Paschal oration was already a notable genre in the second century CE. Eusebius of Caesarea attests that Melito wrote two books on the paschal feast. The *Chronicon Paschale*, a Byzantine document of the seventh century, affirms that one of Melito’s contemporaries, Apollinaris of Hierapolis (fl. 160–180), was also the author of a paschal homily. Eusebius additionally avows that Clement of Alexandria composed a book entitled *On the Passover* at the express supplication of some of his friends demanding an exposition of the ancient tradition of the Elders or Presbyters of the early Church on this topic. Eusebius affirms that Clement alluded to Melito and Irenaeus in the document, perhaps assessing them among the Elders (or at least preserving their traditions). This remarkable observation makes the connection between the Asiatic and Alexandrian traditions and, moreover, between these traditions and the early tradition of the Elders. While Pseudo-Hippolytus was most likely an Asiatic author, Origen, too, has to be added to this ancestral tradition. I must also emphasize the idea that these early traditions of the Elders are in strong connection with Jewish Christianity and the Second Temple traditions which Jewish Christianity

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2 The *Chronicon Paschale* preserves a few sentences of his text (PG 92:80C–D).
4 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.13.9. Thus, it is also plausible that Irenaeus wrote something on this subject.
preserved. From a socio-cultural perspective, this position is accepted since Judaism represented an ancient and influential reality in both Alexandria and Asia Minor at the time when Christianity flourished in these areas and generated its earliest paschal liturgical formulas. While Alexandrian Judaism represents the environment which created the Septuagint and many biblical and extra-biblical writings, Asia Minor was also the place of an early and active Jewish presence.

The main conceptual instruments I will employ, in order to unravel and reconstruct the early paschal Christology, consist of a series of divine titles commonly ascribed to the God of the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature. Thus, Christ’s divine dimension is frequently connoted as the Lord of Glory (Kabod), the King of the [Heavenly] Hosts (Yahweh Sabaoth), the Divine Image, the Son of Man, the Logos, the Demiurge, and/or the Heavenly Anthropos. Each of these titles indicates human-like features, and is a part of the pre-Nicene christological language which shares common elements with Biblical parlance. The logical interconnections between the aforementioned titles represent a less investigated topic in modern scholarship. Among them, the figure of the Heavenly Anthropos is one of the most widely discussed concepts which may subsume a few other functions; the Divine Image, the Son of Man, and the Demiurge act as particular aspects of such a rich theoretical category.

The initial chapter of this first part will be dedicated to the presence of this enigmatic figure in the earliest paschal materials (specifically in the works of Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Methodius), while the second chapter will try to find the roots of this figure in Second Temple traditions and other Hellenistic contexts. We will see that the Heavenly Anthropos figure in itself is very diverse, and implies a large spectrum of ontological statuses and functions, the phrase denoting a wide variety of conceptions from a Platonic paradigm to quasi-angelic and quasi-divine characters. At the end of this investigation, one may conclude that the Paschal Anthropos reflects a special Heavenly Anthropos trend, namely, one rooted in the

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8 Paul R. Treilco affirms that “Jewish communities were established in a number of cities in Asia Minor by 139–8 BCE.” See his Jewish Communities in Asia Minor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 6.