The two paradigms of *eikonik* soteriology assume two distinct christological titles and functions. While the *eikonik* soteriology of re-creation envisions Christ as a Demiurge, the *eikonik* soteriology of liberation portrays him as a Divine Warrior. Since we have already investigated the Demiurge title and function in the previous chapter, this chapter will focus on “Divine Warrior Christology” and its corresponding soteriology, which in its own way represents a theorization of considerable complexity. An obvious presence in such ancient materials as *Lugale*, the *Anzû Epic*, *Enûma Eliš*, the Baʿal Cycle, the Kumarbi Cycle, and Hesiod’s *Theogony*, the mythical narrative formula of the Divine Warrior (also known as the combat myth) opens a new chapter in the *Chaoskampf* materials of the Hebrew Bible. In all these texts the Divine Warrior fights the primordial chaos and saves his favourite people, either his divine family—as in the aforementioned Mesopotamian, Canaanite, and Greek materials—or, as in Scripture, his people, Israel. In its own way, the Hebrew Bible seems to undertake a notable turn regarding the saved characters—from gods to the people of Israel, therefore from the divine realm to the human existence. As a Divine Warrior, Yahweh is no longer the savior of his divine court or the savior of his celestial family but particularly the rescuer of his holy people.

Nevertheless, the narrative formula of the divine combat equally appears in the earliest Christian documents dedicated to the festival of Pascha. For instance, in his *Peri Pascha*, Origen develops an allegorical interpretation of the Passover report of Exodus 12. In his interpretation, he understands the biblical story as a pre-figuration of Christ’s combat with Death for the salvation of humankind and a pre-figuration of the eschatological return of the whole humanity to the celestial Father. The story regarding Christ’s combat with Death certainly embodies the Christian expression of what Frank M. Cross labelled, “the myth of the divine warrior.” Origen’s discourse also

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incorporates the idea that Christ—at the same time serving as warrior and sacrificial lamb—offers himself to be consumed at the Easter celebration.\(^2\)

The author avers, in *Pasch.* 30–31, that every participant in the paschal Eucharist should assume a priestly condition, then sacrifice and eat the invisible, intelligible, and mysterious body of the Logos-Christ:

> [S]ome partake (μεταλαμβάνουσιν) of its head, other of its hands, others of its breast, others of its entrails, still others of its thighs, and some even of its feet, where there is not much flesh, each partaking of it according to his own capacity (ἐκὰτ’ αὐτὸν μεταλαμβάνοντος δύναμιν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ). Thus it is that we partake of a part of the true Lamb according to our capacity to partake of the Word of God (μεταλαμβάνοντες τοῦ λόγου τοῦ θεοῦ). There are some who partake of the head, if you wish, of each part of the head, for example, of the ears so that, having ears, they can hear his words. Those who taste of the eyes will see clearly; lest you dash your foot against a stone. Those who taste the hands are the workers who no longer have drooping hands which are closed against giving.\(^3\)

It is with these new ideas in mind that the present chapter will argue that the pre-Nicene paschal writings created a new and distinct paradigm of the divine combat formula. Three particular paschal documents, ascribed to Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Pseudo-Chrysostom, envision the feast as the divine sacrifice of Christ’s self-offering. And yet, since the texts redefine the Divine Warrior’s nature as noetic, the feast becomes the consumption of Christ’s noetic body, an ingestion which dissolves the boundaries between the human and divine condition, while transforming the human individual into a quasi-divine being.

1. **Melito of Sardis: the Paschal Christ as Divine Warrior**

A few verses of Melito’s *Peri Pascha* witness the presence of the Divine Warrior story. Although the text does not include the idea of noetic consumption of Christ’s flesh, the language of the divine combat is already evident, for instance, in *PP* 102. Its context, especially *PP* 100–102, represents a short history of salvation in itself: Jesus, as heavenly Lord (Κύριος), discovers on earth his creation, or humanity, enslaved by death and suffering. Christ puts on humanity (ἄνθρωπος) as a garment, assuming the suffering and the death of the enslaved. He liberates afterwards the condemned human being (ὁ

\(^2\) See *PP* 46–49.

\(^3\) Origen, *Pasch.* 30.15–31.11.