needs to be paid to the interplay between biblical and liturgical hermeneutics, and that naturally raises the question of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

1. Jewish Origins, Pagan Inculturation or Original New Creations? Conditions for the Emergence of a Christian Cycle of Feasts

It is worthwhile to look back from the hermeneutical meta-level to the questions of origin mentioned above. Christian feasts do not, of course, emerge in a religious vacuum. But the relationship of Christianity to other religions seems, on closer examination, to be frequently more complex than one-track models would suggest. In studying the relationship to other religions, recent research manifests a clear withdrawal from diachronic and genetic explanations and a return to questions of synchronic and reciprocal influencing. Inquiry into strategies of reception, integration, and differentiation is made more difficult because of the fact that models of understanding for early history are always also determined by contemporary formulations of the question. How thoroughly do we really take ideological-critical account of the hermeneutic underlying our research in our evaluation of the significance of both Jewish and pagan feasts for the development of Christian liturgy? Under what conditions, generally speaking, are we to think of the adoption of Jewish or pagan feasts or elements of celebration? Do we, on the one hand, give sufficiently consequent consideration to the fact that Christianity, just like Judaism after the destruction of the Temple, had to find its new identity as a religion without cult? Is not, in this connection, the Christian reception of biblical motifs to be more clearly distinguished from its reaction to Jewish customs? And are not, on the other hand, history of religions continuity

models or the concept of “inculturation” of pagan feasts to be occasionally placed under suspicion of ideology?⁸⁵

The question about the conditions for the development of a circle of feasts does not, however, come just from outside. Inner Christian factors have also contributed to the fact that the development of a cycle of feasts has taken place in epochal steps. Surely contributing is the systematic unfolding and anti-heretical demarcation of theology and Christology;⁸⁶ and, above all, the significance of the Jerusalem liturgy being influenced by the pilgrim phenomenon can hardly be overestimated.⁸⁷ But for the unfolding of a circle of feasts, just how constitutive is the unique interpenetration of space and time and the interplay of mimesis and anamnesis that it makes possible? This question has far-reaching consequences: Does it make any sense to be

⁸⁵ Even though liturgical development can never be considered apart from its manifold and changing cultural conditions, the phenomenon of an explicit inculturation seems to have been first noted in the waning years of late antiquity. As an offensive strategy we find the integration of pagan cult phenomena for the first time in the Anglo mission of Gregory I. On the famous *Ep.* 11, 56 (*Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina* 140 A, 961f, ed. Norberg), see, for example, Harald Buchinger, “Gregor der Grosse und die abendländische Liturgiegeschichte: Schlüssel- oder Identifikationsfigur?,” in *Psallite sapienter*, ed. István Verbényi (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2008) 113-56, esp. 116f. As an element of scholarly exposition, one can find a history of religions hypothesis in the Venerable Bede (*De temporum ratione* 15 [*Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina* 123 B, 331, 36-41, ed. Jones]) on the meaning of the word “Easter.” Not until the twelfth century, in a gloss to Dionysius bar Salibi († 1171), was the introduction of the feast of Christmas explicitly grounded for the first time on a history of religions argument; cf. Wallraff, *Christus*, 174, with reference to the edition by Josephus Simonius Assemanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana. . . . 2: De scriptoribus syris monophysiti (sic)* (Rome: Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, 1721; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1975) 164.

⁸⁶ Cf. the work of Roll, *Toward the Origins of Christmas*, 168-211; and Martin F. Connell, “Heresy and Heortology in the Early Church. Arianism and the Emergence of the Triduum,” *Worship* 72 (1998) 117-40.

⁸⁷ The direction of the influencing was, to be sure, also here no one-way street; cf. Paul F. Bradshaw, “The Influence of Jerusalem on Christian Liturgy,” in *Jerusalem. Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Lee I. Levine (New York: Continuum, 1999) 251-59.

searching for a pre-history of many feasts before the fourth century? And how does the inner-Christian motivation relate to interaction with other religions?⁸⁸

Even if the “Constantinian turn” is to be judged in a differentiated way⁸⁹ and, in contrast to oversimplifying discontinuity models, elements of continuity are to be emphasized also in the liturgy,⁹⁰ one must still remember that, precisely in the development of a cycle of feasts, the elements of discontinuity clearly dominate. Except for the Christian Paschal celebration and its Pentecost, it is known that there is no sure evidence for a single Christian feast before the fourth century, while, towards the end of the same century, a fully unfolded liturgical year with several circles of feasts seems to have spread across the whole Christian world. On the one hand, a process like that naturally needs to have time, but it is, on the other hand, a qualitative step with fundamental hermeneutical presuppositions and consequences.

2. *From Exegetical to Hermeneutical Hermeneutics: The Rise of a Christian Concept of Feast*

No single idea has so deeply stamped the liturgical theology of the last decades than that of the “Paschal mystery” as taken up by Vatican II.⁹¹ Encompassing Old- and New-Testament

⁸⁸ The suppression of the Bar-Kochba revolt in the Second Jewish War and the subsequent prohibition against the circumcised entering Jerusalem meant a maximal discontinuity for the “Jewish-Christian” community in Jerusalem. In view of this, does it make any sense at all to ask about the continuation of “Jewish-Christian” traditions in the developed liturgical practices of the “heathen-Christian” church of Jerusalem in the fourth, fifth, and even later centuries, as has been happening in recent times?

⁸⁹ After Klaus Martin Girardet, *Die konstantinische Wende. Voraussetzungen und geistige Grundlagen der Religionspolitik Konstantins des Grossen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006). From the perspective of liturgical scholarship, for example, Andreas Heinz, “Die Bedeutung der Zeit Konstantins (306–337) für die Liturgie der Kirche,” in *Konstantin der Grosse. Der Kaiser und die Christen – die Christen und der Kaiser*, ed. Michael Fiedrowicz, Gerhard Krieger, and Winfried Weber (Trier: Paulinus, 2006, 2007) 139-82.

⁹⁰ Cf. Bradshaw, *Search*, 211-30.

⁹¹ Cf. the foundational study of Irmgard Pahl, “Das Paschamysterium in seiner zentralen Bedeutung für die Gestalt christlicher Liturgie,” *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 46 (1996) 71-93, presented at the 1995 Congress of Societas Liturgica [English: *Studia Liturgica* 26 (1996) 16-38, with a response by Willy Rordorf, *ibid.*, 39-48; French: *La Maison-Dieu* 204 (1995) 51-70, with Rordorf response, *ibid.*, 71-82].

salvation history, while being christologically centered, it was able to express all this in one concept and to put a name on a theological principle both of sacramental celebration and of worship in the rhythm of time. It is known that this formulation is already found in the oldest extant feast sermon, Melito's homily on the Pasch.⁹² But only rarely does there seem to be an awareness that one is there dealing in the first instance with a concept of exegetical hermeneutics. As Basil Studer has elaborated, in the second century (e.g., by Justin), the mystery concept was already being transferred from the Christian hermeneutic of the Old Testament to the realities of the New Testament; but it wasn't until the fourth century that its application to the Christian feasts and rites became common in theology.⁹³ The germ of this development is indeed present in the oldest accessible witnesses of Christian feast theology; but its decisive theological achievement comes about only in the third century in the "double exegesis" above all of Origen, who not only applies the methods of his biblical interpretation to the liturgy, but also engages in explicit hermeneutical reflections on this transference which, ultimately, makes him the model for practically the whole of premodern interpretation of the liturgy.⁹⁴ In his footsteps walked even authors like Theodore of Mopsuestia, who remained quite reserved about the allegorical interpretation of the Bible.⁹⁵ When we, as heirs of the patristic renewal of theology in the middle

⁹² On the patristic references from Melito, *pass.* 2; 11; 56; 65 (Oxford Early Christian Texts 2, 10; 6, 65; 30, 396; 34, 448, ed. Hall); cf. Buchinger, *Pascha*, 2:437f.

⁹³ Basil Studer, "Der christliche Gottesdienst, eine Mysterienfeier?," in *L'adattamento culturale della liturgia. Metodi e modelli. Atti del IV congresso internazionale di liturgia, Roma, Pontificio Istituto Liturgico, 6-10 Maggio 1991*, ed. Ildebrando Scicolone (Rome: S. Anselmo, 1993) 27-45, esp. 30f.

⁹⁴ Basil Studer, "L'esegesi doppia in Origene," *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 10 (1993) 427-37; and idem, "Die doppelte Exegese bei Origenes," in *Origeniana Sexta. Origène et la bible / Origen and the Bible. Actes du Colloquium Origenianum Sextum Chantilly, 30 août-3 septembre 1993*, ed. Gilles Dorival and Alain Le Boulluec (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Peeters, 1995) 303-23, repr. in his *Mysterium caritatis. Studien zur Exegese und zur Trinitätslehre in der Alten Kirche* (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 1999) 37-66.

⁹⁵ Studer, "Der christliche Gottesdienst," 35; but see also the emphasis on the hermeneutical differences in René Bornert, *Les commentaires byzantins de la divine liturgie du VII^e au XV^e*

of the twentieth century, are recipients of a theology of liturgy that is stamped by the terminology and hermeneutics of the great mystagogues of the later fourth century, we should not forget the achievement of transformation from exegetical to liturgical hermeneutics that is presupposed in that theology of liturgy.

This hermeneutical transformation is to be found not only on the liturgy-interpretive meta-level. Even when one climbs down from the theological meta-level to the concrete material-liturgical level a significant change in terminology in the older patristics can be identified. In Christian literature, at least into the middle of the third century, the biblical concept of Pasch—the term of the oldest and for a long time only Christian feast—designates in the first instance the biblical or Jewish reality,⁹⁶ and only from the middle of the second century does it begin to get successively transferred to the Easter celebration of the church.⁹⁷ In both the Greek and Latin sources it is first related only to the fast and thus to the grieving phase of the Christian celebration of Easter, which presumably reveals the remaining traces of an original, even if polemical, connection with the Jewish Pesach in the Quartodeciman celebration of the Pasch. This terminological usage continues with astonishing precision right up to the sources of the

siècle (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1966) 47-82; Enrico Mazza, *La mistagogia. Una teologia della liturgia in epoca patristica* (Rome: C.L.V.-Liturgiche, 1988, 1996); and Reinhard Messner, "Zur Hermeneutik allegorischer Liturgieerklärung in Ost und West," *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 115 (1993) 284-319; 415-34, especially 286-309.

⁹⁶ In Melito, "Pascha" never means the Christian feast of Easter but always the biblical Pascha; the same, for example, holds true for Justin. Origen can, of course, often interpret this in the transferred sense and relate it metaphorically to the Christians; liturgical references to the Eucharist in these passages are not unusual. In contrast, he speaks of the Easter celebration of the Christians just one single time, in *Contra Celsum* 8, 22 (Sources Chrétiennes 150, 222, 2, ed. Borret). *Hom. 12, 13 in Jer.* is ambivalent (Sources Chrétiennes 238, 46, 25f, ed. Nautin), where he is talking mostly about the taking over or imitation of Jewish practices. Cf. Buchinger, *Pascha*, 2:412-38, especially 421f.

⁹⁷ On the following, see Buchinger, *Pascha*, 2:413-16, with reference to sources and older literature. The specifically Christian use of the concept is at first related to the fast and thus to the grieving phase of the Christian celebration of the Paschal celebration (an indication of the

fourth century (Eusebius, Epiphanius);⁹⁸ and in the fifth century it influences, for example, the oldest liturgical sources of Jerusalem provenience,⁹⁹ even if with Cyprian its meaning is already shifting for the first time to the “joyous day of the Pasch” (*dies laetitiae paschae*)¹⁰⁰ and with time becomes changed so much that Ambrose—almost reversing the concept formulated by Tertullian—can say that the fifty days of Pentecost are all to be celebrated like the day of the Pasch.¹⁰¹

The extent to which the idea of Pentecost goes back directly to Jewish influence should, according to Leonhard, be seriously doubted. The earliest records of it as found in the Acts of Paul or in Tertullian have an independent Christian profile and presuppose a dominical Paschal

original and probably polemical connection with the Jewish feast and its date in Quartodeciman practice?) and shifted only gradually to the whole Easter celebration.

⁹⁸ Documentation in Buchinger, *Pascha*, 2:415f. Comparing the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius with the language used in its translation by Rufinus gives an indication of the softening up of the terminology in the course of the fourth century: the version of Rufinus speaks (in *Hist. eccl.* 5, 23, 2 [Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller 2/1, 488, 19–22; 489, 16f, ed. Schwartz] of the *dominicum paschae* (!) *celebrare mysterium*, where Eusebius says only τοῦ κυρίου μυστήριον, while he continues to use the word “Pascha“ as he goes on to speak of the “conclusion of the Paschal fast”! On the *Didascalica* cf. also Auf der Maur, *Osterfeier*, 97: “Moreover, the word Pascha means no longer just the full fast and the night celebration from the 14 to 15 Nisan, but the expanded Paschal celebration, with the half-fast days of the preceding week (that then later led to the formation of Holy Week).”

⁹⁹ The Armenian lectionary still calls Holy Week the “Week of the Paschal Fast” (cf. note 59). But at the same time, this same terminology, “Pasch”—with its primitive Christian connotations of fasting and grieving—is not only used for Holy Thursday which is described as “Thursday of the Old Pasch” (§38: *Patrologia Orientalis* 168 = 36/2, 264 [126], 18 Renoux), but “Pasch” continues to be used in an undifferentiated way for Easter and its octave (§52ff.: *ibid.*, 326 [188], 13f). In Egeria, the adjective *paschalis* still refers to the celebrations of Holy Week (cf. Egeria, *Pereg.* 30, 1 [Fontes Christiani 20, 256, 12, ed. Röwekamp, Franceschini, and Weber).

¹⁰⁰ Cyprian, *Ep.* 21, 2, 1 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 3B, 112, 33, ed. Diercks).

¹⁰¹ Cf. Buchinger, *Pascha*, 2:415, with reference to Ambrose, *Luc.* 8, 25 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 14, 307, 277, ed. Adriaen); in Tertullian it was just the opposite, cf. *Bapt.* 19, 2 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 1, 294, 14-16, ed. Borleffs). For discussion of the understanding of the concept in Augustine, see Basil Studer, “Zum Triduum Sacrum bei Augustinus von Hippo,” in *La celebrazione del Triduo Pasquale*, ed. Scicolone, 273-86, esp. 278.

celebration.¹⁰² Then, in its theological unfolding from the third century, one finds frequent recourse to Old Testament symbolism and metaphors—a process of theological reflection, but not of liturgical tradition.¹⁰³ Even the relatively common concept of “feast” is used by Melito in a purely historical or exegetical way, and the very differentiated biblical theology of feast, as in Origen, for example, is used mostly in a secondary way and applied in a derived sense to a biblical theology of Christian celebration in the rhythm of time.¹⁰⁴ Also, in the history of the theological interpretation of the Day of the Lord—without prejudice to the controversies about the historical lines of development¹⁰⁵—and from the earliest witnesses of the second century until far into the imperial church, the hermeneutical refraction of biblical motifs can be observed.¹⁰⁶

Thus the unfolding of the ancient church’s understanding of feast was a hermeneutically significant process. Accordingly this raises anew the question: Were the Christians, for a longer time than commonly assumed, aware that their celebrations were to be understood neither in unbroken continuity with biblical (i.e., primarily Old Testament) customs nor in analogy to the religious feasts of the world around them?

In the development of the Christian theology of feast in the first centuries, one finds a differentiated interplay of continuity and transformation. Up to the beginning of the third century,

¹⁰² Leonhard, *The Jewish Pesach*, 159-88. That Pentecost was not so commonly and originally widespread, as widely assumed, has been demonstrated by G. Rouwhorst, “The Origins and Evolution of Early Christian Pentecost,” *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001) 309-22.

¹⁰³ Cf. Buchinger, *Pascha*, 2:812-17.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:892-907, with references (*ibid.*, 894) to Melito, etc.

¹⁰⁵ For concise information on the most important positions of recent research, see, e.g., Bradshaw, *Search*, 178f.

¹⁰⁶ Hermeneutically complex are above all those—in part very early—texts that call the Lord’s Day the first or the eighth day and frequently contrast it with the Sabbath as the seventh day; cf. the still foundational work of Willy Rordorf, *Der Sonntag. Geschichte des Ruhe- und Gottesdiensttages im ältesten Christentum* (Zürich: Zwingli, 1962), as well as the collection of texts, *idem*, *Sabbat und Sonntag in der Alten Kirche* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972).

biblical—that means at this time mostly Old Testament—ideas and concepts were seldom, if at all, applied to Christian institutions in an objectively linguistic way, and where this does happen, one is conscious of the hermeneutical discontinuity. Then, later in the third century, after the relationship of exegetical and liturgical hermeneutics is explicitly reflected upon, the application of biblical images and motifs quickly becomes self-evident, even though traces of the old sensitivity remain visible for a long time.¹⁰⁷

The biblical interpretation of the Christian construction of time is part of the picture of a cultic reinterpretation of other liturgical concepts in the course of late antiquity: the reinterpretation of space (with the typological interpretation of the Temple and, consequent upon that, the resulting sacralization of church space and its furnishings which has its breakthrough in Eusebius's famous church dedication sermon in Tyre¹⁰⁸); the reinterpretation of the liturgical roles and ministries (especially with—in Origen's allegorical exegesis of the Old Testament cult institutions—the beginning of the establishment of a cultically-influenced understanding of Christian office, whose terminology and theology at first quite obviously is connected neither to the cultic institutions of the Old Testament Bible nor to those of the pagan ambiance¹⁰⁹); and, also of course, the reinterpretation of time itself. Similar to Christian theology's successive adoption of biblical concepts and cultic ideas about "temple," "altar," "sacrifice," "priest," etc., when we come to the end of the process, the central heortological terms "feast," "Pasch," etc., were no longer applied in their transferred sense (typologically, allegorically or metaphorically)

¹⁰⁷ A flat contrasting of pre-Constantinian and imperial-church theology would fall far short of the mark because many developments already had their beginning in the first half of the third century.

¹⁰⁸ *Hist. eccl.* 10, 4 (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller 2/2, 862-83, ed. Schwartz).

¹⁰⁹ On the ecclesiological use of biblical cult terminology and institutions, cf. (the materially extremely rich) Giuseppe Sgherri, *Chiesa e Sinagoga nelle opere di Origene* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1982) 194-243; 378-427; and F. Ledegang, *Mysterium Ecclesiae. Images of the Church and its Members in Origen* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001) 310-39.

as biblical categories of interpretation of Christian realities, but in an immediate, linguistically objective way. But at this point it should not be forgotten that, first, we are dealing with the result of a hermeneutically complex process which, second, represents a qualitative step in the development of Christian liturgical theology, and that, third, exegetical hermeneutics was godfather to the liturgical.

Even if these sketched-out lines of development seem to be clear, we find in heortology a rewarding field for detailed investigations into those concrete paths of tradition and transformation that the feast-theology of the theologians, mystagogues, and preachers of the time of the imperial church¹¹⁰ have brought the demanding theology of Christian existence down to the level of community comprehension and sacramental actualization.¹¹¹ Hermeneutical sensitivity is just as necessary for this as is philological spade-work on the body of patristic homilies, and not just on those feasts that, at the end of the fourth century, can already look back upon a certain tradition of celebration.

3. Primacy of Practice over Theory? On the Relationship of Celebration and Theology

In the early history of Christian feasts, not only is the relationship of biblical and liturgical hermeneutics worthy of profound attention; genuine Christian concepts can also be worthy of a fundamental liturgical examination.

¹¹⁰ Exemplary is the investigation of Rexer, *Festtheologie*.

¹¹¹ In Paschal theology, Eusebius, the “grandchild” student of Origen, is clearly identified as the heir of Origenian interpretations as well as their transformer, when in *Pasch.* 7 (PG 24, 701) the metaphorical Paschal celebration of the Christians takes place no longer, as it does in Origen, *hom. 10, 3 in Gen.* (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller. Origenes Werke 6, 97, 8f., ed. Baehrens) through one’s daily participation in the liturgy of the word, but via one’s Sunday participation in the Eucharist; cf. Harald Buchinger, “Jüdische Feste als Herausforderung christlicher Theologie und Liturgie: Eine Spurensuche in der Paschatheologie palästinischer Autoren,” in *Dialog oder Monolog? Zur liturgischen Beziehung zwischen Judentum und Christentum*, ed. Albert Gerhards and Hans Hermann Henrix (Freiburg: Herder, 2004) 184-207, esp. 201f. Presumably, numerous examples of such sacramentalizing of theological motifs can be found in homilies from the time of the imperial church.

about a *triduum*.¹¹⁸ The second is that in the surviving liturgical sources a small anomaly in the liturgy of the hours can be identified: whereas, namely, Good Friday and Holy Saturday have their own psalms in the manuscripts from the tenth century, Holy Thursday does indeed have its own antiphons, but uses psalms of the everyday weekly psalter.¹¹⁹ Other than this, all the regulations since the codification of the Roman liturgy in the early Middle Ages have to do with the special nature of Holy Thursday through Holy Saturday. Nowhere, as far as I can see, is there any mention of a *triduum* in the liturgical sources, not even in the patristic sense.¹²⁰ The extent to which Ambrose and Augustine wanted to speak of an actual liturgical principle is doubtful¹²¹ (for Ambrose's Milan there seems to be no proof that the celebrations of Holy Week had already been established and set up according to the chronology of the Passion.)¹²² It is, in any case, perfectly

¹¹⁸ Robert Cabié, *La lettre du pape Innocent I^{er} à Décentius de Gubbio (19 Mars 416)* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires; Bureau de la R.H.E., 1973) 24-26; Innocent speaks circumspectly only about the fast; he says nothing positive about the liturgy of these two days, but only that the *sacramenta* are not celebrated on them. The reconciliation of the penitents, following the Roman custom, takes place on the *quinta feria ante Pascha* (ibid., 28, 113-16).

¹¹⁹ *Corpus Antiphonalium Officii*, ed. Renatus-Joannes Hesbert (Rome: Herder, 1963–1979) 1:166-69; 2:302-5, n.72. Structurally, however, Holy Thursday with its three nocturns, each with three psalms, is matched up with the two following days; cf. Halmo, *Antiphons*, 32f; 132-35.

¹²⁰ The title of Ordo Romanus 23—*De sacro triduo ante pascha* (Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense 24, 269 Andrieu)—comes apparently from the editor. The need to sort out the rubrical implications of a liturgical-theologically nonsensical double Triduum was noticed only much later, and was a development that was properly corrected in the twentieth century; cf. Balthasar Fischer, “Vom einen Pascha-Triduum zum Doppel-Triduum der heutigen Rubriken,” *Paschatis Sollemnia. Studien zu Osterfeier und Osterfrömmigkeit*, ed. Balthasar Fischer and Johannes Wagner (Freiburg: Herder, 1959) 146-56.

¹²¹ Augustine is already familiar with a passion-chronological Paschal celebration unfolded over several days; nevertheless, Studer (“Zum Triduum Sacrum,” 277 on *Ep.* 55, 14, 24 [Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 34, 195, 13f, ed. Goldbacher]), affirms: “But this does not have to do with the external observance of the Triduum. He was much more interested in the spiritual meaning of the cross, the repose in the grave, and the resurrection.”

¹²² The pericope notes collected by Josef Schmitz (*Gottesdienst im altchristlichen Mailand. Eine liturgiewissenschaftliche Untersuchung über Initiation und Messfeier während des Jahres zur Zeit des Bischofs Ambrosius [† 397]* [Cologne: Hanstein, 1975] 323-41) for the weeks before Easter speak more against than for a passion-chronology developed celebration of Holy Week; cf. also Zerfass, *Mysterium*, 247f: “But in contrast to the later and current understanding of the

clear that this theologoumenon is of purely literary origin. In his fifth Homily on Exodus, Origen comments on the “way of three days” (Exod 5:3 in the light of Hos 6:2): “The first day is the Passion of the Redeemer, and the second, that on which he descended into the underworld; but the third is that of the Resurrection.”¹²³ To be sure, the text is preserved only in the Latin translation of Rufinus from the end of the fourth century; the motif, however, is for [Origen’s] train of thought so constitutive that it was with certainty already an integral element of the Greek original. Now there is no doubt that the Easter celebration of the church at the time of Origen was not yet spread over several days.¹²⁴ Thus it is that the idea of a “*triduum sacrum*” came up originally as a purely literary theologoumenon more than a century earlier than the liturgical unfolding of the celebration of Easter according to the chronology of the Passion.

A further example of the precedence of theology over liturgical practice is the celebration of baptism at Easter. Thanks to an influential article by Paul Bradshaw, and in contrast to an earlier widespread cliché, it has now become generally accepted that Easter is by no means to be regarded as the time for baptism. From the first three centuries, clear indications for that are known only from North Africa and Rome.¹²⁵ Long before this practice begins to win out in the fourth century, Origen (again) is developing a differentiated Paschal baptismal theology. Baptism is not only a key to his theology of the Pasch understood as *διάβασις*; his treatise “On the Passover” contains a whole series of allusions to the celebration of initiation (among them

triduum sacrum there is no liturgical rite or rubric hidden behind this expression. There is no indication of an actual Good Friday liturgy after the Jerusalem model.”

¹²³ *Hom 5, 2 in Ex.* (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller. Origenes Werke 6, 186, ed. Baehrens); Origen goes on to develop this thought in terms of baptismal theology; cf. Buchinger, *Pascha*, 2:790-96.

¹²⁴ Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8, 22 (Sources Chrétiennes 150, 222, 1-3, ed. Borret) gives an indirect indication, where, along with the weekly celebrations of Friday and the Lord’s Day, only Pascha and Pentecost are mentioned as annual feasts.

presumably the oldest reference to a baptismal anointing in the Palestinian sphere).¹²⁶ Origen—who also with his repeated recourse to the baptismal theology of Romans 6 is an early witness for theological tendencies that only later were to win general acceptance¹²⁷—thus unfolds a Paschal theology of baptism, even though it was presumably a long time before Easter became a time for baptism in his community.

These examples of core concepts and central elements of celebration of the Christian Easter liturgy should suffice to register fundamental doubts about the current conviction that liturgical theology reflects and unfolds as a rule preceding liturgical experience. This way of asking the question turns our customary perspective upside down. But it grows out of impartial work on the sources of the pre-Nicene “prehistory” of the unfolded liturgy and out of inquiry into its relationship to the sources from the time of the imperial church. In any case, it could have far-reaching methodological consequences for inquiry into the origin and early history of feasts and their elements of celebration. Scholars have commonly assumed that literary proofs for theological motifs should allow one to conclude to a corresponding liturgical practice. But if that assumption should turn out to be a fundamental heortological fallacy, numerous liturgical-historical hypothetical constructions would then become apriori superfluous. But on the other hand, the most innovative contributions of the more recent research could then be integrated into a comprehensive theory, thus a “synopsis/*Gesamtschau*” of the early history of the church year,

¹²⁵ Paul F. Bradshaw, “‘Diem baptismo sollemniorum’: Initiation and Easter in Christian Antiquity,” in *EΥΛΟΓΗΜΑ*, ed. E. Carr et al. (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 1993) 41-51; repr. in Johnson, ed., *Living Water*, 137-47.

¹²⁶ Harald Buchinger, “Towards the Origins of Paschal Baptism: The Contribution of Origen,” *Studia Liturgica* 35 (2005) 12-31.

¹²⁷ Cf., e.g., Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation. Their Evolution and Interpretation*, rev. ed. (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2007) 72f [cf. the first edition, 1999]. It is, of course, problematic to use writings from Origen’s Caesarean period as indications of the Alexandrian praxis of his time. On Romans 6 in Origen, see the detailed work of Robert

without overburdening historically problematical primitive witnesses or having to harmonize their occasional contradictions. We name here the brilliant contributions of Thomas Talley on the significance of chronological speculation for the origins of Christmas (and the memorials connected with it in the calendar), as we do also the significant observations of Gabriele Winkler on the history of Epiphany motifs, and not least the numerous elements of patristic Paschal theology that have influenced the unfolded liturgical ordinances of late antiquity and the Middle Ages. The dating of the development of a liturgical year beyond Pasch and Pentecost in the time of the imperial church would then be more than an agnostic resignation in the face of the complexity of mutually-contradictory hypotheses. In terms of cultural- , church- , and theological history, it would perhaps even be plausible.

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