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ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS: A SOURCE OF ORIGEN'S PHILOSOPHY?*

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RÉSUMÉ. Alexandre d'Aphrodise et Origène sont deux philosophes et professeurs de philosophie semi-contemporains qui composaient le même genre d'œuvres. Origène était un philosophe chrétien, ancien élève d'Ammonius Saccas, le maître de Plotin. Il est très probable qu'Origène connaissait les écrits d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise, qui étaient lus à l'école de Plotin, et fut inspiré par eux. Beaucoup d'éléments soutiennent ma thèse. Par exemple, le *Traité des Principes* d'Origène dans sa structure est probablement emprunté à l'œuvre homonyme d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise ; l'expression ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν est utilisée pour la première fois – ce qui est très intéressant – justement par Alexandre et par Origène, qui très probablement la transféra du débat philosophique sur l'éternité du cosmos à la théologie trinitaire chrétienne ; la notion d'hypostase comme « substance individuelle », qui devient technique chez Origène et exercera une influence énorme sur la théologie trinitaire chrétienne, était présente dans le Moyen Platonisme, ainsi que chez des auteurs médicaux du Haut Empire qui très probablement inspirèrent Origène, et peut-être chez Alexandre aussi ; Origène modifie la doctrine stoïcienne de la mixtion dans un sens qui s'approche d'Alexandre et de sa critique de cette doctrine ; la conception de ὕλη/ὑποκείμενον et εἶδος chez Origène révèle des influences manifestes d'Aristote et peut-être d'Alexandre ; la présentation et la réfutation de la pensée déterministe stoïcienne sont les mêmes chez Alexandre et Origène ; la théorie de Dieu comme Intellect et toute la caractérisation de Dieu a des parallèles étonnants chez Alexandre et Origène ; la doctrine de l'âme et celle des Idées aussi ont des ressemblances impressionnantes chez les deux philosophes. La relation d'Origène à la philosophie (qui fait l'objet d'un débat critique) est éclaircie à la lumière des nouvelles contributions de la présente recherche.

SUMMARY. *Alexander of Aphrodisias and Origen are two semi-contemporary philosophers and teachers of philosophy who composed the same kinds of works. Origen*

* I am very grateful to the anonymous readers of *Philosophie Antique* for their helpful suggestions and to Jean-Baptiste Gourinat and Michel Narcy for receiving my essay in this prestigious Journal.

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was a Christian philosopher, a disciple of Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus' teacher. It is very probable that Origen knew Alexander of Aphrodisias' works, which were read at the school of Plotinus, and drew inspiration from them. Many clues support my hypothesis. For instance, Origen's Περὶ Ἀρχῶν in its structure was probably inspired by Alexander's homonymous work. The expression ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, very interestingly, was used for the first time exactly by Alexander and Origen; the latter very probably imported it from the philosophical debate on the eternity of the world into Christian Trinitarian theology. The notion of hypostasis as «individual substance», which becomes technical in Origen and will exert an enormous influence on Christian Trinitarian theology, was present in Middle Platonists and medical theorists of the early imperial age who are very likely to have inspired Origen, and possibly also in Alexander. Also, Origen seems to have modified the Stoic doctrine of mixture in a way that comes closer to Alexander and his criticism of that doctrine. The concepts of ὅλη/ὑποκείμενον and εἶδος in Origen are clearly influenced by Aristotle and probably by Alexander too. Both the presentation and the refutation of Stoic determinism are very similar in Alexander and Origen. The doctrine of God as Intellect and the whole characterisation of God in Alexander is remarkably similar to that which is found in Origen and is almost sure to have exerted some influence on him. The doctrine of the soul and its existence in a body and the doctrine of the Ideas also reveal impressive parallels in our two philosophers. The contribution of the present research to (hopefully) advancing scholarship also helps to cast light on Origen's relation to Greek philosophy, which is the object of critical debate.

Two Semi-Contemporary Philosophers and Teachers of Philosophy who Wrote the Same Kinds of Works

Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. ca. 210 CE) probably held one of the chairs of philosophy established by Marcus Aurelius, in his case the Aristotelian chair, and was based in Athens, as a recent epigraphical discovery seems to have made unquestionable.¹ The only chronological clue about his life is given by the dedication of his *De Fato* to Septimius Severus and Caracalla, who ruled together between 198 and 209 CE. It is worth noticing that, likewise, Bardaisan, the Christian Middle Platonist from Edessa, dedicated his own *De Fato* to an «Antoninus» who may have been either Marcus Aurelius or Caracalla himself.² The topic was being hotly debated in philosophical circles and was deemed worthy of imperial dedications.

Alexander was very well steeped in Aristotelian, Platonic, and Stoic doctrines, and could still read Stoic works directly³, even though he also used doxographical works. As results from his extant writings, Stoicism was often a target of his polemic. Besides his commentaries on Aristotle's esoteric works,⁴ he wrote other treatises (such as *De principiis*, *De anima*, and the aforementioned *De Fato*) and a polemical treatise against Galen⁵. «We

1. An inscription published by Chaniotis 2004 was dedicated by Alexander to his father. Sharples 2005 observes that this inscription conclusively demonstrates that Alexander's professorship was at Athens, and indicates that in the time of Alexander a holder of an imperial Athenian chair of philosophy was called *διάδοχος*.

2. See Ramelli 2009a on this point and for a systematic rereading of Bardaisan as a Christian Middle Platonist, and the positive reactions in Crone 2012, Speidel 2012, esp. p. 36 nn. 94, 96 and 99; p. 37 n. 104, 106 and 108; p. 38 nn. 110, 111 and 112; p. 39 n. 114; p. 40 n. 118; p. 41 n. 119; and Marx Wolf 2013. See also Ramelli forthcoming.

3. On the fading away of primary Stoic sources in Imperial and late antiquity see the introduction in Gourinat & Barnes 2009.

4. To his commentaries Alexander owed being dubbed «the Commentator» (the same epithet was given later to Theodore of Mopsuestia especially in the Eastern Syriac church, but Theodore commented on the Bible, and not on Aristotle). Six commentaries by Alexander are extant and nine others are lost or preserved fragmentarily.

5. Translation with introduction and notes: Rescher and Marmura 1965.

know little or nothing about the impact of Alexander's teaching in his lifetime», was rightly noted by Dorothea Frede⁶. However, perhaps some light can be shed on his probable impact over the greatest Christian philosopher of the whole Patristic age, and Alexander's quasi-contemporary: Origen of Alexandria (ca. 186-255/6).

Like Alexander, he was a teacher of philosophy, first in Alexandria and then in Caesarea: he taught all the philosophical schools (apart from the atheistic ones, so he did include Platonism, Stoicism, and probably Aristotelianism) and then Christian philosophy-theology.⁷ Like Alexander, Origen mostly wrote exegetical works – not on Aristotle, but on the Bible, adapting the philosophical tradition of commentaries to Scripture – as well as other treatises (such as *De principiis*, *De resurrectione*) and a polemical treatise against the anti-Christian Middle Platonist Celsus. Origen very probably knew at least Alexander's works; he might even have met him, since he was in Athens – as well as in Ephesus, Antioch, and Rome – in the first half of the third century, as is attested by his own *Letter to Friends in Alexandria* reported by Rufinus in *De adulteratione librorum Origenis* 7: *fratres miserunt ad me Athenas...*⁸ Pierre Nautin places Origen's second stay in Athens (Eus. *HE* VI 32,2) between the end of 245 and the beginning of 246.⁹

There can be no certainty about Origen's personal acquaintance with Alexander, but it is highly probable that Origen knew his works, as his younger contemporaries Plotinus and Porphyry did too (Plotinus was a fellow disciple of Origen at Ammonius Saccas' school, and Porphyry frequented Origen when young, in Caesarea or Tyre). Alexander's commentaries were widely read in the circle of Plotinus (Porphyry *V. Plot.* 14, 13), and some points of contact have been detected by scholars between Alexander's and Plotinus's thought. An example of similarities and differences has been studied by Lavaud 2008, who suggests that some passages from Alexander's *Quaestiones* concerning matter may have influenced Plotinus (esp. *Enn.* II, 4 [12]), but he also acknowledges some important divergences: while for Alexander matter is a quasi-substance, distinct from both privation and qualities,¹⁰ for Plotinus matter is privation and somehow connected to evil, what Alexander did not admit of. In this res-

6. Frede 2009. On Alexander's philosophy in general see at the very least also Moraux 2001; Rashed 2008.

7. See Ramelli 2009b. Le Boulluc 2008 rightly underscores the difference between Origen's inclusion of Greek philosophy in his own teaching and Pamphilus' and Eusebius' school, which was more concentrated on Scripture.

8. See Ramelli 2014a.

9. Nautin 1976, p. 20.

10. On qualities and their relation to matter in Alexander see Kupreeva 2003.

pect Alexander seems to me to be much closer to Origen, who also refused to connect matter with evil.

Alexander is the last of the Peripatetic commentators,¹¹ who explained «Aristotle by Aristotle» (albeit, as I shall show, he does reflect Platonic influences). Later commentators on Aristotle, from Porphyry onward, interpreted Aristotle in the light of Neo-Platonism. Indeed, Plotinus's (and Origen's) teacher, Ammonius, endeavoured to harmonise Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy, as is made clear by Hierocles of Alexandria *ap. Phot. Bibl. cod. 214, 172A; cod. 251, 461B*.¹² Porphyry too followed Plotinus on this score: the *Suda, s.v. Πορφύριος*, attributes to Porphyry a work in seven books *Περὶ τοῦ μίαν εἶναι τὴν Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους αἵρεσιν*. Just as Plotinus and Porphyry abundantly used Alexander in their study of Aristotle, so probably did Origen as well.

Origen the Christian Philosopher

Origen was a Christian philosopher, and more specifically a Christian Platonist, which his adversaries – during his lifetime but also later, in the course of the Origenistic controversy and up to our day – considered to be a contradiction in terms.¹³ These adversaries were both Christians who regarded Greek philosophy with suspicion and pagan philosophers like Porphyry who saw Christianity as a non-culture and a non-philosophy, in fact incompatible with philosophy *tout court*. Origen, on the contrary, wanted to construct a Christian philosophy. Both his formation and his teaching centred on philosophy, which he never rejected. A close examination of all extant sources and a careful investigation of Origen's philosophical formation, readings, teaching, and works even suggest that Origen the Neoplatonist, of whom Porphyry, Hierocles, and Proclus speak, may have been the same as Origen the Christian philosopher.¹⁴

Origen was a *Christian* Platonist.¹⁵ His «anti-Platonism», recently highlighted especially by Mark Edwards and Panayiotis Tzamalikos,¹⁶

11. The first seems to have been Andronicus of Rhodes in the first century BCE.

12. Langerbeck 1957, p. 74, hypothesised an influence of Alexander of Aphrodisias on Ammonius Saccas; all we know is that Ammonius supported a compatibilism between Plato and Aristotle.

13. Ramelli 2009b.

14. Ramelli 2009b and 2011a. *Ead.*, «Origen and the Symbolic Meaning of Plato's Dialogues», forthcoming, with further arguments from Hierocles' testimonies and others. Other scholars too, on different bases, agree that the two Origenes were probably one and the same person, e.g. Digeser 2010.

15. See O'Leary 2011, with my review in *Gnomon*, 84 (2012), p. 560-563.

16. Especially Edwards 2002, and more marginally 2009a, p. 79-104; Tzamalikos 2006 and 2007; his lecture at the Oxford 2011 Workshop on *The Soul in the Origenian Tradition*, directed by M. Edwards and I. Ramelli, forthcoming.

requires to be qualified. What Origen opposed is, in my opinion, *pagan* Platonism and *Gnostic* Platonism, not Platonism *tout court*, which in his view could be embraced – and needed to be, albeit critically – by Christianity: for him, Plato was a disciple of Moses and in the Bible many Platonic truths could be found (in a perspective that was already Philo's¹⁷). Origen was against the pagan Platonism and the Gnostic Platonism of his day, as distortions – to his mind – of Platonism, while he himself intended to construct an *orthodox Christian* Platonism, against Gnosticism, Marcionism, and paganism. Of course, in this perspective, he would reject doctrines such as that of *metempsychosis*, which was incompatible with the Bible and in fact was supported by Plato himself only in a mythical form, while it was contemporary pagan Platonism that supported it in a theoretical and dogmatic form: this is what both Origen and Gregory Nyssen countered.¹⁸

It is possible that Origen was initially a pagan, as some clues in Eusebius himself make me suspect, but even in this case, when he became a Christian, he intended to develop a Christian philosophy, not less Christian for being a philosophy, and no less of a philosophy for being Christian. Indeed, Eusebius used a first-rate source for his biographical information on Origen in *HE* VI: Pamphilus. He informed Eusebius regarding Origen both orally and by means of his *Apology*, whose Books II-VI were devoted to Origen's life and intellectual figure. Moreover, Eusebius read Origen's letters, another primary biographical source concerning Origen himself. If one must doubt the exactitude of the information provided by Eusebius, it is not because of the quality of his sources, which is excellent, but because of his own, and Pamphilus's, apologetic aims.¹⁹ Eusebius emphasised that Origen was a Christian from the beginning for apologetic reasons, to defend him from accusations – coming from the Christian side – of not being Christian enough just because he was a philosopher. But Eusebius himself calls Leonidas «Origen's so-called father [λεγόμενος πατήρ]», which raises suspicions that the Christian martyr Leonidas was not Origen's biological father, but perhaps his spiritual father, who converted him to Christianity.²⁰ For this and many other reasons, I suspect that Origen, as Porphyry and Marcellus of Ancyra contended, might indeed have been initially a pagan who then converted to Christianity (albeit

17. Ramelli 2008a.

18. Ramelli 2013b.

19. This is why, for instance, I would not doubt that Origen did mutilate himself, since Eusebius (and Pamphilus) admitted this, although with clear embarrassment, and endeavoured to excuse this, which was very probably already an object of the polemics of Pamphilus's adversaries.

20. See Ramelli 2009b.

Porphry's and Marcellus's testimonies are both biased and must be assessed critically).

Origen, in any case, definitely was, or became, a Christian, and his Platonism is Christian, so that his thought is grounded in the Bible first and in Plato after – also because in his view it is Plato who was inspired by Scripture. This entails the priority of the Bible, but also the inevitable affinity between the teaching of Scripture and that of Plato.²¹ Indeed, it is as a *Christian philosopher* that Origen wrote his Περὶ Ἀρχῶν; in its structure, and in its very title, Origen's philosophical masterpiece was inspired, not by earlier Christian works, but by 'pagan' philosophical works stemming from the selfsame authors as those appreciated at Ammonius Saccas' and Plotinus's schools.

Alexander of Aphrodisias' Περὶ Ἀρχῶν and Origen's Περὶ Ἀρχῶν: A Possible Inspiration?

Origen's Περὶ Ἀρχῶν stems from the first three decades of the third century CE, and was composed in Alexandria. He conceived his masterpiece as a philosopher, of course a Christian philosopher; here he delineated the structure of reality in a fully philosophical treatise. The Christian element in it is that the ἀρχαὶ of all are not exactly, for instance, a supreme deity, a subordinate deity, and matter, or the world, but the three Persons of the Christian Trinity, and the reference texts are not Plato's or Aristotle's writings, but the books of the Bible. Origen produced the first comprehensive exposition of Christian thought in philosophical argument, conducted with a "zetetic" method. As the title itself indicates (attested by Eusebius, *HE* VI, 24), the subject of this masterpiece is «the first principles of reality». Rufinus, in the preface to his own translation of the first two books of Περὶ Ἀρχῶν, translates the title with *De principiis* or *De principatibus*.

Origen's operation was groundbreaking in Christianity. Clearly there was no Christian antecedent to it, but the Περὶ Ἀρχῶν genre belonged to the (pagan) philosophical tradition. There surely is an influence from Philo of Alexandria, who precisely posited God as the first ἀρχή qua Creator,²²

21. The doctrine of *apokatastasis* is one of the best examples of this: most of its premises are based on both Scripture and Platonism, but Origen adduces *Scripture* to buttress it, and feels the need to correct Plato and his point concerning some ἀνλάτοι by having recourse to the omnipotence of Christ-God, Creator and Physician, in order to support universal restoration and salvation: *nihil enim Omnipotenti impossibile est, nec insanabile est aliquid Factori suo*. For all this see Ramelli 2013.

22. See Bos 2009. Philo was obviously influenced by Platonism and Stoicism, much less by Aristotelianism. See Lévy 2011, ch. 2, who argues that Philo's debt to Aristotle, if any, is simply terminological.

though Philo never wrote a *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*, so he cannot have influenced Origen from the point of view of the philosophical genre and of the structure of his treatise. It is certainly the case that *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* has clear theological resonances and evokes the very opening words of the Bible and of the Gospel of John, ἐν ἀρχῇ. But no *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* existed in prior Christian literature, only in 'pagan' philosophy, where there were many works with that title; additionally, Origen's *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* is no Biblical commentary, but a philosophical treatise – a monumental research in Christian philosophy. Origen intentionally drew inspiration from Greek philosophical models, which existed in both the Platonic and the Aristotelian tradition.

A long excerpt of a *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* ascribed to Archytas of Tarentum is preserved by Stobaeus, I, 41, 2 p. 278 W. and seems to be due to a Neo-Pythagorean and/or Middle-Platonist who blended Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions. This treatise focused on the three principles (ἀρχαί) that are found in Middle-Platonism: God, identified with the moving principle, form, and matter. A derivation from Plato's *Timaeus* is probable, with a reinterpretation in the light of Aristotelian notions. Porphyry was acquainted with Ps. Archytas' *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*. Longinus also wrote a *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* (Porph. *V. Plot.* 14) and Porphyry, his disciple, obviously knew it too.²³ Porphyry in a fragment (*ap. Eus. HE VI*, 19) also attests that Origen read Longinus; thus, he too surely knew his *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*.

The Peripatetic tradition of *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* is even richer and goes back to Aristotle himself. He, indeed, entitled the first five books of his *Physica* «*Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*»²⁴ and Gennadius Scholarius in his commentary on Aquinas' *De ente et essentia* 9 testifies to a «first book *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*» by Aristotle.²⁵ According to Dimitri Gutas,²⁶ the title of Theophrastus's *Metaphysics* was in fact *On First Principles*, *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*. This treatise is preserved in Greek and Arabic; the latter version, composed by Ishāq ibn Hunayn († 910/11), is extremely faithful to the Greek, to the point of being important for the textual criticism of the Greek itself.²⁷ Strato of Lampsacus, the successor of Theophrastus, also wrote a *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* (Diog. Laërt. V, 59). Alexander of Aphrodisias, the closest to Origen's lifetime, wrote a *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν τοῦ Κόσ-*

23. See Brisson & Patillon 1994-1998.

24. Simplicius, *In Ar. De caelo* VII, 226, 19; *In Ar. Phys.* 9 p. 4, 14; *ibid.* 9 p. 6, 9; *ibid.* 10 p. 801, 14; p. 1126, 10; Gennadius Scholarius, *Prol. in Ar. Phys.* 2 p. 160, 8.

25. Cf. Id. *Adnotationes in Arist. opera diversa*, 2 *De Cael.* 2 l, 136; *Contra Plethonis ignoratorem de Aristotele*, 31, 29; *Divisio quinque primorum librorum Arist. Physicae*, 1, 10.

26. Gutas 2010.

27. As Crubellier 1992 already noted; see also Alon 1985.

μου, which is lost in Greek but is preserved in Arabic and partly in Syriac.²⁸ The Syriac translation of Alexander's treatise – accurate though with the omission of references to the world's eternity: clearly a Christian adaptation – was prepared by Sergius of Resh'ayna, who studied philosophy and medicine in Alexandria around 470-490 and introduced Aristotelianism into Syriac culture.²⁹ In Arabic the title and subtitle are: «On the Doctrine Concerning the First Principles of the Cosmos, in Accordance with the Opinion of the Philosopher Aristotle». Alexander in his treatise presented Aristotle's doctrine on «the first principles of the world». It is true that Alexander's work may have been modified in the Arabic version (though not necessarily: as I have mentioned, the Arabic translation of Theophrastus's homonymous work is extremely literal and faithful), but we also have the Syriac version, made by an Aristotelian expert, which allows scholars to check the reliability of the Arabic translation. Thanks to both translations, we can know the contents and title of Alexander's work with a fair degree of certainty.

It is probable that Origen not only knew Alexander's treatise *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*, but also drew inspiration from it for the title and the structure of his own philosophical masterpiece, *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*.³⁰ Indeed, it is not simply a matter of title, but of content, as I set out to show. The overall organisation of Alexander's work is exactly the same as the structure of Origen's *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*. Alexander in his treatise first describes the first principle (ἀρχή), identified with the prime mover, as the best of beings, incorporeal, immobile, eternal, simple substance, always active, thinking itself. Likewise Origen opens his treatise with the first ἀρχή, God, also conceived as eternal, simple substance, always active, thinking, immutable, and the best of beings. In particular God the Father is declared to be incorporeal; the Son is Wisdom, Logos, and the seat of the Ideas as in Middle Platonism, and the Holy Spirit is the third component of God. A discussion of the rational natures' participation in the Good, i.e. God, their fall, and their restoration follows. In the final book (IV) Origen adds a treatment of exegesis as part and parcel of philosophy, since his philosophy is the philosophy of a *commentator*, exactly like that of Alexander. There is no philosophical argument that Origen does not attempt to ground in

28. Critical edition, with translation, commentary, and introduction: Genequand 2001. See also D'Ancona & Serra 2002. Lists of works of Alexander of Aphrodisias preserved by Arabic bibliophiles attest lost works by Alexander concerning issues of logic and metaphysics. See Rashed 2011.

29. See Miller 1994; King 2010.

30. Origen's complete title might indeed have been *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν τοῦ Κόσμου*, exactly like Alexander's, since in *Princ.* IV, 4, 5 he states that his treatise deals with «the principles of this world».

Scripture, as Alexander does in Aristotle. Origen in his preface expounds the doctrines that are revealed by Scripture, and programmatically states that he intends to apply philosophical investigation to them. Among the categories of Greek philosophy that he sets out to use and to find in the Bible is that of “incorporeal” (particularly important as Origen is convinced that only God is absolutely incorporeal, while every creature needs a body, whether heavy or spiritual and immortal):

We shall see whether *what Greek philosophers call “incorporeal”* [ἄσώματον]³¹ *is to be found in Scriptures* under another name. It will be necessary to investigate how God should be considered: whether corporeal ... or having a different nature [*sc. incorporeal*] ... it will be necessary to extend the same investigation also to Christ and the Holy Spirit [*sc. the three first principles*], and to the soul and every rational nature... to order the rational explanation of all these arguments into a unity... with clear and irrefutable demonstrations... to *construct a coherent work*, with arguments and enunciations, both those *found in the Sacred Scripture* and those *thence deduced by means of a research made with exactitude and logical rigour*» (*Princ. 1, praef. 9-10*).

Greek philosophy is applied to the exegesis of Scripture by Origen, and to the exegesis of Aristotle by Alexander. Alexander’s Περὶ Ἀρχῶν and Origen’s Περὶ Ἀρχῶν bear remarkable similarities in their title, contents, and plan.

When Porphyry later wrote his own Περὶ Ἀρχῶν in two books,³² he had at least Alexander, Longinus, Archytas, and Origen as models before him. But Origen himself probably had at least Alexander’s and Longinus’s Περὶ Ἀρχῶν as models, when he imported the Περὶ Ἀρχῶν genre from Greek philosophy to Christian philosophy – where for many centuries nobody will dare to write a new Περὶ Ἀρχῶν until John the Scot Eriugena, a direct heir of Patristic Platonism, with his bold *Periphyseon*.³³ Interestingly, Origen’s Περὶ Ἀρχῶν is the only work of a Christian author that will be deemed worthy of a commentary of its own – that of Didymus of Alexandria –, whereas all other Patristic commentaries, including Origen’s own, are devoted to *Biblical* books.³⁴

31. Here Rufinus faithfully keeps Origen’s original Greek, as in some other cases such as Origen’s use of *μονὰς καὶ ἐνὰς*, because it is a key philosophical term. He just adds a gloss for the benefit of his Latin readers: *ἄσώματον id est incorporeum*.

32. Attested by Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* I, 51, 5, and the *Suda*, s.v. Πορφύριος.

33. On Eriugena’s dependence on Origen see Ramelli 2013a, the chapter devoted to Eriugena.

34. See Ramelli 2014a.

**(Οὐκ) ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν First Used by Alexander and Origen.
From Cosmological Discussions to Catchphrase in the Arian
Controversy**

Origen imported not only the Περὶ Ἀρχῶν genre from Greek philosophy – and perhaps especially Alexander – to Christianity, but also, for instance, the reflection on the affirmation or denial of the eternity of *x* that underlies the expression (οὐκ) ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν *x*, «there was a time when there was not *x* / there was no time when there was not *x*». The idea of eternity was indeed a central concern in Origen's philosophy and theology³⁵.

In Patristic authors, the phrase οὐκ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, in reference to the Son («there was no time when the Son did not exist»), became a catchphrase of Nicene “orthodoxy” against the “Arian” opposite catchphrase, ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, «there was a time when the Son did not exist». Indeed, Alexander of Alexandria, *ap. Socr. HE* I, 16, 15 attributes to Arius himself the sentence ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν. These opposite sentences are widely attested in Christianity from the time of the Arian controversy onward, and not by chance are they first found in authors who knew Origen's works very well.³⁶ But before Eusebius, Athanasius, and later Christian writers who used these sentences in connection with the Son's eternity and therefore divinity, the only attestations of these formulae are to be found in Origen and, before him, not in earlier Christian authors, but only in two pagan philosophers who lived just immediately before him: the Middle Platonist Alcinous (mid-second century CE)³⁷ and precisely Alexander of Aphrodisias.

In Origen the formula at stake is very clearly attested, both in passages preserved in the original Greek and in Latin translations of his works. In all of these passages Origen is discussing the absolute eternity of the Son as a divine being. In *Comm. in Rom.* I, 7, 4-5, the sentence *non erat quando non erat* – just as in *Princ.* I, 2, 9 the sentence *non est autem quando non fuerit*, both in reference to the Son – clearly translates οὐκ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν. The former passage, *Comm. in Rom.* I, 7, 4-5, is also reported by Pamphilus in *Apol.* 52 and Rufinus's translation is exactly the same: *secundum carnem non erat prius, secundum spiritum uero erat ante, et non erat quando non erat*. Also *Princ.* I, 2, 9 is reproduced by Pamphilus in *Apol.* 58 and ren-

35. See Ramelli and Konstan 2011, p. 126-138.

36. Eusebius *Ep. ad Caes.* 8 and 15; *Comm. in Ps.* PG XXIII, 565, 55; *PE* VII, 22, 8; Gregory of Nyssa *Antirr.* GNO III/1, 220, 27; *C. Eun.* III, 7, 61; *in Cant.* GNO VI 251, 11, as well as Basil, Athanasius, with the highest number of occurrences, John Chrysostom, Marcellus of Ancyra, Epiphanius, Cyril of Alexandria, Socrates, Sozomenus, Theodoret, etc.

37. Edition: Whittaker & Louis 1990; translation and commentary: Dillon 1993; Summerell & Zimmer 2007. Study: Göransson 1995.

dered by Rufinus with the same formula: *non est autem quando non fuerit*. In *Princ.* IV, 4, 1 Origen opposes some «heretics» of his day who claimed that the Son was generated or created by the Father at a certain point in time: *Non enim dicimus, sicut haeretici putant, partem aliquam substantiae Dei in Filium versam, aut ex nullis substantibus Filium procreatum a Patre, id est extra substantiam suam, ut fuerit aliquando quando non fuerit*. The last sentence is again a translation of οὐκ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, which Origen refuted against some «heretics» of his day.³⁸ Soon after, Origen insists: *Numquam fuit quando non fuit*, yet another translation of οὐκ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, and explains that any expression denoting temporality is properly inapplicable to the Trinity (including the Son), in that it transcends time. The same polemic against those who posited a beginning for the existence of the Son is reflected in *Comm. in Rom.* I, 7, 15-19: *Haec nobis dicta sint propter eos qui in unigenitum Filium Dei impietatem loquuntur ... qui ... semper fuit sicut et Pater*.

But there are also at least three Greek attestations – one of which coming from direct textual transmission and not fragmentary – that confirm that the presence of the eternity formula in Origen is not an invention of his translator Rufinus: Fragment 31 from Marcellus of Ancyra (*ap. Eus. C. Marc.* I, 34), *Comm. in Io.* II, 19, 130, with a slight variation (οὐκ ἦν γὰρ ὅτε ἡ ἀρχὴ ἄλογος ἦν in reference to the eternity of the Logos)³⁹, and a long fragment quoted *ad verbum* by Athanasius, *De decr. Nic. syn.* 27, 1-2:

If it is an image [εἰκὼν] of the invisible God, it is an invisible image. But I would even dare add that, being also the likeness [ὁμοιότης] of the Father, there is no time when it did not exist [οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν]. For when is it that [πότε] the Godhead ... had not the effulgence of its own glory, so that one could dare ascribe a beginning [ἀρχὴν] to the Son, who purportedly did not exist earlier [πρότερον οὐκ ὄντος]? When is it that the image of the individual substance [ὑποστάσεως] of the Father, the expression, the Logos that knows the Father, was not [πότε ... οὐκ ἦν]? Whoever dares say, «There was a time when the Son did not exist» [ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν ὁ Υἱός] should consider that he will also say: «At a certain time Wisdom did not exist» [ποτὲ οὐκ ἦν], «the Logos did not exist», and «Life did not exist».

Here in the first occurrence there is a present (ἔστιν) in the first part of the formula instead of a past (ἦν), but the formula is clearly practically the

38. Precisely on the basis of *Princ.* IV, 4, 1 Simonetti 1965, p. 114, deems the formula οὐκ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν Origenian. And rightly so, I think. But what is most interesting is that Origen had no Christian antecedents in this respect, but imported this formula from the (pagan) philosophical debate of his time.

39. Origen's formulation is very likely to be the source of Calcidius, *In Tim.* 276: *neque enim fuerit tempus ullum quo Deus fuerit sine Sapientia*.

same, and in the second occurrence it is exactly ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν. Origen may even have used this formula – in this positive form: ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν – to assert the non-eternity of evil and the necessity of its disappearance, within the framework of his doctrine of universal *apokatastasis* or restoration of all beings to God–the Good: «there was a time when evil did not exist, and there will be one when evil will not exist any more» (*Expl. in Prov.* 5; *Frg. in Prov.* 5). In this case, it is Origen who directly inspired Evagrius Ponticus, another Christian Platonist and another supporter of the doctrine of *apokatastasis*, when he proclaimed: «There was a time when evil did not exist, and there will be a time when, likewise, it will no more exist, whereas there was no time when virtue did not exist, and there will be no time when it will not exist» (*KG I*, 40, preserved in Syriac; the original Greek evidently was: ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν ἡ κακία καὶ ἔσται ὅτε οὐκ ἔσται).

Before Origen, as I mentioned, there is no trace of this formula in Christianity, but it only appears in two Greek (“pagan”) philosophers who lived, respectively, shortly before Origen and in his own lifetime: Alcinous and Alexander of Aphrodisias, though *only Alexander* has the same formulation as Origen, and more than once. This seems to be a significant indication of Origen’s probable dependence on Alexander. Speaking in reference to the cosmos, Alcinous in *Did.* 14, 3 connects a similar formula to the notion of being eternal as opposite to being generated: «When it is said that the cosmos is γενητόν, this should not be interpreted in the sense that there had been a time ἐν ᾧ οὐκ ἦν κόσμος». Alcinous is arguing that the cosmos has a cause (the Demiurge and the Ideas, according to Plato’s *Timaeus*), but not a beginning in time – a hotly debated issue in the Platonic tradition.

Alexander of Aphrodisias has many more occurrences of the formula at stake, and moreover, unlike Alcinous, he has this formula *in exactly the same form as it is in Origen* and in later Christian authors who drew it from Origen. Therefore, he is likely to have inspired Origen in this regard. The expression ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, indeed, repeatedly occurs in his extant Greek works, always in connection with his reflection on eternity or αἰδιότης.⁴⁰ In a certainly authentic work, his Commentary on Aristotle’s *Meteorologica*,⁴¹ the formula at stake is attested thrice. In 64, 24-27 it is used in the present tense to support the eternity of time (there is no time when time does not exist) and the eternity of the universe (the same position as Alcinous’), and to deny the eternity of other realities which are eternal only apparently, such as very large rivers, since there was a time when the river did not exist and there will be a time when it will no longer exist:

40. See Ramelli and Konstan 2011, p. 29-30, on Alexander of Aphrodisias’ concept and terminology of eternity, and p. 28-35 on Aristotle and Hellenistic philosophy. For the terminology of eternity in Plato and Platonism see p. 12-28.

41. Ed. Hayduck 1899. See also Sorabji 2007.

There is no time when time does not exist [οὐδέποτε γὰρ ἔστιν ὅτε οὐκ ἔστι χρόνος] and when the universe [τὸ πᾶν] does not exist, and indeed it is *eternal* [ἀίδιον], whereas, for instance, any others of the big rivers that seem to be perennial [ἀετνάων] are *not eternal* [ἀίδιοι], but *there was a time* [ἦν ποτε] when the place in which they now flow was arid, and there will be again a time when it will again be so [καὶ ὕστερον πάλιν ἔσται].

In 78, 4-5, the formula ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν appears again, and twice at that, once in the past and once in the future: «It does not endure as eternal [ἀίδιος μένει], not even in its form, but it is both the case that *there was a time when the sea did not exist* [ἦν τε τις χρόνος ὅτε οὐκ ἦν], and that *there will be again one when it will not exist* [ἔσται πάλιν ὅτε οὐκ ἔσται]». As is evident, here too this formula occurs again in close relation to the notion of being eternal (ἀίδιος). Just as rivers in the previous passage, here the sea is declared to be not eternal, on the grounds that there was a time when it was not and there will be one when it will no longer be. Interestingly, the future-tense formula, ἔσται ὅτε οὐκ ἔσται, is found imitated in the section of the commentary on the *Metaphysics* which is due to a later author, probably Michael of Ephesus (and even here Michael probably retained parts of Alexander's original commentary, so it may be an imitation, but it may also be Alexander's own expression once again):⁴² «There will be a time when movement will not exist [ἔσται ὅτε οὐκ ἔσται]» (*In Ar. Metaph.* 688, 19).

The formula under examination, in its past-tense form, is also found in *In Ar. Top.*⁴³ 80, 18: «This is neither eternal [ἀίδιον] – because the grammarian was not always [ἄει] a musician, but *there was a time when he was not* (a musician) [ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν] –, nor *γενόμενον*: because the musician does not become [γίνεται] a grammarian». The same sentence returns in *In Ar. Metaph.* 449, 32, a passage that belongs to the section of this commentary that was reworked by Michael of Ephesus. In this specific passage, the probable author, Michael, was attempting to reproduce Alexander's own wording, or even was keeping Alexander's wording. Indeed, the phrase ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν occurs again twice in the inauthentic part of the commentary, in two further imitations of Alexander's wording. In 450, 16, the issue is again that of eternity: «if everything that now exists, yet *there was a*

42. The authentic section of this commentary includes Books A-Δ. Edition of the whole commentary, both the authentic part and the rest, in Hayduck 1891. Translations and commentary in Dooley 1989; Dooley & Madigan 1992; Madigan 1993; Dooley 1993; Italian translation: Movia 2007. See also Luna 2001.

43. This commentary is authentic, although it may contain interpolations (as was suggested by its editor, Wallies, followed by Sharples 1990); this passage, however, is not interpolated, and in any case the formula occurs three other times in authentic works of Alexander (see below). Edition by Wallies 1891; translation and notes by van Ophuijsen 2001.

time when it did not exist [ἦν δὲ ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν], has come to existence [γέγονε]». Likewise in 818, 32 the very definition of «eternal» is in the focus: «Eternal [ἀίδιον] is that concerning which it is impossible to say that there was a time when it did not exist [ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν] and that there will be likewise a time when it will not exist [ἔσται ὁμοίως ὅτε οὐκ ἔσται]. On the contrary, what has come to existence [γεγονός], there was a time when it did not exist [ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν]». This clearly echoes again the authentic passage in *Comm. in Arist. Top.* 80, 18, where Alexander established that what is eternal (ἀίδιον) is what οὐκ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, and on the contrary, if something ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, then it is not eternal (ἀίδιον).⁴⁴

Alexander distinctly reflected a great deal on the formula ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν – which he is likely to have coined – in connection with the notion of eternity (ἀιδιότης in the Aristotelian terminology⁴⁵). In his definition, this entails something's permanence in existence in all times, so that there is and will be no time when this thing was not or will not be.⁴⁶ Other notable parallels in authentic works of Alexander's are found in *De anima cum Mantissa*⁴⁷ 121, 34: «there is no time when (matter) is without form» (οὐδέποτε ἐστὶν ὅτε χωρὶς εἶδους ἐστὶν), and in Alexander's Commentary on Aristotle's *Analytica Priora* I,⁴⁸ 155, 15: «there is no time when a human being does not move» (οὐδέποτε γὰρ ἔστιν ὅτε μὴ κινεῖται ἄνθρωπος τις)⁴⁹. As is clear from the present analysis, at least four attestations of the formula ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν in Alexander are certain: one in his commentary on the *Topica* and three others in that on the *Meteorologica*. Moreover, there are

44. In the authentic section of Alexander's Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, 342, 16, an analogous expression appears, concerning the same issue of the eternity or non-eternity of something: «It did not exist before, and will not exist after» (καὶ πρότερον γε οὐκ ἦν καὶ ὕστερον οὐκ ἔσται).

45. In Platonic terminology, and only there, «eternity» is αἰών. See Ramelli-Konstan 2011.

46. See also *Comm. in Ar. Top.* 385, 5: if something «does not accompany a thing always [μὴ ἀεί], but sometimes it is there and sometimes not [ποτὲ μὲν ὑπάρχει ποτὲ δὲ οὐ]», then it is «an accident and not a property». The same problem and terminology is related to the determination of what is substance and what is not substance, in a passage belonging to the authentic section of Alexander's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, 231, 33: «these things that do not come into being and do not perish sometimes are and sometimes are not [ὅτε μὲν ἔστιν ὅτε δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν], so that they are not substances».

47. Sharples 2008. Accattino & Donini 1996 suggested that the *De anima cum Mantissa* is an abridgement of Alexander's commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*. Accattino 2001 thinks that the section «On Intellect» is an early work of Alexander integrated into this later work.

48. Edition of the commentary on *Prior Analytics I* by Wallies 1883. Translation and commentary: Barnes [et al.] 1991; Mueller & Gould 1999a and 1999b; Mueller 2006. See Lee 1984.

49. *Ibid.* 299, 23: ἔστιν ὅτε μὴ ὑπάρχει αὐτῷ τὸ αὐτῷ κινεῖν.

other similar expressions, belonging to authentic works. Later on this formula, which was found in Alexander's authentic works, was imitated by the compiler(s) of the inauthentic parts.

This was manifestly a philosophical phrase, first attested in Alexander of Aphrodisias – and partially in Alcinous, though not in this exact formulation. It patently arose within philosophical discussions of eternity, and then, very interestingly, passed on to Christian theological debates by means of Origen, who repeatedly used it in his own arguments for the eternity of the Son. Then, Christian authors who were profoundly familiar with his writings, such as Eusebius and Gregory of Nyssa, drew it from Origen. But before Origen himself, it was never used by Christians, nor is it attested in Scripture.⁵⁰ Indeed, it was not a scriptural, but a *philosophical* formula, stemming from discussions about the nature and definition of what is *αἰδίου*. In philosophical debates of the second century, just before Origen, it was mainly employed in connection to the issue of the eternity of the world. In Alcinous' passage that I quoted, this is clear, as well as in some passages of Alexander. The Middle Platonist Calvenus Taurus also debated the question of the eternity of the world in his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* (esp. in *In Tim.* 28A-C); the same problem was discussed by the Middle Platonist Atticus, whom Origen almost certainly knew,⁵¹ and who thought – on the basis of his own exegesis of Plato – that the world was created *κατὰ χρόνον*. This was indeed a highly debated issue in Middle Platonism that involved an exegetical aspect: what did Plato mean in *Tim.* 28B7 by saying that the cosmos *γέγονεν*? Establishing whether the cosmos had a beginning in time and therefore *ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν* or not was crucial especially with respect to the so-called perishability axiom: whatever had a beginning in time must also have an end in time. If *ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν*, then *ἔσται ὅτε οὐκ ἔσται*.⁵²

Origen was very well acquainted with this debate⁵³ and with the perishability axiom. Indeed he used the latter precisely in reference to the world: *mundus iste a certo tempore coeperit et sit soluendus* (ap. Pamph. *Apol.* 25,

50. This was noticed by the bishops at the Council of Nicaea in Eusebius's report in his *Epistula ad Caesarienses* (15, 5).

51. See Ramelli 2011b.

52. This is what some Middle Platonists did not admit, those accused by Plutarch of interpreting Plato's *Timaeus* metaphorically, «convinced as they are that they should conceal and deny something terrible and unspeakable: the coming into being [*γένεσις*] and the constitution [*σύστασις*] of the cosmos and its soul, which therefore do not exist from eternity [*ἐξ αἰδίου*] nor remain for an infinite time [*τὸν ἀπείρον χρόνον*]» (*De an. procr. in Tim.* 1013E).

53. He also knew very well that this was quite a problem for Philo, who held both the Bible (Genesis) and Plato's *Timaeus* as authoritative texts. Here I limit myself to referring to Sterling 1992.

41-43); in *Princ.* II, 3, 6 he shows himself to be well aware of this axiom's use in Middle Platonism (and this awareness is certainly Origen's own, and not Rufinus's).⁵⁴ Sometime in that context of the debate on the eternity or temporal beginning of the world, and clearly in Alexander of Aphrodisias (who remembered Aristotle's thesis of the eternity [ἀϊδιότης] of the cosmos), the formula ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν emerged. Origen drew it from that philosophical debate – very probably from his reading of Alexander – and imported it into Christianity, where it later became the core formula of the Arian theological controversy. Interestingly, both Origen and Evagrius after him, as I showed, also used this formula in connection with the perishability axiom to argue that, if ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν ἡ κακία, then ἔσται ὅτε οὐκ ἔσται, in the service of their doctrine of *apokatastasis* or universal restoration and salvation, which depended on the eventual elimination of evil.⁵⁵ This is why they, like Gregory of Nyssa, argued forcefully that, since there was a time – or a state before time – when evil (and specifically moral evil) did not exist, it is certain that there will finally be a time – or a state after time – when evil will no longer exist, and all creatures will voluntarily adhere to the Good.

The Development of the Notion of Hypostasis and the Union of Natures

Origen developed a notion of ὑπόστασις as individual substance (as opposed to οὐσία or common essence of a species, such as that of rational creatures or that of the whole Trinity) that, especially through the Cappadocians, exerted an immense influence on subsequent Christian Trinitarian theology. As I have argued extensively elsewhere,⁵⁶ and therefore need not demonstrate again here, not only was Origen's use essentially a novelty, but it may even have influenced “pagan” Neoplatonism, in particular Porphyry. Now, Origen's sources of inspiration were – once again – not previous Christian theologians, but ‘pagan’ philosophers and even medical authors, besides the Bible (Epistle to the Hebrews).⁵⁷ Among these pagan philosophers there might have been Alexander of Aphrodisias, although in

54. Porphyry, who obviously knew this use and Origen's, used the perishability axiom to argue that the world was not created in time and thus is incorruptible and eternal (ἀίδιος, *ap. Zachar. De op. mund.* 140-143 Colonna; Al-Shahrastani, *Kitab al-Milal wal-Nihal*, 345 Cureton: according to Porphyry, Plato in his *Timaeus* did not describe a creation in time, but a being originated by a cause).

55. For the eventual disappearance of evilness will enable universal restoration. On this doctrine in Origen, Nyssen, and Evagrius see Ramelli 2013, the chapters devoted to them.

56. Ramelli 2012.

57. Ramelli 2012, with detailed demonstration. On the notion of hypostasis in Neoplatonism after Origen, from Plotinus onward, see Romano & Taormina 2004.

this case he is certainly not the only – and probably not even the main – source of inspiration for Origen.

Alexander and Origen indeed display sometimes the same meaning of *ὑπόστασις* as individual substance of each one of the individuals in the same species (the same *οὐσία*, different *ὑποστάσεις*), a meaning that in Origen becomes technical. In *De Anima* p. 19, 19,⁵⁸ Alexander speaks of an independent substance or existence, with both the nominal (*ὑπόστασις*) and the verbal expression (*ὑφεστάναι*) of this concept: «It is impossible to claim that the *pneuma* is a genus of the soul, being endowed with an *individual substance / existence of its own* [ἔχον ὑπόστασιν καθ' αὐτό]. For nothing is a genus if it is such as to *subsist on its own* [οὐδὲν γὰρ γένος τοιοῦτον, ὡς ὑφεστάναι καθ' αὐτό]». The soul and the spirit have different independent substances or *ὑποστάσεις*; therefore, the spirit cannot be a genus of the soul, since a genus has no independent substance of its own, but the spirit does have a substance of its own. The notion of individuality here comes to the fore. This might be present also *ibid.* p. 88, 7. Here Alexander expresses the notion that the forms subsist ontologically *per se*, even without being conceived by an intellect;⁵⁹ they have a «substance/existence of their own» (κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ὑπόστασιν). It is not entirely certain whether here Alexander means the individual substance of each form. In *De mixt.* p. 216 (= SVF II, 473) Alexander is speaking of the Stoic doctrine: «the soul, having *its own substance* [ἰδίαν ὑπόστασιν], just like the body that hosts it, extends through the whole of the body, but, while mixing with it, nevertheless it keeps its own substance [τὴν οἰκείαν οὐσίαν]». The concept of an individual, separate substance of its own (both for the soul and for the body) is clear; it is conveyed both by *ἰδίαν ὑπόστασιν* and by *οἰκείαν οὐσίαν*, as well as *οἰκείαν φύσιν* soon after.⁶⁰ Here the use of *οὐσία* and *φύσις* as near synonyms of *ὑπόστασις* indicates that the meaning is «substance of its own» or «individual substance», and not simply «individual existence». Alexander stresses the distinctiveness of the substance that is proper to the soul, as opposed to that of the body.

58. Ed. Bruns 1887. Edition, French translation, and commentary by Bergeron & Dufour 2008. Now new edition based on a new collation of mss. by Sharples 2008. English translation by Sharples 2004.

59. On forms and their subsistence in Alexander see Sharples 2005b, p. 43–55, on *De an.* 90, 2–8 and *Quaest.* 1, 11.

60. In *Comm. in Arist. Met.* p. 83, 32, Alexander uses *ὑπόστασιν καὶ φύσιν* as a synonymic couple. The expression *ἐν ὑποστάσει*, p. 110, 13, probably means «in existence» and occurs again on p. 230, 26: «If they were beings and substances [ὄντα καὶ οὐσίαι], they would be in sense-perceptible bodies; for only these things are in existence [ἐν ὑποστάσει]; but if they were not, they would not be substances [οὐσίαι] either». Only *οὐσίαι* can be *ἐν ὑποστάσει*, which may mean that only substances can subsist; indeed, they are also said to be *ὄντα*, existing beings. On p. 233, 23, too (τῷ εἶδει, ἥτοι λέγων τῇ φύσει καὶ τῇ ὑποστάσει), metaphysical form, nature, and substance would seem to be roughly equivalent.

In *Comm. in Ar. Met.* 180, 4, ἐν οικείᾳ ὑποστάσει corresponds to ἐν ἰδίᾳ ὑποστάσει and indicates that the principles «have a substance/ existence of their own and exist *per se*» (ἐν οικείᾳ ὑποστάσει εἰσὶ καὶ καθ' αὐτάς), just as «each individual being» (τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα τῶν ὄντων), unlike the genera and common species. These, as I have already mentioned, have no substance of their own, just because they are general and not individual. This is close to – though not identical with – the meaning of ὑπόστασις as individual substance that will be found in Origen as technical, and moreover in reference to the first principles. Each being in a species has its own ὑπόστασις, distinct from that of the others. Genera and species do not have an ἰδίαν ὑπόστασιν, but «individual beings» (τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα) do (*ibid.* p. 18, 12). Exactly the same concept underlies the following passage as well: «The principles become for them substances, and *substances on their own, different from the others* [καθ' αὐτάς οὐσίαι καὶ διαφέρουσαι τῶν ἄλλων]... for the substance of common species is not independent [οὐ καθ' αὐτήν ἢ τῶν κοινῶν ὑπόστασις]» (*ibid.* p. 234, 33). Here the use of οὐσίαι points again to the meaning «substances on their own» or «individual substances», and not simply «individual existences». Each principle is depicted as a substance of its own, different from the others, and since οὐσία and ὑπόστασις seem to be used as synonyms, this at least leaves the door open to the understanding «individual substance» in the other passages as well, where ὑπόστασις is used. *Ibid.* p. 199, 20 Alexander is speaking of people who conceive mathematical entities by abstraction from sense-perceptible realities and do not ascribe to them «a substance/existence of their own» (ἰδίαν ὑπόστασιν).⁶¹

Origen's thought represented a novel and fundamental theorisation in respect to the individuality of ὑποστάσεις, conceived as individual substances, in the Trinity, within a communality of οὐσία. In *Comm. in Io.* X, 37, 246, a trustworthy passage preserved in the original Greek and not in a translation or a fragment, Origen opposes those who differentiate the Father and the Son conceptually but «not in their individual substance» (οὐ κατὰ ὑπόστασιν). In his view, the Father and the Son have each his own ὑπόστασις or individual substance. This was a conceptual and linguistic

61. See also p. 263, 16: αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχοντα; p. 561, 23: οὐκ ἔστι καθ' αὐτὸ ἐν ὑποστάσει ὄν. In *In Ar. Anal. Pr.* p. 4, 10-13, there is a differentiation, close to that drawn by Origen, between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις, the latter being paired with ὑπαρξεις: some things, such as matter and form, can be separated from one another only mentally and cannot subsist without one another in their actual existence (ὑποστάσει and ὑπάρξει), but are different in their nature and essence (κατ' οὐσίαν): Διαρεῖν ἀπ' ἀλλήλων τῷ λόγῳ δύνασθαι τὰ διαφέροντα μὲν ἀλλήλων κατ' οὐσίαν, τῇ μέντοι ὑποστάσει τε καὶ ὑπάρξει μὴ δυνάμενα χωρὶς ἀλλήλων εἶναι... ὅλη τε καὶ εἶδος... ἀχώριστα γὰρ τῇ ὑποστάσει ταῦτα ἀλλήλων καὶ οὐ δυνάμενα θάτερον αὐτῶν εἶναι χωρὶς θατέρου. Here, therefore, the case is of realities with different οὐσίαι, but inseparable in their ὑπόστασις. In the case of the Trinity, in Origen's technical terminology, we find three different ὑποστάσεις but one and the same οὐσία.

novelty that Origen introduced in Christian theology, not without having in mind the linguistic use of some philosophical and medical authors of the early Empire, possibly including Alexander of Aphrodisias.

That the Father and the Son have two distinct individual substances is repeated in another Greek and non-fragmentary passage, *CC VIII*, 12, in which Origen criticises those who deny that they are «two different individual substances», δύο ὑποστάσεις. The same polemic against those who denied that the Father and the Son have two different individual substances is reflected in yet another fully reliable passage, Greek and non-fragmentary: *Comm. in Matt.* XVII, 14, where Origen maintains that the Father and the Son are distinct both conceptually and in their individual substances or ὑποστάσεις. In *Comm. in Io.* II, 10, 75, also a Greek and non-fragmentary attestation, Origen states that not only the Father and the Son, but the Spirit too are three different individual substances. This confirms the Greek passage of *Schol. in Matth.* PG XVII, 309, 47: the Father, the Son, and the Spirit «are one not for the confusion of the three, but because they have one and the same nature; their *individual substances* [ὑποστάσεις] are three, perfect in all of them».⁶² In *Comm. in Io.* I, 24, 151, again a fully reliable Greek and non-fragmentary *testimonium*, Origen blames adversaries who do not conceive the Son as having an individual substance of his own, distinct from that of the Father, but consider the Son to be merely an emanation from the Father, like an empty name, and not a personal, «individual substance» (ὑπόστασις). The same is stressed *ibid.* I, 34, 243: the Son, the Wisdom of God, is not a mere representation, but «possesses a real individual substance [ὑπόστασιν], an incorporeal [ἄσώματον ὑπόστασιν] and, so to say, living substance». Christ-Logos has its individual substance (ὑπόστασις) in the Wisdom of God (*ibid.* I, 39, 292).⁶³ The testimony of the Baptist concerning Christ reveals the Logos's «preeminent individual substance», προηγούμενην ὑπόστασιν, which permeates the world, being found in all rational souls (*ibid.* II, 35, 215).

The technical meaning becomes even clearer *ibid.* XXXII, 16, 192-193, where «the hypostasis of the Only-Begotten Son», τὴν ὑπόστασιν τοῦ μονογενοῦς, considered as one divine hypostasis of the Trinity, is said by some to be separated from Christ's human aspects.⁶⁴ All of these passages are incontrovertible, being neither fragments nor translations of Origen's texts.

62. In *Comm. in Jo.* II, 23, 149, indeed, Origen explains that the Father and the Son are the same in their essence or οὐσία, but they are «not the same thing» (οὐ ταυτόν), evidently in that they are two different individuals, with different individual substances or ὑποστάσεις.

63. The closeness to *Sel. in Ps.* PG XII, 1125, 2 is manifest: here the individual substance of God's Logos, that is, its very hypostasis, includes its being Wisdom.

64. The individual substance of the Son as hypostasis is also mentioned in *Sel. in Ps.* PG XII, 1581, 32: κατ' ἄξιαν τῆς ὑποστάσεως Πρωτοτόκου πάσης κτίσεως.

They fully confirm a remarkable fragment preserved by Athanasius (*Decr.* 27, 1-2), in which Origen affirms that Christ-Logos is the image, not of the nature (οὐσία) of God generically – since he too shares in it and therefore cannot be its image –, but «of the Father's own ineffable and unspeakable individual substance [ὕποστασις]», which is distinct from that of the Son.

Origen in a Greek passage counters those who do not admit that the Son has «a substance of his own» (ὕποστασιν ἰδίαν, *Sel. in Gen.* PG XII, 109,46). To clarify that he means ὕποστασις as «individual substance», he adds ἰδία; as I have shown, the expression ἰδία ὕποστασις was already used by Alexander to specify that a substance was not to be taken generally, but as proper to an individual being. In *Fr. in Io.* 123, likewise, Origen criticises those who deem the Spirit «God's energy or activity, without an individual substance of its own» (μὴ ἔχον ἰδίαν ὕποστασιν). Here ἰδία is again added to ὕποστασις, to stress that it is the substance of the Spirit alone, and not of the Father (or the Son).

In his *Dialogue with Heraclides*, also preserved in Greek, Origen takes great pains to explain how it is that the Father and the Son are two distinct individuals, but the same God. The very term ὕποστασις does not appear in this dialogue, and this, I suspect, is but a further indication of its *philosophical* derivation: for Origen refrains from using it here undoubtedly due to the lack of a philosophical background in his interlocutors, bishops and other clerics. Origen did not use this technical term, which he drew from philosophy, with Christians who had little or no philosophical formation (I shall show later on that his follower Didymus, who also had a philosophical formation including Aristotelianism, did much the same). But even if the technical term is absent, the concept itself is there, and Origen clearly depicts two distinct hypostases sharing one and the same divine nature.⁶⁵ In a fragment preserved by Pamphilus, *Apol.* 50, Origen criticises

65. The Son is presented as distinct, ἕτερος, from the Father (*Dial. c. Her.* 2, 18 and 21-22); this distinction obviously resides in their distinct ὑποστάσεις. At the same time, both the Son and the Father are God, and yet they are not «two Gods». Origen, who posited two hypostases (three including the Spirit), had to be careful not to give the impression of positing two (three) Gods. Therefore, *ibid.* 2, 30-31, Origen intends to explain «in which respect the Father and the Son are two, and in which these two are one and the same God». And in 3, 20-4, 9 his explanation makes it clear that his conception of two hypostases but one divine nature or essence countered both a kind of pre-Arianism or adoptionism, which denied the divinity of the Son, and what Origen calls μοναρχία, which postulated only one divine hypostasis (the Father's). Among all extant works of Origen, μοναρχία appears only here. It does not mean one single power, but rather one single principle (ἀρχή). It denied the hypostatic distinction between the Father and the Son, whereas Origen maintained three distinct hypostases in the Trinity, coinciding with the three ἀρχαὶ of all. His very Περὶ Ἀρχῶν, which opens with a treatment of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and resumes this same treatment in Book IV as a conclusion to the whole investigation, probably refers

those who deemed the Father and the Son one and the same hypostasis, to avoid giving the impression of preaching two gods or denying the divinity of the Son. This is preserved in Rufinus' translation, but its trustworthiness is supported by the many original Greek passages I have quoted above:

uti ne uideantur duos deos dicere neque rursum negare Saluatoris deitatem, unam eandemque subsistentiam Patris et Filii adseuerant, id est duo quidem nomina secundum diuersitatem causarum recipientem, unam tamen ὑπόστασιν subsistere (id est unam personam duobus nominibus subiacentem, qui latine patripassiani appellantur).

Origen's own solution is that the Father and the Son are two different individual substances, but one God.

Origen used ὑπόστασις also in reference to the substance of each soul (e.g. CC VI, 26). Like the persons of the Trinity, rational creatures too, including souls, have one and the same nature or οὐσία, but each its own individual substance or ὑπόστασις (*Princ.* III, 1, 22; *Sel. in Ezech.* PG 13. 817.21: «Each soul has its own individual substance [ὑπόστασις], which consists in its own rationale, and not a different one»).

In sum, Origen coined the notion of ὑπόστασις as individual substance in Christianity (unlike οὐσία, which for the Trinity and rational creatures is their common substance or essence). In the case of the Trinity, Origen indeed created a technical term, introducing ὑπόστασις as «individual substance» into Christian Trinitarian terminology. His innovation had an enormous impact on Christian theology, well beyond the Cappadocians and their Constantinopolitan formulation (one οὐσία, three ὑποστάσεις).⁶⁶ Scholarship, however, has hardly shown awareness of this innovation, and has totally neglected to investigate its intellectual background in early Imperial philosophy. While in this case other thinkers – especially Middle Platonists and medical theorists – seem to have been Origen's main source of inspiration, some minor influence may have come from Alexander of Aphrodisias as well.

in its title to these three ἀρχαί. The three principles for Origen coincide with the three hypostases of the Trinity, but God is one οὐσία.

66. Maximus the Confessor still insisted on the idea of ὑπόστασις as individual substance *per se*, reproducing the notion and the very wording of Origen and his inspirers: *hypostasis* indicates τὸ καθ' ἑαυτὸ εἶναι (*Cap. de subst.* PG XCI, 264AB). Erismann 2011 notes that John of Damascus treats ὑπόστασις as individual substance and οὐσία as the essence of all members of a species; I would like to remark that this is *Origen's* use, which John inherited through the Cappadocians and Maximus.

Origen Seems to Modify the Stoic Doctrine of Mixture Coming Closer to Alexander

One further, related point makes me surmise that Origen might have had Alexander of Aphrodisias in mind, again in connection with a core theological theory of Origen's. In *Princ.* II, 6, 3 and 6 Origen discusses the union of divine and human nature in Christ as a union of a soul with the light of the Logos and as a union of iron (representing the soul) and fire (symbolising the divine Logos), in which divine light prevails over the soul and fire prevails over iron.⁶⁷ This image of iron and fire was already adopted by ancient Stoics, especially Chrysippus, to illustrate mixture (μίξις); it is found in SVF II, 471 and 473, preserved respectively by Stobaeus, *Ecl.* I, 153 W. and precisely Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De mixt.* 216 Bruns. However, according to the Stoics, in this case each component in the mixture keeps its own qualities and substance (ὑπομενουσῶν ποιότητων [Stob.]; σώζοντος αὐτῶν ἑκατέρου τὴν οἰκείαν οὐσίαν [Alex.]),⁶⁸ without a prevalence of one or the other component (fire or iron in the example). Origen, on the contrary, indicates that in this union fire informs iron, and light informs the soul:

Tota [anima] totum [Verbum] recipiens atque in eius lucem splendoremque ipsa cedens. (3)

Ferri metallum capax est et frigoris et caloris. Si ergo massa aliqua ferri semper in igne sit posita, omnibus suis poris omnibusque venis ignem recipiens et tota ignis effecta... totam ignem effectam dicimus, quia nec aliud in ea nisi ignis cernitur; sed et si qui contingere atque adtrectare temptaverit, non ferri sed ignis vim sentiet. Hoc ergo modo etiam illa anima, quae quasi ferrum in igne sic semper in Verbo, semper in Sapientia, semper in Deo posita est, omne quod agit, quod sentit, quod intelligit, Deus est. Et ideo nec convertibilis aut mutabilis dici potest, quae inconvertibilitatem ex Verbi ei unitate indesinenter ignita possedit... In hac autem anima ignis ipse divinus substantialiter requievisse credendus est. (6)

The very substance of that iron, i.e. of that soul, becomes fire; thus, in Origen it is not the case that each component keeps its own substance and qualities, but there is a prevalence of fire over iron, and of the divine light over the soul.

This suggests, once again, an influence from Alexander of Aphrodisias and Aristotle. For Alexander, following Aristotle (*Gen. et corr.* I, 5, 320), in *De mixt.* 9 spoke of a union in which one of the two components over-

67. See Ramelli 2011b.

68. From Alexander *De mixt.* p. 216 Bruns 1892: σώζειν ἑκαστον αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ μίξει τῇ τοιαύτῃ τὴν τε οἰκείαν οὐσίαν καὶ τὰς ἐν αὐτῇ ποιότητας.

comes the other, but does not eliminate it: it rather informs it, exactly as in Origen's example. Indeed, Alexander in his treatise was precisely criticising the Stoics; he tried to prove that their notion of mixture could not be upheld.⁶⁹ He countered the Stoic arguments for the distinction of three kinds of mixture by taking into account earlier Platonists' ideas on the role of qualities in explaining the constitution of things. Alexander in his polemic mainly opposed the views of Chrysippus, recognising that other Stoics, such as Sosigenes, came closer to Aristotle's ideas on mixture, but at the cost of contradicting their own Stoic principles (*De mixt.* 216 Bruns).⁷⁰

Origen is likely to have had Alexander's treatment in mind when he described the union of natures – the soul and the divine Logos – in the one Hypostasis of Christ, all the more so in that Alexander in his refutation of the Stoic doctrine of mixture repeatedly used exactly the example of the union of fire and iron, both in *De mixtione* (216 and 226 Bruns) and in other works (e.g. *De an. mant.* 140 Bruns). Moreover, Origen's explicit insistence on the immutability of the soul in its union with the Logos in the passage I quoted (*nec convertibilis aut mutabilis*) seems to perfectly correspond to Alexander's criticism of Chrysippus's theory of mixture in *De mixt.* 213 Bruns: while Chrysippus claimed that the two components can separate again (τὰ κεκραμένα χωρίζεσθαι πάλιν; cf. 216: δύνασθαι χωρίζεσθαι πάλιν ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, ὁ μόνως γίνεται τῷ σώζειν ἐν τῇ μίξει τὰ κεκραμένα τὰς αὐτῶν φύσεις), Alexander denied this possibility, and Origen sided with the latter. This makes it more probable that Origen had in mind, not only Aristotle, but also, more specifically, Alexander. In addition, Cordonier 2011 has argued that Alexander's criticism of the Stoic doctrine of mixture also shaped Plotinus' polemic against the Stoics in *Enn.* II, 7 and 4, 7. If Alexander's doctrine of mixture was taken over by Plotinus, it is more probable that Origen, too, drew on it. This would be another remarkable example of how pivotal theological doctrines rested on philosophical bases that were imported by Origen from Imperial philosophical debate to Christian theology.

Origen's Reflection on the Aristotelian ὕλη (ὑποκειμενον)-εἶδος Binary and Alexander

In his *De resurrectione* Origen – like Gregory Nyssen in his footsteps in his own *De anima et resurrectione*⁷¹ – endeavoured to present the Christian

69. See Todd 1976; Kupreeva 2004.

70. P. 216: ἡ μάλιστα δοκοῦσα δόξα εὐδοκιμεῖν παρ' αὐτοῖς περὶ κράσεως ἐστὶν ἡ ὑπὸ Χρυσίππου λεγομένη. τῶν γὰρ μετ' αὐτὸν οἱ μὲν Χρυσίππῳ συμφέρονται, οἱ δὲ τινες αὐτῶν τῆς Ἀριστοτέλους δόξης ὕστερον ἀκούσαι δυνήθεντες πολλὰ τῶν εἰρημένων ὑπ' ἐκείνου περὶ κράσεως καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν ὧν εἷς ἐστὶ καὶ Σωσιγένης, ἑταῖρος Ἀντιπάτρου, οἷς οὐ δυνάμενοι πάντη συμφέρεσθαι διὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις διαφωνίαν ἐν πολλοῖς αὐτοῖς λέγοντες εὐρίσκονται μαχόμενα.

71. See Ramelli 2007, with the reviews by Tzamalikos 2008 and Edwards 2009b.

doctrine of the resurrection in a philosophically sustainable manner. He read the resurrection on a twofold plane, physical and spiritual as well, as a resurrection of both the body and the soul, which is liberated from its own death, which was due to sin (Origen in *Dial. c. Her.* 26, preserved in Greek, maintained that «the soul is mortal with respect to the real death»: not an ontological destruction, but the death of sin).⁷² Origen's treatise is unfortunately lost; his ideas on the resurrection must be gleaned from later sources, which however must be read critically, since they also misunderstood Origen's thought. One of these sources is Methodius.

In *Res.* I, 20-24 he reports a long passage in which Origen argued that the material (ὕλη) substratum or ὑποκείμενον, which is always in flux, will not be resurrected, but the εἶδος will, which is the metaphysical form of the body and will guarantee the permanence of its identity from the earthly to the risen body. Methodius, who had not got a very solid philosophical formation, and in particular no Aristotelian technical background, plainly misunderstood the metaphysical meaning of εἶδος in Origen's treatment, mistaking εἶδος for μορφή or σχῆμα,⁷³ i.e. mistaking the metaphysical form meant by Origen for a sense-perceptible shape or figure.⁷⁴ Origen himself

72. See Ramelli 2008b; I shall return to this shortly.

73. This is particularly clear in the excerpts from Methodius's *De Resurrectione* preserved by Photius, *Bibl. cod.* 234, p. 299a-300a, where Methodius reads εἶδος as a synonym of μορφή or σχῆμα, e.g.: σχῆμα τὸ ἀνιστάμενον; πλείσται γὰρ τῶν σχημάτων αἱ παραλλαγαί; ὁ μετασχηματισμός ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀπαθές καὶ ἐνδοξόν ἐστὶν ἀποκατάστασις. Methodius's misunderstanding is clear in his mistaken paraphrase of Origen's thought: «Origen wants that what is restored [ἀποκαθίστασθαι] to the soul is not the same flesh, but a *certain shape* [ποιὸν μορφήν] of each one, *according to the appearance* that now, too, characterises the flesh... that each one may *look the same* [ὁ αὐτὸς φανῇ] again in his or her *shape* [κατὰ τὴν μορφήν] ... The material body is in flux [ῥευστοῦ] and never remains the same, but it increases and decreases around *the appearance* which *characterises the shape* [μορφήν] and by which the *figure* [σχῆμα] is also controlled; therefore, the resurrection (according to Origen) will necessarily be of *the appearance alone*... Dear Origen, you affirm with confidence that we should expect a resurrection of *the sole appearance* which will be transposed into a pneumatic body... It is absolutely absurd to limit the resurrection to *the sole appearance*, since souls, even after exiting the flesh, never seem to abandon *the appearance which Origen says to be resurrected*. [...] Origen says that *the appearance* is dissociated from the body and given to the soul. [...] It is inconsistent to claim that *the appearance rises again* without undergoing any damage, while the body, in which *this appearance was stamped*, is destroyed... In Origen's view, perhaps *the figure of the soul at death has an appearance that is similar to the dense and earthly body*» (*ibid.*). Methodius thinks of the appearance, and not of the metaphysical form, as is confirmed by his conviction that the souls of Moses and Elijah retained this «appearance» which enabled them to be seen at the Transfiguration.

74. Proclus, a character in Methodius's dialogue, supported the resurrection, not of the body's material substratum or ὑποκείμενον, which is in constant transformation, but of the body's εἶδος. Both Proclus and Aglaophon are refuted by Eubulius and Memmianus, who supported the view of the resurrection of the flesh. Origen himself sometimes spoke of the resurrection of the flesh, and that he never denied the resurrection of the body was well

was aware that his technical philosophical terminology could be misunderstood, and therefore renounced using it when speaking to people who had no philosophical formation. The same was done by his fourth-century follower Didymus the Blind, who took over Origen's terminology, but only in the works that addressed a philosophically learned public. In his *Commentary on Zachariah*, for instance, whose public was not restricted to his own disciples, but was much broader, Didymus simplified Origen's theory, preferring a "more introductory" treatment (εἰσαγωγικώτερον). Thus, in this work Origen's technical terms εἶδος and ὑποκείμενον (the former denoting the metaphysical form of the body, which will be identical in the present and in the risen body; the latter indicating the material substratum of the corruptible body, which is in constant flux) are *not* employed. Didymus clearly aimed at avoiding the misunderstanding that these Aristotelian notions had given rise to, even though he himself had a penchant for Aristotelianism. But he renounced these technicalities for the sake of his broader public.

Origen thought that what will be the same in the present and in the risen body is the εἶδος of the body (of which he speaks also in *Princ.* II, 10, 2: «every body is endowed with its individual form»). In fact, every individual has his or her own εἶδος, which endures throughout his or her life and will endure also in the next world, at the resurrection: *eadem in nobis speciem [εἶδος] permanet ab infantiam usque ad senectutem... ipsam permanentem etiam in futuro, plurima tamen immutatione in melius et gloriosius facta... nec haec species [εἶδος] exterminabitur licet gloriosior eius effecta sit permutatio* (*Comm. in Ps. 1 ap. Pamph. Apol.* 141). With εἶδος Origen meant the form as the *metaphysical* principle, in an Aristotelian sense, and more specifically in a sense that was typical of Alexander of Aphrodisias, who was very probably known to him.

Indeed, Origen with his reasoning based on the categories of εἶδος vs. ὕλη-ὑποκείμενον was moving along the Aristotelian line. As a technical term, ὕλη itself is Aristotelian (*Met.* VII, 3, 1029a ff.), and the definition of ὕλη as substratum (ὑποκείμενον) as opposed to the metaphysical form (εἶδος) is exactly one of the two main definitions of matter in Aristotle (the other being that of matter as potency as opposed to the actuality of the εἶδος).⁷⁵ Indeed, ὕλη is identified as the very first meaning of ὑποκείμενον in *Met.* VII, 3, 1029a2-3. Immediately before Origen, the εἶδος vs. ὕλη-ὑποκείμενον binary was a pivotal motif in Alexander's works, especially his

known to Methodius, who, in 3, 22, quoted a section from Origen's lost *De resurrectione*, which begins with "This body awaits resurrection." This is the very same passage that Pamphilus reported in his apology, a work that was probably read by Methodius.

75. See e.g. Fonfara 2003, p. 80-84 on ὑποκείμενον as ὕλη and 43-47 and 73 ff. on ὑποκείμενον in Aristotle, also with Alexander's comments.

Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.⁷⁶ But also in his *Quaestiones* (Φυσικαὶ σχολικαὶ ἀπορίαι καὶ λύσεις),⁷⁷ among much else, Alexander brings up the problem of the relation of εἶδος and ὕλη, of course following Aristotle. In general he emphasises their unity. In this case, Origen may have relied directly on Aristotle; at any rate, it is obvious that he was deploying the Aristotelian binary that in his day was prominent in major works by Alexander of Aphrodisias.

Interestingly, the Aristotelian notion of ὑποκείμενον, which was rejected by the Cappadocians but was well present in Origen and in Aristotle's commentators, will be fruitfully deployed by a much later Origenian, Leontius of Byzantium, in the time of Justinian. He introduced it as a substratum for the human qualities (ποιότητες) in the person of Christ, with the intention to demonstrate that the Chalcedonian dogma of the double nature of Christ in one single *hypostasis* was not at odds with the tenets of Aristotelianism. Krausmüller rightly comments that Leontius «does not simply reproduce Cappadocian teaching, but reinterprets it within the conceptual framework of Aristotelian philosophy».⁷⁸ Leontius's introduction of the substratum goes against the Cappadocian model, coming closer to Aristotelianism, but I suspect that Leontius – albeit without acknowledging it, perhaps because in his time any Origenian allegiance had become dangerous – drew it from the “spiritual father” of the Cappadocians themselves, Origen, who worked with the notion of ὑποκείμενον and whom Leontius knew very well⁷⁹. Indeed, in *Comm. in Io.* X, 37, 246, Origen precisely speaks of the ὑποκείμενον of the Son. It is Origen, I think, who inspired Leontius' adoption of this Aristotelian category in the description of Christ.

This chapter has thus provided further evidence of how Origen imported key themes from Greek classical philosophy and the philosophical debate of his day and used them in his elaboration of core theological doctrines, which were to have an enduring impact on Christian theology.

76. As a consequence, ὕλη and εἶδος occur an impressive amount of times only in his extant Greek works: εἶδος (1840 instances); εἶδους (470); εἶδει (435); εἶδη (647); εἰδῶν (266); εἶδεσι (27); εἶδεσιν (28); ὕλη (739); ὕλης (619); ὕλη (206); ὕλην (495); ὕλαι (22); ὕλῶν (6); ὕλαις (2).

77. Sharples 1992 and 1994.

78. Krausmüller, 2011, p. 484-513; I quote from 486.

79. On Leontius's knowledge of Origen's thought see at least Richard 1947; Beatrice 2009, 517. On his soteriology: Dowling 2010. After 543 Leontius probably felt the need to protest his “orthodoxy” and display a distance from Origenism – whatever this was supposed to be at this point in time.

Alexander's and Origen's Struggle Against Stoic Fatalistic Determinism

Alexander tackled the question of determinism in *De Fato* – which, albeit he never mentions the Stoics therein, is largely considered to be devoted to a refutation of Stoic determinism,⁸⁰ and was completed sometime between 198 and 209 –, and in *De an. c. mant.* ch. 25 Sharples, which summarises his *De Fato*, as well as in some of his *Quaestiones* (2-5). He entered an ancient debate – very lively in his day, as Bardaisan's own *De Fato* testifies – by developing an Aristotelian notion of fate. This ultimately resides in the natural constitution of things, including human nature (*DF* chs. 2-6). Chance resides in what happens against the natural order of things.⁸¹ Alexander deems Stoic compatibilism between Fate and free will unsuccessful, untenable,⁸² and dangerous for moral life, in that it excludes responsibility (*DF* chs. 7-21). It rules out τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν.⁸³ This is in fact the same criticism that Origen levelled against Gnostic determinism. Alexander's «construction of an Aristotelian account of fate and divine providence that limits them to nature and its overall benign order represents quite a weak conception of fate».⁸⁴ This is true; it is a weak notion of Fate that comes close to that of providence, which is no less weak in Alexander.⁸⁵ I would remark that a very similar, very weak conception of Fate – i.e. the order of nature as an expression of divine providence – was maintained by Bardaisan of Edessa in that very same period;⁸⁶ like Origen, Bardaisan too fought both Gnostic and astrological determinism. Later on, Hierocles the Neoplatonist, an admirer of Ammonius Saccas and of Origen himself, in his *On Providence* (reported in Photius *Bibl. cod.* 251, 462b) has the very same concept as Bardaisan displays: «fate depends on providence» and preserves human free will.

80. Hahmann 2005; Natali 2009.

81. On Aristotle's own refutation of determinism, based on chance, accidents, and human freedom, see Dudley 2012.

82. Salles 1998, p. 65-83; Bobzien 1998; Sharples 2008b, essentially on Bobzien's reading of Alexander.

83. For the meanings of ἐφ' ἡμῖν in Imperial literature, in Alexander of Aphrodisias, and in the Stoics see Strobel 2010. His conclusion is that Alexander's notion of ἐφ' ἡμῖν is in the end similar to that of the Stoics, whom he criticised. On the notion of ἐφ' ἡμῖν in Aristotelianism, including Alexander, see Labarrière 2009.

84. Frede 2009, 3c.

85. In Alexander's *Quaestiones* there are some essays on the notion of providence: providence over the objects in the sublunary sphere is exercised by the movement of the heavenly bodies in the sense that they preserve the continuity of the species on earth.

86. See Ramelli 2009a; a volume is forthcoming in Tübingen: *Bardaisan on Human Nature, Fate, and Free Will: The Book of the Laws of Countries*.

Alexander's treatment is very likely to be in the background of Origen's refutation of determinism, all the more so in that Origen not only refuted Gnostic determinism (especially in its Valentinian form involving the different predestination of three classes of humans «by nature», which destroyed free will and responsibility⁸⁷), but precisely also *Stoic* determinism – just like Alexander – in his criticism of the Stoic notion of *apokatastasis* and of the whole cosmological and ethical conception that was attached to it. Moreover, here, as I shall show, Origen's presentation of Stoic thought is very similar to that of Alexander. Indeed, Origen's attack on Stoic determinism has much in common with Alexander's.

In *De or.* VI, 2 Origen avers that a human being can never act as though he or she were not responsible for his or her deeds and thereby liable to praise or blame. Origen is in line with Alexander's polemic against Stoic fatalism and his reception of Carneades' objection to it (the ἀργὸς λόγος argument).⁸⁸ The very arguments based on the importance of praise and blame and the prayer of request and thanksgiving are the same in Origen (the author of a *De oratione*) and Alexander (see esp. *DF* 20). More specifically, Origen launched into a refutation of Stoic determinism within his discussion of the Stoic view of the succession of aeons and *apokatastasis*⁸⁹ with its deterministic implications. Origen refuted these more than once (both in works preserved entirely in Greek and in others preserved in Latin translation, such as *CC* IV, 12; IV, 67-68; V, 20; *Princ.* II, 3, so that the first three Greek passages fully confirm the last). He wanted to make it clear that his own Christian doctrine of *apokatastasis* was quite different from the Stoic one, and did not imply determinism.

There are two main differences between the Stoic theory of *apokatastasis* and Origen's Christian doctrine of *apokatastasis*. The first is that the Stoics posited an *infinite* series of aeons, whereas Origen postulated an end

87. See Ramelli 2006.

88. See Amand 1945.

89. The term ἀποκατάστασις is referred by Eusebius to the Stoic cosmological conception of the cyclical return of the universe to its original condition at the end of every great year: «The common logos, that is, the common nature, becomes more and more abundant, and in the end dries up everything and resolves everything into itself. It returns to the first logos and the famous resurrection [ἀνάστασις] that makes the great year, when the universal restoration [ἀποκατάστασις] takes place» (*PE* XV, 19, 1-3). However, ἀποκατάστασις is not used to designate this Stoic doctrine in pagan sources. Marcus Aurelius *Ad seips.* 11, 1, 3; Simplicius *In Ar. Phys.* 886, 12-13, and precisely Alexander of Aphrodisias as quoted by Philoponus *In Ar. Gen. et corr.* 314, 13-15 rather use παλιγγενεσία and πάλιν γίγνομαι. Ἀποκατάστασις is only used by other Christian sources such as Nemesius *NH* 38 (= *SVF* II, 625): «The Stoics maintain that the planets will return [ἀποκαθισταμένους] into the same constellation ... Universal restoration [ἀποκατάστασις] takes place not only once, but many times, or better the same things will continue to be repeated [ἀποκαθιστάσθαι] indefinitely, without end.»

of all aeons, which coincides with *apokatastasis* itself. This will put an end to every time and every aeon. The second difference between Origen's doctrine of *apokatastasis* and the Stoic, deterministic one is the following: while the Stoics thought that in each aeon everything would happen, and the same people would behave, in the very same way (or almost)⁹⁰ as in all the others, Origen thought of each aeon as different from all others, in that they are the theatre of the moral and spiritual development of rational creatures and their free choices.⁹¹ The point against determinism was really the gist of Origen's polemic against the Stoic notion of «periodic time». For example, in *CC IV*, 12 and 67-68, absolutely reliable passages preserved in their original Greek and not in translation, nor in fragments, Origen criticises the Stoic theory exactly because it denies human free will and responsibility (with the relevant above-mentioned argument of praise and blame):

If this is the case, our *freedom of will* is over. For, if during given cycles, out of necessity, the same things have happened, happen, and will happen... it is clear that out of necessity Socrates will always devote himself to philosophy, and will be accused of introducing new divinities and of corrupting youth; and that Anitus and Meletus will always be his accusers, and that the Areopagus judges will condemn him to death... If one accepts this idea, I do not quite know how *our freedom* will be saved and how *praises and blames* will possibly be justified. (*CC IV*, 67-68.)

In *Princ.* II, 3, 4, a passage in translation definitely accredited by the previous passages in Greek, the Stoic doctrine of periodical time is again accused of denying human free will and responsibility (with the difference that the examples adduced here are not from Greek philosophy [Socrates], as in the debate with the Middle Platonist Celsus, but from Scripture):

I do not quite know what arguments can be adduced by those who maintain that the aeons follow each other being perfectly identical to one another. For, if one aeon will be perfectly identical to another, Adam and Eve will do for the second time the same things that they already did... Judas will betray the Lord again, and Paul will keep again the mantels of those who were stoning Stephen, and all that has happened in this life will happen again.

But this theory can be supported by no argument, since *souls are pushed by their free will*, and their progresses and regresses depend on the faculty of their will. Indeed, souls are not induced to do or wish this or that by the circular movement of the heavenly bodies that after many aeons accom-

90. See the detailed treatment of Gourinat 2002.

91. See my *Tempo ed eternità in età antica e patristica: tra grecità, ebraismo e cristianesimo*, forthcoming, introductory essay.

plish the same cycle, but *wherever the freedom of their inclination has pushed them*, there they orient the course of their actions.

As for the refutation of the infinity of aeons postulated by the Stoics, Origen delivers this in many places. For instance, in *Princ.* II, 3, 5 the end of all aeons is affirmed, coinciding with the final *apokatastasis*, «when all will be no more in an aeon, but God will be “all in all”». ⁹² Already *ibid.* 3, 1, Origen envisaged «a stage in which there will be no aeon any more». Likewise in a passage preserved in the original Greek and not fragmentary, *Comm. in Io.* XIII, 3, he asserts that after «life in the future aeon» in Christ, ⁹³ there will come the eventual *apokatastasis*, in which all will be in the Father, and God – who transcends time and aeons – will be «all in all». ⁹⁴

Alexander of Aphrodisias, too, like Origen, was very well acquainted with the Stoic notion of recurrent aeons and discussed it in a citation by Philoponus *In Ar. Gen. et corr.* 314, 13-15, as I have mentioned, and several other passages, such as *In Ar. Anal. Pr.*, 180, 31-36: ⁹⁵ «In their opinion, after the conflagration [ἐκπύρωσιν], all the beings that exist in the cosmos come into existence again *numerically* [πάλιν πάντα γίνεσθαι κατ’ ἀριθμόν], so that the being endowed with a quality of its own is again the same [πάλιν τὸν αὐτόν] as before and comes to being in that cosmos, as Chrysippus maintains in his *On the Cosmos*.» The numerical identity of each being in each cosmos is not precluded by minimal differences, as Alexander clarifies shortly afterwards: «Regarding the beings endowed with a quality of their own that exist subsequently, they may differ from those which existed formerly only with respect to some exterior accidents, such as the transformations that affect Dion while he remains *the same person* all his life long; these transformations do not make him *a different person*. Indeed, he does not become *another person* if, for instance, he had warts on his face and then no more. They [*sc.* the Stoics] claim that such differences occur in the beings endowed with a quality of their own in a world, vis-à-vis those which exist in another.» (*In Ar. Anal. Pr.*, 181, 25-31.)

92. 1 Cor 15:28.

93. Gr. αἰώνιος. See Ramelli 2008c.

94. Similarly, in *Sel. in Ps.* 60, after the sojourn in the aeons there comes the dwelling, not only in the Son, but also in the Father, indeed in the Holy Trinity; this is *apokatastasis*. This idea corresponds to what is expressed also in *Comm. in Io.* X, 39 and III, 10, 3. In *Hom. in Ex.* 6, 13, too, Origen foresees the end of all aeons.

95. Analysed by Gourinat 2002, who also distinguishes Zeno’s doctrine from Chrysippus’s modified doctrine (his modifications aimed at attenuating the doctrine’s necessitarianism) and notes that some Stoics, such as Zeno of Tarsus and Diogenes of Babylon, and especially Boethus and Panaetius, did not profess that doctrine.

Two main elements in Alexander's treatment of the Stoic doctrine of recurrent worlds need to be stressed in relation to Origen's own treatment of the same. They concern the notion of numerical identity and of the continued identity of an individual throughout more worlds. Gourinat⁹⁶ rightly noticed that the concept of numerical identity seems to be superimposed by Alexander (and other Aristotelian commentators such as Philoponus, who quotes Alexander, and Simplicius) on Chrysippus' text. For the expression itself comes from Aristotle *De gen. et corr.* II, 11, 338b18,⁹⁷ who clearly had a different idea from what Chrysippus had: according to Aristotle, numerically identical beings can recur only if their substance is necessary, i.e. incorruptible. This is not the case with people, whose recurrence the Stoics did maintain. I note that the same Aristotelian expression occurs in a scholion to Epicurus's *Κυρία Δόξα* I: «the deities can be contemplated by means of reason, and do not subsist separately by number [κατ' ἀριθμόν].»⁹⁸ What is more, Origen uses precisely this phrase, κατ' ἀριθμόν, more than once, and this only in his extant Greek works; he couples it with the parallel expression τῷ ἀριθμῷ, and uses both expressions in the sense of numerical identity or distinction – exactly as Alexander does. Origen often uses κατ' ἀριθμόν, in his debate with the Middle Platonist Celsus and elsewhere.⁹⁹ In *Comm. in Io.* X, 37, 246, which is preserved in the original Greek and is not a fragment either, Origen is criticising those who believe that the Father and the Son are not numerically distinct but share, not only the common substance of the Trinity, but also their individual substratum: ᾤοντο... μὴ διαφέρειν τῷ ἀριθμῷ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ πατρὸς, ἀλλ' ἐν οὐ μόνον οὐσίᾳ ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑποκειμένῳ τυγχάνοντας ἀμφοτέρους, κατὰ τινὰς ἐπινοίας διαφόρους, οὐ κατὰ ὑπόστασιν λέγεσθαι πατέρα καὶ υἱόν. Origen is adopting Aristotelian categories, including that of ὑποκείμενον, to explain the theological position of his adversaries; τῷ ἀριθμῷ here is tantamount to κατὰ ὑπόστασιν.¹⁰⁰ In *Princ.* I, fr. 10 from Just. *Ep. ad Menam* 210, 25-27

96. Gourinat 2002, p. 222-226.

97. See also *Met.* 1016b31; *Top.* 103a9.

98. See also fr. 355 Us.; fr. 193 Arr.; fr. 194 and 195 Arr.

99. *CC* IV, 8: ἔστησεν ὅρια ἐθνῶν κατ' ἀριθμόν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ; the same expression occurs in *CC* V, 29; *Comm. in Io.* XIII, 50, 332; *Philoc.* 22, 7; *Exp. in Prov. Cat.* PG XVII, 249, 30; a slight variation is in *Comm. in Matt.* XI, 16: ἔστησε κατὰ ἀριθμόν υἱὸν Ἰσραήλ. See also *Ep. ad Afr.* PG XI 53, 16: κατὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν; *de Pascha* p. 112, 11: Κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ψυχῶν ἕκαστος τὸ ἀρκοῦν αὐτῷ συναριθμῆσεται; *ibid.* p. 114, 23: ὁ πλήρης ἀριθμὸς οὗτος καὶ ὁ τῆς ἀργίας, καθ' ὃν ἀριθμὸν καὶ ὁ πλείστος ὄχλος ὁ χεῖρας ἔχων ἀργὰς καὶ μὴ ἐργαζόμενος ἕως ἡμέρας ἐστὶν ἀναστρέφεται. These are all passages preserved in their original Greek, and almost all of them are not fragments either.

100. Here, on the contrary, the expression τῷ ἀριθμῷ has no technical meaning; *Comm. in Matth.* XII, 15: οὐχ ὁμοίως τρανοῦντες καὶ καταλαμβάνοντες τὰ γινωσκόμενα οὐδὲ τῷ ἀριθμῷ

Schw. an analogous expression occurs in an opposition between genera and species, which are common, and individuals, which are numerically singular and identified as such: Πάντα τὰ γένη καὶ τὰ εἶδη αἰεὶ ἦν, ἄλλος δὲ τις ἐρεῖ καὶ τὸ καθ' ἐν ἀριθμῷ· πλὴν ἐκατέρως δηλοῦται ὅτι οὐκ ἤρξατο ὁ θεὸς δημιουργεῖν ἀργήσας ποτέ, «All genera and species existed from eternity; someone else will say that also what is numerically singular did. Either way it is clear that God did not begin to create at a certain point, while earlier he was idle.» Quotations from a hostile and late source such as Justinian – who received his information from the anti-Origenistic monks of the Laura of St. Sabas – must always be handled with care and suspicion. However, in this case the technical point of numerical identity is correct, even though Justinian is misrepresenting Origen's theory of the presence of the ideas or *logoi* of all things in God's Logos-Wisdom *ab aeterno*, in order to falsely attribute to Origen the doctrine of the coeternity of creatures with their Creator.

Also, the focus on becoming a different person or not in the next world, which emerges in the second passage from Alexander that I have quoted, is the very same as Origen's concern for the continued identity of the person who will be resurrected in the next world. Origen insists that it must be the very same person even if with different characteristics, and not a different person (*Princ.* III, 6, 6; *Fr. in Luc.* fr. 140; *De res.* II ap. Pamph. *Apol.* 132; CC III, 42, preserved in Greek and not fragmentary; I have already quoted *Comm. in Ps.* 1 ap. Pamph. *Apol.* 141, which speaks of the enduring identity of each single individual throughout the present life and in the next world). And, as I have already indicated, what guarantees that it will be the same person, in Origen's view, is the continuity of the metaphysical εἶδος (in contrast with the ὑποκείμενον of ὄλη): this was an Aristotelian concept which Origen evidently knew and with whose treatment in Alexander of Aphrodisias Origen was probably acquainted. For Origen, too, the numerical identity of rational creatures must be preserved throughout the aeons and after the resurrection. When he insists that God made everything «in number and measure», he understands this as the creation of a certain number of rational creatures that will have to remain unaltered until the end, thus preserving the individual, numerical identity of each one: *Fecit se dignas creaturas, id est quae eum digne capere possent ... fecit autem omnia numero et mensura ... omnis igitur creatura intra certum apud eum numerum mensuramque distinguitur, id est vel rationabilium numerum vel mensura materiae corporalis.* (*Princ.* IV, 4, 8.)

τοσαῦτα γινώσκοντες τοῦτο ἐροῦσιν; (Origen's adversaries «do not know so many things, not even by number»: they do not even know how many they are.)

The ways in which Alexander and Origen both presented aspects of Stoic determinism and countered it are remarkably similar. If not absolutely certain, it is at least very probable that Origen had Alexander on his mind in this regard.¹⁰¹ It is also clear, once again, that fundamental ontological categories such as those of substratum, metaphysical form, and numerical identity, which had a long tradition in Aristotelianism and Stoicism and were being brought up in early Imperial philosophical debates, were applied by Origen to pivotal and philosophically problematic Christian doctrines such as that of the resurrection.

God as Intellect in Alexander and Origen

Close parallels between Alexander's and Origen's philosophy emerge from their concept of the Intellect and God. This is noteworthy and points to a probable influence of Alexander on Origen in this respect. Alexander – not without forcing Aristotle's thought – identified Aristotle's agent Intellect (νοῦς) with God and the first principle, i.e. the Intellect coming from outside.¹⁰² Origen too, in the very same way, identified the νοῦς with God and the first principle; e.g. in *Princ.* I, 1, 6, speaking of the first ἀρχή, Origen describes it as follows: “*Deus ... intellectualis natura simplex ... ex omni parte μονὰς et, ut ita dicam, ἐνὰς, et mens ac fons ex quo initium totius intellectualis naturae vel mentis est... natura illa simplex et tota mens*”. Rufinus in his translation retained Origen's original Greek formulation of God as μονὰς καὶ ἐνὰς. The definition of God as intellect clearly emerges also in a text preserved in its original Greek and not fragmentary, such as *CC VII*, 38, which definitely validates the previous passage: νοῦν τοίνυν ἢ ἐπέκεινα νοῦ καὶ οὐσίας... ἀπλοῦν καὶ ἀσώματον τὸν τῶν ὅλων θεόν, as well as in another passage preserved in Greek, *Fr. in Io.* fr. 13: αὐτὸς ὢν καὶ ἡ νόησις καὶ τὸ νοούμενον. The last two Greek passages therefore confirm the accuracy of Rufinus's translation of the first. I shall soon return to the definition of God as intellect, beyond intellect, incorporeal, and both subject and object of intellection.

Now, before Origen, Alexander was the first who identified the νοῦς with the first cause (*De an.* 89, 9-19) and with God (*De int.* 109, 23-110, 3¹⁰³), and this on the basis of the fact that the agent Intellect is impassible, in that it is not mixed with matter: ἀπαθὴς δὲ ὢν καὶ μὴ μειγμένος ὕλῃ;

101. Jackson 1996 rightly admits, albeit vaguely, an Aristotelian influence on Origen.

102. Boeri 2009, p. 79-107, argues that Alexander's identification is wrong from the exegetical point of view. See also Donini and Accatino 1994, p. 373-375; Moraux 1942.

103. It must be noted that Aristotle is said to have described God as both νοῦς and beyond the νοῦς in his lost treatise on prayer (fr. 49 Rose). Likewise Origen, the author of a Περὶ εὐχῆς himself, described God as both νοῦς and ἐπέκεινα νοῦ καὶ οὐσίας (*CC VII*, 38).

therefore it is incorruptible, ἀφθαρτος – and it can be independent of matter because it is an act and a metaphysical Form (ἐνέργεια ὧν καὶ εἶδος; *De an.* 89, 16-17). For Origen, too, God is the only being who is totally unmixed with matter (*Princ.* II, 2, 2; I, 6, 4; IV, 3, 15; *Hom. in Ex.* 6, 5), and thereby totally incorruptible; Origen indeed remarks that wherever matter is, corruption creeps in. I have already quoted his declaration of the incorporeality of God in the Greek, non-fragmentary passage from *Contra Celsum* (VII, 38). Consistently, the whole of Origen's treatment of God as the first principle, at the very beginning of *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*, teems with declarations that God is incorporeal. Already in his Preface, 9, he states that he intends to investigate *si vel alio nomine res ipsa, quam Graeci philosophi ἄσώματον (id est incorporeum) dicunt, in sanctis scripturis invenitur*. Rufinus left again Origen's technical term ἄσώματον in Greek, just as he did with μονὰς καὶ ἐνὰς. His very first words, in *Princ.* I, 1, 1, aim at correcting the impression that Scripture may convey the idea of a corporeal God (*scio quoniam conabuntur quidam etiam secundum scripturas nostras dicere Deum corpus esse*). In the treatment that follows immediately, and focuses on God as the first principle, Origen demonstrates precisely that God is incorporeal; for instance, *non ergo corpus aliquod aut in corpore esse putandus est Deus... non indiget loco corporeo neque sensibili magnitudine vel corporali habitu aut colore, neque alio ullo prorsus indiget horum quae corporis vel materiae propria sunt* (*Princ.* I, 1, 6). Likewise God is called ἄσώματον not only in *CC* VII, 38, a Greek non-fragmentary passage that confirms those from *De Principiis*, but also in several other passages in which Origen hammers home the complete immateriality of God.¹⁰⁴ Origen, again like Alexander, also underlines the perpetual activity of God, especially in his argument on creation – in *Princ.* I, 4, 4-5, where he wants to rule out that there was any time when God was not active –,¹⁰⁵ but also already at the beginning of his treatment of God as first principle, and precisely in connection with the nature of God as Nous: *natura illa simplex et tota mens ut moveatur vel operetur aliquid nihil dilationis aut cunctationis habere potest* (*Princ.* I, 1, 6). God is perpetually active.

104. E.g. IV 3, 15: «The Trinity's substance... is neither corporeal nor endowed with body, but it is wholly incorporeal.»

105. «Deum quidem Patrem semper fuisse, semper habentem unigenitum Filium, qui simul et Sapientia... appellatur. [...] In hac igitur Sapientia, quae semper erat cum Patre, descripta semper inerat ac formata conditio et numquam erat quando eorum, quae futura erant, praefiguratio apud Sapientiam non erat. [...] ut neque ingenitas neque coaeternas Deo creaturas dicamus, neque rursum, cum nihil boni prius egerit Deus, in id ut ageret esse conversum... Si utique in Sapientia omnia facta sunt, cum Sapientia semper fuerit, secundum praefigurationem et praeformationem semper erant in Sapientia ea, quae protinus etiam substantialiter facta sunt.»

Guyomarc'h studied how Alexander in *De anima* identifies the agent intellect with Aristotle's prime mover and describes it as a «first cause» and a form without matter and separate¹⁰⁶. Guyomarc'h noted that Aristotle never calls the prime mover a form, but only characterises it as an act, and argued that Alexander, by describing it as a form (εἶδος, *species*), gets closer to Platonism. I deem it noteworthy that Origen, too, like Alexander, describes God as a form, right in his initial treatment of God as the first ἀρχή in his Περὶ Ἀρχῶν, and, exactly like Alexander, connects this description with the complete separation between God and matter: *quod oportet totius corporeae admixtionis alienum una sola, ut ita dixerim, deitatis specie constare* (*Princ.* I, 1, 6). Origen's use of the formula *ut ita dixerim* makes it even more probable that he is drawing the definition of God as *species* from the philosophical tradition (rather than Scripture); within this tradition, Alexander is the closest and likeliest candidate. Also, Alexander's definition of God as «first cause» is identical to Origen's definition at the beginning of Περὶ Ἀρχῶν, where he repeatedly describes God as *omnium initium* and *ipsum principium* (*Princ.* I, 1, 6).

The Nous that is God – Alexander avers – is not a part or a power or faculty of the human soul, as the human intellect can be (*De int.* 108, 22-23).¹⁰⁷ Origen too distinguishes very clearly God the Nous from the *nous* as a faculty of each soul. Alexander argues that the Intellect which he identifies with God «is more powerful than that which is in us and is material [τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ ὕλικου], because... what is separable from matter is more powerful than what is in matter» (*De an.* 88, 19-21). Origen also thinks that only God is free from matter, while all created intellects have a body, heavier or lighter, and therefore are material to a certain extent (*Princ.* II, 2, 2; I, 6, 4; *Hom. in Ex.* 6, 5: «No one is invisible, *incorporeal*, immutable, beginningless and endless... *but the Father with the Son and the Holy Spirit*»). I shall return to this in a moment.

Precisely in relation to Origen's description of God as «One» (ἐν), a typical Aristotelian echo is to be found in his philosophical commentary on John. The section of this commentary that was devoted to the great prayer for unity in John 17 is lost, but a fragment on John 17:11 survives in Greek from the *Catena* (fr. 140), in which Origen explains that «“One” has many meanings», Τὸ ἐν πολλαχῶς λέγεται, καὶ καθ' ὁμοιότητα καὶ καθ' ἕτερα πολλά· καὶ κατὰ μὲν συμφωνίαν, ὅταν εἴπῃ... all the examples follow. This obviously echoes Aristotle's Τὸ ὅν λέγεται πολλαχῶς,¹⁰⁸ and even more

106. Guyomarc'h 2008.

107. In *De anima cum Mantissa*, chapter 2 Sharples is devoted to the intellect. It is typical of Alexander to devote more than one work, or section of work, to a theme.

108. *Met.* 1003a33; b5; 1026b2; 1028a5.10; 992b19; *De an.* 410a13; cf. *Eth. Eud.* 1217b25.

closely *Met.* 1004a22: πολλαχῶς τὸ ἐν λέγεται, which is repeated *ibid.* 1005a7 and *Phys.* 227b3 (cf. *Met.* 1077b17; *Met.* 1018a35: τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ ὄν πολλαχῶς λέγεται; *Phys.* 185b6: τὸ ἐν πολλαχῶς λέγεται ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ ὄν; *Soph. el.* 182b27: διὰ τὸ πολλαχῶς φάναι τὸ ἐν λέγεσθαι καὶ τὸ ὄν).¹⁰⁹ Origen's sentence is indeed identical. That Origen is specifically referring to Greek philosophy is indicated in an absolutely reliable text, preserved in Greek, and not a fragment or a translation: *Comm. in Io.* I 90, where he begins by stating that «it is *not only the Greeks* who say that ἀρχή has many meanings» (οὐ μόνον Ἕλληνες πολλὰ φασὶ σημαίνόμενα εἶναι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς προσηγορίας). The very phrase πολλαχῶς λέγεσθαι, «to be said in many senses, to have many meanings», used by Origen in his commentary on John 17, is typical of Aristotle: there are 61 occurrences in his corpus. And it is even more typical of Alexander of Aphrodisias, in whose works it occurs 81 times. Origen uses πολλαχῶς in reference to the manifold predications of something also in *Fr. in Io.* fr. 121: σχοινίον μὲν γὰρ πολλαχῶς ἡ γραφή τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὠνόμασε; examples follow.¹¹⁰ He clearly has in mind Aristotle and/or his commentator Alexander. Origen embraced core ideas of their metaphysical armament, applying them to the highest doctrine of Christian theology, that of the Godhead itself.

The Immortality of the Soul and Plato's Ideas Reinterpreted in Alexander and Origen

Both Alexander and Origen reinterpreted Plato's doctrine of the Ideas. Alexander, *In Ar. Metaph.* 79, 3-98, 24, is the major source of evidence for Aristotle's lost *De Ideis*, and comments on the two chapters of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (A6; A9) that criticise Plato's doctrine of the Ideas¹¹¹ on the grounds that it entailed a useless multiplication of beings. Alexander's treatment is also a remarkable source on Plato's «unwritten doctrines» and their reception. It has been suggested that Alexander endeavoured to correct the interpretation of Aristotle's theory as a doctrine of the immanent form,¹¹² and that he may have contributed to the widespread Imperial Platonic notion that the Ideas are in the mind of God.¹¹³ This is usually considered to be a typical Middle Platonic doctrine, and Origen definitely embraced it. In this perspective, the Ideas are in God's Logos,

109. See also *Met.* 1052a15, 1060b32; *Phys.* 185a21; 206a21.

110. See also two passages preserved in Greek such as *De or.* 8, 2 (ὠφέλειαν δὲ ἐγγίνεσθαι τῷ ὄντι δὲ τρόπον εὐχομένῳ ἢ ἐπὶ τοῦτο κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν ἐπειγομένῳ πολλαχῶς ἡγοῦμαι συμβαίνειν) and *Comm. in Rom.* I-XII *Cat.* 53, 4: πολλαχῶς δὲ ἔστι πεινῶντα θρέψαι τὸν ἐχθρὸν ποτὲ μὲν λόγῳ διδασκαλικῶ ποτὲ δὲ εὐχῇ τῇ περὶ αὐτοῦ.

111. Lefebvre 2008.

112. Rashed 2008b.

113. Armstrong 1960.

rather than in the «*hyperouranios*», however this was defined (as a place, a state, and so on).

What Origen criticises in *Princ.* II 3, 6 is not Plato's view;¹¹⁴ *Ne forte aliquibus praebeatur occasio illius intelligentiae qua putent nos imagines quasdam, qua Graeci ιδέας nominant, adfirmare; quo utique a nostris rationibus alienum est mundum incorporeum dicere in sola mentis fantasia vel cogitationum lubrico consistentem*, «Let nobody be offered the occasion to interpret that I affirm the existence of certain images, which the Greeks call Ideas, because it is alien to my reasoning to maintain the existence of an incorporeal world *that consists only in fantasy, or mental representation, and in the fallaciousness/transitoriness of thoughts.*» Plato did not at all regard his metaphysical Ideas as images, fantasies, or thoughts, or mental representations that can be wrong or are transitory. Nor did Origen consider the Ideas or Forms inside God's Logos in this way: the κόσμος νοητός that resides in God's Wisdom-Logos is far from being fallacious, because God's Wisdom-Logos is Truth itself, and is far from being transitory, because God's Wisdom-Logos, i.e. God's Son, who is God, is eternal (as God alone is). Indeed, in *Comm. in Io.* I, 9 (11) and especially XIX, 22 (5), 147, both passages preserved in the original Greek and not fragmentary, the Son, as God's Wisdom containing many forms, is identified with the intelligible world: the Son-Wisdom is «he himself a world [καὶ αὐτὸς κόσμος], having many more forms than the sense-perceptible world [τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ κόσμου] has» and is a world «deprived of every matter». Indeed it is a νοητὸς κόσμος.

What Origen is describing in *Princ.* II 3, 6 is rather a philosophical theory that identified the ideas with thoughts and mental representations, such as the Stoic theory. His description, indeed, is perfectly consistent with other testimonies – mostly coming from commentators of Aristotle! – concerning the Stoic view of the ideas. For instance, SVF I, 494, stemming from Syrianus's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, attests that Cleanthes considered the ideas [ιδέας] to be thoughts [ἐννοήματα]. SVF II, 364 comes again from the same commentary on Aristotle by Syrianus, and attests to the same thing, but using εἶδη instead of ιδέαι. In SVF II, 360 (= SVF II, 65b), Aetius briefly states that «the Stoics, followers of Zeno, said that the ideas [ιδέας] are our thoughts [ἐννοήματα]». In SVF II, 278, Simplicius in his commentary on Aristotle's *Categories* reports that for this reason «Chrysippus was uncertain whether to call the idea [ιδέα] αὐτὸ τί. The idea is not a substance or an individual being because it is just a thought, a concept. Therefore, the Stoics «defined the universals “non-something”» (οὐ τίνα τὰ κοινά, *ibid.*). In SVF II, 65a

114. Boys-Stones 2011, 334, agrees with me on this score.

Stobaeus confirms that the followers of Zeno regarded the ideas (ιδέαι) as concepts or thoughts (ἐννοήματα), without a substantial existence of their own (ἀνυπάρχοντες εἶναι). In SVF II, 65bc, Diogenes Laertius, reporting the Stoic position concerning the ideas, describes ἐννόημα as φάντασμα διανοίας. Origen in *Princ.* II 3, 6 seems to me to be quoting this Stoic definition when he refers to *mentis fantasia vel cogitationum* (and this quotation obviously stems from Origen himself, and not from Rufinus). As a consequence, Origen is not criticising Plato's Ideas, and least of all the Middle Platonic Ideas as God's thoughts, but the Stoic doctrine of the ideas as thoughts and mental representations.

Alexander, explaining Aristotle's words, writes that «the Forms are cause of the essence for the other things, and the One for the Forms» (*In Ar. Metaph. A*, 59, 1-9), and Origen would have subscribed to this, meaning with «the One» the Divinity, μονὰς καὶ ἑνὰς, who is the seat of the Forms with its Wisdom-Logos. The Ideas/Forms (εἶδη) or λόγοι (*rationes*) of all beings – Origen adopts the Platonic and Aristotelian terminology as well as the Stoic – preexist *ab aeterno* in God's Logos-Wisdom. Then these Forms or *logoi* became substances only when they were created as independent beings. First the Forms-*logoi* existed in a pre-figuration or pre-formation: *secundum praefigurationem et praeformationem semper erant in Sapientia ea, quae protinus etiam substantialiter facta sunt* (*Princ.* I, 4, 4-5). The same view is also expressed in a passage preserved in the original Greek and not fragmentary, and thus able to corroborate the previous one: *Comm. in Io.* I, 19, 114-115. Here Origen uses the metaphor of a project in an architect's mind that was used by Philo:¹¹⁵ «Everything comes to existence thanks to Wisdom and the impressions of the complex of thoughts inside the Logos [τοὺς τύπους τοῦ συστήματος τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ νοημάτων]. Let me offer a simile. A house or ship are built on architectonic models, so one can say that the principle of the house or ship consists in the paradigms and *logoi* found in the craftsman. In the same way, I think, all things were made according to the *logoi* of future beings that God had already manifested beforehand in Wisdom. It is necessary to maintain that God founded [κτίσας], so to say, a living Wisdom, and handed it the task of transmitting the structure [πλάσις], forms [εἶδη], and, to my mind, substances [οὐσίαι] too, from the archetypes in it to beings and matter». God's Wisdom is God's Logos in its creative aspect, as is clear also in *Fr. in Io.* fr. 1 l. 67, also transmitted in Greek: ἦν νῦν καλοῦσιν κατ' οὐσίαν αἱ γραφαί, ἥ μὲν ὠκείωται τῷ θεῷ Σοφία, ἥ δὲ νένευκεν, ἵν' οὕτως εἴπω, πρὸς τὰ δημιουργήματα ὁ δημιουργικὸς Λόγος. οὐκ ἐνταῦθα δὲ μόνον ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ υἱὸς Λόγος εἴρηται· ἔστι δὲ παραθέσθαι ῥητὰ οὐκ ἐκ τῆς καινῆς μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκ τῆς παλαιᾶς· «Τῷ Λόγῳ γὰρ κυρίου οὐρανοὶ ἐστερεώθησαν»; *Sel. in Ps.* (Greek fragments from the

115. See Ramelli 2014b.

Catena) PG XII, 1296, 38: οἱ λόγοι εἰσὶ τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς, οἱ χαρακτηρίζοντες τὸν δημιουργικὸν αὐτοῦ Λόγον. God's Wisdom, as demiurgic or creative Logos, contains all the Forms-*logoi* or paradigms of all creatures. These existed there *ab aeterno*, before their creation as substances. But they do not exist *ab aeterno* substantially as creatures. In this respect, not even rational creatures are coeternal with God, since only God is eternal proper¹¹⁶.

But what about the immortality of souls? Alexander reworked one of Plato's arguments for the immortality of the soul; he used Aristotelian logic to elaborate this Platonic argument found in *Phaedr.* 245C-246A,¹¹⁷ something that Origen must have appreciated. For Origen, the soul is mortal with respect to «the real death» (τοῦ ὄντως θανάτου, *Dial. c. Her.* 26, preserved in Greek and not fragmentary),¹¹⁸ but this is a spiritual and not an ontological destruction. From the ontological point of view, God «made all beings that they might exist, and what was made in order to exist cannot fail to exist. Therefore, creatures can receive transformations and variety of aspects, so that, with respect to their *merits*, they will be found in *better or worse conditions*. However, the beings that God created in order for them to exist and endure *cannot undergo a destruction in their very substance*» (*Princ.* III, 6, 5).¹¹⁹ A similar ontological argument is presented by Origen in his debate with the philosopher Celsus in *CC* V, 22, a Greek and non-fragmentary text. Here Origen insists that, unlike the material world, the *logoi* of God's creatures – being the Forms that subsist in God's Logos – will never pass away: «Even if heaven and earth and all that is in them will pass away, the *logoi* of every being, though, will not pass away, by all means, since they are parts of a whole of *forms or species of the Logos*, who was God the Logos in the beginning».

It is in a spiritual sense that the souls which embrace evil come close to non-being, because evil is non-being; only God/the Good is the true Being. The Good has a priority that is not only moral, but ontological, since it is God, and qua God it is the true Being. Evil has no ontological consistence. According to Origen (*CC* IV, 63, an utterly reliable Greek text), just as to Plato (*Resp.* 445C6), it is indefinite, ἀόριστον, like non-

116. See Ramelli 2008c. On God as absolutely transcending time see Tzamalikos 2006, p. 21-38, with my review in *Rivista di Filosofia Neoscholastica* 99 (2007), p. 177-181.

117. Longo 2009, p. 145-164. On Alexander's use of Aristotelian logic see also Rashed 2007.

118. The same idea returns in a Greek, non-fragmentary passage, *Comm. in Matth.* XII, 33, 12: «The enemy of this Life, which will be destroyed as the last enemy of all his [*sc.* of Christ, who is Life] enemies, is death (1 Cor 15:26), *the death that the sinning soul dies*», θάνατον ἐστὶν ὃν ψυχὴ ἢ ἁμαρτάνουσα ἀποθνήσκει. Cf. Ramelli 2011c.

119. Only God can destroy them, but that God will never destroy the substance of those beings that he created is made clear also in *Hom. in Ier.* 1, 16, in which Origen joins this point with that of the eventual eradication of evil.

being; it is dispersed in multiplicity, whereas virtue, like the Good – who is God, the One –, is one and simple. In *Comm. in Io.* II, 13, another fully reliable, Greek, and non-fragmentary text, Origen is clear that «the one who *is good* coincides with the One who *Is*. On the contrary, evil and meanness are opposed to the Good and *non-being* to Being. As a consequence, meanness and evil are non-being [οὐκ ὄν]». This is why choosing evil means becoming «non-being», but Origen warns again that this cannot mean a substantial annihilation of the creatures of God: *Si autem a Te exiero, perdidi etiam hoc ipsum quod sum, et ero tamquam qui non est... in nobis est, sive ut simus sive ut non simus. Donec enim adhaeremus Deo et inhaeremus ei qui vere est, etiam nos sumus. Sin autem abscesserimus a Deo... vitio in contrarium decidimus. Non ergo per hoc substantialis animae designatur interitus* (*Hom. 2 in Ps. 38, 12*).¹²⁰ Origen adds the last sentence because thinkers such as Philo thought that a soul that does evil perishes ontologically altogether,¹²¹ and probably also because some, including the Stoics and some Aristotelians, denied the immortality of the soul.¹²² This was a matter of lively debate at that time. Shortly after Origen, Porphyry, a disciple of Plotinus and likely also of Origen, attacked (in excerpts preserved by Eusebius) the Peripatetic Boethus' criticism of Plato's arguments for the immortality of the soul in his *Phaedo*.¹²³ Besides, from the ethical point of view, it is worth remarking that Origen, along with Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias, believed that virtue must be practiced and has to become an habit to be established (*Princ.* I, 4, 1; III, 1, 1-4). This too is an evident Aristotelian heritage.

120. See also *Princ.* II, 9, 2: «To go far from the Good means nothing but falling into evil, since evil is a loss of Good. This is why it happens that, the more one detaches himself from the Good, the closer one comes to evil.»

121. See Ramelli 2008a. On the death of the soul in Philo and early Imperial philosophy see Ramelli 2010 and Conroy 2011, p. 23-40, who is right to see Philo's notion of the death of the soul as ontological and not just metaphorical, although he does not indicate the close parallels that exist in Roman Stoicism and the New Testament (Paul and Pastoral Epistles), besides Origen.

122. That the annihilation of the wicked for Origen is not ontological, but spiritual, is confirmed by *Hom. 2 in Ps. 38, 1: peccatores ad nihilum redigit: haec est ergo imago terreni id est peccatorum, quam ad nihilum redigit Deus in civitate sua*, and by *Hom. 5 in Ps. 36, 5: «Cum pereunt peccatores videbis.» Fortassis hoc prius erit ut peccatores et impios iusti videant condemnatos. [...] Postea enim quam viderint quomodo pereunt peccatores, tunc ipsi exaltabuntur... «Et ecce non erat [sc. impius].» In die iudicii omnino non esse. Qui enim non est particeps illius qui semper est, iste neque esse dicitur.* The destruction of the sinner in the next world will be the destruction of his sin, so that the sinner will be no longer a sinner, but a righteous: *Hoc enim etiam Dominus pollicetur, ut exterminet romphaeam, id est peccatum, ita ut ultra iam non sit peccator.*

123. See Trabattoni 2011 and Karamanolis 2006, p. 288-297.

What is more, Origen also, like Alexander of Aphrodisias, applied a distinctly syllogistic argument to the immortality of the soul, not only from the ontological, but also from the spiritual point of view – that is to say, in respect to the «death of the soul» that is due to sin, and not to the soul's ontological destruction. What Origen argues in this syllogism is that the death of the soul will come to an end, but not life, basing his argument on the logical notion of «contradictory»: two propositions are contradictory when, if one is true, the other must necessarily be false; «life is eternal» and «death is eternal» are contradictory, so that, if life is eternal, death (which Origen interprets primarily as the death of the soul) cannot possibly be eternal:

Uerumtamen, quamuis permaneat quis in peccato, quamuis sub mortis regno et potestate perduret, non tamen ita aeternum istud mortis esse arbitror regnum ut est uitae atque iustitiae, maxime cum nouissimum inimicum mortem ab apostolo audiam destruendum. Si eadem aeternitas mortis ponatur esse quae uitae est, iam non erit mors uitae contraria, sed aequalis: aeternum enim aeterno contrarium non erit, sed idem. Nunc autem certum est mortem uitae esse contrarium: certum est ergo quod, si uita aeterna est, mors esse non possit aeterna. ... Cum enim mors animae, quae est nouissimus inimicus, fuerit destructa, etiam haec communis mors, quam illius uelut umbram esse diximus, necessario abolebitur, et regnum mortis pariter cum morte destructum erit.

However, even if one may remain in sin, even if one may endure under the royal power of death, I do not think that this reign of death is eternal as that of life and justice is, especially in that I hear from the Apostle that the last enemy, death, must be destroyed [1 Cor 15:26]. For should one suppose that the eternity of death is the same as that of life, death will no longer be the contradictory opposite of life, but equal to it. Because «eternal» is not the contradictory of «eternal», but the same thing. Now, it is certain that death is the contradictory of life; therefore, it is certain that, if life is eternal, death cannot be eternal. ... For, when the death of the soul, which is the very last enemy, has been destroyed, also this common death (which, as I said, is a sort of shadow of the death of the soul) will necessarily be abolished, and the kingdom of death, along with death itself, will be wiped out. (Comm. in Rom. V, 7.)

The very use of logic in this passage, as well as Origen's ideas about death, life, and eternity, rule out the possibility that it might ever be an invention by Rufinus. In general, Rufinus tended to simplify Origen's texts, and to clarify them for his readers, but not to misrepresent, alter, or interpolate them.

In *De anima cum Mantissa*, chs. 3, 4, and 6 Sharples, Alexander strongly attacks the Stoic corporeal view of the soul. This is again an attack that

Origen appreciated. He too insisted on the incorporeal nature of the soul, which is a necessary premise for its immortality; at the very beginning of his *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* he even sets out to develop his discourse on God and rational creatures on the very basis of the bipartition between what is corporeal and what is incorporeal (God, intellectual beings). That souls, *per se* incorporeal, always make use of bodies, corruptible or not, is another story. And it is again a story that bears a striking similarity with Alexander. For the latter, too, maintained that the soul, albeit being no body, only exists in a body, though not as in a subject (*De an. c. mant.* 140, 4-8) and it consists of faculties (*ibid.* 106, 30 f.), as Aristotle indicated in his own *De anima*. Origen also insisted that souls are incorporeal but are always found in bodies. Indeed, I have mentioned that Origen claims that all creatures, including rational creatures, need bodies (of various kinds: incorruptible and light, or heavy and mortal, etc.), whereas only the Trinity can live without a body:

If it is absolutely impossible to claim that any other nature besides the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit can live without a body, the argument's coherence compels to understand that rational beings were created as the principal creation, but the material substance can be separated from them – and thus appear to be created before or after them – only theoretically and mentally, because they can never have lived, or live, without matter [numquam sine ipsa eas vel vixisse vel vivere]. For only the Trinity can correctly be thought to live without a body [incorporea vita existere]. Therefore... the material substance, which by nature is capable of being transformed from all into all, when it is dragged to inferior creatures, is formed into a dense and solid body... but when it serves more perfect and blessed creatures, it shines in the splendour of heavenly bodies and adorns with a spiritual body God's angels and the children of the resurrection. (Princ. II, 2, 2.)

The same is expressed, more concisely, in *Princ.* I, 6, 4: «*I cannot understand how so many substances can live and subsist without a body, whereas it is a prerogative of God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to live without material substance and any union with corporeal elements.*»¹²⁴ Origen could not be clearer that – as Alexander actually maintained too – souls can only be found in bodies, be these earthly or spiritual such as those of angels. This is the case from the very beginning, in his view: rational creatures were created with spiritual bodies, which were transformed after their fall, but they were never souls without bodies.¹²⁵

124. I have already quoted *Hom. in Ex.* 6, 5: «No one is invisible, incorporeal, immutable, beginningless and endless ... but the Father with the Son and the Holy Spirit.»

125. See Ramelli 2013b.

After the fall, they were not given bodies for the first time, but had their immortal bodies changed into perishable (in the case of humans) or «ridiculous» ones, in the case of demons (as is attested in a Greek, non-fragmentary passage such as *Comm. in Io.* I, 17, 97-98).¹²⁶ Origen's interpretation of the «skin tunics» that the first humans received after the fall is consistent with this, since these tunics are not identified with the body – which humans had also prior to the fall –, but with mortality: *Pellicis, inquit, tunicis, quae essent mortalitatis quam pro peccato acceperat.* (*Hom. in Lev.* 6, 2.)¹²⁷

In *Princ.* II 3, 2 Origen even produces a syllogism – another application of Aristotelian syllogistic reasoning to his own philosophy! – to demonstrate that it is impossible for any creature to live incorporeally: if any creature can live without a body, then all will be able to do so; but in this case, corporeal substance would be useless; therefore, it would not exist. Now, this is manifestly not the case; therefore, no creature can live without a body.¹²⁸ In *Princ.* IV, 4, 8 Origen argues again that rational creatures always need a body, by necessity: corporeal matter *tamdiu necesse est permanere quamdiu permanent ea, quae eius indigent indumento. Semper autem erunt rationabiles naturae, quae indigeant indumento corporeo; semper ergo erit et natura corporea, cuius indumentis uti necesse est rationabiles creaturas.* Thus, souls had a body at the beginning of their existence as substances, when God created both them and matter, with a

126. The devil was the first to fall, and his body turned into one much worse, not because it is mortal, but because it is ridiculous, while other bodies are not so, but glorious. He «is that famous “first earthly being” in that he was the first to fall down from the superior state and wanted a different life from the superior one. Thus he deserved to be the principle, not of the foundation (of the Son) [κτίσμα], nor of the creation (of rational creatures) [ποίημα], but only of what was moulded with clay [πλάσμα] by the Lord. He became such as to be the object of derision by the Lord's angels» (*Comm. in Io.* XX, 22, 182, a Greek and absolutely reliable passage).

127. In *Fr. in I Cor.* 29 Origen likewise admits that the human being had a body before falling and receiving those tunics, which represent, not the body *tout court*, but the heavy and corruptible body given by God to humans after the fall. In his polemic with the Middle Platonist Celsus (*CC* IV, 40), Origen declares that the skin tunics conceal a mystery that is deeper than that of the fall of the soul according to Plato (*Phaedr.* 248CD). Procopius (*Comm. in Gen.* 3:21 PG 87,1 221A) very probably attests to Origen's interpretation of the skin tunics, not as the body, since the human being in paradise already had a body, «fine and suitable for life in Paradise», but as the mortal, heavy corporeality given to humans after sin. Gobar (*ap. Phot. Bibl. cod.* 232, 287b-291b) also attests to Origen's identification of the skin tunics with mortality, heavy corporeality, and liability to passions.

128. In *Princ.* II, 3, 3, Origen puts forward an objection that comes from people who believe that rational creatures can live without a body, and he presents it only to counter it: «However, those who believe that rational creatures can ever live without a body may observe at this point...»

potential for infinite transformations. This is explained in the section that immediately precedes the above-quoted passage:

The intelligible nature *must necessarily use bodies*, because, qua created, it is *subject to movement and alteration*. For what *was not and began to exist* is for this very reason mutable in its nature and does not possess good or evil substantially, but accidentally... The rational nature was liable to movement and alteration, so that, *according to its deserts, it could be endowed with a different body, of this or that quality*. This is why God, who knew in advance which the different conditions of souls or spiritual powers might be, *created the corporeal nature as well*, which, according to the will of the Creator, *could be transformed, by changing qualities*, as required by the situation. (*Princ.* IV, 4, 8.)

In CC VII, 32, a Greek non-fragmentary passage that reflects Origen's confrontation with a Middle Platonist and is of indubitable authenticity, Origen insists on the necessity that the soul always be in a body, and one that is suited to the place or situation in which it happens to be, according to its spiritual progress or elongation from the Good: 'Ἡ τῇ ἐαυτῆς φύσει ἀσώματος καὶ ἀόρατος ψυχὴ ἐν παντὶ σωματικῷ τόπῳ τυγχάνουσα δέεται σώματος οὐκ αἰοῦ τῇ φύσει τῷ τόπῳ ἐκείνῳ. The soul is *always* in a body, even after death, as Origen declared in his fragmentary *De resurrectione* (καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπαλλαγῇ σώματι χρητῆται ἡ ψυχὴ, *ap. Method. Res. ap. Phot. Bibl. cod.* 234, 301a). That the soul has a body adapted to its spiritual refinement and progress is also stated in *Hom. 2 in Ps.* 38, 8, in *Res. II ap. Pamph. Apol.* 134,¹²⁹ and *Comm. in Ps. 1 ap. Pamph. Apol.* 141: *Necesse est animam in locis corporeis habitantem uti corporibus talibus quae apta sint his locis in quibus degit.*

For two core doctrines, therefore, namely the metaphysical doctrine of the Ideas and the doctrine of the soul, Origen turns out to have relied heavily on the Greek philosophical tradition, and more particularly not only on Platonism and Middle Platonism, but also on Aristotelianism.

The Dyad: a Final Reflection on Origen's Christian Philosophy and Its Relation to Greek Philosophy

I have mentioned that Alexander is one of the main sources concerning Plato's unwritten doctrines on protology. The doctrine of the One and the indefinite Dyad (δύαξ) is a prominent aspect of Plato's protology, known to Aristotle (*Met.* A6, 987b18 ff.; *Phys.* III, 4, 203a15-16) and Alexander of Aphrodisias (*In Ar. Met.* 55, 20 ff.; 203, 25 ff.; 228, 1 ff. Hayduck). There is nothing that implies a direct dependence in this case, but Origen may

129. For a sojourn in the *mansio beatorum* the body will be luminous; for a sojourn in *poenis* it will be adapted to suffering.

have had Alexander's treatment in mind in his own use of the Dyad (δυάς) in his speculation on the very first principles (the Father and the Son), especially in *Dial. c. Her.* 4, a passage transmitted in the original Greek and transcribed from an oral debate: Κύριος πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα καὶ Θεὸν τῶν ὄλων ἐστὶν οὐ μία σὰρξ, οὐχὶ ἐν πνεῦμα, ἀλλὰ ... εἷς Θεός. ... "Ὁθεν τὸ 'Εγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν ἐσμεν' οὕτω νοῶμεν. Εὐχόμεθα διὰ μὲν τοὺς τηροῦντες τὴν *δυάδα*, διὰ δὲ τοὺς ἐμποιοῦντες τὴν *ἐνάδα*, καὶ οὕτως οὐδὲ εἰς τὴν γνῶμην τῶν ἀποσχισθέντων ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας εἰς φαντασίαν *μοναρχίας* ἐμπίπτομεν, ἀναιρούντων Ἰδὸν ἀπὸ Πατρὸς καὶ δυνάμει ἀναιρούντων καὶ τὸν Πατέρα, οὔτε εἰς ἄλλην ἀσεβῆ διδασκαλίαν ἐμπίπτομεν τὴν ἀρνούμενην τὴν θεότητα τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Origen here is establishing that the Father and the Son are two different first principles, two ἀρχαί, and not one single ἀρχή (this is the meaning of *μοναρχία*). At the same time, Father and Son are one God, and not two Gods. Origen's own solution is that they have one common divine οὐσία but two different ὑποστάσεις; this explains why at the same time they can be a ἐνάς (in their common οὐσία) and a δυάς (in their ὑποστάσεις). Origen reflects on the perfection of the One and the imperfection of the Dyad – the idea that is found in Plato, Aristotle, and Alexander – in another Greek passage, albeit fragmentary: *Sel. in Ps.* PG XII, 1076, 10. Here he successfully tries to find in the Bible traces of this truth: ἀριθμῶν ἕκαστον δύναιμι, κατὰ λόγους ἀριθμητικούς θεωρουμένην. ἐν τῇ θείᾳ Γραφῇ... εἰς ἀκάθαρτον ἀριθμὸν ἢ δυάς παρείληπται... Καὶ τὴν μονάδα δὲ πολὺ πρότερον τὴν τε πρώτην αὐτὴν κτλ. The same is the case with another Greek, though fragmentary, passage, *Sel. in Ez.* PG XIII, 781, 23, where he explains the negativity of the dyad with the fact that it entails a division, and sees this negativity clearly represented in Scripture: τὴν *δυάδα* καὶ *σχίσιν* περιέχειν ἀκαθάρτων ἐστὶ συγγενής· ὡς δὴλόν ἐστιν ἐκ τῶν ἐν τῇ κιβωτῷ γινομένων ζώων ἀκαθάρτων καὶ τῶν ἀποστελλομένων τῷ 'Ησαΐ παρὰ τοῦ 'Ιακώβ. This is a good example of how Origen – like Philo before him –¹³⁰ read the tenets of Platonism in Scripture. This was natural to him, since he was convinced that Plato was actually inspired by the Jewish Scripture, and that the same Logos that revealed itself in the Bible – which is the body of Christ the Logos – also inspired Greek philosophers in their best doctrines, of course the doctrines that Origen found compatible with Christianity. This is why he taught all philosophical schools at his university, apart from the atheistic ones, which could not possibly be compatible with Christianity.

As this investigation has hopefully contributed to showing, the philosophical background of Origen's Christian philosophy still deserves a great deal of rigorous research (and is likely to yield further momentous surprises), both *per se* and also in consideration of the enormous impact that

130. See Ramelli 2011d.

Origen's thought had on later thought – not only on Christian, but also on pagan philosophy¹³¹. This background, still to be researched, does not seem to be identifiable exclusively with Middle Platonic, Neopythagorean, and Neostoic texts, such as those listed by Porphyry in his famous fragment on Origen's readings¹³², but also with Aristotelian texts. Jerome in *Ep.* 70, 4 attests that Origen in his unfortunately lost *Stromateis* (whose title itself clearly echoed Clement's homonymous treatise) confirmed the Christian doctrines by means of passages drawn, not only from Middle Platonists/Neopythagoreans, Neostoics, and Plato, but also from Aristotle, within the framework of a systematic comparison between Christian faith and philosophy: *Hunc imitatus Origenes decem scripsit Stromateas, Christianorum et philosophorum inter se sententias comparans et omnia nostrae religionis dogmata de Platone et Aristotele, Numenio Cornutoque confirmans*. Just as «Plato» here subsumes not only Plato's dialogues, but also the Middle Platonists who commented and reflected on them – and we know from Porphyry and the very analysis of Origen's texts that he was conversant with these authors –, so does also «Aristotle» subsume not only some of Aristotle's works, but in all likelihood also his commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias, Origen's semi-contemporary, as I hope to have demonstrated. The available evidence indeed suggests that Origen knew Aristotle both directly, at least in part,¹³³ and through mediators,¹³⁴ among whom Alexander of Aphrodisias plays a prominent role. It is certainly not the case that Alexander is the main inspirer of Origen's thought as a whole, but, in the light of the present investigation, it is likely that he did exert some significant influence on Origen.

131. A remarkable example is in Ramelli 2012, but much still waits to be done on this score.

132. Thorough analysis in Ramelli 2009b.

133. Bardy 1932, 75-83, admitted that Origen had some acquaintance with Aristotelianism, but thought that a direct use of Aristotle cannot be proved. This is the same position taken later by Dorival 1992, p. 195 and 206-207, and by Berchman 1992, p. 233. However, Runia 1989, p. 7, lists some passages in which Origen depends on Aristotle.

134. Including epitomes. Epitomes of Aristotle were available in the time of Origen, Ammonius, and Plotinus: see e.g. Taormina 2011, who argues that *Enn.* IV, 3 and 6 depend on an epitome on Aristotle's *De memoria*, also attested by Stobaeus' Anthology. The use of the epitome instead of the original work explains some lexical peculiarities.

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