



Durham E-Theses

A re-appraisal of Origen's Christology in the light of modern scholarship

Echevarria, Jesus

How to cite:

Echevarria, Jesus (1994) *A re-appraisal of Origen's Christology in the light of modern scholarship*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online:
<http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/5849/>

Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

A RE-APPRAISAL OF ORIGEN'S CHRISTOLOGY
IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

By

JESÚS ECHEVARRÍA

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author.
No quotation from it should be published without
his prior written consent and information derived
from it should be acknowledged.

MA Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Arts
Department of Theology
Durham University
September 1994



14 FEB 1995

CONTENTS.

| | <u>PAGE</u> |
|--|-------------|
| ABSTRACT | 2 |
| STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT | 3 |
| LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED | 4 |
| INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| CHAPTER ONE: Origen's Life and Times. | 12 |
| CHAPTER TWO: Origen's Works. | 36 |
| CHAPTER THREE: Origen's Christology. | 50 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: Origen's Ancient Christological Legacy. | 102 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: Origen's Modern Christological Legacy. | 135 |
| CONCLUSION. | 173 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY. | 183 |



University of Durham

Master of Arts

Author: Jesús Echevarría

Title of Thesis:

A re-appraisal of Origen's christology in the light of modern scholarship.

ABSTRACT

The main aim of the thesis is to present Origen's christology within a historical perspective taking into account recent critical work.

Chapter one deals with the life and times of Origen and examines the significance of these in assessing his christology.

Chapter two looks at the work of Origen and identifies the relevant extant texts which can be used to locate his christology.

Chapter three launches into a critical examination of his actual christology, gathered from his texts and other important scholars in this field. It also raises the issues of the subordination in his concept of the Trinity, his understanding of the Incarnation and the Redemption, his doctrine of the pre-existence and his concept of the titles of Christ.

Chapter four examines Origen's ancient christological legacy, with specific reference to his orthodoxy and his involvement in the early christological controversies, such as Arianism. The charges against Origen are tackled and refuted, showing that Origen's christology was orthodox within his lifetime.

Chapter five looks at Origen's christology in modern patristic scholarship, which leans in Origen's favour. The second part of the chapter looks at the relevance of Origen in modern christology. Origen's christology is compared with modern christologies, and an attempt at constructing a new christology based on Origen's, in order to demonstrate how it could be used today.

After briefly being contrasted to Liberation Theology, Origen's christology is re-appraised. The final conclusion is reached in the vindication of the orthodoxy of Origen's christology within his own time, and in the assertion that Origen's christology is not systematic. Finally, some areas are suggested for further research.

STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT.

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without his prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED.ORIGEN'S WORKS.General works

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>De Princ.</i> | <i>De Principiis</i> (On First Principles). |
| <i>C.Cels.</i> | <i>Contra Celsum</i> (Against Celsum). |
| <i>Dial. Cum Herac.</i> | Dialogue with Heraclides. |
| <i>De Orat.</i> | Treatise on Prayer. |
| <i>De Res.</i> | Treatise on the Resurrection. |
| <i>Exh. Mart.</i> | Exhortation to Martyrdom. |
| <i>De Pasc.</i> | Treatise on Easter. |
| <i>Strom.</i> | Stromateis of Origen. |
| <i>Epist.</i> | Letters. |
| <i>Philocalia</i> | Philocalia of Origen. |

Exegetical works

These are referred to by the following prefixes to the particular biblical book.

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| <i>Comm. in</i> | Commentaries. |
| <i>Hom. in</i> | Homilies. |
| <i>Ser. in</i> | Commentariorum series. |
| <i>Frag. in</i> | Fragments. |
| <i>Sel. in</i> | Select. |
| <i>Exc. in</i> | Excerpta. |
| <i>Hex.</i> | Hexapla. |

OTHER ANCIENT WRITERS.

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| <i>HE</i> | <i>Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius.</i> |
| <i>Bibl.</i> | <i>Bibliotheca of Photius</i> |
| <i>ApolPamph.</i> | <i>Apology for Origen by Pamphilus.</i> |
| <i>ApolRuf.</i> | <i>Apology for Origen by Rufinus.</i> |
| <i>Adult.</i> | <i>De Adulteratione by Rufinus</i> |
| <i>VirIll</i> | <i>On Illustrious Men by Jerome.</i> |
| <i>De Decret.</i> | <i>De Decretis Nicaenae Synodi</i> <i>(the decrees of the Council of Nicea)</i> |
| <i>Rem. Orig.</i> | <i>Address of Thanks of St. Gregory</i> <i>Thaumaturgus.</i> |
| <i>Ep. Ad Avitum</i> | <i>Letter to Avitus, by Jerome.</i> |

All other ancient works are cited by their full title.

OTHERS.

| | |
|-------------|---|
| <i>JTS</i> | <i>Journal of Theological Studies</i> <i>(Oxford).</i> |
| <i>GCS</i> | <i>Die Griechischen Christlichen.</i> <i>Schriftsteller (Berlin Corpus).</i> |
| <i>CUFr</i> | <i>Collection des Universités de France.</i> |
| <i>SC</i> | <i>Sources Chrétiennes (Paris, Editions</i> <i>du Serf).</i> |
| <i>PG</i> | <i>Patrologiae cursus completus; series</i> <i>graeca (J.P. Migne).</i> |
| <i>PL</i> | <i>Patrologiae cursus completus; series</i> <i>latina (J.P. Migne).</i> |

INTRODUCTION.

The main aim of this thesis will be to examine and re-appraise the christology of Origen, the Alexandrian early Church father.

There are three basic reasons why such a study appears relevant today. The first has much to do with the renewed interest in Origen's work over the past few years, such that modern scholarship has begun to provide us with a more complete picture of his thought. It is hoped that this study can bring much of what has been discovered into a single manageable volume.

The second reason is due to the rapid development of modern christology in general, such that it has moved from a seemingly static position in the Chalcedonian Formula, to a very dynamic one, at the very forefront of theological and ecclesiastical debates; for instance, in the role that christology has had in the development of Liberation Theology. It is imperative then that anything that can shed light on the christological issues facing us today be studied.

Finally, Origen's thought has endured over eighteen centuries and is part of what makes up our Christian heritage. A deeper understanding of it can only be of benefit in helping us to make sense of that Christian heritage. Such thought must not be allowed to fade away and finally disappear, but must be re-appraised and

re-stated periodically in order to keep it fresh and relevant, much like certain historical events must not be allowed to be forgotten, lest we make the same mistakes again.

The task then, will be to piece together a coherent picture of his christology and test it against both the old and new, in order to increase our understanding of it, and in order to make it relevant to Christianity today.

In a relatively recent christological book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, a Belgian theologian working in Latin America, Jose Comblin, set himself the task of "meditating" exclusively on the humanity of Jesus. He states:

"In this book we intend to meditate on the human - simply human - life of Jesus Christ. We want to examine again this Jesus of Nazareth just as the disciples knew him and understood him - or did not understand him - when they walked with him in the valleys of Galilee, roaming the villages of Israel, when they did not know him as Lord and Son of God. We want to see this Jesus just as he appeared when he had not yet manifested his personal bond with God: when, to the eyes of the disciples, he was still only a man"¹

It appears as a fairly standard modern christological approach from below, and could be seen as typical for its time and location in the world. It is true to say that christology has indeed changed dramatically from the time of Origen, our chosen protagonist, to the Liberation christology of Latin

1. Comblin, 1979, p. 1.

America. But there does seem to be a parallel between what Comblin sets out to do, and the main thrust of this thesis.

While it would be presumptuous to suggest that Origen can be equated to Jesus, it seems that the task facing us is similar. We must try to consider Origen, the man, rather than Origen, the myth. We must try to examine Origen as his contemporaries understood him, without the baggage of later controversies, without the later perceptions of him. We want to see Origen just as he appeared when he had not yet manifested his greatness, or notoriety, as the case has been. Only then can we discover what his theology was about. And only then can we re-appraise his christology.

Most of Origen's detractors, and certainly all of those who had any real say in terms of the power to condemn him, all lived many years after his death. By this time, they were in fact fighting not the real Origen, but the developed Origen as seen by those who considered themselves Origenists. This parallels the idea put forward by some theologians, such as James Mackey, for example, that the Christ of the New Testament is a created myth (Mackey blames Paul for distorting Christ's theology and mythologising Him²) which bears little resemblance to the historical.

2. Mackey, 1979, pp. 174-195

Most of the time, Origen is rebuked for not having had the foresight to predict future events such as the Arian conflict, as if, like Jesus has in some high christologies, he should have had some form of pre-knowledge.

In a sense, we need to approach Origen's christology, Origen's thought, "from below" as it were. From a perspective of the historical.

Therefore we will begin our study of his christology, not by beginning with the Incarnation, but by placing Origen the man in the context of his own time. Only then can we judge, for example, the orthodoxy of his doctrine of the Incarnation. For this reason, an examination of his life and times is essential to a correct understanding of his thought.

Only then will we be able to look in detail at his thought. But before we can proceed, we need to identify what he wrote, where it survives and how, in order not to attribute to him something which is not his, or remove from his thought that which was present. To this end, an examination of Origen's work will be necessary. These two together, his life and his work, will then serve as an informing framework on which to hang his christological thought.

We will then proceed to identify and analyse his christology from his extant texts, earmarking any areas of concern encountered.

But once we have this christology in our grasp, why should we be interested in it? What has a christology of a man who was born over eighteen centuries ago have to offer us now? Indeed, one that has been so comprehensively condemned? What can we possibly learn from a man whose outlook on the World was so different to our own contemporary thought? What can we gain by going over an ancient and seemingly irrelevant old ground?

Our answer is twofold. Firstly, as our methods of scholarship improve, some have come to the conclusion that a great injustice has been done to this extraordinary figure over the years, and that his thought deserved a more sympathetic hearing.

Secondly, might it just be possible that, like an old shell, it may contain a priceless pearl which will illuminate our understanding of Jesus Christ? The only way to be sure is to find out.

To this end then, firstly we will continue with a review of Origen's ancient christological legacy, in order to find why it attracted such vehement criticism in the ancient Church.

We will then follow this by an examination of his modern christological legacy, which will deal with not only what modern scholarship has discovered about his christology, but also with the relevance of it in today's christological climate.

Our review over then, and all the evidence gathered, we will then be in a position to make a judgement on the value of Origen's christology and its treatment in history, as well as indicate further future research pathways. This will bring our study of Origen's christology to its conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE.ORIGEN'S LIFE AND TIMES.

While an exhaustive biography of Origen is not required for the purposes of this thesis, it will be necessary to place the man in an historical setting, in order to explain later, some of the reasons why he thought as he did; and there can be no doubt that the religio-political situation in his time is a major influence on the development of his theology.

There are various sources available to us which enable us to piece together Origen's life quite accurately. Firstly, his own writings contain autobiographical details¹. Secondly, writings from others such as the speech of thanks by St. Gregory Thaumaturgus², and Pamphilus' *Apology for Origen*, as well as numerous other mentions in the works of Jerome, Socrates the Historian and Photius. Thirdly, but most importantly, in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, where he devotes a considerable portion of Book VI to the life of Origen. This is based on a large collection of Origen's correspondence, kept at Caesarea³. It is as

1. Crouzel, 1989, p. 1.

2. Nautin contests this authorship, attributing it to a pupil of Origen he calls Theodore. However, Crouzel rejects this assertion in his article "Fait-il voir trois personnages en Gregorie le Thaumaturge" in *Gregorianum* 60, 1979, pp. 287-320, and in his book *Origen*, 1989. Crouzel states that while Theodore may have been the author's name, he then took Gregory as his baptismal Christian name.

3. HE VI, XXXVI, 3-4.

well here to point out that Eusebius' account does tend to be rather idealised and fabulous at times (at one point he claims even the utterings of Origen from the cot were important and worthy of mention⁴); however, Crouzel, among others, does feel that this does not remove credibility from his account, and that rather it is the modern historian, "unaccustomed to ancient rhetoric and thinking its highly hagiographical tone unauthentic" who tends to see it as such⁵.

However, the availability of such evidence does not mean that there is no scholarly debate regarding the exact order of events in Origen's life, or indeed, the importance of such events upon the various general theories about Origen. As the primary example, we find a difference of opinion between Joseph Trigg, (who uses Pierre Nautin's chronology of Origen's life⁶) in his book, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-century Church*⁷, and Henri Crouzel, who contests quite forcibly Nautin's (and therefore Trigg's) account of the events on a variety of points. These include the true identity of Origen's father, and the authorship of the speech of thanks attributed to St. Gregory

4. HE VI, II, 2.

5. Crouzel, 1989, p. 6.

6. Nautin's account of Origen's life paints a picture of a man who is followed by controversy and clashes with ecclesiastical authority often. His journeys are interpreted as attempts to find a safe haven away from the constraints of episcopal interference. Nautin, 1977.

7. 1983.

Thaumaturgus⁸ in his book, *Origen*⁹. One suspects that the disagreement does more for the reputation of the scholars, than a service to historical truth, although it can be seen that each scholar has his own underlying agenda. Trigg (and Nautin) hold that Origen was a systematic theologian, so will be looking to interpret his life events in ways which will lend credence to this theory, whereas Crouzel does not believe Origen was systematic at all, and hence will be looking to interpret the sources in a way which supports his theory. This point will be examined later. For now, I will limit myself to giving a brief, but critical account of his life, based on a combination of Crouzel and Trigg, in their use of the evidence from Eusebius.

Origen was born in or about AD 185, probably in Alexandria, to Christian parents¹⁰. His Father Leonides, an important man in Alexandria, was martyred under the persecution of Septimius Severus in 202¹¹. Indeed, if it had not been for his mother hiding his clothes, Origen would have gladly joined him¹². Origen seems to have

8. See footnote 2, above.

9. 1989.

10. Although some claim that perhaps at the time of Origen's birth, his parents were still pagan, given that the name Origen means "son of Horus" (an Egyptian god). However, both Trigg (p.36) and Crouzel (p. 4, n. 11) discount this.

11. HE VI, II, 12. In 202, Origen "was not quite seventeen, such that it is possible to work back to his year of birth being 185/6, as Crouzel points out.

12. HE VI, II, 5. Further to this, Eusebius reports that Origen wrote to his father in jail, telling him to "be careful not to change your mind because of us" (HE VI, II, 6.)

been fascinated with the idea of martyrdom from this point forward, eventually producing his *Exhortation to Martyrdom* on the subject. However, it should be pointed out that his near obsession with martyrdom was not in itself strange amongst Christians of that era, but an accepted, and in some cases searched for, part of Christian life¹³. As Trigg points out:

"Martyrs had a powerful motivation since martyrdom was considered a second baptism, procuring certain forgiveness of all sins the martyrs themselves had committed and, some thought, the sins of others as well. It was the one way an early Christian could be absolutely certain of salvation."¹⁴

He received a good education from his Father, (as would befit the child of a wealthy citizen) comprising not only of the Hellenistic grammar and general education¹⁵, but also a grounding in Biblical studies¹⁶). It was this education that laid the foundation for providing Origen with a means of earning his, and his family's living, as a teacher of grammar. This became a

13. See Trigg, 1983, pp. 20-25, and his sources, for a fuller account of martyrdom in the Early Church.

14. Trigg, 1983, p. 24.

15. Greek education consisted of a preliminary, or primary level which simply taught the basic rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic, followed by, for those who could afford it, a secondary phase, which involved firstly, grammar (greek literature, including Homer, and the like) and secondly general education (maths, geometry, astronomy and music theory). For a much more detailed treatment of the greek educational system, see Trigg, 1983, Chapter II, pp. 31-51, in the first instance, which provides further bibliographical references too numerous to mention here.

16. Crouzel, 1989, p. 5; Trigg, 1983, p. 10.

necessity as, with the martyrdom of his Father, and hence the confiscation of all his wealth by the State, his family was left destitute¹⁷.

As well as this education, Origen would have been brought up with the rudiments of the Christian faith, which have been called "the canon of faith". He would also have received these from his father, for whom there is evidence to suggest that he was involved in catechetical teaching¹⁸. It is important then to look at the composition of the canon of faith, especially as regards what was considered orthodox in his own time. This will have serious repercussions later, when we examine Origen's condemnation. Using Hanson¹⁹, Trigg identifies the following as the probable content of the canon of faith that Origen would have known.

"(1) A doctrine of God. There is one God the Father, who created the universe and governs it by providence. Worship is due to God alone, who gave the Law to the Jews and sent God's son Jesus Christ to redeem the world.

(2) A doctrine of Christ. Jesus Christ, the Messiah whom the Old Testament foretold, was a man born of Mary, who as a virgin, miraculously conceived him. In Palestine he taught and performed miracles, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried. He descended into hell to liberate the righteous dead. He rose from the dead, appeared to his disciples, and ascended into heaven, where he reigns with God the Father. Christ will return

17. Trigg, 1983, p. 30.

18. Crouzel points to the fact that Septimius Severus' persecution was aimed at stopping the catechetical activity of the Church, with particular regard to the higher classes, such that it would be logical to assume that Leonides was involved in such. Crouzel, 1989, p. 5.
19. 1962.

to judge the living and the newly resurrected dead. Jesus Christ is divine and hence worthy of worship but not identical with God the Father.

(3) A doctrine of the Spirit. God's Spirit inspired the prophets and Apostles who wrote the Bible and continues to animate believers.

(4) A doctrine of spiritual beings. There are rational beings not confined, as we are, to earthly bodies. Some are angels who worship God and carry out God's commands. Others are demons - probably fallen angels - who follow the commands of Satan, their prince. The demons disguise themselves as Gods, thereby deceiving the pagans into sustaining them with sacrifices, and they seek to entice believers into heresy and sin.

(5) A doctrine of last things. At the end of time, God will destroy the world God made. When this happens, all the dead will resume their bodies, and Christ will then welcome the righteous into everlasting happiness and condemn the wicked, along with Satan and the demons, to everlasting torment.

(6) A doctrine of sacraments. Baptism, a ritual washing with water, obtains forgiveness of all sins committed prior to it. The Eucharist, a ritual meal celebrated with bread and wine, is a communion in the body and blood of Christ that obtains immortality for all who partake of it worthily."²⁰

These essential Christian beliefs form a "creed" which Origen would have held dear to him for all his life, and which would have formed the basis of any judgement of orthodoxy or heresy. It will become clear that Origen's writing must conform to the above in order to remain orthodox in his own lifetime. It can also be seen that there are differences between what the second century Church regards as orthodox (remember that the

20. Trigg, 1983, pp. 13-14.

above "canon" had not been definitely confined to writing at this time), and what the fourth or sixth century Church might consider so. I shall return to this point later, but for now I shall continue with Origen's life.

After the death of his father, Origen came under the patronage of a rich Christian woman, who enabled him to complete his training as a teacher of grammar. However this lady also had with her a man named Paul, from Antioch, whom she treated as a son, and who held heretical Gnostic views. This, Trigg points out, would be Origen's first encounter with Gnosticism, and he suggests, may have caused him to later challenge this heresy with his own system²¹.

As well as teaching grammar, Origen became a teacher of the Christian faith, by default, rather than anything else, as, under the continuing persecution, of Severus, all the other catechetical teachers had been forced to flee Alexandria. It was then, at the tender age of eighteen, that he became head of the Catechetical school, appointed there by the bishop Demetrius²². Amongst his more notable students, Origen could count the martyr Plutarch, and his brother Heraclas, who would become his assistant, and later, succeed Demetrius as bishop of Alexandria²³.

21. Trigg, 1983, pp. 38-51.

22. HE VI, III, 1-8.

23. Crouzel, 1989, p. 7.

Eusebius tells us that Origen studied under Clement, Origen's predecessor as head of the Catechetical School²⁴, but there is some doubt about this. There appears to be no direct link between the two, Origen never mentioning Clement by name. But as Crouzel²⁵ states, Origen was familiar with Clement's work. Further, he even uses one of Clement's titles, *Stromateis*, for one of his own works, and there is sufficient continuity about their work that suggests that they had met (Trigg, 1983, p.54). What is clear is that if Origen did study under him directly, it must have been before the persecution of Septimius Severus that led to the departure of Clement as a catechetical teacher (see above).

As well as Clement, Origen also attended the lectures of a Platonic philosopher, Ammonias Saccas²⁶. This has led to a link between Platonic, and Neo-Platonic thought and Origen's thought. While it is difficult for us to measure the extent of Ammonius' influence on Origen (he left nothing in written form), Origen's use of Platonic concepts and philosophical tools would suggest that it was an important influence²⁷. It would appear

24. HE VI, VI.

25. 1989, p. 7.

26. HE VI, XIX, 1-14.

27. Trigg devotes an entire chapter of his book, 1983, pp. 52-75, to the influence of Platonism in Origen's thought, which, while falling outside of the scope of this study directly, does have a bearing on the development of Origen's Christology from a philosophical perspective, as we shall see later.

that Origen and Plotinus (the neo-platonist) studied under Ammonius Saccas, but at different times, Plotinus being twenty or so years younger than Origen²⁸. It may of course, have been merely curiosity that led him to Ammonius' lectures, as Heraclas had been attending them for five years previously²⁹.

Origen continued to teach grammar and instruct in the Christian faith for a short while, but eventually he decided that to continue to teach the essentially pagan grammar was incompatible with his duties as a catechist, and hence gave it up. He sold his somewhat large library³⁰ of pagan literature in return for a small daily wage of four obols. This meagre wage would not have been enough to support his family, so that he must have carried out this action when his brothers were old enough to support the family themselves³¹. Eventually, Origen would return to teaching his students grammar as a means of enhancing his Christian teaching.

Origen adopted for himself a rather ascetic lifestyle based on Gospel values, sleeping few hours,

28. The passage that Eusebius quotes from Porphyry, the student of Plotinus, raises a series of discrepancies, which have led some scholars (notably Henri de Valois in the seventeenth century) to postulate the existence of a second Origen. Bearing in mind Ockham's Razor, Trigg devotes an appendix to this possibility in his book, 1983, pp. 259-260. Crouzel also deals with it in his book, 1989, pp. 11-12. Both remain uncommitted, but sceptical.

29. Crouzel, 1989, p. 10.

30. Crouzel, 1989, p. 8, points to the possibility that his father's library formed part of this.

31. Crouzel, 1989, p. 8.

and only on the floor, owning no shoes, and only one cloak, and fasting regularly³². It was in a moment of extreme asceticism that he appeared to take Matthew 19:12 too literally³³, and castrated himself. He would later come to regret this decision, and his detractors would hold it against him in later years³⁴. While such an action seems rather bizarre by modern standards, there was a precedent for it amongst not only pagans, but also Christians. Sexual relations were allowed only within marriage, and then only for the purpose of procreation. To most Christians, even marriage was just about tolerated, and virginity was admired and considered holy. Some Christians went beyond this and forbade marriage, and some, even more extremely, had themselves castrated, as the ultimate symbol of rejecting licentious pagan morality. Trigg gives us the following example:

"During the second century a zealous Alexandrian Christian, seeking to refute pagan allegations that Christians engaged in sexual licentiousness, asked the Roman prefect of Egypt for permission to have himself castrated (a certificate was required or he and his physician would be liable to prosecution). He was turned down, but he made his point. Bolder souls went ahead with the operation regardless."³⁵

32. Trigg, 1983, p. 53

33. Crouzel questions this, saying that "it is indeed intriguing to find one who is held to be the 'prince of allegory' taking literally a verse which earlier tradition had usually understood allegorically". For a more detailed treatment, see Crouzel, 1989, pp. 9f, from which the above quotation is taken.

34. Trigg, 1989, pp. 53-54.

35. Trigg, 1983, p. 20.

Unfortunately, Trigg neglects to give us a source for this anecdote.

It was not until 215 or so, that Origen began writing his numerous volumes. The reason for this is most probably his befriending of Ambrose, a rich Valentinian whom Origen managed to convert from that heresy. In return, Ambrose became his financial backer, endowing Origen with a veritable army of secretarial and administrative staff, including the famous "seven stenographers" who wrote down almost every word he uttered. This enabled Origen's works to be published for the benefit of those questioning Christians, like Ambrose, who had sought answers in the many gnostic and heretical sects existing at that time³⁶. It was during this early period of literary activity that his famous treatise, *De Principiis (On First Principles)* was composed³⁷.

During this period of residence in Alexandria, Origen undertook a number of important journeys, some of which would see him effectively exiled to Caesarea in 231. His first journey, between 198 and 217 according to Eusebius, took him to Rome. Origen had expressed a desire to see the "ancient Church of the Romans"³⁸. Further evidence for this is given by Jerome who reports

36. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 13-14.

37. Scholarly debate varies slightly on the exact date, but it is clear that it was composed in Origen's Alexandrian period. I shall return to this briefly in the next chapter.

38. HE VI, XIV, 10.

that Hippolytus, while giving a homily, pointed out Origen in the congregation³⁹. Trigg attributes some importance to the influence that Rome had on Origen's thought, no doubt in order to back his theory of a systematic nature to his writings⁴⁰, while Crouzel does not for the opposite reasons (see above).

His second journey took him to see the Roman governor of Arabia (modern day Jordan) who appeared to want to find out about Christianity first hand. He sent a soldier with messages for Demetrius and the prefect of Egypt requesting Origen specifically. Eusebius dates it at about 215, and reports that Origen completed his tasks and returned to Alexandria⁴¹. However, during his absence from Alexandria, considerable unrest had taken place on account of the Emperor Caracalla's visit there. As a result of being insulted by students, he took out his anger on them violently, sacking the city and closing the schools⁴². Origen was forced to flee and take refuge in Caesarea in Palestine. While there, two bishops, Theoctistus of Caesarea and Alexander of Jerusalem, who

39. VirIll 61, quoted by Crouzel, 1989, p. 14.

40. Trigg, 1983, pp. 76-80.

41. Crouzel, 1989, p. 14.

42. Trigg suggests that there has been a mix up here about which unrest is being referred to (see Trigg, 1983, p. 130 and especially footnote 1), and Crouzel also alludes to this slight debate in *Origen*, 1989, pp. 16-17. The exact details do not concern us directly, suffice it to show that Origen spent some time in Caesarea where the seeds of the conflict with Demetrius were sown. However, Nautin suggests that the "fury of Caracalla" was really the "fury of Demetrius". Nautin, 1977, and Trigg, 1981, p. 23.

valued him as a learned scholar, asked him to give sermons on the Scriptures to their congregations. This marked the beginning of Origen's fall from Demetrius' favour, as the bishop of Alexandria objected to a lay man preaching in the presence of bishops and complained to the Palestinian bishops, quickly demanding the return of Origen, for which he sent numerous letters and even deacons. Origen duly returned, but relations with his bishop were to deteriorate further, as we shall see later.

Eusebius tells of a third journey, where the mother of Alexander Severus, Empress Julia Mammea, sent for him while he was staying at Antioch⁴³, as his fame as a great Christian thinker had by now spread far and wide.

Eusebius tell us:

"he stayed some time with her, expounding to her a great many things to the glory of the Lord and to the advantage of sacred studies"⁴⁴.

The final journey undertaken by Origen was to Greece which occurred about 231. Eusebius reports that Origen had to go there to "meet the urgent requirements of ecclesiastical affairs" and that he went via Palestine⁴⁵. Other evidence, from Photius suggests that he went

43. Evidence put forward by Crouzel suggests that he was there to do battle with a heretic whom he had had dealing with in Ephesus. He bases this on the evidence of Origen's own *Letter to friends in Alexandria*, preserved by Rufinus in his *De Adulteratione*, 8. Crouzel, 1989, p. 17, n. 60.

44. HE VI, XXI, 3-4.

45. HE VI, XXIII, 4.

without his bishop's permission⁴⁶. What is clear is that he went to Greece via Caesarea, where he met his old friends Alexander and Theoctistus.

While there, the two bishops ordained Origen to the priesthood. Why they did so is not entirely clear, but Eusebius tells us that they had simply decided that he was worthy of such an honour⁴⁷. Crouzel examines some possibilities, including an enforced ordination, which was not unknown at that time, however, he discards the idea arguing that Origen must have at least reluctantly consented to such an action⁴⁸.

Trigg suggests, in my opinion, a rather better reason, in that Demetrius had already snubbed Origen by ordaining Heraclas ahead of him⁴⁹. Perhaps Origen mentioned this to his friends, who duly ordained him in order to make up for such a snub. The ordination did not go down well with Demetrius as we shall see.

Origen went on to Athens where he engaged in a lively debate with a heretic, as he tells us himself, in a letter to his friends in Alexandria⁵⁰. It is possible that the heretic was Candidus, as part of the argument seems to concern the possibility of the Devil's salvation. Origen apparently defeated the arguments of

46. Bibl 118, CUFr II, in Crouzel, 1989, p. 17.

47. HE VI, VIII, 4.

48. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 18-20.

49. Trigg, 1983, p. 137.

50. Fragments of this letter survive in both Jerome *Apology against Rufinus* II, 18-19, and *Rufinus De adulteratione librorum Origenis* 6-8.

this heretic and finally returned to Alexandria, to face the wrath of Demetrius⁵¹.

Demetrius had been angered by Origen's ordination, claiming that the Palestinian bishops had no right to ordain a person who was to serve in a different diocese. In fact it would be almost a hundred years later, that Canon 16 of the Council of Nicea would prohibit such ordinations and declare any made thereafter as null. Demetrius called a local synod to decide the case, who in turn, effectively exiled Origen. But it did not strip him of his priestly status, simply stating that as he had been ordained by a bishop other than that of Alexandria, then he ought not to exercise his ministry there, and by implication, exercise his ministry under the obedience of the bishop who had ordained him. Demetrius was not content with this and set about trying to take away Origen's priestly status. Together with some Egyptian bishops, he declared Origen's ordination as invalid, and then set about discrediting Origen by writing to other authorities (including Rome). One of the strategies he used was to disclose Origen's castration publicly, which while at the time it did not exclude Origen from the priesthood, would not have been well looked upon⁵². Again, it would not be until Canon 1 of the Council of

51. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 21-22.

52. See, for example, Deut 23:1, "He whose testicles are crushed or whose male member is cut off shall not enter the assembly of the LORD".

Nicea decreed that self mutilation would exclude someone from the priesthood⁵³.

Origen therefore left Alexandria and settled in Caesarea where he was afforded the opportunity not only to continue his voluminous work, but also to carry out his priestly duty of preaching on the Scriptures. Ambrose continued to be his friend and patron, and gave him not only continued logistic support, but personal encouragement as well⁵⁴. His priestly preaching went mostly unrecorded at first, at Origen's request, and much to the annoyance of Ambrose who desired to publish almost everything he produced. According to Eusebius, once Origen had reached the age of sixty, he eventually relented and allowed Ambrose's stenographers to record what have now been termed the homilies⁵⁵. Why he should have allowed what he had previously resisted can be explained if, as Crouzel does, we take into account that much of the preaching was impromptu and improvised, with Origen not always being aware of which readings were to be used as part of the liturgy of the Word⁵⁶. It was not until he had gained sufficient confidence and experience

53. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 22-23.

54. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 24-25; Trigg, 1983, pp. 147-148.

55. HE VI, XXXVI, 1.

56. Crouzel, 1989, p. 30, gives the example of Origen's homily on Saul and the witch of Endor (1 Sam: 28), where he had to ask the bishop which reading, from the four that had been used, he would like him to expound. The actual homily is available to me in English (Tollington, 1929, pp.217), but unfortunately minus the preface that Crouzel refers to. I therefore quote his reference for this in GCS III.

of preaching from memory that he would allow them to be recorded for fear of being misinterpreted or of making errors⁵⁷.

He was also able to continue his teaching and founded a new sort of school based broadly on the catechetical school of Alexandria, but without the overtly catechetical side. Instead, it specialised in bringing the Christian message to young pagans who had expressed an interest but were not ready yet for baptismal training. It did this by approaching Christianity from a pagan philosophical perspective, rather than preparing them for baptism immediately⁵⁸.

We are blessed with an important source of information on Origen's teaching activities, in the form of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus' *Address of Thanks* mentioned earlier. Gregory not only tells us of his high regard for Origen, but also gives us a fairly detailed account of his teaching methods and content which I shall outline below⁵⁹.

Origen began his teaching with philosophy, in the form of dialectics and logic, and used them as a base from which to launch into the sciences. These subjects were considered to be the tools which Christians could use to

57. Crouzel, 1989, p.30.

58. Crouzel, 1989, pp.27-28.

59. The description is based on Crouzel's account in *Origen*, 1989, p.26, which in turn comes from the *Address of Thanks*, VI-XV. Crouzel obviously uses his own 1969 French translation in SC 148. For an English edition see Metcalfe, 1920, pp.62-83.

further their understanding of their faith. As he tells Gregory in his letter to him:

"I would beseech thee to draw from Greek philosophy such things as are capable of being made encyclic or preparatory studies to Christianity, and from geometry and astronomy such things as will be useful for the exposition of Holy Scripture, in order that what the sons of the philosophers say about geometry and music and grammar and rhetoric and astronomy, that they are handmaidens of philosophy, we may say of philosophy itself in relation to Christianity."⁶⁰

He followed this with a study of ethics, not only theoretically, but in practice, living with his students in what can only be described as austerity. It is that austerity which perhaps led to Origen's popularity with early monks and could form the basis of monastic life.

Finally Origen would teach theology, beginning with pagan philosophy and poetry mentioning God, leading eventually, and most importantly, to the study of the sacred Scriptures. As we can see, Origen had softened his line on the teaching of Greek grammar from his earlier outright rejection of it, to his acceptance of it as a useful tool with which to pave the way for a deeper understanding of the Scriptures.

Origen also found time to travel. He visited Caesarea in Cappadocia at the request of its bishop, Firmilian⁶¹, he also visited Athens again⁶², and tells us

60. Letter to Gregory, I; Philoc XIII. Metcalfe, 1920, pp.89-90.

61. HE VI, XXVII.

62. HE VI, XXVII, 2.

himself, in the conclusion to his letter to Julius Africanus⁶³, that he visited Nicodemia. Crouzel points out that he must have made a journey to either Antioch or Rome, in order to have met Plotinus, as Porphyry attests in his *Life of Plotinus*⁶⁴, assuming that there was only one Origen⁶⁵.

Eusebius gives us details of three rather important journeys he undertook in order to combat heresies. Sometime before 244, according to Eusebius, Origen was summoned to a synod at Hauran, the capital of the Roman province of Arabia. There, a group of bishops were trying to make Beryllus, the bishop of Bostra, see sense over a christological doctrine he had expressed concerning the divine nature of Christ. Beryllus claimed that the Son had not pre-existed in his own right before the incarnation, and His divinity did not belong to him, but only to the Father, thus encompassing a mixture of modalist and adoptionist heresies. Origen managed to get Beryllus to agree to an orthodox position⁶⁶. This obviously raises two points: firstly, when orthodoxy is at stake, bishops summon Origen, which bodes badly for those who would claim him a heretic later. Secondly, Origen's own christology must have been different to that of Beryllus, invalidating any claims that somehow link

63. S.19, in SC 302, translated into French by Nicholas de Lange and Quoted by Crouzel, 1989, p. 31, and nn. 119-120.

64. Crouzel, 1989, p. 31

65. See note 27 above.

66. HE VI, XXXIII. See also VI, XX, 2.

him to either modalism, or, more importantly, to adoptionism, as perhaps Arianism could well be understood.

A second and somewhat similar mission was again to Arabia, also in order to attend a synod, but this time dealing with the Thnetophisites. This group believed the soul to be mortal. Once again, Origen managed to convert them back to orthodoxy⁶⁷.

The third journey, also similar to the other two, in events and subject matter, dealt with the bishop Heraclides. This time, however, we do not have to rely solely on Eusebius, but have in our possession a transcript of what occurred in his *Dialogue with Heraclides*. Fellow bishops of Heraclides call a synod in response to what they consider unsound christological views by Heraclides. As before, Origen is summoned, and once again, Origen is able to bring the errant bishop back into line⁶⁸. We shall examine this in detail later when we outline Origen's Christology. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that Heraclides' views dealt with the divine nature of Father and Son, their distinction and unity, and the divine and human natures of the Son. His

67. HE VI, XXXVII.

68. As an example of how Nautin's reconstruction of Origen's life differs, here he believes that although Origen is able to do this, it is not without arousing suspicion about the orthodoxy of his own beliefs, when he is further questioned by the bishops present. See Trigg, 1981, pp. 21-22, and therefore Nautin, 1977.

views are not dissimilar to Beryllus, hence later in the *Dialogue*, Origen attacks both modalism and adoptionism⁶⁹.

While Origen had lived in relative peace at Caesarea, even through the persecution of Maximin the Thracian, it was not until the reign of Philip the Arabian, after he had killed Gordian III in 244 that there was a period of peace for the whole Church⁷⁰. Crouzel goes as far as to claim that Philip was the first Christian emperor⁷¹, as he was given public penance by bishop Babylas of Antioch for the murder of Gordian. This would suggest that he was baptised⁷². Certainly Philip seems to have had a very favourable attitude towards the Church, which led to an increase in conversions. Origen, however, lamented the lowering of moral standards as a result of the lack of persecution and the surge of new converts⁷³. He did however, remark on the increasing public hostility to the Church in 248⁷⁴. Soon, the climate of peace would change.

The defeat and death of Philip at the hands of Decius in 249 marked the beginning of the first truly comprehensive persecution of the Church, and it is during this persecution that Origen was arrested together with

69. Crouzel, 1989, p. 33.

70. Trigg, 1983, p.166 and Crouzel, 1989, p. 34.

71. Crouzel gives us three separate authorities in Eusebius, Chrysostom and the *Chronicon Paschale*, and further details can be found in his 1975 article, "Le christianisme de l'empereur Phillippe l'Arabe", in *Gregorianum* 56, pp. 545-550.

72. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 3-4.

73. Trigg, 1983, p. 201.

74. Chadwick, 1967, p. 117.

many notable Christians, including his old friend bishop Alexander of Jerusalem.

According to Eusebius⁷⁵, Alexander would die in prison, while Origen was tortured on various occasions in order to get him to apostasise. The Roman authorities would no doubt have loved to have been able to claim as prominent and learned a Christian as Origen as an apostate, and hence did not hasten to kill him. The harsh ascetic lifestyle that Origen had adopted no doubt allowed him to resist the brutal and cruel tortures, and they were unable to achieve their aim. This ensured that Origen would survive the persecution, but at great cost to his personal health. In 251, Decian died in battle, and the persecution ended. Origen was released, now suffering from the effects of his treatment in prison. He would die shortly afterwards, a martyr in spirit, if not in fact.

His survival is attested not only by Eusebius⁷⁶, but also by Photius⁷⁷, (no doubt, based on letters written by him after his ordeal and kept at Caesarea) and Jerome⁷⁸. Photius also records an alternative tradition in which Origen died in the persecution, "in illustrious martyrdom at Caesarea itself"⁷⁹. However the weight of evidence points to him having died in Tyre, aged about sixty-nine,

75. HE VI, XXXIX, 2-4.

76. HE VII, I.

77. Bibl. 118, 92b. CUFr II.

78. VirIll 54, quoted by Crouzel, 1989, p. 35, n. 137.

79. See note 39.

due to the injuries received in prison, and his body was buried there. The date would be about 253/54.

Eventually, he would be buried at the Cathedral there, a fact which is attested to by numerous medieval visitors and Crusaders, as late as the thirteenth century⁸⁰.

As far as the Church of the time was concerned, Origen had died in orthodoxy. His contribution to Christian thought had a deep, if not immediate, influence on the theology of the Church, and it would be years later that his theology, and especially his christology, would cause controversy.

Sadly he would be denied his greatest desire: to die a martyr. This would have tragic consequences later on; firstly, it would have been virtually impossible to have had a martyr condemned. Secondly, the fact that he survived the persecution was used by later detractors, such as Epiphanius, to falsely suggest that he had apostasised⁸¹.

We have seen in this short biography, that Origen was, like all people, a product of his time. His thought was shaped by the atmosphere of persecution, the particular heresies of his time, and his desire to establish a philosophical route to Christianity. He would be remembered as the ultimate speculative

80. Crouzel, 1989, p. 35.

81. Crouzel, 1989, p. 36.

theologian, trying to push forward the bounds of
Christian thought as an exercise, a *gymnastikos*⁸².

82. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 163-164.

CHAPTER TWO.ORIGEN'S WORKS.

Thanks to Ambrose, Origen's rich benefactor and patron, Origen "may well have been one of the most prolific writers of the ancient world"¹. The publishing resources that Ambrose provided would ensure that a vast number of works by Origen would be published. It would also ensure that, despite Origen's later condemnation, some of them would survive due to sheer numbers; it would have been easier to suppress Origen's thought if he had published only a handful of volumes. Nevertheless, much of Origen's vast work does not survive, while most of what does survive, does so only in Latin translations of dubious reliability; unfortunately, as we shall see, this is the case with what most scholars consider his central text, *De Principiis*.

In order to identify his christology as fully as possible, it will be necessary to outline the works of Origen, then identify those writings now extant, and then select those which have the greatest importance as regards his christology. My first task then is to briefly outline his total work as far as it is useful to do so. In attempting this task I am indebted to Henri Crouzel's comprehensive treatment of this in the second

1. Crouzel, 1989, p. 37.

chapter of his book *Origen*², as well as to guidance from Dr. Dragas of Durham University..

There are basically two lists of Origen's work available to us. Firstly Jerome lists them in his Letter 33 to Paula³, and they comprise most probably of the volumes that he had seen at the library at Caesarea. This list is by no means complete. Secondly, Eusebius gives us three different lists of his works, arranged by him according to which period of Origen's life they related to⁴. Like Jerome he most likely ascertained it from the contents of the library at Caesarea. Eusebius is at variance with Jerome at times, certainly in terms of the numbers of books, but they are sufficiently similar for modern scholarship to piece together, especially when consulting other surviving fragments. Eusebius also mentions a whole collection of his correspondence, comprising over one hundred letters. He listed them in his addition to Pamphilus' *Apology for Origen*, but unfortunately most of this work has now been lost⁵.

The bulk of Origen's work is concerned with exegesis, as Origen held Scripture paramount in all his

2. 1989, pp. 37-49. I will not attempt to reproduce in depth Crouzel's account, it being overly detailed for the purposes of this study.

3. CUFr II, quoted by Crouzel in its entirety;

4. HE VI, XXIV, 1-4 for the Alexandrian period, HE VI, XXXII, 1-2 for the early period at Caesarea, and finally HE VI, XXXVI, 2-3 for the later part of his life.

5. We have only book I (in Latin translation by Rufinus) and various fragments in other ancient authors. Crouzel, 1989, p. 1.

thought. This exegetical work falls into three broad categories or classes. The first class of exegetical writings are detailed and often lengthy commentaries (Jerome and Eusebius speak of numbers of books, meaning , in fact, full papyrus scrolls) on both Old Testament and New Testament books. According to Jerome he produced commentaries on Genesis, Lamentations, many of the Psalms, Isaiah, Hosea, Proverbs, Matthew, Luke, John, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philipians, Colossians, I and II Thesalonians, Titus and Philemon.

The second class consists of what Nautin and Crouzel call "scholias" (Greek: *excerpta*), which are similar to the commentaries, but which focus on smaller sections of Scriptural texts, rather than whole books. Again, Jerome lists scholia on Exodus, Leviticus, Isaiah, some Psalms, Ecclesiastes and John.

The third class of exegetical works comprises of the numerous homilies Origen preached at Caesarea. These were sermons examining Scriptural passages, but as one would expect, in less detail, and more in keeping with what would be understood by the particular congregations to whom he preached. As I have already mentioned in the previous chapter, Origen was at first loathe to have them recorded because of the impromptu nature of most of them. Jerome and Eusebius mention a great number of them on such books as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, the Song of Songs, Judges, Kings, Isaiah,

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Psalms, Matthew, Luke, Acts, II Corinthians, Thessalonians, Galatians, Titus and Hebrews. In the same class as homilies, although not strictly speaking exegetical, Origen also preached on ecclesiastical and practical topics such as Easter, peace, marriage, etc.

A final work related to exegesis, and not mentioned by Jerome in Letter 33, is that of the colossal *Hexapla*, a six column, side by side version of the Old Testament, containing not only the official Septuagint version, but also other Greek versions by Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus. Also included would be a Hebrew transliteration and perhaps the Hebrew text itself. Its composition is not fully clear as only small fragments survive, and only the Septuagint version was copied⁶.

Origen's non exegetical work comprises of the following: *De Principiis*, a theological treatise; *Contra Celsum*, a refutation of Celsus' *True Doctrine*; *Stromateis*, now lost, but whose title means Tapestries, and was also the title of the important work by Clement, his predecessor at Alexandria; *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, intended to strengthen Ambrose during the persecution of Maximin the Thracian; Also to Ambrose and a woman named Tatiane, *De Oratione*, a treatise on prayer; A treatise *On The Resurrection*; A recently discovered treatise *On*

6. Constantine ordered fifty copies be made, entrusted to Eusebius, who tells us in his *Life of Constantine*, IV, 36-37.

Easter; The Dialogue with Heraclides, giving an account of a synod where Origen reconverted the bishop Heraclides; A collection of his correspondence, mentioned above.

As can be seen, the number and scope of Origen's writing was truly awesome. However, what survives is only a small part of that great work, mainly due to the controversies and condemnations of later years. The fact that any of it survives at all is a testament to his popularity even after his condemnation: the monks at St. Arsenius hid, rather than destroyed his work as a result of the condemnation of the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople⁷. Such evidence would lend credence to the idea that some of the bishops present at the Council, after condemning Origen, dutifully went home and hid their copies of his work, rather than destroy them⁸.

And so, I shall move on to his extant work, and the associated problems arising from it. Again, I am indebted to Crouzel's account, referred to above.

Two important points need to be made before we list the surviving work. Firstly, much of what survives, does so not in the original Greek, but in fourth and fifth century Latin translations. Most of these translations, although not all⁹, are either by Rufinus of Aquileia,

7. Crouzel, 1989, p. 32.

8. This view has been expressed by Dr. J. McGuckin, at a lecture which I attended in 1987.

9. For example, the "unknown translator of the *Commentary on Matthew*", that Crouzel dates to the later fifth, or even sixth century. 1989, p. 42.

whose reliability is in question by his own admission, or by Jerome, who eventually became one of Origen's most important detractors. At once we can see that we not only have possible and conflicting bias, but also a different interpretational perspective in terms of the historical time period; there is a vast difference between the "Greek of the persecuted minority Church of the 3rd century, and Latins of the triumphant Church of the end of the 4th"¹⁰. Further to this, many of these translations were, in fact, more like paraphrases, as a cursory comparison of the Greek fragments which survive, with the Latin translations, clearly shows¹¹.

The second point refers to the many fragments that survive, and the difficulty of their accurate identification and attribution. This is particularly true of the fragments that survive in the *Catena*e, as I shall show below. On top of this, it is not always possible to piece them together in the original and correct order, especially when we do not possess even Latin translations.

Of Origen's first class of exegetical works, the commentaries, we possess the following: Nine books, from a reported thirty-two¹², of the *Commentary on John*, in Greek, of which one of them (XIX) is incomplete. The *Commentary on Matthew* survives partially in Greek (eight

10. Crouzel, 1989, p. 42.

11. Crouzel, 1989, p. 42.

12. For reported numbers of books, see Jerome's Letter 33, as informed by Eusebius in Crouzel, 1989, pp. 37-39.

books from a reported twenty-five), but also in a Latin translation, which has been divided into homily-like sections. The *Commentary on the Song of Songs* only partially survives (three books and possibly part of a fourth, from a reported ten), and is in the Latin of Rufinus. The *Commentary on Romans* also survives in Rufinus' Latin translation, but as ten books, rather than the original fifteen. This time, however, the reason is not loss, but Rufinus' editing of the original Greek manuscript, as he tells us himself in the preface. The already mentioned find at Toura unearthed fragments of the commentary, which, when compared to the Latin version, surprisingly show Rufinus to have carried out a reasonably good job. Of the rest of the Commentaries, we possess only fragments, particularly on the Psalms in the *Catena*¹³.

With the second class of exegetical writings, the scholia, the problems mentioned above come into their own. It is possible to interpret some of the fragments as parts of either a commentary or a homily, and difficult to tell the difference. The scholia have come down to us, as Crouzel states¹⁴, by three main sources: firstly in collections such as Pamphilus' *Apology for Origen* (as much of it that survives in any case) and the *Philocalia of Origen*, put together by the Cappadocian Fathers, specifically Basil and Gregory of Nazianzen.

13. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 43-45.

14. 1989, pp. 44-45.

Secondly in the *Catena*e, which were exegetical compilations of early Church Fathers' work. These prove to be rather unreliable, in terms of their correct attribution to Origen, or otherwise. In any case, they are mostly paraphrased and abridged. Thirdly as quotations in works by other writers such as, for example Methodius or Jerome. Again, the reliability of these is not always good, especially when the particular authors were detractors of Origen, or when they were interpreting Origen out of context and out of his own time.

Of the homilies, the third class of exegetical writings, we possess two hundred and seventy nine of them, but only twenty-one in Greek (twelve of these also exist in Latin translations by Jerome). The rest are extant in the Latin of either Jerome or Rufinus. Indeed, some of these had not been recognized as Origen's, instead attributed to Jerome¹⁵

The *Hexapla* exists only in fragments, mainly from other author's quotations, and then only of the Septuagint text. It is not surprising that this should be the case, as only its text of the Septuagint was ever copied. It would be logical to suspect that Origen composed it as a working tool, for his own Scriptural

15. Crouzel mentions the work of Luke V. Peri in attributing seventy four homilies on the Psalms to Origen, where before they had been considered by Dom Morin to be Jerome's. Peri's article is not available to me so I give Crouzel's reference for it: *Omellie origeniane sui Salmi: Studi e Testi* 289. Vatican City, 1980. Crouzel, 1989, p. 43, text and n. 30.

studies, rather than anything else, hence it would not have been intended for distribution. Crouzel suggests a new edition of fragments should be produced, due to recent finds, as the previous such edition dates from 1875, by Field¹⁶.

In the final category of non-exegetical works, we possess some important texts. The first and most famous one of these is the *De Principiis* (*Peri Archon* in Greek, and *Treatise on First Principles* in English). This four volume work survives in its entirety in Rufinus' Latin translation, but has been massaged somewhat by him, in order to remove what he considered to be later additions. In fact, he ends up softening Origen's views and thus smoothing over crucial passages relating directly to the aim of this study. Some parts of it survive in Greek, together with fragments of Jerome's Latin translation, normally considered to be more faithful. The unfortunate effect of this is that many who study Origen base all their conceptions of him on this one tome, effectively ignoring the extant translation's shortcomings. Thus they form an incomplete opinion of Origen's thought. Further to this, they can also be misled by the fact that *De Principiis* is a rather early work¹⁷, and so tends to

16. Crouzel, 1989, p. 41. Unfortunately, this is not available to me. In any case Crouzel, untypically, fails to give sufficient bibliographical details.

17. Trigg gives the date as 229 (1989, p. 91), and while there is some scholarly debate about the exact date, it does not concern us here. The important point is that it was composed in Origen's Alexandrian period, sometime between 215 and 230.

reflect Origen's thought at that time, before a greater maturation process has been allowed to develop. However, *De Principiis* does represent a starting point for further study, and in some scholars' opinions, a complete theological system, such as Nautin and Trigg.

The *Treatise on Prayer* survives in Greek, as does the *Exhortation to Martyrdom*. Both these works belong to the Caesarean period in Origen's life, and appear to be written for, and at the request of, Ambrose. A *Treatise on Easter* surfaced at Toura, which, although badly damaged, has been published by Nautin, according to Crouzel¹⁸. Also discovered at Toura, the *Dialogue with Heraclides*, in Greek, mentioned in the previous chapter, and important in that it shows us Origen in action.

The brilliant apologetic defence against Celsus' *True Discourse, Contra Celsus* has also survived in Greek, and gives us the opportunity to compare his later thinking to his earlier, the book being completed in about 248¹⁹. Certainly it represents the earliest Christian attempt to refute the pagan hellenistic philosophical tradition, using its own tools, and from a position of intellectual equality at the very least²⁰.

Finally, from the collection of Origen's correspondence, mentioned by Eusebius, only two letters

18. This text is not available to me, and again, Crouzel neglects to give further bibliographical information (Crouzel, 1989, p. 47).

19. See Chadwick's introduction to his English translation (1953, pp. xiv-xv).

20. Chadwick, 1953, p. xiii.

survive in Greek; one to Julius Africanus (together with Julius Africanus' letter to Origen), and the other to Gregory Thaumaturgus. Some fragments in Latin survive, including Origen's letter to friends in Alexandria, preserved in *De Adulteratione* 8 by Rufinus.

It can be seen then, that while we possess a reasonably large amount of his writings, they represent only a small part of his total work. Even then, much of what we have is second, and even third hand, and often in unreliable versions. This naturally presents a problem when trying to identify a particular strand of his thought, such as his christology. What methodology then, should be employed in attempting to ascertain his christology? Crouzel suggests an answer²¹.

He states that scholars in the past have tended to ignore difficult and contentious fragments, and such works as the Homilies and Commentaries, instead of concentrating on the major works surviving in Greek, plus *De Principiis*. I would add that some do not even go that far, confining themselves to *De Principiis* alone, or even limiting themselves to their own preconceived ideas, based on second hand information²². Instead, Crouzel suggests the use, on a massive scale, of all extant texts is the correct *modus operandi*, following Henri de Lubac's

21. 1989, pp. 48-49.

22. For example, none less than Martin Luther dismisses Origen on the grounds that "in all of Origen there is not a single word about Christ", demonstrating a severe lack of real knowledge about Origen's writings. Trigg, 1983, p. 256. Trigg does not give us a source

suggestion in his *Histoire et Esprit*²³. This will allow the reader to cross reference and compare parallel texts and determine the true shape of Origen's thought.

However, I would suggest that to follow this course of action exactly could lead to inconclusive confusion at worst, and erroneous conclusions at best²⁴, as Origen tends to contradict himself quite often²⁵. Crouzel is aware of the problem when he states that, "his thought is full of internal tensions and no text yields his thought precisely on a given point"²⁶. It may come down, again, to the fact that Crouzel does not believe Origen is systematic, while other authors such as Nautin and Trigg do, basing their contention on the centrality of *De Principiis* in Origen's thought²⁷. Their method will naturally be different, and at odds with Crouzel's.

A compromise must therefore be reached in an attempt to satisfy both camps. If *De Principiis* is used as a starting point, and then gradually informed by the use of other Origenian texts, we can retain some of the

23. 1950.

24. For instance, J. Nigel Rowe's 1987 book on Origen's christology, in my opinion, suffers from an overkill of quotations, tying itself up in contradiction after contradiction, and consequently obscuring its central argument. A further objection to Rowe's analysis is the relative lack of a historical framework within which to judge Origen's christology effectively. I will expand on this later.

25. I shall return to this in the following chapter, suffice it to say for now, that Origen's method as a teacher may well account for some of this.

26. Crouzel, 1989, p. 49.

27. Trigg devotes a whole chapter of his book to this aim. 1983, pp. 87-129.

centrality of it, pleasing the systematician. At the same time, the gradual and critical use of other extant texts should ensure that undue importance is not attached to *De Principiis*, which should please the non-systematician. As a result we should achieve a fairly balanced picture of Origen's thought. This, then, is the methodology I propose to adopt in studying his christology.

For the English speaking student with no Greek or Latin, there is a further problem, that being the reliance on English translations of the texts, and other scholars' interpretations of them in their work. In the case of *De Principiis*, which is a good example, this will mean that the text available will have come through three languages, Greek, Latin, and finally English, and will have undergone three editing processes by Rufinus, Koetschau (who was German), and Butterworth. In addition, much recent scholarship has been published originally in languages other than English; De Faye, Danielou, Nautin and Crouzel are all French, for example. Again, a dependence on translations is inevitable. Further, the versions of texts quoted by these authors have been obtained from sources available to them in their countries, and not always available here. Consequently, I have tried to limit myself to quotations from the English translations available to me (not all of them were) as I have detailed in the preliminary chapter.

Where this was not possible, I have indicated the source given by other authors.

Having placed Origen in a historical framework and examined the nature and extent of Origen's work, we can now go on to study his christology in detail.

CHAPTER THREE.ORIGEN'S CHRISTOLOGY.

In order to conduct as thorough as possible an examination of Origen's christology, I shall first have to identify the major constituent themes in that christology. Therefore I shall attempt to construct an overview of it from Origen's own texts.

As has already been stated, the starting point of such an attempt will be the formulation of his christology in his famous treatise *De Principiis* (also known as *Peri Archon* in Greek, and *On First Principles* in English). It begins here because this can be considered to be Origen's attempt at a first Systematic Theology.¹ Here, according to the systematic scholars such as Trigg, he expounds views which he considers fundamental to Christian faith and, in an intellectual and analytical way, describes possible solutions to theological questions. *De Principiis* has been considered Origen's attempt to state his beliefs and draw them into a unified system. This contention itself will be examined more fully later.

1. As we have already seen, there is some debate about the validity of considering *De Principiis* to be systematic, and while many scholars believe it to be so (e.g. Trigg), others do not; most notably Henri Crouzel, who states that it should not be seen as a first "Summa Theologica", Crouzel, 1989, p. 46. However, it is not my intention to enter into this debate for the present, as it is clear that for both sides, *De Principiis* represents to some degree, a lucid formulation of Origen's theology.

That is not to say that other works by Origen have nothing to offer us. Quite the contrary, as has been stated above, the method will require reference to the other Origenian texts, in order to clarify and inform the picture of his christology in *De Principiis*. What is being said is that *De Principiis* is our starting point to which we will make adjustments, in the light of the other extant texts.

Before we begin, it is as well to say a few words regarding the reliability of the version of the text currently extant, over and above what has already been stated. The only complete text of *De Principiis* survives in the Latin translation of Rufinus of Aquileia, which was completed in 398, and whose reliability is in question as Rufinus himself states that he has "smoothed over" and "emended" it so as not to cause offence to Latin readers². Rufinus was of the opinion that the Greek text available to him had been tampered with by heretics, and saw it as his duty to correct this³.

While Jerome had completed a more faithful translation, this is now lost. However, some Greek fragments have survived as quotations in other works, such as the *Philocalia*, Justinian's *Florilegium*, and to some extent in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa⁴. For a complete treatment of the problem see G.W. Butterworth's

2. *De Princ.*, preface, 2.

3. Daniélou, 1955, p. xii.

4. Daniélou, 1955, p. xii.

introduction to Dr. Koetchau's text⁵. In addition, Gustave Bardy deals with the problem at length in his *Recherches sur l'histoire du texte et des versions latines du De Principiis d'Origene*⁶.

It is therefore clear that Rufinus' translation will have to be used, but with care. The text available to me is Butterworth's English version of Koetchau's translation, which, although containing too many Greek fragments, has been "splendidly" translated into English, in Trigg's opinion⁷.

De Principiis appears to set out systematically the "First Principles" of the Christian Faith and explore possible explanations of matters therein, on a speculative basis. In his preface, Origen seems to say just that:

"Many of those...who profess to believe in Christ, hold conflicting opinions not only on small and trivial questions but also on some that are great and important...In view of this it seems necessary to lay down a definite line and unmistakable rule in regard to each of these, and to postpone the inquiry into other matters until afterwards."⁸

Accordingly Origen begins with the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, argues his way through a "history" of creation, from the Falling Away to the very End, treating questions which arise from that study, stressing the importance of scripture and defending use of his

5. SPCK, 1936, pp. ix-xxx.

6. Paris, 1923.

7. Trigg, 1981, p. 24.

8. *De Princ.* I, Pref., 2.

allegorical method, before summing up the Doctrine of the Trinity. As Crouzel points out, the division of the work into four volumes does not correspond fully with the plan of the treatise, due to the constraint of calling each full roll of papyrus a volume⁹.

The first Christological innovation comes early in the work, when Origen argues for an eternal begetting of the Son from the Father. In order to do this he relies on a central part of his christological thought, which in turn is based on Biblical texts: that of a theology of the titles of Christ. Origen develops his doctrine of the titles, or more accurately, the *epinoiai*, of Christ by examining the titles given to Christ in the New Testament, and using his allegorical method of exegesis to extract titles from the Old Testament¹⁰. For him, these *epinoiai* are simply the different ways in which Christ appears to us. As Crouzel states:

"They represent the different functions or attributes that the Christ takes on as Mediator in relation to us...[...]...For

9. Crouzel, 1989, p. 46.

10. Origen is concerned to show that the two Testaments belong together, and the use of allegorical exegesis enables him to link the two. This is due to the sort of heresies expressed in his time: most notably that of Marcion, who argues that each Testament must have a different God, as God appears to act differently in them. For example he postulates that the God of the Old testament cannot be a good God, due to the amount of cruelty, war, suffering, etc., that is present in the Old Testament. Origen, however, by using the allegorical method of exegesis, does not have to interpret every event in the Old Testament as literal truth, and can instead concentrate on showing how the two Testaments belong together, with the God of the New and of the Old, being one and the same. Crouzel, 1989, p. 154.

Origen it is simply a matter of the different aspects under which Christ appears to us: the word *epinoia* expresses a human way of looking at these things, with or without foundation in the real, without this distinction of concepts corresponding to different beings."¹¹

Origen identifies about a hundred or so *epinoiai* throughout his work, and studies around fifty in Book I of the *Commentary on John* Crouzel¹². We shall return to the *epinoiai* as a whole when we examine the curious idea that each person saw Christ as different. But for now, like Crouzel, we are only interested in the two major *epinoiai*: that of Wisdom and that of Logos.

Origen considers Wisdom as the principle *epinoia*, following Prov. 8: 22, and John 1: 1. It is in Wisdom that we find the "Intelligible Word". As Crouzel states:

"Wisdom which is the Son can be shared by rational creatures: the virtue of wisdom is in fact the highest of all, the mystical virtue par excellence which enables its possessor to see as by an intimate connaturality the divine realities."¹³

The Logos, being the second *epinoia*, is that which allows Wisdom to be communicated to the *logika*, (who are the rational beings), and the *logika* are indeed rational because of their participation with the Logos (or Reason).

11. Crouzel, 1989, p. 189.

12. 1989, p. 189.

13. Crouzel, 1989, p. 190.

Thus, in order to demonstrate the eternal begetting of the Son from the Father he begins with the *epinoia* of Wisdom:

"And can anyone who has learned to regard God with feelings of reverence suppose or believe that God the Father ever existed, even for a single moment without begetting his wisdom? For he would either say that God could not have begotten wisdom before he did beget her, so that he brought wisdom into being when she had not existed before, or else that he could have begotten her and - what is profanity even to say about God - that he was unwilling to do so; each of which alternatives, as everyone can see, is absurd and impious, that is, either that God should advance from being unable to being able, or that, while being able, he should act as if he were not and should delay to beget wisdom.

"Wherefore we recognize that God was always the Father of his only-begotten Son, who was born indeed of him and draws his being from him, but is yet without any beginning, not only of that kind which can be distinguished by periods of time, but even of that other kind, which the mind alone is wont to contemplate in itself and to perceive, if I may so say, with the bare intellect and reason."¹⁴

Origen expands the idea that the thought of God being without "Wisdom" is unthinkable, either because he needs "wisdom" to beget "wisdom", or because to be able to beget "wisdom" and not do so would suggest that either God is not omnipotent or benevolent. He then extends this idea to encompass the Word or Logos *epinoia*, which he deals with in a similar way in which he has already dealt with Wisdom. But it is not just a case of the Father generating the Son and being done with: "The

14. *De Princ.* I, 2, 2.

Father did not generate the Son and dismiss Him after He was generated, but He is always generating Him"¹⁵. However, this begetting, cannot be compared to any earthly or human begetting, but is:

"An everlasting begetting, as a brightness is begotten from light. For he does not become Son in an external way through adoption of the Spirit, but is Son by nature."¹⁶

Origen wants to distance himself from the idea that the Son is in some way created from a part of the Father, by the Father. In other words, that although the Son is of the same substance as the Father, he is not, as some had proposed, begotten "by an act of separation from himself (The Father)"¹⁷. This is to refute the Valentinian heresy that such an act of separation (Prolobe) had occurred.¹⁸

Having established this eternal begetting, it then leaves us with the problem of whether the Son is subordinate to the Father. One of the problems in this endeavour is to decide how much of Origen remains in Rufinus' text, and indeed, where we have access to different versions, how much they are tarnished with the desire to see Origen condemned as a heretic because of his subordinationism.

15. *Hom. in Jer.* IX, 4.

16. *De Princ.* I, 2, 4.

17. *De Princ.* IV, 4, 1.

18. Origen would have been very aware of the Valentinian viewpoints as he had converted Ambrose, his wealthy friend and benefactor, from that very heresy. Quasten, 1953, p.43.

Let us examine Book I, chapter 2, 6, as an example. Rufinus renders the text in question:

"Our Saviour is therefore the image of the invisible God, the Father, being the truth, when considered in relation to the Father himself, and the image, when considered in relation to us, to whom he reveals the Father."

Jerome, in turn, renders it as follows, in his *Epistle ad Avitum 2*:

"The Son, who is the image of the invisible Father, is not truth when compared with the Father: but in relation to us, who are unable to receive the truth of God Almighty, he is a shadow and semblance of the truth."

Clearly, Rufinus' version is quite palatable, while Jerome's forms the basis for an accusation of heresy. By the time Theophilus writes, after the Council of Alexandria where Origenism was condemned in 400 A.D., the text is rendered:

"The Son compared with us is truth, but compared with the Father is falsehood."

This is obviously quite a departure from even Jerome's version and has been twisted to such an extent as to portray Origen as almost evil, such is the power of the word "falsehood" used in the text¹⁹. The problem is compounded by the fact that Origen's opponents do not understand the Platonist use of the word Truth as opposite to image, rather than falsehood. Thus,

19. Butterwoth, 1936, p. 20, n. 1.

according to Crouzel²⁰, Theophilus fails to understand this and condemns Origen for a heresy which is due entirely to his own ignorance. Now while one may concede that Origen was mistaken, the accusation of culpable, deliberate heresy is certainly not deserved. Indeed, Origen is the first to state that if he is mistaken then he should be corrected, when he states:

"In the meantime, these are the thoughts which occur to us at the moment in our discussion of such very difficult subjects as the incarnation and deity of Christ. If there be anyone who can discover something better and prove what he says by clearer statements out of the holy scriptures, let his opinion be accepted in preference to mine."²¹

However, coming back to the problem of the position of the Son in relation to the Father, there appears to be some evidence from *De Principiis* that Origen does consider Christ subordinate to the Father. Much of the evidence for this is centred around two rather contentious ideas that he puts forward; namely the Son as the "image of the invisible God", and the pre-existence of the soul of Christ. We shall deal first with the "image".

Origen uses the idea put forward by Paul²² to illustrate the relationship between the Father and the Son. He firstly examines the use of "image" in human

20. 1989, p. 171.

21. *De Princ.* II, 4, 7.

22. Col. 1:15.

terms, firstly as a painting or carving can be an image of something, and secondly as a son can be said to be the image of his father; Origen uses Adam and Seth as his example. The first, he says, applies to how human beings are made in the image of God²³, and the second can be applied to the Father and the Son. Here we can see the tension in Origen's thought: while he does not want to fall into the Valentinian and Gnostic trap of supposing a separation between the Father and the Son, he is also at pains to conform to a strict monotheism.

He wants to conform, not perhaps because he is a strict monotheist himself, but because he recognizes that many other people in church held as traditional that view. Origen seems to entertain the idea that being too strictly monotheist leads people into important errors; that much is clear from his *Dialogue with Heraclides*:

"*Orig.*:...Is the Father God?

Heracl.: Assuredly.

Orig.: Is the Son distinct from the Father?

Heracl.: Of course. How can he be Son if he is also Father?

Orig.: While being distinct from the Father is the Son himself also God?

Heracl.: He himself is also God.

Orig.: And do two Gods become a unity?

Heracl.: Yes.

Orig.: Do we confess two Gods?

Heracl.: Yes. The power is one.

Orig.: But as our brethren take offence at the statement that there are two Gods, we must formulate the statement carefully, and show in what sense there are two, and in what sense the two are

23 Gen 1:26.

one God..."²⁴

Origen goes on to qualify and soften the statement, but this is not the only occasion when he makes such an assertion that are two Gods²⁵. However, as in the example above, he always adds some sort of qualification, and always uses the statement to show how the two are one God²⁶.

On the one hand, the Father wills the Son into existence through the power of his mind²⁷, meaning of course that the Son must be contingent on the Father; indeed, Origen goes on to state:

"This point must above all be upheld by those who allow nothing to be unbegotten, that is, unborn, except the God the Father only."²⁸

In fact, Rufinus has cushioned the blow here by rendering *γενητός* as *γεγενητός* (created as begotten)²⁹, and Jerome claims that what Origen had really written was that "nothing is uncreated except God the Father only"³⁰

24 *Dial. cum Heracl.* Scherer p. 123-4, Chadwick and Oulton, 1954, p. 438.

25. *De Orat.* XV, 1; *C. Cels.* V, 39; VI, 61; VII, 57; *Comm. in Joh.* II, 2: 10, 37.

26. Chadwick and Oulton, 1954, pp. 433-4 & n. 8.

27. *De Princ.* I, 2, 6.

28. *De Princ.* I, 2, 6.

29. It is likely that the distinction between these two words was not very clearly defined in Origen's time; Butterworth translation, p. 3, n. 3. Indeed, Crouzel is at pains to point out that the importance the distinction (double *n* as opposed to a single *n*) arose as a result of the much later Arian controversy, and that before then, the two were used interchangeably, such that the double *n* was not even pronounced. It was only after the Arian crisis that exact meanings and spellings of words become an issue in the church. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 174-175.

30. *Ep. ad Avitum* 2, quoted in Butterworth translation, p. 19, n. 3.

On the other hand, Origen discounts any division between the Father and the Son by saying that there can be no separation between the mind and will of the Father begetting the Son, hence if the Father is invisible so is the "image" produced which is the Son. Origen comes to this conclusion because God the Father is incorporeal, and hence so is the Son: in other words, nothing which does not have a physical body can be physically divided. He goes on to state the famous catchphrase of the Athanasian party; "ouk en hoti ouk en -There was not when He was not", not once, but twice in *De Principiis*³¹, and again in the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*³², as if somehow he could have foreseen the Arian crisis, and we shall examine this in detail later. Suffice it to say that these could not have been additions by Rufinus as some commentators have assumed, as St. Athanasius himself quotes *De Princ.* IV, 4, 1, in Greek, specifically attributing it to Origen³³.

As a further illustration of how the Son can be said to be the image of God the Father, Origen firstly states that the Christ is "the express image of God's substance" or subsistence³⁴ which he gets from Hebrews, (incorrectly

31. *De Princ.* I, 2, 9 and IV, 4, 1.

32. *Comm. in Rom.* I, 5.

33. Crouzel, 1989, p. 187.

34. Origen then, rather delightfully adds "Whatever that substance or subsistence means", almost pre-empting the centuries of discussion that would spring from the terms *ousia* and *homousia*! Indeed, according to Rufinus, he is the first to use the term *homousia*, Fortman, 1972, p. 56. As a counterbalance to this, Hanson claims that Rufinus must have deliberately altered the text to have

but understandably assuming Pauline authorship) and then goes on to give us one of his analogies, albeit acknowledging the limited nature of it:

"Let us suppose, for example that there existed a statue of so great a size as to fill the whole world, but on account of its immensity was imperceptible to anyone, and that another statue was made similar to it in every detail, in shape of limbs and outline of features, in form and material, but not in its immense size, so that those who were unable to perceive and behold the immense one could yet be confident that they had seen it, when they saw the small one, because this preserved every line of limbs and features and the very form and material with an absolutely indistinguishable similarity."³⁵

He then compares the immense statue to the Father, and the smaller statue to the Son. This obviously causes some problems in later times as it can be interpreted as clearly making the Son subordinate to the Father. To be fair to him though, he does state that the only reason that the analogy may be permitted is to illustrate how it was possible for the Son of God to be active in a human body.

However, as a result of Origen's thought as outlined above, it is clear that a coherent doctrine of the incarnation is needed. In order to state that the Son is the image of the Father, the Son must also be

Origen use homoousios of the Son, else Athanasius would undoubtedly have used it to back up his arguments against the Arians. He did not, and hence Hanson is of the opinion that Origen did not use the term. See Hanson, 1972, pp. 293-303, and 1987, p. 412.
35. *De Princ.* I, 2, 8.

incorporeal. This, as can clearly be seen, does not marry well with the incarnate Jesus Christ. Origen however, appears to have little to say about the incarnation as empirical fact³⁶, and prefers to deal with its problems by concentrating on how the incarnation itself was possible in the first place. He gets around this problem by using the idea of the pre-existence of the Soul of Jesus, and interpreting it as hard fact.

This doctrine however, poses a serious question for modern theology, which, because of its insistence on the humanity of Christ, evident in low christologies, is reluctant to accept it as it seems to undermine that very humanity. But because of the extensive Biblical evidence to support the view, it interprets the pre-existence in a metaphorical way, which of course, can undermine Christ's divinity³⁷. Put simply, some low christologies never get off the ground!

36. Origen does not seem to place great importance on the human aspect of the incarnation, but the reason for this may, I suggest, be a simpler one than at first meets the eye. His extant exegetical works exclude the *Commentary on Luke*, and the part of his *Commentary on Matthew* which would have had to address such an issue (i.e. the birth narrative) has also been lost. As John does not include a birth narrative, and his other extant works would not have had to address the problem directly, it may simply be that what he did have to say is lost forever. To balance this argument, one would have expected at least *Contra Celsum* to have contained strong hints at the existence of any deeply held convictions on this matter. By working back from Origen's view of the resurrection, both as it applies to Christ and humans (essentially one is dependant on the other), it is possible to piece together a more accurate idea of exactly how he perceives the concept of the incarnation; this will be examined briefly in due course.

37. Bostock, 1987, p. 259.

In order to fully understand what the doctrine means we must examine in detail Origen's overall scheme of things; how he saw the beginning of the Creation, what happened before Creation, etc.

Origen begins with God the Father, who begets God the Son, The Logos, through whom all else is created, following Genesis and the Prologue of John's Gospel. The Spirit is also God, but does not concern us directly here. God then created "minds", and these, at first, are pure. These "minds" can be thought of as sitting around the wondrous splendour of the Logos in one massive circle, "offering service to God and keeping his commandments"³⁸. But then the Devil, who possessed free-will, chose to break away from God, and hence God drives him away. However, this leads all the other "minds" to revolt too, although not all to the same degree. This then leads to the Fall. God, according to Origen, does not make each "mind" as a soul, or daemon, or angel, but in fact, the particular final outcome of the individual mind's state of being is determined by each mind's sin; some sin more, and become daemons, some sin very little and become angels and archangels, some sin somewhere between the two, and end up as souls bound to bodies in this world. Hence the creation and endowment of corporeal bodies is seen as a consequence of our sin, a punishment for our sin in the time before we were born.

38. *De Princ.* I, 8, 1.

Thus, Origen proposes his doctrine of the pre-existence of souls³⁹. He gives some evidence for this in various places, for example, by using the supplanting of Esau by Jacob⁴⁰, and perhaps more clearly for our purposes, by asking the question about why some babies are born with defects, (blind in his example) though they have not committed any sin, and others are not⁴¹. The only explanation is that the sin must have been committed before they were born, and they must therefore have been pre-existent⁴².

But out of all the souls that pre-existed, one, and only one, committed no sin and remained loyal to God. Indeed, though this soul had free will, it chose God so strongly that the possibility of sin was removed. This soul was the soul of Jesus, which, being pre-existent, like the others, but not turning away, becomes like one

39. Origen has been heavily criticized for this doctrine by other Church Fathers and it is one of the heresy charges which finally leads to his condemnation in the sixth century. Many of his opponents believed the doctrine to be a product of Greek philosophy (specifically from the teachings of Plato), and considered it a pagan influence leading to error. Gerald Bostock (1987, pp. 259-264), however, makes a good case for showing that in fact the doctrine comes from traditional Jewish thought, the Old Testament, and Philo in particular, a point which we will deal with later.

40. *De Princ.* II, 9, 7; III, 1, 22.

41. *De Princ.* I, 8, 1.

42. Origen seems to be attempting to marry the old Jewish idea (see n.10, above) that illness and well-being are linked to sin, and not only personal sin, but the sin of the forefathers, with the concept of a loving God, using Free Will. In the first case God is seen to be vengeful, ruling by autocratic dictatorial fear and less than benevolent, in an early statement of the Problem of Evil, to which Origen replies with his formulation of the Free Will, or "Summa Bonnum" Defence.

with the Logos. Now while the Logos cannot enter into and act in the material world, because it is not in the Logos's nature to do so, by its union to the soul of Jesus it can now do so, because it is not against the nature of the soul of Jesus to take on a material body.

This then, is the Incarnation. In Origen's words:

"That soul of which Jesus said 'no man taketh from me my soul' [Jn 10:18], clinging to God from the beginning of the creation and ever after in a union inseparable and indissoluble, as being the soul of the wisdom and word of God, and the truth and true light, and receiving him wholly, and itself entering into his light and splendour, was made with him in a pre-eminent degree one spirit.....This soul, then, acting as a medium between God and the flesh (for it was not possible for the nature of God to mingle with a body apart from some medium), there is born, as we said, the God-man, the medium being that existence to whose nature it was not contrary to assume a body."⁴³

Origen coins the expression "God-man" (θεοάνθρωπος)

here, and introduces another innovation in doing so for the first time⁴⁴, making a lasting contribution to Christian theology⁴⁵.

43. *De Princ.* II, 6, 3.

44. Quasten, 1953, p. 80.

45. It is possible that this was derived and adapted from a contemporary concept; Eugene V. Gallager, in his now published Doctoral thesis *Divine man or Magician? Celsus and Origen on Jesus* (1982), points out the already existing, greek philosophical concept of "divine man" (Greek: θεῖος ἄνθρωπος). In turn, the Hellenistic idea of a divine man may have come to it from eastern, and indeed Jewish thought (the concept of "son of god" in the Old Testament, especially as it refers to King David for example). Jesus could well have been seen in this way, and Origen may well have been adapting a concept which had already been applied to Jesus by earlier Hellenistic Christian converts. For a full exposition see

However, returning to the incarnation, J. Nigel Rowe in his 1987 book, *Origen's Doctrine of Subordination*, following Wintersig⁴⁶, claims that the idea that the Logos cannot be associated with the corporeal, effectively denies the incarnation, as only the human soul of Jesus becomes flesh⁴⁷. Origen, like many thinkers at that time, considered material existence as secondary⁴⁸; for Origen, the material world only exists because of the fall of the first order of creation. The divine order then, is essentially incompatible to the created order, so there is no way that the divine Logos can enter the created order. For Origen, in Rowe's words, "the Incarnation in fact becomes an awkward episode which has to be taken account of because Christian tradition emphasises it"⁴⁹.

Rowe refers to various passages by Origen, but particularly *Contra Celsum* IV: 15, as evidence of the fact that Origen "cannot really conceive of the Word of God as Himself becoming incarnate"⁵⁰. He sees this as a result of the influence of the Platonic scheme of things on

Gallagher's book, especially chapter I and his conclusion.

46. 1932, p. 76.

47. Rowe, 1987, p. 121.

48. There is a similarity here with Gnostic thought, but while the Gnostics would claim the created world is bad or evil, Origen in fact sees the world as essentially good. *De Princ.* II, 1, 3; II, 3, 6; II, 9, 6. *C.Cels.* IV, 57; VIII, 31; VIII, 52. In simple terms, a good God cannot create evil things, but evil is merely a lack of good, accounted for by creation's free will.

49. Rowe, 1987, p. 288.

50. Rowe, 1982, p. 290.

Origen's thought; the starting off with perfection, followed by a fall to imperfection, and then back again⁵¹. This he claims, leads Origen to formulate a contradictory and confused christology⁵².

Certainly, Origen seems ill at ease with the idea of material flesh being part of salvation, be it as part of Christ's body, or indeed as part of humans in general. He has little to say about the Incarnation, as Daniélou points out⁵³, but this is because Origen has effectively moved the "Incarnation" back into the Metaphysical realm, in the sense that the Logos joins with the soul of Jesus before the earthly Incarnation. Added to this is the fact that Origen held that the Logos was always acting on the human race, and this is as a consequence of his doctrine of the pre-existence. As Daniélou puts it:

"...the Incarnation does represent the pre-eminent instance of the Word's intervention in human affairs."⁵⁴

51. Rowe, 1987, pp. 287-293. It is because of this, and in an attempt to get around the problem, that Origen postulates his doctrine of the pre-existence of all human souls including Jesus'. Rowe considers this doctrine to be derived from Platonism, but Gerald Bostock shows that he got it from Scripture and Jewish thought. Bostock, 1987, pp. 259-263. Further to this, it has always been assumed that Origen derives this cyclical scheme of things directly from Platonism, but in fact, it comes to him from the Bible, from Jewish thought and from the Church, as Daniélou shows. Daniélou, 1955, p. 269.

52. The influence of Greek philosophy on Origen, which has been mentioned before, will be examined in detail below (pp. 90-93), when the role of Christ as mediator is considered.

53. Only a short chapter in *De Principiis*, II, 6. Daniélou, 1955, p. 262.

54. Daniélou, 1955, p. 262.

In other words, the visible, material Incarnation is only a sacrament of the invisible reality of the Logos' constant and unceasing intervention in order to save humanity⁵⁵. Daniélou adds;

"The historical Christ is a sacrament of the Christ who presides over the inner life and is present unseen in the Church and in the souls; he is also a sacrament of the glorious Christ who will be revealed at the end of time."⁵⁶

So Origen did believe that Christ really did become incarnate, but that the important thing about the Incarnation was its spiritual dimension, or the spiritual truth it represented.

In order to see that Origen did indeed believe in the historical Incarnation, for want of a better phrase, we can look briefly to Origen's doctrine of Redemption. Not only must Christ have really died on the cross for there to be an effective Redemption, but if we follow Jose-Antonio Alcain's analysis of the Redemption in Origen's thought⁵⁷, we can clearly see how highly he valued Christ's humanity.

Alcain examines numerous Origenian texts and comes up with five schemes by which Origen is able to express the Redemption in terms of Christ's death and Resurrection. These inter-related schemes are the

⁵⁵ Daniélou, 1955, p. 263.

⁵⁶ Daniélou, 1955, p. 265.

⁵⁷ Alcain, 1973. See also Crouzel, 1989, pp. 194-195 for a brief overview.

mercantile, the military, the juridical, the ritual and the mystical.

In the mercantile scheme, we are on sale, the Devil is the seller, and Christ is the buyer. The price is Christ's humanity in the form of his soul. But the Devil has been tricked into thinking that he can hold onto this soul, and being blind to God from his own sin, he is unable to see that this soul is forever joined with the Word, so escapes. This scheme is not only based on Scripture⁵⁸, but is in accord with an important part of the basic faith expressed in the Apostle's Creed in the very early Church with Christ's descent into Hell.

Similarly, in the military scheme, we are freed from being prisoners of the Devil, by Christ's victory in the cross, and again, this is based on Scripture⁵⁹ and includes the descent into Hell, as Christ breaks into the camp of the Devil and frees us.

The juridical scheme is again based on Paul⁶⁰, and deals with the setting aside by Christ in court of a legal bond on us by the Devil, by nailing it to the cross, and hence freeing us.

The ritual scheme concentrates on the idea of Christ as both priest and victim in his own Passion, derived from the Letter to the Hebrews. In this scheme, His priesthood represents his divinity while his role as

58. I Peter 1:18f; I Cor. 7:23; Apoc. 5:9.

59. Col. 2:15.

60. Col. 2:14.

victim represents his humanity. His sacrifice cleanses and purifies us, enabling us to be reconciled with God.

Finally, the mystical scheme focuses on the actual death and Resurrection of Christ, which is of the same type as our own. Hence we die to sin with Christ, and are resurrected with him in conformity. Christ then, is the mediator of our resurrection, not just as the example, but as the facilitator of our Redemption.

All these schemes are not to be considered in isolation from one another, but should be seen as linked with one another, together producing the picture of the mediating and redemptive act of Christ's death and Resurrection. The important thing to note here is the crucial and necessary role of Christ's humanity. As Crouzel states when summing up his review of Alcaïn's exposition:

" it is through the humanity that He has assumed that the Son manifests Himself to us: that humanity shares fully in his mediatorial work and offers itself as the most immediate model for our imitation."⁶¹

Following on from this, we can also examine Origen's ideas about the resurrection itself in order to shed light on his concept of the Incarnation⁶², given that the two are intrinsically linked. We should then be able to ascertain whether Origen does consider Christ's body to

61. Crouzel, 1989, p. 197.

62. At the time of course, they would have been seen as separate from Christology, and part of Soteriology, or the study of salvation; Christ's suffering, death and resurrection were linked to our salvation, being the absolute proof of Christ's divinity.

be like ours, given that our resurrection will be of exactly the same type. What we find however is that he is unhappy with speaking about the resurrection of the flesh, and prefers instead the resurrection of the body. It is because of this that Methodius of Olympus (d. c. 311) criticized him in his treatise *Aglaopon* or *On the Resurrection*, claiming that his use of the term *eidos* (form) effectively denied the real resurrection of Christ⁶³. But Crouzel shows convincingly that Methodius had misinterpreted Origen's philosophical language⁶⁴.

But does Origen shy away from speaking about the Incarnation and the resurrection of the flesh for the reason that Rowe suggests? Is it indeed the overbearing influence of the Platonic scheme on Origen's thought, or can this tendency in Origen's thought be explained by other means? The answer to this, I feel, lies in placing Origen within his historical situation, such that the ideas of the opponents Origen is trying to do battle with need to be examined. Origen is trying to refute various different camps. Firstly he is defending the idea of the resurrection against pagan critics, such as Celsus. They poured scorn on the idea of the resurrection because of a common Christian conception at the time, that of the millenarians or chiliasts. These believed that the final resurrection would entail the exact reconstitution of the

63. See Kelly, 1977, pp. 474-476 for example.

64. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 92, 247, 248-255, and especially 256.

earthly body, which led the question of how this could possibly come about, given that, for example, if a person dies, is eaten by an animal, and then eaten again by another person, to whom will the original matter belong when the final resurrection takes place? The Millenarians appealed to ever more fanciful and outlandish ideas in order to explain this⁶⁵, such that pagan critics made fun of and rejected the whole idea of resurrection⁶⁶. Secondly, therefore, Origen opposed these literalist Christian interpretations. Finally, Origen was keen to refute Gnostic and Manichean heretical ideas that earthly matter, earthly bodies, did not have a place in salvation because matter is, by its nature, evil⁶⁷. This, of course, represents the other extreme. It is in trying to steer a middle path between these considerations that gives rise to Origen's explanation of the resurrection in terms of "form" or *eidos*⁶⁸. Origen realises that the material which constitutes the body is transient, but the form of the body is not⁶⁹. As an

65. See Crouzel, 1989, pp. 250-1.

66. There is a similarity between the pagan criticisms and the Sadducean criticism of the resurrection in Matt 22: 23-33.

67. Kelly, 1977, p. 471.

68. *Sel. in Ps.I*, 5.

69. Interestingly enough, modern science has demonstrated that all the molecules in human bodies change approximately every seven years, such that we are no longer the same material as we were seven years ago. However, we continue to be the same person, with the same body. Further to this, as all matter is manufactured in stars; it is simply the constituent matter of everything, and it is the "form" which determines the personality of living beings. Origen's ideas appear to be up to date and compatible with modern scientific discovery!

example, when a person ages, they physically change, but they are still identical to their younger self; they are still the same person. In this way Origen speaks of the body as the "form", and suggests that a new essence is needed for the resurrected body in order for it to exist in the spiritual realm⁷⁰ so the body is made of a spiritual "material substratum" rather than a fleshy one. In this way, he solves the apparent problems that the literalist generate, while refuting the total lack of body that the Gnostics and Manicheans put forward, and retaining the resurrection as a fact in the face of the pagans.

As incarnation and resurrection are intrinsically linked, this sheds some light on the question of why Origen's view of the incarnation is as it is. It cannot be simply seen as being derived from Platonism as Rowe suggests, but is more due to a desire on the part of Origen, to combat the heresies of his time.

More importantly however, I would posit, as Crouzel does, that the fault lies with the fact that Rowe's criticisms are a product of contemporary christological ideology and due to Rowe's low christological starting point. As Crouzel remarks:

"His judgements about Origen's doctrine of the Son start explicitly from a conception of the two natures which he calls 'evangelist' in opposition to the 'Tractarians' which he defines as

70. *C.Cels* VII, 32.

'adoptionists', ie. a concept which considers Christ more or less as a man who becomes progressively united to God. According to this idea, he constantly reproaches Origen for inconsistency and understatements about the Incarnation. I think, on the contrary, that Nigel Rowe seeks to clear up the mystery of the God-man with a purely human logic."⁷¹

Coming back to Origen's formulation of the Incarnation, one of his main concerns is to postulate the pre-existence of the soul of Jesus, as something different from the Logos. Some christologies had put forward the idea that in Jesus the soul was replaced by the Logos (e.g., the Apollinarians). In other words, the soul was divine, and the body human. Origen could not go along with this as the danger would then be for Docetist tendencies to creep into Christian thought. He saw that the pre-existence of the soul of Jesus went hand in hand with the pre-existence of all human souls; the two are inseparable; they are of the same nature. If this were not the case Jesus could not have been truly, fully human; in order for Jesus to be fully human, he would need to be like us in every detail, including the possession of a soul. If He did not possess a soul, the door would be open for considering Jesus as a puppet of the Logos, with no free will, and therefore no true humanity; a sort of "God in disguise as man", or, "God in Fancy Dress" christology. Such a christology could not be acceptable to Christians as it would mean that if

71. Crouzel, 1988, p. 510.

Jesus was not fully human, then the redemption and resurrection would not apply to them as humans and they would therefore not be saved.

Origen states as much in his *Dialogue with Heraclides*, saying "The whole man would not have been saved unless he (the Son) had taken upon him the whole man"⁷². It is almost a prediction of the standard defence against the Apollinarian heresy which would arise in the fourth century⁷³. This problem continues to rack the minds of ordinary Christians today, as well as theologians, especially considering it in the light of Liberation Theology, which relies on the humanity of Jesus (some would say, to the detriment of His divinity). Indeed, the "Chalcedonian definition" came about as a compromise between the divine and human natures of Jesus.

But there is another danger in Origen's words that needs to be addressed. If Jesus's soul has free will, then how can it truly choose good for ever? Could the soul of Jesus decide to turn away at any time? Would this then mean that Jesus could at some point cease to be God? Or worse still, could this mean that Jesus becomes God? The solution that Origen gives is to put forward another innovation in the idea of *Communicatio Idiomatum*. This concept will be familiar to those who have at any time studied the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, and involves the predication of attributes for one part of

72. Scherer p. 137 in Chadwick and Oulton, 1954, p. 442.

73. Chadwick and Oulton, 1954, p. 435.

the Trinity, to be true of the others as well, and vice versa. Hence, applied to Jesus Christ, the union between the Logos and the Soul of Jesus is such that they become indistinguishable, so that what can be said of the Logos can be said of Jesus, and vice versa. This allows human attributes to be predicated of Logos without compromising His divinity, and also allows divine attributes to be employed of Jesus without compromising His humanity⁷⁴.

To demonstrate this point, Origen uses his now famous analogy of the bar of iron entering a furnace:

"Suppose then a lump of iron be placed for sometime in a fire. It receives the fire in all its pores and all its veins, and becomes completely changed into fire, provided the fire is not removed from it, and itself is not separated from the fire. Are we then to say that this, which is by nature a lump of iron, when placed in the fire and ceaselessly burning can ever admit cold? Certainly not; it is far truer to say of it, what indeed we often detect happening in furnaces, that it has completely been changed into fire, because we can discern nothing else in it except fire. Further, if anyone were to try and touch or handle it, he would feel the power of the fire, not of the iron. in this manner, then, that soul which, like a piece of iron in the fire, was for ever placed in the word, for ever in the wisdom, for ever in God, is God in all its acts feelings and thoughts; and therefore it cannot be called changeable or alterable, since by being ceaselessly kindled it came to possess unchangeability through its unity with the word of God. And while, indeed, some warmth of the Word of God must be thought to have reached all the saints, in this soul we must believe that the divine fire itself essentially rested, and that it is from this

74. It is by this concept of *Communicatio Idiomatum* that the Son truly suffers death on the cross while being divine.

that some warmth has come to others."⁷⁵

While there is much which is appealing about the analogy, there are certain problems. A bar of iron, no matter how hot and indistinguishable from the fire, never becomes the fire, but remains iron; even if it melts it is still molten iron, not fire. It may even eventually evaporate and become a gas, but it will still be iron. This not only allows the possibility of Adoptionist heresies, but lends a hand to the Arian heresy. Further it could leave Origen open to charges of creating a fourth person in the Godhead; effectively having a Tetrads instead of a Trinity⁷⁶.

Origen does warn the reader that the analogy should not be taken to extremes, and indeed, in the whole exposition, he clearly states that it is his own "suppositions, rather than any clear affirmations"⁷⁷, and that he is only expounding them reluctantly. Indeed he seems to think that it may well be impossible to explain the mystery of the Incarnation, stating that it "lies beyond the whole creation of heavenly beings"⁷⁸.

Evidence to show that Origen thought of the Father and the Son as equal also abounds in *De Principiis*. As well as the idea of eternal begetting, and his acceptance

75. *De Princ.* II, 6, 6.

76. This accusation faced moderate Origenist in the sixth century, curiously from more extreme Origenists known as Isochristses. The accusations however, are unfounded, as Crouzel points out. For a fuller account, see Crouzel, 1989, pp. 192-193.

77. *De Princ.* II, 6, 3.

78. *De Princ.* II, 6, 3.

of the Logos theology expressed in the prologue of John's Gospel, he calls God the Monad (Unity from which all multiplicity is derived) and the Henad (absolute unity)⁷⁹. He also states, not only of the Son, but of the Spirit too, that "nothing in the Trinity is to be called greater or less" and "the power of the Trinity is one and the same"⁸⁰. There appears to be sufficient evidence in other Origenian writings to show that these clear expressions were not simply due to Rufinus' "housekeeping"⁸¹.

Nevertheless, the reader can identify in *De Principiis*, a tension between seeing the Son as equal with the Father, and the Son as subordinate to the Father. In order to identify Origen's position fully (if indeed we can), we need to consult his other extant texts *en masse*, as suggested by Henri de Lubac⁸². and it is this which we will now move on to.

A clear and methodical exposition of the evidence from Origen's writings appears in the fourth chapter of

79. *De Princ.* I, 1, 6.

80. *De Princ.* I, 3, 7.

81. Lyons, 1982, p. 110, and n. 45. In direct opposition to these quotes, Koetchau includes in *On First Principles*, a Greek fragment found in Justinian (*Ep. Ad Mennam* [Mansi IX, 524]), which exists also in Latin in Jerome (*Ep. ad Avitum* 2), stating that "The God and Father, who holds the Universe together is superior to every being that exists," and continues "...the Son being less than the Father, is superior to rational creatures alone (for he is second to the Father)". The passage further subordinates the Spirit (I, 3, 5). However, Lyons presents a good case for not including the fragment in note 45, pp. 110-1.

82. Lubac, 1950, p. 42, as reiterated by Crouzel, 1989, pp. 48-9.

James Lyons' work *The Cosmic Christ in Origen and Theilhard de Chardin*⁸³. Lyons sets out to show that Origen in fact had a "two-fold doctrine on the Son" and thus presents us with carefully researched evidence both for and against the view that Origen was a subordinationist. We shall attempt to follow his scheme here.

We shall begin with the evidence for seeing the Son as equal to the Father. Firstly, Origen's work is littered with references to state that the Father and Son are one and "exist in each other"⁸⁴. For example, in *Dialogue with Heraclides*⁸⁵, Origen states that this union is not like any human or spiritual union, but goes on to say that the union is "union in God". Origen has run out of appropriate terminology, and does not want to use any term which might imply a less than perfect union; this union must be transcendent⁸⁶, so he uses the word *God* to show that it is beyond our comprehension.

The use of the terms *Monad* and *Henad* in *De Principiis* is backed up by the statement that "Christ pertains to the Henad since that nature is at one (ἡνωμένη) with the uncreated nature of the Father"⁸⁷.

Origen's concept of the Son as image of the Father is interpreted by Lyons as affirming the equality of the

83. Lyons, 1982, pp. 105-117.

84. *Hom. in Lev.* XIII, 4; *C.Cels.* VIII, 12; *Comm.in Joh.* VI,22; *Dial.cum Herac.*: Scherer p. 126.

85. Scherer, p. 126.

86. Echoed in *C.Cels.* V, 11.

87. *Comm. in Joh.* XIX:6, Quoted in Lyons, 1982, p. 107.

two, rather than lending credence to the subordinationist viewpoint. As the Son is the perfect image of the Father, then their minds are in full agreement⁸⁸; the Son is the only one who does the Father's will perfectly⁸⁹. Many scholars (e.g. M.F. Wiles), would argue that an image is still an image, not the same thing, hence Origen's doctrine of the Son as image leads to subordinationism. Lyons acknowledges this⁹⁰ but does not think that it is the main thrust of his doctrine. One would suspect that Lyons, here, holds a minority opinion amongst scholars. Perhaps the best way to consider Origen's use of the term "image" is to suggest that the word itself had slightly different connotations before and after Nicea, or at least Origen's way of thinking when he used the word were different to later theologians:

"...there may be a kind of incommensurability between the whole mentality and thought-categories of Origen and those of a later age, so that it would be unhistorical to transpose from the one to the other, as if there were an exact correspondence between them"⁹¹.

88. *C.Cels.* VIII: 12.

89..*Comm. in Joh.* XIII: 228-234.

90. Lyons, 1982, p. 108, n. 25.

91. Lonergan, 1976, p. 63. Lonergan, in section VII of his book, 1976, pp. 56-67, essentially argues the case that Origen's way of thinking, for example, in not having a clear sense of the concept of consubstantiality, leads Origen to use words in a different way to the later theologians who had the benefit of more developed concepts and more specific meanings for their language.

Certainly, we shall see later how the Arian crisis, for the first time in the history of the church, led to a need for much more specific and precise and exact meanings of words.

If we consider the attributes of incorporeality (invisibility in Biblical terms), and goodness, there is further evidence to support the equality of Father and Son. We find in *De Principiis* that God only is incorporeal (invisible)⁹², that the Trinity is incorporeal⁹³, and that the Son is incorporeal⁹⁴. Further, as we have seen above, the Son is the invisible (i.e. incorporeal) image of the invisible Father⁹⁵. We also find that goodness belongs only to the Trinity:

"For only in the Trinity,
which is the source of all things,
does goodness reside essentially."⁹⁶

Further, both Father and Son are the only ones uncreated⁹⁷, both Father and son are called Creator⁹⁸, both the Father and Son have the same love, and as their love does not differ, they differ in nothing else⁹⁹.

While the presentation of this evidence is by no means complete or conclusive, it does show that Origen

92. *De Princ.* II, 2, 1.

93. *De Princ.* I, 6, 4.

94. *De Princ.* I, 1, 8.

95. *De Princ.* I, 2, 6.

96. *De Princ.* I, 6, 2.

97. Father: *Comm. in Joh.* II, 14; II, 104; XX, 184; *Comm. in Rom.* VI, 8; *Dial. cum Herac.:* Scherer, p. 120.

Son: *Frag. in Joh.* II; *C.Cels.* VI, 17.

98. Lyons, 1982, pp. 100-102.

99. *Comm. in Cant. Prol.*, 2; *Comm. in Rom.* IV, 9. Following Lyons, 1982, p. 110.

cannot be considered an out and out subordinationist in the Arian sense. After all, it is because of the Arian controversy that Origen's work is retrospectively scrutinised for subordinationist tendencies. This then, brings us to an examination of the evidence to support the contention that Origen is subordinationist.

We have already seen that some of Origen's doctrines can be interpreted as subordinationist. The doctrine of the Son as the image of the Father, for example, can act as a two edged sword (as can most of Origen's doctrines, and indeed that may well be a crucial clue in unravelling Origen's true thought later). An image is still an image, not the actual thing, much like a photograph of a loved one, no matter how faithful a reproduction, is not that loved one.

To this we can add a considerable number of statements that Origen makes, especially in the *Commentary on John*. For example:

" we say that the saviour and the Holy Spirit transcend all creatures not by comparison but by surpassing pre-eminence, while he [the Saviour] is transcended by the Father as much as or even more than he himself and the Holy Spirit transcend all other beings, even those that are not inconsiderable"¹⁰⁰

He states that only the Father is unbegotten¹⁰¹. Only the Father is the source of divinity¹⁰². Only the Father is the beginning of all beings, including the

100. *Comm. in Joh.XIII*, 151.

101. *Comm. in Joh.I*, 187; *C.Cels.VIII*, 14.

102. *Comm. in Joh.II*, 20

Son¹⁰³. He calls the Father "*Ho Theos*" - The God, and the Son simply "*Theos*" - God without the article, in his *Commentary on John*, following John 1: 1¹⁰⁴. This seems to suggest that the Son is a secondary God, possessing the divinity in terms of participation¹⁰⁵ (A Platonic idea) and not as of right¹⁰⁶. Whenever "*Ho Theos*" is used in Origen, it is used of the Father, never of the Son. However, Crouzel, after Rahner, shows that this is in accordance with Scriptural evidence and should therefore not be interpreted in a subordinationist way¹⁰⁷. Origen also takes John 14: 28, "for the Father is greater than I", as a statement of the Son's relation to the Father, rather than the more normally accepted relation to the Incarnation¹⁰⁸. He goes as far as to call the Son subordinate to the Father (ὑποβέβητος) on more than one occasion¹⁰⁹. Finally, in Lyons words:

"Origen's subordinationism appears in a variety of contexts. As Wisdom and Truth The Son is inferior to the Father^a. He is less than the Father in knowledge^b, goodness^c, and justice^d. As agents of divine

103. *Comm. in Joh. I*, 102

104. *Comm. in Joh. II*, 1-2, 12-18.

105. *Comm. in Joh. II*, 17.

106. Fortman, 1972, p. 56. See also Crouzel, 1989, p.181; Daniélou, 1955, p. 252; Lyons, 1982, p. 111; Kelly, 1977, p. 128.

107. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 181-182, and Rahner, 1959, pp. 81-111.

108. Lyons, 1982, p. 112.

109. *C.Cels.* VIII, 14-15; also *Comm. in Joh. VI*, 200; *Ser. in Matt.* 45.

a. ABRIDGED FOOTNOTES FROM LYONS (1982, pp. 112-113)

Comm. in Joh. II, 151.

b. *Comm. in Joh. XXXII*, 350.

c. *Comm. in Joh. I*, 254. See also *De Orat. XV*, 4; *Exhort.*

revelation, he and the Holy Spirit are represented by the two seraphim who Isaiah saw attendant on God^e and by the two animals (or living beings) beside God in the song of Habakkuk^f. It is not to the Son that we should pray but only to the Father through the Son^g, since the Father is Lord of the Son, just as he is Lord of those who have through the Son become sons of God themselves^h. The Son creates under the Father's directionⁱ, and at the consummation of existence he is subjected to the Father^j."120

J. Nigel Rowe examines Origen's christology and argues a strong case for considering him to be a subordinationalist, even if unintentionally¹²¹. For Rowe, it is Origen's understanding of, or unease with the incarnation which is at fault, as we have seen above. However, Rowe's extensive use of Origenian texts seems to give a rather confusing picture in his book, and perhaps he has not fully taken into account the speculative nature of Origen's work as a whole. By this, I mean the fact that while Origen makes conflicting statements from time to time, he does so as part of a process of trying to find explanations, and offering suggestions; there is a sense in which nothing that Origen says can be considered the final word on that topic.

ad Mart. VII.

d. *Comm. in Joh.* I, 252.

e. *De Princ.* I, 3, 4; *Hom. in Is.* I, 2.

f. *De Princ.* I, 3, 4.

g. *De Orat.* XV, 1-44.

h. *De Orat.* XVI, 1.

i. *Comm. in Joh.* II, 72; *Hom. in Jer.* XX, 9; *C. Cels.* II, 9; II, 31; VI, 60. See also *Comm. in Joh.* I, 255.

j. *De Princ.* II, 5, 6-7; *Comm. in Joh.* VI, 295-6.

120. Lyons, 1982, pp. 112-113.

121. Rowe, 1987.

While there are strong reasons for considering Origen a subordinationist, that subordination may only be in a sense, one of hierarchy in the Trinity, and therefore in the relation between the Father and Son. What we mean by this is that it has been considered as wrong to postulate any hierarchical attributes to the Trinity. This may be true if we consider that hierarchy in terms of power alone: if we are to say that the Father is more powerful than the Son, or the Holy spirit, then that would be clearly subordinationist. But if we are to interpret the hierarchy that Origen seems to propose, as one of economic action (*oikonomia*), then what we have is a very a different proposition. A hierarchy of action as viewed from *outside* of the Trinity is not incompatible to an equality of the Three *internally*, as long as we do not speak of the hierarchy in ontological terms, and Origen does not. In fact, it is the Arian controversy of later times that provides the very language by which we can consider the Trinity in ontological terms; the terminology is not sufficiently developed for Origen to employ it in his time (his method has a bearing here too and we will discuss this later), as its precise meanings had not been clearly defined yet¹²².

The roles of the three members of the Trinity, externally, are different. It is the Son that becomes Man and dies (lest we end up in Patripassionism). It is

122. Crouzel, 1989. p. 188.

the Spirit which inspires the prophets. It is the Father who is Father (else why use the language, or have the distinctions) and is first. As Crouzel puts it:

"The Father gives the orders, the Son and the Spirit receive them and are the envoys, the agents *ad extra* of the Trinity, each for his own part. If the Father is the centre of decision, the Son and the Spirit are not mere executants of the paternal will, for while the Father's initiative is often emphasised, so is the unity of will and action (*De Princ.* I, 3, 7) on the part of the Three Persons."¹²³

As an illustration of the principle we could consider marriage as an analogy, which, although not a perfect one, to coin an Origenian phrase, can suitably express some of the meaning of considering an economic hierarchy in the Trinity. A man and a woman who are married (let us suppose that no children are involved yet), we shall call them Mr. and Mrs. Smith, share the same home - the Smith household. They enter into that marriage as equals, such that the vows they make are identical (these days). They agree to live together as one, for the rest of their lives. However, they are two different people, but equal¹²⁴ in love. They will cease to speak of themselves to others as "I", but will now speak of themselves as "we". They will do things and

123. Crouzel, 1989, p. 188.

124. I would suggest that much of the present day controversy surrounding equal rights for women centres around the misconception that *equal* means *the same*, and that consequently *different* means *not equal*. A mistake perhaps, also made in the topical area of race relations. Perhaps they should read Origen!

make decisions as "we". Other people will consider them as "the Smiths", so that in a sense parallel to an ontological one, they will appear as one. However, in their economic roles they will be different. One may do the washing up while the other cooks, for example. One may be employed while the other stays at home. They may both work, but in different occupations. One may look after the finances while the other deals with the decorative design of their home. They never cease to be married, never cease to be one, when they are carrying out these duties, yet each one has different areas of responsibility. These areas are not mutually exclusive, their unity may necessitate diversity of action, and their actions may well determine the need for unity. Even when the couple are parted for whatever reason, then they remain in each other's mind.

To stretch the analogy further, if they decide to have children, their roles will be different, in conceiving, carrying and looking after their child, but they will both be the parents; they will have equal power to be "creators", (in so far as God gives them that power), only the way in which they carry out that "creation" will be different.

So for Origen, the Trinity may have a heirarchy of economic roles, where the Three Persons have, if you like, different jobs to do. But that does not mean that they are not equal. In Origen's words:

"God is entirely hand, since he scrutinizes all things; while the hands of God are the Son and the Holy Spirit, through whom he has created all things, especially man."¹²⁵

A closer examination reveals evidence for this point of view as being considered orthodox, even up to St. Athanasius himself, for the assertion that the Son is subordinate and equal to the Father at the same time, can be found in his writings after Nicea!¹²⁶

Origen's concept of the Trinity is not, however merely economic like earlier theories put forward by the likes of Tertullian and Hippolytus¹²⁷, but stresses the distinct hypostasis of each of the Three¹²⁸. This concept, which has been referred to as the doctrine of the three hypostases, and arises as a direct consequence of his doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, represented a great step forward from the earlier theories of the Trinity, and remained popular with those who considered themselves within the Origenist school later¹²⁹. While he stresses the distinctiveness of the Three in an ontological sense, he also stresses their

125. *Frag. in Ps. 118*. 73. Quoted by Lyons, 1989, p. 110, n. 40.

126. Crouzel, 1989, p. 188. Crouzel even adds Hilary as another source for this.

127. Kelly, 1977, p. 129; Logan, 1987, p. 424.

128. *Comm. in Joh. II*, 75

129. See Fortman, 1972, pp. 54-58. Also Logan, 1987, p. 424 and Kelly, 1977, p. 129; the matter is further confused by the fact that *ousia* and *hypostasis* were originally synonymous, and that their meaning was not as precise in Origen's day as it would be after Nicea.

unity of will¹³⁰ and is therefore not explaining the economic hierarchy in an ontological sense.

We have seen, therefore, that while Origen's work may contain strands of subordinationism, it is not the same subordinationism that would plunge the Church into such turmoil with the Arian crisis.¹³¹

Nevertheless, there appears to be an internal contradiction in the way that Origen treats the relationship between the Father and the Son. As much evidence exists to show Origen as a subordinationist as to show that he is not. Lyons calls this the "Twofold doctrine of the Son"¹³². It is difficult then, to decide whether Origen lies in orthodoxy, but there may be another reason for the apparent contradiction.

Origen lived at a time when the influence of Greek philosophy was rife in the Church. Converts to Christianity came mainly from Hellenised pagans, who brought with them their own world views. Origen's work has been seen by some scholars in the past as an attempt to incorporate and systematize that Greek philosophy into mainstream Christianity; this seems perfectly in accordance with the Middle Platonist influences in his

130. *De Princ.* I, 3, 7.

131. Crouzel, 1989, p. 188. For a fuller account of the problem see W. Marcus, 1963, *Der Subordinatianismus als historisches Phanomen*, as well as Crouzel's 1976 article "Les Personnes de la Trinite, sont-elles de puissance inegales selon Origene, Peri Archon 1, 3, 5-8?", in volume 57 of *Gregorianum*.

132. Lyons, 1982, pp. 105-117.

work¹³³. However, because of this, his work has been discounted as mere Greek philosophy dressed up as Christianity. This contention will be examined shortly, when the Son's mediating role is examined. For now, suffice it to say that he has been accused of bringing ideas into the Church that are alien to Christianity. This may well ignore the real reason for Origen's writings, especially in *De Principiis*, where he states that he is writing for those Christians who, when attempting to reason their faith, looked for answers elsewhere and ended up in heresy. He wishes to provide some area of discussion for these "intellectual" Christians, in order to avoid having them look for answers in the teachings of the gnostic sects¹³⁴. His method in doing this is to give as many answers as possible to particular theological questions asked, much as a teacher, trying to get students to reach their own conclusions, may well present various viewpoints to them, while his or her own beliefs may be different altogether, or only one of those stated. And if one considers the majority of Origen's work to have been composed in that very situation, with Origen teaching students, and a veritable army of stenographers waiting on and recording his every word, thanks to Ambrose, then it is not surprising to find contradictions. Origen is doing what

133. Daniélou, 1955, p. 261.

134. *De Princ.* IV, 4, 5. See also Crouzel, 1989, pp.153ff.

may be called speculative, experimental theology. As Crouzel calls it, a research theology - theology as a means of exercise, or *gymnasīkos*¹³⁵.

This realization has serious implications for the interpretation of Origen's work. If it is not truly systematic¹³⁶, then it cannot be considered as Origen's final word on any contentious issue. Just as people today may have pet theories as to why certain things in life are as they are, but may not be fully sure, or ready to state these opinions as fact (in Origen's case, as dogma). As we will see later, when we discuss the condemnation of Origen, this view casts serious doubt on the accusations levelled at him by his detractors many years later.

In connection with the influence that Greek philosophy had on Origen, the role of Christ as mediator between God and creation, sometimes called the "Cosmic Christ"¹³⁷, needs to be expanded upon. It is fairly clear that Greek philosophy is a factor in Origen's work, but what has been debated is the extent and nature of that influence; is it that Origen adapts Greek philosophy to Christianity, or is it that his problem of trying to link God to his creation - the necessary to the contingent - is essentially the same task that thinkers

135. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 163-4.

136. See note 1 above

137. For a full discussion on the emergence and meaning of this expression, see chapter 1, pp. 7-68, in Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ in Origen and Teilhard de Chardin*, 1982.

in the various Greek philosophical schools had to deal with? In order to examine this, a comparison is needed between Origen's solution of this problem, and Greek philosophy's various postulations.

The two great philosophical schools with the most influence generally, at the time that Origen writes, are the Platonic school (especially Middle Platonism) and the Gnostic school. I shall outline them briefly presently.

Beginning with the Platonic solution to the problem of mediation, there appear to be two opposing strands of thought. Lyons states that "we may characterize these two types of mediation by calling the first emanationist and the second subordinationalist. The first is exemplified in Monarchism, the second in Arianism"¹³⁸. In some authors, such as Philo and, most significantly Plotinus, both strands of thought are present. Emanation concerns the emergence from the transcendent God of a part that is able to enter into the created order, without separating itself from the essence of the Godhead, which remains completely separate and transcendent. Subordination starts with the totally transcendent God, followed by a second divine sphere or order, which mediates to the contingent world. This second, mediating, semi-divine order is the realm of Plato's Demiurge¹³⁹.

138. Lyons, .1982, p. 91.

139. Lyons, 1982, pp. 90-97.

Gnosticism also contains a hierarchy of divinities, as well as a hierarchy of contingent beings. Essentially, for the gnostics, the created world is evil and entraps certain individuals who have fallen from a higher plane, as opposed to others, lower down in the order. The Demiurge is then a demi-god who has come to rescue these lost individuals, mediating between the realm of the transcendent God, and His selected fallen. The demi-god is clearly subordinate to the supreme deity in a multi-tiered order of things, but his mediation is only for a chosen few, not all of creation¹⁴⁰.

As is apparent, there are similarities between both schools and Origen's doctrine of the Son as mediator. However, in Origen, there are also vast differences which set him apart from both schools. In the first instance, Origen arrives at his subordinationalist ideas from scripture, rather than metaphysics¹⁴¹. His subordinationism is not, as Lyons states, "*tout court*"¹⁴², but, as we have seen above, a question of economy rather than power. Though the Father is primarily Creator, the Son is immediate Creator¹⁴³, hence the Son appears to be subordinate to the Father in function, or economy, rather than nature. But there is a sense in which they are equal since both are the

140. Lyons, 1982, pp. 97-104.

141. For example, Mk. 10:18; Lk. 18:19; Jn. 14:28.

142. Lyons, 1982, p. 123.

143. *C.Cels.* VI, 60.

efficient cause of creation¹⁴⁴. The Son then, is not only mediator for a distant and transcendent other God, but is also Creator with him, in a sense drawing the Father closer to His creation. More importantly, the similarity between the eternal begetting of the Son from the Father and Platonic emanation is superficial. In Origen, the Son's begetting by the Father is eternal, such that both have the same substance, while the nature postulated of the pre-existent souls he refers to are not. Neither is their pre-existence material in a way so that what eternally exists is no more than the possibility of creation¹⁴⁵. Even once rational beings are created, they possess free will. This is at variance with the Platonic scheme. Finally, though Origen does share the Gnostic preoccupation with "pre cosmic events leading up to a fall into a material world that was not from the beginning"¹⁴⁶ ; and the notion that eventually there will take place a re-establishment of the original metaphysical state of perfection, he does not share with them the idea that the material world is in some way evil¹⁴⁷. Likewise, the Son's redemption is universal, and not just for a small and chosen part of creation; the Father and the Son enter into the whole of

144. Comm. In Joh. I, 110; II, 72; II, 183. Cited by Lyons, 1982, p. 125.

145. Lyons, 1982, p. 121. See also Bostock, 1987, pp. 259-264 for the assertion that Origen derives the doctrine of the pre-existence from Philo and Scripture, rather than directly from the Platonic scheme of things.

146. Lyons, 1982, p. 97.

147. See note 48, above.

creation. In other words he rejects the idea that somehow there are different classes of human beings¹⁴⁸.

A final and rather curious aspect of Origen's christology has to do with the *epinoiai*, or titles of Christ (see above, pp. 51-53). That is the contention that the physical form of Jesus changed while on Earth.

Origen mentions this intriguing idea in a number of his works, particularly in *Contra Celsum* as well as in his commentaries on Matthew and John¹⁴⁹. Such a doctrine has led Origen to be accused of docetism and gnosticism and it would appear that the idea, which Origen claims to have received as tradition, comes originally from the gnostic sects. Why then, should Origen bother to develop it? The answer lies in his "doctrine of the multiplicity of the *epinoiai*", and in the idea that the Logos is a perfect mirror around which all the originally pre-existent souls used to sit.

Firstly, Origen mentions the doctrine in *Contra Celsum* almost immediately after he has given the list of the *epinoiai* when he gives the example of the Transfiguration as the "Earthly economy" of the doctrine, and as evidence of these human transformations. As McGuckin states:

"The variability of the earthly mode of appearance is, in a small

148. Lyons, 1982, pp. 101-104.

149. *C. Cels.* II, 64-5; IV, 16; VI, 68; VI, 75-7; *Comm. in Joh.* XXXII, 17; *Comm. in Matt.* XII, 36-8; *Ser. in Matt.* 100; *Philocalia* XV, 9, 84-6., quoted in note 1 by McGuckin (1987, p. 220).

way, a reflection of the variability of the *epinoiai* of the Logos in his divine nature."¹⁵⁰

Secondly, if the Logos is like a perfect mirror, then all who gaze into it will see a perfect reflection of themselves (only, of course, reality is in the opposite direction since all who gaze upon the Logos are made in the image of the Logos). In a sense, they will perceive an image representing them as they truly are, "warts and all", so that each being sees a different reflection. For Origen then, the appearance of the human Jesus depended on who was looking at him. A certain "plasticity and instability" of the nature of matter would have been part of Origen's scientific mind set in any case, and would have been accepted as normal¹⁵¹.

We should then examine the origin and uses of this doctrine which, as we have already mentioned, Origen received as tradition. The doctrine seems to appear mainly in apocryphal writings; concretely in the Acts of John, where it is definitely a docetic "christological device", and then in the acts of Peter, where it appears in somewhat softer form, but nevertheless still as a christological device. The docetists then, saw the doctrine as a way of distancing the Logos from the flesh, because for them the two media were totally incompatible. It would lend credence to the idea that

150. McGuckin, 1987, p. 215.

151. McGuckin, 1987, p. 215.

somehow Christ's body was not a real human one, and only appeared so.

Rowe puts forward the case, substantiated by numerous citations of Origen's work, that Origen is in fact much more of a docetist than is normally supposed. He then uses this curious idea that somehow, Jesus appears different to each observer, as the final nail in his coffin¹⁵². Origen, however, does not mean the same thing as Rowe interprets. In sharp contrast to the use of this doctrine by the docetists, Origen does not really consider it as descriptive of Christ, but saying much more about those who see him¹⁵³.

When he uses the idea to counter Celsus' contention that the appearance of Jesus was insignificant¹⁵⁴, he is clearly more concerned with how people saw Jesus, as opposed to how Jesus actually looked; people saw Jesus according to their ability to do so, so that each saw what he or she was able to see. However, Origen uses the doctrine in a more spiritual than literal sense, as an analogy almost, of how one should approach Jesus, so that how each person sees him is commensurate to the "individual's spiritual capacity" to comprehend the Godhead. To illustrate this he uses material from the

152. Rowe, 1987, p. 128.

153. In the same way, we may see God in someone or something or some event, but only if we have a certain frame of mind and faith. This concept can be very useful in the context of the teaching of morals and spirituality in schools today.

154. For example, *C.Cels.* I, 55.

Old Testament¹⁵⁵ to explain the Transfiguration. Thus, as McGuckin points out, he is using the doctrine in a soteriological way, and not a christological way. In no way does Origen want to put in doubt the reality of Christ's humanity; this is simply not the issue here. What he is trying to do is to take a docetist idea and rework it for the sake of the orthodox¹⁵⁶. This is entirely in keeping with both his allegorical method of exegesis and the desire to stop inquiring intelligent Christians from drifting into heretical groups because of such doctrines.

Origen interprets the changing nature of Jesus' body as a symbol of the changing forms in which the divine nature makes itself known. Hence, Christ can be "all things to all men"¹⁵⁷. As McGuckin states:

"The changing forms of Jesus, in his [Origen's] hands, tells us more about the varying ability of spectators to apprehend the truth than it does about the instability of the flesh of Christ. In this process he assimilates the tradition into the larger context of his doctrine of spiritual accents. All this argues that, for Origen, the Logos' working of salvation is so dynamic a process that its dynamism is not only represented in the great metamorphosis from spirit to flesh, which is the incarnation, but even in smaller metamorphoses working for the good of individuals and tailored to their capacities which take place in the course of the earthly economy."¹⁵⁸

155. Is. 52:4 and Ps. 49.

156. McGuckin, 1987, p. 220.

157. I Cor. 9:22.

158. McGuckin, 1987, p. 219.

It is therefore clear that accusations made of Origen as in some way docetist or gnostic because of this particular doctrine hold little water in the light of this brief examination.

In our overview of Origen's christology according to his extant works, we have discovered that it is centred around the *epinoiai*, or titles of the Son. This in turn, leads us to his doctrine of His eternal begetting from the Father, and His eternal existence as image of the Father. We have also seen how Origen attempts to explain the Incarnation, and uses for that purpose his doctrine of the pre-existence of Jesus' soul (and therefore, the pre-existence of all souls); this appears to be the weakest part of his christology, and he has certainly been heavily criticized both for having a somewhat shaky theology of the Incarnation, and for proposing the doctrine of the pre-existence of the souls. We are left then with the problem of the relationship between the Father and the Son, and find that there is a tension in his thought between the subordination of the Son to the Father, and the equality of both. As a result, Origen's theology of the Trinity has been examined briefly, and his doctrine of the three hypostases emerges, which would have a great influence later.

Finally, but most importantly for the purposes of our study, we have begun to see that some important modern scholars' primary concern has been to clear

Origen's name from the accusations of his detractors, both ancient and more recent. In order to decide on the import of this scholarship, we will need to examine the nature of the accusations made of Origen, both ancient and modern, in order to indicate where modern scholarship is changing our view concerning Origen's orthodoxy, and this is what we will proceed to presently.



CHAPTER FOUR.

ORIGEN'S ANCIENT CHRISTOLOGICAL LEGACY.

Having established the essential factors that make up Origen's christology, we need now to see what influence that christology had upon, and what legacy it left to, later times.

I have distinguished between Origen's ancient legacy, which, for the purposes of this study deals with the patristic period, and the modern period, which is typified, not only by recent patristic scholarship, but also modern christology as well. My first task then is to outline the ancient legacy.

The influence that Origen's thought had upon early Christianity as a whole must not be underestimated for, as Richard Hanson states:

"Origen was the most important theologian produced by the Eastern , Greek speaking, Church during the first three centuries of its existence. Until the arrival of Athanasius and the Cappadocian theologians in the fourth century, there was no theological mind capable of rivalling his"¹

Before we can examine this ancient legacy of Origen's christology, we need to outline briefly the beginnings of the influence of his theology as a whole up to the first Origenist crisis, especially as regards the creation of what has come to be known as the Origenist tradition.

1. Hanson, 1985, p. 410.

There is a sense in which Origen's legacy was passed down through the two geographical locations of Caesarea and Alexandria. At Caesarea Origen left his personal library and correspondence, so that by the time that Pamphilus (c. 240-309) arrived and taught Eusebius there, they had access to a great deal of information with which to put forward Origen's cause. It is also from Caesarea that Origen's former pupils like, for example, Gregory Thaumaturgus, set out with his theology on board. However, there was not a "continuous Origenist tradition there" and it is instead, in Alexandria, that the Origenist tradition began in earnest².

Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria until his death in 264, was somewhat sympathetic to Origen, and allowed his exegetical and theological tradition to continue under Theognotus (d. c. 282), and more importantly, Pierus (d. c. 309), who was known as "the younger Origen"³. Pamphilus in turn studied under Pierus and eventually moved to Caesarea where, with his student and eventual bishop of Caesarea, Eusebius, he produced his controversial *Apology for Origen*, in response to early critics⁴. Eusebius' literary contribution to Origen's cause, in the form of book six of his *Ecclesiastical History*, has already been mentioned in previous chapters. The efforts of such Origenist supporters ensured that

2. Trigg, 1983, p. 246.

3. Trigg, 1983, p. 247.

4. Trigg, 1983, p. 247.

Origen's influence not only continued but grew, especially in the East.

In particular, Origen's influence continued in Egypt, and developed into two strands. Firstly, his methods of interpreting the Bible were championed by Didymus the Blind (c. 313-398). It was he who taught St. Gregory of Nazianzus ((329-389), Rufinus and Jerome, and they in turn disseminated Origen's thought and preserved his work⁵. St. Gregory of Nazianzus was one of three theologians known collectively as the Cappadocian Fathers, together with St. Basil the Great (c. 330-379) and St. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330-c. 395). They followed in the footsteps of one of Origen's most celebrated students, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, who had earlier brought Origen's thought to Cappadocia, and furthered the cause of Origenism⁶. Together with Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus produced the *Philocalia of Origen*⁷, which was an anthology of Origen's work in Greek, and which survives today thanks to the immense reputation of the Cappadocian Fathers⁸. Rufinus and Jerome, as we have previously seen, clashed dramatically over Origen's theology and were the main protagonists of the first Origenist controversy.

5. Trigg, 1983, p. 248.

6. Hanson, 1987, p. 422, after H. Dörries, 1956.

7. *Philocalia* meant "the love of beautiful things". Crouzel, 1989, p. 44.

8. The Cappadocian Fathers are held in the highest regard, especially Basil, whose writings are held to be the equivalent of the West's monastic rule by Benedict, for Greek monasticism. Trigg, 1983, p. 249.

Secondly, Origen's more speculative and contemplative elements were adapted by Evagrius Ponticus (346-399) for use by the growing monastic movement in the fourth century. Evagrius himself went to live in the monastic colony of Nitria from where he spread his Origen-inspired ascetic theology, such that it reached as far as Syria, Iraq and Armenia, effectively establishing an Origenist monastic tradition⁹.

As I have suggested above, Origen's ideas faced some early opposition, concretely from Peter of Alexandria (d. 311), and more notably from Methodius of Olympus (d. 311), whose criticisms merit a further brief analysis¹⁰. This is because they were effectively the first, and because their nature would have an enduring effect later, in that later detractors would base their views of Origen on Methodius'.

Methodius' criticisms were expressed in two treatises, *Xenon* or *On the Creatures*¹¹ and *Aglaophon* or *On the Resurrection*¹². In the first of these Methodius criticizes Origen on his doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son being simultaneous with the creation of the Intelligible World in form of Wisdom¹³,

9. Trigg, 1983, p. 248.

10. For a fuller account of the roles of Origen, Methodius, and indeed their influence on the Arian dispute, see Patterson, 1982(a), pp. 912-923.

11. In Photius, *Bibl.* 235, 302a (CUFr V), cited by Crouzel, 1989, p. 189.

12. Preserved in Greek by Photius, *Bibl.* 234 (CUFr V), 300b-301a, and in Old Slav in its entirety: in GCS Methodius. Cited by Crouzel, 1989, p. 92, n. 12.

13. *De Princ.* I, 2, 10.

and as a result the pre-existence of the intellects or souls. Methodius confused the creation of the Intelligible World in Wisdom with the creation of the pre-existent intellects, hence implying that all creatures are co-eternal with God, and that, at worst, God does not create them but only rules them. In fact, Origen refers to the Intelligible World as the world of reason and ideas forming part of Wisdom (ie. an *epinoia* of the Son), and this must have been co-eternal with God because God must always have been creator since He is perfect and cannot experience progress or change¹⁴. But Origen clearly states that the creation of the pre-existent intellects or souls takes place later¹⁵. Methodius has confused the two, and mainly because of his lack of understanding of the Platonic philosophical language that Origen employs¹⁶.

The second attack by Methodius is probably the more famous, in that it leads eventually to one of the anathemata against Origen, firstly at a local synod under the auspices of Justinian in 543, and secondly at the Second Council of Constantinople (the Fifth Ecumenical) in 553, also under Justinian¹⁷. It concerns, as I have

14. *De Princ*, I, 2, 10. It is interesting to note the similarity between the language of Origen here and the language of St. Anselm's Ontological Argument for the Existence of God in *Proslogion*.

15. *De Princ*. II, 9, 2.

16. See Crouzel, 1989, pp. 171 and especially 189-190.

17. Llorca, 1960, pp. 565-567. There is some doubt about whether the anathemata were officially part of the Council, as they do not appear on the minutes. It seems that they were probably discussed before the council

previously stated, Origen's ideas about the resurrection, and his apparent unease with the resurrection of the actual earthly flesh. We have seen previously that he employs the idea of the "form" (*eidōs*) to maintain the essence and unity of the body, without having to have keep the original material, arguing that a heavenly existence will need a heavenly body¹⁸. Methodius states that the earthly flesh must be resurrected in order for it to be a real resurrection, otherwise we could be falling into Docetism. For him, the idea that only the form (*eidōs*) of the body remains in terms of "seminal reason" (*logos spermatikos*) and that there is no material continuity of the body between earthly and heavenly existence invalidates the resurrection. Based on Christ's Resurrection, he states that Christ's body was the same body before and after the resurrection, as the episode with Thomas in John 20: 24-29 suggests¹⁹; hence the resurrection of the souls must be of the same order else His Resurrection would not apply to us. By *eidōs*, Methodius understands "mould", seeing the form of the body as external to it, like a tube through which water passes²⁰. He also treats it as transient, suggesting that the form of an object, such as a bronze statue is the

proper. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 178-179, based on Diekamp's theory.

18. Origen is following Paul in I Corinthians 15: 35-53 here.

19. *Aglaophon*, II, 12-14.

20. *Aglaophon*, III, 3.

first thing that disappears when it is melted down²¹. But Methodius has misunderstood the terms *eidos* and *logos spermatikos* in the Platonic sense in which Origen employs them. Origen is not actually saying that the old earthly body is replaced by a new heavenly (or ethereal) one, but rather that the old earthly body is transformed into a heavenly one by means of the central controlling principle of the *eidos*, the *logos spermatikos*. It is the *logos spermatikos* which enables the continuity and identity to be maintained, while allowing for the difference which there must be between the earthly and heavenly body. The main evidence in Origen's work for this view to be considered correct is given in his exegesis of the argument between Jesus and the Sadducees in Matt. 22: 29-30²². Further, Crouzel shows that Methodius' understanding of the term *eidos* is not the same as the understanding that Origen would have had of it in its Stoic sense. As Crouzel states:

"Reading the commentary on our text [the Old Slav version of the *Aglaophon*] by Proclus and the criticism of it by Euboulius we can measure the extent of Methodius' misconception of the nature of the bodily *eidos*, as Origen conceived it: he has not grasped the philosophical meaning of the term, he takes it in its popular sense of outward appearance and by doing so renders completely absurd the doctrine he is seeking to refute. He consequently considers that the glorious body is in Origen's view a different body from the earthly body, to which has been given the same outward appearance: he thus frustrates the efforts of the Alexandrian

21. *Aglaophon*, III, 6.

22. *Comm. in Matt.*XVII, 30.

to express the identity without neglecting the difference. This fundamental misunderstanding deprives Methodius' complaints about Origen's doctrine of the resurrection of the body of almost all their value."²³

Further, Methodius attempts to suggest that as Origen had used the same explanation of the "seminal reason" to explain Moses and Elijah's presence at the Transfiguration, Christ could not be the first risen from the dead²⁴. However, Methodius is guilty, I think, of not understanding the true significance and power of the Resurrection event, in that the risen Christ is present across time: the Crucifixion and the Resurrection are "once and for all" events, valid for all time, both before and after. Now while it may be the case that Methodius' understanding of Christ's Resurrection may be more literal than this, surely by his own standards²⁵ he would have to admit the power of God to be able to ensure that despite appearances, Christ is still the first to be resurrected.

Finally, Methodius attempts to poke fun at Origen's conception of the resurrected or glorious bodies. He interprets Origen's view that God does not create what is not necessary, hence the glorious bodies would have no need of organs such as arms or legs. Origen, in fact, merely suggests this, rather than states it as dogma, but

23. Crouzel, 1989, p. 256.

24. *Aglaophon*, III, 5.

25. When he considers the reconstruction of the original human, earthly body from its myriad of resting places at the end of time, for example, not to be beyond the power of God.

Methodius asks sarcastically whether this body would be "round, polygonal or cubic"²⁶. To be fair to Methodius, Origen does appear to have taken the idea a little too far as he can be seen to be threatening the individuality of the person, but the fact remains that once again, Methodius is critical of his own interpretation of Origen's thought. Sadly, Methodius' joke question is then taken seriously by later detractors, finally resulting in Justinian's 5th anathema in 543 stating that Origen held that the glorious bodies would be spherical²⁷. It is fairly clear Origen never stated this, and such a theory is based on misconstruing an Origenian text²⁸ which refers to the heavenly bodies being spherical, but means the stars and not the glorious bodies.

I shall now turn to the fourth century, as it was then that the first universal christological controversy, known as the Arian controversy, arose. With St. Athanasius (c. 296-373) and the arch-heretic Arius (c. 250-c. 336) as the central protagonists, it would be this crisis which would bring the issue of the orthodoxy of Origen's christology to the forefront.

It is not in dispute that the Arian controversy was not only the first serious controversy to rock the whole church, but that its effect launched the Church into a

26. *Aglaophon*, III, 15.

27. *Liber adversus Origen* or *Letter to Menas* (PG 86/1, col.943-994), cited by Crouzel, 1989, pp. 252f.

28. Such as *De Orat.* XXXI, 3.

long period of christological turmoil which would last until, at the very least Chalcedon in 451. It could be argued that the controversy continues today, due to the compromise that the Chalcedonian definition represents, and the recent emergence of christologies from below, based on the advent of modern Biblical scholarship. I shall examine this view in the next chapter. For now, I shall return to the fourth century.

While a detailed account of the Arian controversy itself is not required²⁹, it will be as well to describe the essence of it briefly. On the one hand Arius, and his followers, claimed that Jesus was not fully divine in the way the Father was, but was created by the Father at a particular point in time, for the purposes of humanity's redemption. Consequently, Jesus was of a different nature, or substance from the Father and inferior to Him. The Son then, is the highest in the order of creation, but he is not, strictly speaking God. However, because the Son reveals the Father to, and is so far above, human beings, he is called "God" and deserves worship.. Effectively what is being said is that the Son is ninety-nine percent God, and is only considered God in honour of his closeness to the Father. This was subordinationism at its most extreme.

29. For a brief but detailed account, see Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 1967, pp. 124-151. Also Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 1977, pp. 223-251.

On the other hand, Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, his secretary Athanasius (Alexander's successor as bishop of Alexandria and eventual leader of the Nicene party) and their followers disputed this, claiming that there are no degrees of divinity; either the Son is God, or He is not. Divinity is not a predicate. Christians call Jesus God because He is, otherwise they worship a man. Hence, if the Son is divine, then He cannot have been created at any point in time, but must have always existed. Existence is also not a predicate. Their defence against Arianism led some of them to the opposite extreme, to deny any difference between the Father and the Son, such as Appolinarius.

The argument began in Alexandria in about 318-20³⁰ and raged on in numerous synods and councils until its settlement in the edicts of the Council of Constantinople in 381, in favour of the Athanasian party (known also as the "Nicene" or "Pro-Nicene" party, due to its defence of the edicts of the Council of Nicea in 325, where they were initially victorious over Arius). The pendulum of victory first swung one way, and then the other, normally depending upon which particular Roman Emperor happened to be in power, and their personal preference (Imperial politics had more than a small part to play in the affair and its resolution).

30. Chadwick, 1967, p. 254.

The effect of the argument was to sharply polarize christology so that it spelt the end of experimental theologies such as Origen's. Years of conflict surrounding the meanings of the language employed led to the need to define terms precisely and unequivocally in a way that Origen never had to do. As Crouzel points out:

"The skill with which Arian or Arianisers could find their doctrine in the confessions of faith of their adversaries forced the latter to pay careful attention to the terms they used. Origen never had worries like that."³¹

The Creed of the Council of Nicea in 325, and its further endorsement at Constantinople in 381, clearly defined the line between orthodoxy and heresy in this matter, and drew sharp attention to any christological issues that might arise later, such as the Nestorian controversy³². Moreover, the victory of the Athanasian party cast suspicion on any christology seen as in any way subordinationist. In a sense, while during Origen's lifetime, there was some flexibility, after the Arian crisis the goalposts were firmly fixed.

It can be seen then, that Origen's doctrines included elements that could be useful to both camps, and indeed, he was appealed to by both sides during the long conflict. Origen's influence on the crisis then, must be

31. Crouzel, 1989, p. 169).

32. The divine nature of the Son had been emphasized, hence putting pressure on the human nature. The resulting tension leads eventually to the Nestorian crisis.

examined. I shall therefore begin with the view that Origen's doctrines supported, and in some cases led directly to the birth of Arianism.

Hanson points out that until fairly recently, patristic scholars considered Origen to be at least the precursor of the Arian crisis³³, if not the honorary father of Arianism³⁴. This view was probably based upon the fact that several ancient writers also claim this. First to criticize Origen seems to have been Marcellus of Ancyra, who saw Origen as being partly to blame for the Arian doctrine³⁵. Next Eustathius took issue with him, especially concerning his exegesis of the story of the Witch of Endor³⁶. Eustathius, who led the conservative Nicene party at the Council of Nicea in 325, was vehemently opposed to Origen on the grounds that he "inconsiderately gave the heretics an opening"³⁷ by the use of his allegorical method of exegesis, and through his eschatology³⁸. He continually employs sarcastic name-calling against Origen in his *On the Ventriloquist*³⁹, something which Epiphanius (c. 315-403) would later on

33. Hanson cites Kannengiesser's list of scholars who considered this to be the case, such as Wiles, Stead, Barnard and Marrou (Kannengiesser, 1982, pp. 20-21, cited in Hanson, 1987, p. 410).

34. Such as Prestige (1936, pp. 116 and 222) and Pollard, (1958, pp. 106-107). Both cited in Hanson, (1987, p. 410).

35. Hanson, 1987, p. 410.

36. I Sam 28.

37. *Engast* 22, cited by Dechow, 1987(b), p. 406, n. 17.

38. Dechow, 1987(b), p. 406.

39. *Engast*, cited by Dechow, 1987(b), p. 406, n. 18.

ape.⁴⁰. He also unquestioningly accepted Methodius' earlier criticisms of Origen's work, especially as regards the resurrection of the flesh. Dechow sums up the central features of his attack:

- "1. The focus on the resurrection as the central issue relative even to scriptural passages that do not, strictly speaking, treat the resurrection;
2. the reliance on Methodius by conservative Nicene loyalists for the definitive statement of the case against Origen;
3. the unquestioning acceptance of the charge made by Methodius that Origen actually denies the bodily resurrection;
4. the alleged responsibility of Origen for heresy as a result of his teaching about the resurrection of the corporeal form (*eidos*);
5. the alleged responsibility of Origen for all heresy as a result of his method of allegorical exegesis."⁴¹

Based upon the labelling of Origen as a heretic and pro-Arian, Epiphanius is able to formulate his list of charges against Origen in *Panarion* 64. Epiphanius effectively considered Origen to be the direct cause of Arianism; an "Arian before Arius", to use Hanson's turn of phrase⁴². Dechow claims that it is this attack in 376 by Epiphanius, that would eventually lead to the first condemnation of Origen in 400 in Egypt⁴³. The nature of the charges are examined by Dechow in another seminar paper delivered at the Fourth Origen Conference in Innsbruck in 1985 and published in 1987⁴⁴. Among the

40. Dechow, 1987(b), p. 407.

41. Dechow, 1987(b), p. 407.

42. Hanson, 1987, p. 410.

43. Dechow, 1987(b), pp. 405-409.

44. Dechow, 1987(a), pp. 112ff.

charges, which we will examine in greater detail later, Origen is attacked for his subordinationism (charge 1) which by now, would be associated with Arianism.

But how much truth was there in the allegation that Origen's doctrines were basically Arian? A comparison of his doctrines with Arian thought must therefore be carried out. There are, as Hanson⁴⁵ points out, some similarities between Origen's vocabulary and ideas, and Arius'. Firstly, both used the term *epinoia* as descriptions of the "function of the Son/Logos". However, they both mean slightly different things; Arius sees them existing, along with the Logos, as total mediating devices to enable humanity to understand the divine, but Origen does differentiate between those that belong to the Logos in His relation to the Father, and those that belong to him in his relationship with humanity. Secondly, according to Hanson, both Arius and Origen refer to the Son as in some way created⁴⁶. But again, Origen's use of this terminology does not mean that he is in agreement with Arius, as he distinguished between the "making" (*poien*) of the Son and the "formation" (*plassien*) of everything else, which Arius

45. Hanson, 1987, p. 412.

46. Hanson, 1987, p. 411. Hanson states that Rufinus tries to hide the fact, while Jerome tries to make much of it. We have already seen earlier that the distinction between the two terms (created) and (begotten) may not have been as sharply defined in Origen's time as it became after the Arian crisis. See Crouzel, 1989, pp. 174-175.

does not. Further, Arius sees the Son created at a certain point in time, whereas in Origen, the "creating" is eternal. In both Origen and Arius, the Son is subordinate to the Father. But there is a fundamental difference in the nature of the subordination. As Hanson states:

"Origen of course subordinates the Son to the Father, but then so did everyone else in one way or another until Athanasius; and his subordination is still a subordination within a graded Godhead so that the distinct Persons share the same nature."⁴⁷

Arius differs from this in considering the Son not only subordinate, but of an essentially different nature to the Father. We can see then, that the so called similarities between Origen's thought and Arius' are not as similar as they appear at first glance. Not only that, but Arius and Origen vary considerably on other points.

For Arius, there is no human soul of Jesus, but the Logos simply takes its place, whereas Origen has his doctrines of the eternal generation of the Son, and the pre-existence of all human souls, such that, as we have seen in the previous chapter, Jesus has a human soul. It would have suited the Arian cause to have no human soul for Jesus, therefore making God suffer on the cross, and so argue that Jesus was in fact, not God. The existence of a human soul for Jesus gets around the problem, not to

47. Hanson, 1987, p. 411.

mention the more modern objection that for Jesus to be fully human he would have to have a soul⁴⁸.

Another example is the way in which the Son has knowledge of the Father. For both Origen and Arius, the Son's knowledge of the Father is limited in some way, but again, both have a different way of expressing it. Arius' description of the way in which the Son participates in the Father is by appointment (*thesei*) and not by nature (*physei*), whereas Origen does see the Son's participation in the Father as natural, and certainly far above any human or angelic participation⁴⁹.

As a final and most telling example, Arius rejects Origen's doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, so that "there was when he (the Son) was not", putting the Son clearly in the category of creature. Arius chooses instead to modify the Nicene party's catchphrase, adopted from Origen in the first place, by adding "not" (*ouk*) at the beginning of "*en pote hoti ouk en*" (there was not when He was not). Indeed, it was bishop Alexander, one of the central figures in the Nicene party and the excommunicator of Arius in the first place, who had clearly used Origen's doctrine of the eternal generation in order to attack Arius early on⁵⁰.

48. See Hanson, 1987, pp. 411-412.

49. Hanson, 1987, p. 413.

50. Kelly, 1977, p. 225.

It is clear then, that to equate Origen's thought to Arius' would be a gross simplification of the facts. As Hanson states:

" though Arius derived some ideas and some vocabulary indirectly from Origen, he adopted no large or significant part of Origen's theology, and his account of the Christian doctrine of God is widely, perhaps fundamentally, different from that of Origen. Origen does not account for nor explain Arianism, though he may have indirectly contributed something to it."⁵¹

Some of the confusion regarding Origen as a pre-Arian Arian may stem from the fact that the most enthusiastic defender of Origen was indeed Eusebius of Ceasarea, who, while not being strictly speaking an Arian himself, did have Arian tendencies, to the extent that he wrote a letter to Alexander of Alexandria defending Arius⁵². In this way the Origenist school may well have been seen to be associated with Arianism by people who did not fully understand Origen's thought.

This raises an important distinction between the true, fully fledged Arians who were actually a minority, and the majority allied anti-Nicenes who were really Origenists, supporting the doctrine of the three hypostases. They had been convinced by the true Arians that the term *homoousion* somehow threatened that position with a form of Sabellianism; in fact it did not, and the misunderstanding was largely due to the difference

51. Hanson, 1987, p. 413.

52. Hanson, 1987, p. 415.

between Eastern and Western metaphysical language⁵³. The anti-Nicenes then, were actually a broad group of mainly eastern churchmen who had not been fully satisfied with the creed of Nicea 325, rather than fully Arian⁵⁴.

In contrast, Athanasius refers to Origen only twice, and then in a sympathetic and polite way⁵⁵, suggesting that he did not see Origen as particularly pro-Arian. Indeed, Athanasius warns against interpreting Origen's writing as dogmatic and makes a point of highlighting the speculative and experimental nature of much of Origen's writing⁵⁶. On the same occasion Athanasius shows that he fully endorses Origen's doctrine of the eternal co-existence of the Son with the Father, and his participation in the Father's nature. What is more, Athanasius was quick to make use of the formula "*ouk en pote hoti ouk en*" (there was not a time when He was not) as the rallying slogan of the Nicene party, having attributed it to Origen in the first place⁵⁷.

However, there are also differences between Athanasius' thought and Origen's. For example, Athanasius did not accept any form of subordination of

53. For example, the Latin West translated the Greek speaking East's terms *ousia* (essence) and *hypostasis* (individuality) as *substantia* (substance). Frend, 1965, p. 125.

54. Kelly, 1977, pp. 238-239.

55. *Ep. ad. Serap.* 4.9 and *De Decret.* 27, quoted by Hanson, 1987, p. 412, n. 28.

56. *De Decret.* 27, quoted by Hanson, 1987, p. 417 and n.59.

57. *De Princ.* I, 2, 9, and more importantly, IV, 4, 1, which Athanasius directly referred to. Crouzel, 1989, pp. 172 and 187.

the Son, he did not make any use of Origen's doctrine of the three hypostases and he did not see the importance of attributing a human soul to Jesus, to name but a few⁵⁸.

This shows that no one side in the dispute adopted all of Origen's theology, opting instead to make use of the parts that suited them best. As Hanson states:

"During the whole course of the Arian Controversy, from the moment it began, which I take to be the year 318, to the moment it ended, which I take to be the year 381, nobody reproduces Origen's theology in full, not even in outline."⁵⁹

Even then, as time passed, the memory and importance of Origen's thought declined, such that by the later stages of the dispute, nobody was appealing to any part of Origen's theology. Origen was simply not at the "forefront of the consciousness of the most influential theologians"⁶⁰. The solution to the Arian crisis was not to be found in the doctrines of Origen, and we have already seen that neither was its birth. Hanson sums up the role of Origen's thought in the Arian dispute in the following words:

" we cannot say that Origen explains or shapes the Arian Controversy. It was not a struggle between two sides of Origen's thought. His theology did not greatly preoccupy the minds of those who took part in it. None of the participants wholly adopted his theology nor reproduced it as their main source...[.]...Origen contributed indirectly to both sides, in

58. See Hanson, 1987, pp. 417-418.

59. Hanson, 1987, p. 413.

60. Hanson, 1987, p. 420.

fact to more than two sides, in the dispute. Neither Arians, however, nor pro-Nicenes could justly claim him as their intellectual ancestor. Origen cannot be described as the father of the Arian Controversy nor its cause. But it might be said that his ghost haunted it."⁶¹

If however Origen's theology was being effectively forgotten by the end of the Arian dispute, why did it then suffer a concerted attack by detractors, leading to a condemnation in the year 400? The answer lies mainly in the fact that the Arian dispute had crystalised and polarised Christian theological thought so much as to cause what may be described as a retrospective witch hunt. While it can be seen today that Origen's thought did not have that great an impact on the development of Arianism, or on the eventual solution, the victorious Nicene party did not see it that way, and instead began to consider Origen as the unofficial and somewhat unwitting precursor of Arianism. It is easy to see how seventy three or so years of controversy could have clouded and coloured the eventual winners' perceptions of Origen's thought; they saw his doctrines through the eyes of their own anti-Arian zeal. This, coupled with the fact that the Arians themselves had tried to claim Origen as "the patron of their position"⁶² much more forcibly than the Nicenes⁶³, led to the inevitable backlash

61. Hanson, 1987, p. 420.

62. Lonergan, 1976, p. 67.

63. No doubt due to the fact that the Arians were in fact a minority, and relied on the support of a broad coalition of smaller groups all opposed to the Council of Nicea's creed (especially *homooousion*) for the measure of

against Origen, in a Nicene attempt to cut off any Arian tendencies at the roots⁶⁴. Previous criticisms of Origen were resurrected, such as Eustathius' and Methodius', and a list of charges against Origen were formulated by Epiphanius in his *Panarion* 64⁶⁵, written in 377.

Epiphanius, who was bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, used both Methodius and Eustathius in formulating his list of charges against Origen as follows⁶⁶:

- 1) He accused him of Subordinationism.
- 2) He took issue with his doctrine of the Pre-existence of souls.
- 3) He accused him of losing God's image in the exegesis of Genesis.
- 4) He accused him of holding that Adam and Eve were incorporeal before Genesis and of being too allegorical in his exegesis of Genesis as a whole.
- 5) He accuses him of having three different views on the resurrection, by supporting, denying, and in the end opting for a partial resurrection involving the resurrection of the body, but not this body.

Taking each charge separately in turn, we have already seen that Origen can be interpreted as

success which they enjoyed between the councils of Nicea 325 and Constantinople 381; most of these allies were in fact generally Origenist. Kelly, 1977, pp. 237-240.
 64. As we shall see, the reason for the attacks on Origen have more to do with dealing with the followers of Origen, rather than Origen himself.
 65. Also known as *Medicine Chest for All Heresies*. Trigg, 1983, 250.
 66. I am indebted to Jon. F. Dechow's exposition of the charges at Innsbruck. 1987(a), pp. 112ff.

subordinationist, but as I have stated above, everyone is to some extent subordinationist before Athanasius comes along.

The second charge concerned Origen's doctrine of the pre-existence of the souls, which would be condemned as an error in the sixth century, mainly on the grounds that it came directly from Platonism rather than Christian or Scriptural sources. Origen was considered to have grafted on Platonism to Christianity and to have adopted the idea that everything would eventually return to its original state, so negating the eternal punishment of sinners in Hell, and therefore suggesting that the Devil was not condemned for ever⁶⁷. Such a point of view ignores several important points.

Firstly, does Origen simply reproduce Platonism, or neo-Platonism uncritically? We have seen in the previous chapter that this would be a serious oversimplification of the facts. Origen employs Platonic language, but he does not simply reproduce it, as what he is trying to do is to make Christianity acceptable and attractive to the Greek speaking intellectuals: in other words, he is concerned to Christianise Platonists, rather than to Platonise Christians.

Secondly, and more to the point, where does Origen get the idea from if not from Platonism? Gerald Bostock provides us with an answer to this question, in showing

67. Llorca, 1960, p. 254. See also Rowe, 1987, for an example of the fact that this view still persists.

that Origen comes to his doctrine of pre-existence from Philo and Scripture⁶⁸. He adopts Philo's scheme of the Fall, almost in exact detail⁶⁹, even down to the idea that people may need to be incarnated more than once in order to pay for their sins⁷⁰. Of course Origen modifies Philo's scheme in incorporating the Incarnation of Christ, essentially making it Christian⁷¹. Philo in turn, comes to his view, based on Jewish writings and interpretations⁷², rather than Platonism, and this is also true of Origen, who considers the doctrine of Jewish origin⁷³. Indeed, most of the times when Origen argues in favour of the doctrine, he is using existing Jewish speculative theology; for example, when using Esau and Jacob to demonstrate the pre-existence⁷⁴, he is employing a Jewish Rabbinical belief that Jacob and Esau fought even before birth⁷⁵. Even his belief that the pre-existent souls of people and angels were of the same

68. Bostock, 1987, pp. 259-264.

69. Compare Philo's *De Somniis*, I, 138-140 to *De Princ.* I, 8, 1 for example.

70. Bostock, 1987, p. 262.

71. See *De Princ.* III, 5, 4; IV, 3, 12. Also Comm. in *Joh.* II, 24f; XIII, 43.

72. For example, 1 Enoch 48:3; 62:7; 2 Enoch 22:5; Ps. 74:2; Wis. 8:19; 9:15; 15:8.

73. For example, in Comm. in *Joh.* II, 31, Origen quotes a Jewish apocryphal work *The Prayer of Joseph* in order to show that Jacob pre-existed as an angel. Also, in *Hom. in Gen.* XII, 4 and *Frag. in Joh.* 72 (GCS IV 540, 5-6), when discussing the incident with Jesus and the man born blind in John 9:2, it is obvious that he considers pre-existence as a Jewish belief.

74. *De Princ.* II, 9, 7; III, 1, 2.

75. Bostock, 1987, p. 261.

order of creation is based both on Philo and Biblical evidence⁷⁶. Summing up in Bostock's words:

"In conclusion, Origen does not base his doctrine on Plato but on Philo and on an interpretation of the Bible inspired by Judaism. Given that the Biblical basis and that Jewish foundation of his thought, it is hard to believe that the case against pre-existence can be closed by the theological timidity of the sixth century."⁷⁷

Charges 3 and 4 concentrate on Origen's allegorical method of exegesis and strictly speaking do not concern us in this christological study. Suffice it to say that while Origen does get carried away with allegory at times, there is a greater similarity between modern, critical Biblical scholarship and Origen's method, than the more literalist interpretations that prevailed until the eighteenth century,,and in the case of Roman Catholics, the twentieth century. In any case, Dechow shows that in fact, the examples used by Epiphanius to illustrate his points are based on a gross over simplification of what Origen actually said⁷⁸.

The fifth charge, concerning the resurrection, simply repeats and echoes Methodius' earlier criticisms, which have been dealt with earlier in this chapter. It is interesting but concerning to note that Methodius'

76. See I Cor. 6:3 (*Comm. in Matt. X*, 13: XV, 27: XVII, 30) and especially Lk. 20:36, where Jesus tells the Sadducees that people will be like angels in their resurrected state (*De Princ. IV*, 4, 2; *C.Cels. IV*, 28 and *Hom. in Lev. IV*, 4).

77. Bostock, 1987, pp. 262f.

78. Dechow, 1987(a), pp. 115-117.

perception of Origen's thought prevails, above and beyond Origen's own writings, in that Epiphanius relies mostly on Methodius' reporting of Origen's words, rather than the authentic Origenian texts.

"Sometimes the point of absurdity has been reached where Methodius and his successors are held to be right in spite of what Origen says, as though Methodius were a better witness to Origen's thought than the author himself."⁷⁹

Epiphanius also resorts to sarcastic name-calling, in the tradition of Eustathius, when he refers to Origen as "would be wise man", "vain worker", "God maddened one", "pitiful [man]" and finally "unbeliever"⁸⁰. It is no wonder then that Crouzel continues this tradition and sarcastically calls him 'pentaglot', in a reference to his lack of understanding of Origen's use of language⁸¹.

As a final insult, at the very beginning of *Panarion* 64⁸², Epiphanius suggests that Origen had apostasised during the persecution of Decius. This represents Epiphanius at his worst, spreading malicious gossip. Henri de Lubac has shown conclusively that this could not have been the case because of various historical events⁸³. Origen was buried at the cathedral of Tyre, which would not have been possible if he had been an apostate. Likewise Crouzel states that Jerome, in his

79. Crouzel, 1989, p. 235.

80. Dechow, 1987(b), p. 407.

81. Crouzel, 1989, p. 171.

82. ss. 1-5 (GCS Epiphanius II), cited by Crouzel, 1989, p. 36.

83. Lubac, 1959, pp. 257-260.

*Letter 84 to Pammachius and Oceanus*⁸⁴, writes: "Let us not imitate the faults of him whose virtues we cannot copy". It is unlikely that Jerome would have made such a clear reference to Origen's virtue, had he thought him an apostate, especially as he must have been aware of the his friend Epiphanius' accusation, given that *Panarion* was written twenty-two years before his *Letter 84*. The whole idea that Origen apostasised is rejected by all Origen scholars today, but the calumny nevertheless persisted until relatively recently.

Epiphanius' attack did not prove successful immediately, and it was the events that followed that led to Origen's condemnation in the year 400 at a local Egyptian synod. In 393 Epiphanius began to muster support for his extreme anti-Origenist stance by sending out a messenger to various monasteries in Egypt and the Holy land. Jerome, surprisingly received the emissary and abjured Origen, whereas Rufinus did not. This led to a war of words between the two, who had until then been friends. Rufinus secured the backing of his bishop, John of Jerusalem, while Jerome allied himself with Epiphanius⁸⁵.

Jerome's action seemed rather strange, for one who had held Origen in great esteem, but he would later state that Epiphanius had made him aware of *De Principiis* and

84. s. 9: CUFr IV, written in 399, cited by Crouzel, 1989, p. 36.

85. Llorca, 1960, pp. 562f; Chadwick, 1967, pp. 184f; Trigg, 1983, p. 252.

the "heresies" it contained⁸⁶. The matter was compounded a year later, when Epiphanius presented himself in Jerusalem and launched a scathing attack⁸⁷ on Origen for the benefit of John of Jerusalem, who then came to Origen's defence. So began the First Origenist Controversy, which lasted several years, and due to Jerome's popularity in the West, became famous across the Christian world. The two sides were eventually reconciled in 397, under the arbitration of Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria⁸⁸.

Nevertheless, this reconciliation did not last long. Rufinus moved back to Italy and translated *De Principiis*. As we have seen earlier, Rufinus emended the text, making it somewhat unreliable. But what really sparked the row was that he claimed he was following Jerome's example in doing so, also claiming in his preface that Jerome continued to hold Origen in high regard⁸⁹. A furious Jerome responded with his own translation of *De Principiis* which he claimed was literal, but which in truth was as biased against Origen as Rufinus' version was in his favour⁹⁰. There followed an exchange of letters and books which kept the controversy going in the

86. Trigg, 1983, p. 252.

87. He called Origen's words "hostile, worthy of hate and repugnant to God and his saints". Dechow, 1987(b), p. 405.

88. Llorca, 1960, p. 563.

89. See the Preface of Rufinus, in Butterworth's translation of *De Principiis*, 1936, pp. xl-xli.

90. This has been examined briefly in chapter 4 above.

West, but did not have too much of a detrimental effect on Origen's standing there.

It was back in the East that what has been referred to as the Second Origenist Controversy would determine Origen's fate. This concerned Theophilus of Alexandria, the mediator in the original reconciliation in 397⁹¹, and St. John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople. Theophilus angered the monks of the Egyptian Desert with a pastoral letter, written in Origenist style, which urged them to forsake their anthropomorphic beliefs. The monks not only refused, but caused considerable difficulties for Theophilus by "descending in force on Alexandria"⁹². In order to pacify them and continue to enjoy their powerful and important support, Theophilus turned on the Origenists, expelling them from Egypt, condemning Origen's alleged errors in a synod in 400, and finally even getting the support of Pope Anastasius for a formal censure of Origen's ideas, especially in terms of their continued survival in the teaching of Evagrius, who had recently died⁹³.

Evagrius' Origenist monks in Egypt, most notably the so called Tall Brothers, were persecuted by Theophilus to such an extent that they took their complaint to Constantinople, to Patriarch John Chrysostom and the Empress Eudoxia. These agreed to give them shelter.

91. See p. 24 above.

92. Chadwick, 1967, p. 186.

93. Chadwick, 1967, p. 186.

However, Theophilus continued his attack, now targeting John directly, in an attempt to have him replaced. Sadly, John was no politician and rather unwisely criticized Eudoxia's behaviour in some of his sermons. This led to his deposition and exile by the Emperor, using Theophilus' charge of harbouring Origenist heretics as an excuse⁹⁴. Theophilus had proved victorious, and while John Chrysostom would be hailed as a saint not long after his death, the whole episode had a detrimental effect on Origenism.

The final chapter in the condemnation of Origen came in the sixth century. Origenist and anti-Origenist monks in Palestine clashed, mainly about the doctrine of the pre-existence, or at least their conception of it. Eventually, the anti-Origenists triumphed, gaining the favour of the Emperor Justinian, who in 543 published a *Liber adversus Origenem* (Book against Origen), also known as the *Letter to Menas*, and a set of nine anathemata against Origen⁹⁵. The Origenist monks themselves then began arguing with themselves about the pre-existence and the Trinity, leading to a split between the extreme Isochrustes and the moderate Tetradites (as the Isochrustes had labelled them). This finally led to the fifteen anathemata against Origen at the Second Council of Constantinople (the Fifth Ecumenical Council) in

94. For a fuller account see Chadwick, 1967, pp. 184-191.

95. PG 86/1, col. 943-994, cited by Crouzel, 1989, pp. 177f.

553⁹⁶. In truth, it was not so much Origen himself that was being attacked, but Origen's followers, whose theology bore very little resemblance to the Alexandrian's original thought.

The relevance of these later Origenist controversies to the aim of this study are limited, in that they do not deal directly with Origen's Christology, but are more centred on politics and the dubious developments of some of Origen's thought. Christology itself moved away from Origen's ideas because of the results of the Arian crisis. Once Christ's divinity was assured, the next question concerned how the divine and human natures were related, and so the problems with Nestorianism were initiated. It is fairly clear then that Origen's christology had no real part in the later christological crises, in that no one used Origenist ideas to develop their own positions. So it is with the compromise of the Council of Chalcedon that christological debate is finalised, at least in its high variety⁹⁷. It would not be until the advent of modern Biblical scholarship and the Quest for the Historical Jesus that the christological views of the early church would be re-examined in detail.

In examining Origen's influence on ancient christology, we have seen previously how his most

96. See note 17 above.

97. In essence, the Chalcedonian definition of the nature of Jesus is that he was fully man and Fully God.

enduring contribution is his doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, which still survives today in the Creed. But of his more controversial doctrines, the most celebrated are the pre-existence of the souls including Jesus', and his degree of subordinationism. All these together have an important bearing on the Arian dispute. But contrary to popular perception, he is not the real "father of Arianism" as scholars until fairly recently suggested, but that his christological views, seen in the context of his own life-time and method, appear to be generally orthodox. Indeed it was the Arian dispute itself that sufficiently delineated the boundaries for all later christology, and with which Origen is subsequently judged.

We have also seen that most of the misconceptions about Origen's thought were founded on the failure by later detractors to understand his use of philosophical language and to take into account his historical situation and his teaching method. They did not understand the schemes of philosophy which Origen employed and their concerns were very different from his, especially in terms of the heresies which they had to contend with.

Further we must note with regret the degree of wilful neglect at best, and sheer maliciousness at worst, of most of Origen's detractors, manifested in the way in which they contrive to get Origen condemned. Whether by

accident or on purpose, most of them were prone to be rather economical with the truth, at times exaggerating certain passages, while conveniently ignoring others.

Finally, we have begun to see how modern scholarship is beginning to clear Origen's name, showing clearly the extent of the unfair treatment which has been meted out to him in the past. As Crouzel states:

"To accuse a theologian of heresy subsequent to himself, relying on expressions that will only subsequently take on the sense in question, without having made the effort to gather together all that he said on the subject to whether that is really his opinion, when he could not have had his attention drawn, as ours has been, to the danger of that kind of formulation, is clearly a major betrayal of history by a historian: even if the ancients had some excuse for this, we cannot leave the matter to their judgement."⁹⁸

Having looked at Origen's ancient christological legacy, we shall now move on to examine how relevant and influential his christology is today.

98. Crouzel, 1989, p. 172.

CHAPTER FIVE.ORIGEN'S MODERN CHRISTOLOGICAL LEGACY

In attempting to deal with Origen's modern christological legacy, a distinction must be made between modern Origen scholars' attempts to clear Origen's name, and the influence and usefulness of Origen's christology today. The first concerns studying the patristic period with the benefit of modern research methods and we have already seen how this is coming about in the course of this study. This will be examined first below.

The second however, deals with ascertaining the importance of Origen in today's christological theology. This will form the later part of this chapter, in which it is hoped to show that Origen's christology is still relevant today.

We will start then, by considering the state of contemporary Origen scholarship with reference to his christology.

Before we can begin to do this however, we will need to carry out a brief review of how Origen's legacy has come down to us over the ages, so that we can determine the reasons for the recent renewed interest in his theology and especially his christology. For this review I am indebted to Trigg's account in the final chapter of

his book *Origen, The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-century Church*¹.

Over the ages, Origen's legacy has manifested itself in regular, but relatively small outbursts. We have seen that by the end of the fourth century, and certainly by the time of the Council of Chalcedon in 451, Origen's thought had ceased to have much direct influence. However, his legacy continued both in the East and in the West, but in a different way for each.

In the West, as Trigg states "he was read and respected but somewhat suspect"². Among Adherents to Origen's ideas were Pelagius, whose regard for his *Commentary on Romans* was well known, but who himself was embroiled in controversy when attacking Augustine. Later on, John Scotus Erigena (c. 810-c. 877), an Irish theologian, produced a systematic theology inspired by *De Principiis*. Again, later on, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) made use of Origen to produce his *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, and William of St Thierry (c. 1085-1148), a close friend of Bernard of Clairvaux, held Origen in high regard and used his ideas in his writings on the nature of humanity and the link between knowledge and love. But while monastic theologians had some use for Origen, the later scholastics' interest in Origen

1. Trigg, 1983, pp. 244-258.

2. Trigg, 1983, p. 254.

amounted only to arguments about the possibility of his salvation³.

It is not until the Renaissance that interest in Origen's thought re-surfaced, with the help of John Cardinal Bessarion (1403-1472), himself originally from the East and escaping the Turkish invaders, and Cristoforo Persona (c. 1416-1485), the Vatican Library curator, who translated *Contra Celsum* into Latin⁴. Soon afterwards further attention was drawn to Origen's thought when John Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) suggested that it was far more likely to be the case that Origen was saved, than that he was damned. This statement resulted in a Papal reaction which condemned Pico on the grounds that a Council had already sealed Origen's fate.

But interest in Origen did not end there. The famous Erasmus (1469-1536) held Origen in high regard and not only made use of his ideas on free will, but was also responsible for translating and compiling many of Origen's works. His attack on Martin Luther using Origen resulted in Luther stating rather harshly and stupidly that "in all of Origen there is not a single word about Christ"⁵. This is because Origen's ideas on grace and human effort in salvation clashed hopelessly with his.

3. Trigg, 1983, p. 254.

4. Trigg, 1983, p. 254. See also Kelly's 1975 book on Jerome for a full account of these events.

5. Quoted in Trigg, 1983, p. 256.

But other reformers, such as Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) valued Origen's thought despite this clash.

Interest in Origen was maintained after the Renaissance by various scholars, who would be responsible for perpetuating his thought until the nineteenth century. Pierre Daniel Huet (1630-1721), bishop of Avranches, published a compilation of Origen's exegetical works, together with an Origeniana, which Trigg describes as "a thorough and sympathetic examination of Origen's life, doctrine, and works"⁶. Next came Charles Delarue (1685-1739) who produced a magnificent critical edition of Origen's work in 1733.

By the nineteenth century, interest in Origen had once again resurfaced, this time in protestant circles in Germany due, mainly, to the relaxation of dogmatic considerations in the study of Church history. Essentially, with the advent of critical biblical scholarship, and the decline of constraining Roman Catholic dogmatic influence, similar critical techniques could now be applied to the study of Church history in relative freedom. The most celebrated of these Church historians was undoubtedly Adolf Harnack (1851-1930) who, while not being very sympathetic towards Origen's thought, did however acknowledge him as one of the most important contributors ever to the development of Christian thought.

6. Trigg, 1983, p. 256.

We come then to the twentieth century, where there has been a veritable explosion of interest in Origen, especially among Roman Catholic scholars, now freed of their traditional dogmatic constraints as a result of the gradual liberalisation of the Catholic Church. Such important scholars as Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Jean Daniélou and Henri de Lubac, have all contributed to this explosion of interest, and we find that presently, as we head for the twenty-first century, Catholic Origen scholars such as Henri Crouzel and Joseph Trigg are at the forefront of Origen studies.

In the East Origen fared rather worse, in that, as we have seen, Justinian's attack on him in the sixth century led to his condemnation at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553⁷. This led to the loss of many of his works, as they had not been translated from the Greek into Latin, and therefore did not survive into the Western Church. Trigg, however, states that due to the advance of the Muslim Turks into the Eastern Empire, Origen's *Contra Celsum* became a major source of Christian defence against them⁸. Origen's ideas did survive, mostly in the ascetic monastic movements of the East, especially since the Cappadocian Fathers, who held Origen in high regard, remained extremely popular in Eastern Orthodoxy.

7. See previous chapter above.

8. Trigg, 1983, p. 255.

In recent times, when there has been much more of a mood of ecumenism within Christianity as a whole, the study of Origen's thought has not only become popular, but has generally been undertaken by scholars both in the East and in the West, Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant alike. Conferences and colloquies have been organised⁹, bringing together the most eminent Origen scholars from around the world and publishing papers delivered there by them. Origen studies have never been as popular as they are at present.

Why this should be the case has a lot to do with the current climate in theology in general. Over the past hundred years or so, and at least over the past forty, the World as a whole has become a smaller place, thanks to the advances in transport technology and availability. This has led to a meeting of diverse cultures and more importantly belief systems, such that it has become impossible for individual religions to claim the monopoly on religious truth. Scholars like Rudolf Otto have introduced elements of the world religions into Christianity¹⁰, and Christianity has had to modify its stance on other religions from an attitude of dismissal,

9. For example the Origen conferences which are held every four years, the first of which was held in September 1973 at Monserrat in Spain and the Origen colloquy held at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana on April 11-13, 1986. As well as these, there are frequent contributions on Origen at the Oxford patristic conferences held every four years.

10. Otto himself travelled widely and brought back to his work many ideas from the world religions, especially from the East.

to one of a more accommodating and tolerant nature. Even the Roman Catholic Church, with its world-wide network of members has had to adapt to local customs and beliefs in finding its niche in many countries¹¹. Consequently many theologies have arisen which have attempted to incorporate elements of all faiths. It has also led to the creation, and rise in popularity, of some rather suspect religious sects such as, for example, the *Moonies*. This, in turn, has prompted Christians to try to re-discover the roots of their own beliefs and has led to a re-appraisal of a number of ancient writers, among them Origen.

As a result then, of a changing world view, and greater religious freedom. People are no longer burnt for their heretical views, and indeed it is possible to write a book suggesting that Origen was saved without being condemned by the Papacy, as Pico was all those years ago. It has then become possible for scholars to examine the doctrines of those ancient writers who have, over the years, been condemned for their thoughts, and objectively judge them on their merits. Scholars have concerned themselves with clearing the names of important

11. See The Second Vatican Council's *Lumen Gentium* (*The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*) 1965, II, 16, for example. Indeed, the Council took the issue so seriously that it devoted a separate and complete document entitled the *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* (1966). Further to this, Origen is appealed to even in the new *Catechism of The Catholic Church*, Geoffrey Chapman, London 1994, (see p. 647 for a summary of nine references to his work).

ancient writers such as Origen, or at least re-discovering from them useful ideas and concepts which had long ago been forgotten and condemned without so much as a second thought.

But what has modern Patristic scholarship revealed about Origen's christology in particular? Scholarship continues to fall into two broad camps. Those who see his christology as a product of his Platonic background and part of a systematic approach, and hence deficient for not being strictly speaking fully Christian, and those who see his christology as one of a number of Christian ideas emerging as a result of his method of doing a research theology and hence defend Origen against the traditional attacks of his detractors. Hence we have again, as in the past, his detractors on the one side, and his adherents on the other. This time however, both camps agree that Origen's contribution to the development of Christian theology has been immense and is worthy of further study; we do not have the acidity of the battle of wits between Jerome and Rufinus, for example. It would probably be better to talk about those who consider Origen to be wrong in places, as opposed to those who consider Origen to have been right, as long as you don't take him out of the context of his own historical and theological setting.

In the former category we can consider J. Nigel Rowe's book, *Origen's Doctrine of Subordination: A Study*

*in Origen's Christology*¹² which we have examined already in chapter 3. Rowe's main contention, that a confused christology emerges from Origen's writings, is based mainly on the assertion that Origen's scheme (his *apocatastasis*) is based too closely on the Platonic scheme, where everything in history will eventually return to its originally perfect state. This assertion is most likely derived from the work of the earlier Danish scholar Hal Koch. However, even in the Fifties Daniélou was able to raise serious objections to this point of view¹³. Crouzel responds by using Alcain's work, outlined below, to show that while there are some similarities between the Platonic system and Origen's scheme, once the redemption has taken place, the redeemed souls retain their freedom of will, and the end result is not a forgone conclusion¹⁴. Rowe appears to be doing what Crouzel would describe as imposing a "systematic" scheme upon Origen which he never intended. Lyons' comments aimed at Origen's ancient detractors such as Jerome sum up the present criticism of Rowe thus:

"Witnesses hostile to Origen interpreted this principle to mean an *apocatastasis* or restoration of all moral agents to God. But Origen also stressed the principle that all moral agents remain perpetually free."¹⁵

12. Rowe, 1987.

13. See Daniélou on the Redemption, 1955, pp. 269-270.

14. Crouzel, 1989, p. 195. Also his section on the *apocatastasis*, pp. 257-266.

15. Lyons, 1982, p. 75. Lyons goes on to cite the following texts to demonstrate this fact: De Princ. I, Pref, 5; II, 1, 2; II, 3, 3; II, 1, 6. This is the reason why Origen can reply successfully to the criticism

I would add that Rowe fails to take into account the historical setting and teaching situation that Origen was in, as was stated in chapter 3, above¹⁶, and ends up attributing to him seemingly contradictory statements.

But Rowe is not the only one to see a "system" in Origen's thought, and Joseph Trigg seem to be the main exponent of this point of view, as we have already seen. What is curious to note is that Trigg is far more sympathetic to Origen's cause, which, while he will criticise, he nevertheless still admires. That much is clear from his work.

However, in the latter category, we must consider the vast majority of recent work, such as Jose-Antonio Alcain's *Cautivero y Redención del hombre en Origenes*¹⁷, where Origen's view on the Redemption is explained by reference to five dominant schemes, respectively entitled the mercantile, the military, the juridical, the ritual and the mystical. Each scheme must be considered in conjunction with the other four, as they complement each other. They are also derived from Scripture, and demonstrate, when properly considered, that Origen considers Christ's humanity very seriously indeed, and that therefore the Incarnation is seen by him as a historical fact. It also demonstrates that Christ's

that even the Devil will be saved; it is not the same to say that someone can be saved and that someone will be saved.

16. Chapter 3, p. 89.

17. Alcain, 1973.

death and Resurrection are also seen as historical events in Origen's christology¹⁸, and although he tends to interpret them sacramentally, or metaphorically, they remain the basis for basic Christian belief.

Another example of recent scholarship backing up this point of view is Gerardus Reijners' book, *Das Wort von Kreuz: Kreuzes- und Erlösungssymbolik bei Origenes*¹⁹, which, according to Crouzel's review in his bibliographical article in *Theological Studies*, clears Origen of the traditional charge of downplaying the Crucifixion.

The opposite view is held by Colin Gunton²⁰. He considers that Origen could be guilty of degrading the importance of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, in seeing them as only the start of a Christian believer's faith journey. This start represents the lowest form of faith, and the journey must then proceed beyond the strictly temporal, earthly and historical perception of the death and Resurrection, to the mystical, metaphysical and spiritual interpretation of its higher meaning. In other words, he considers the sacramental value of Passion and Resurrection as more important than the historical events. However, this does not mean that he denies them

18. Crouzel, 1988, p. 509; Crouzel, 1989, pp. 194-197.

19. Published by Böhlau, Cologne-Vienna, 1983, and reviewed in Crouzel, 1988, p. 509. Reijners' book is not available to and in any case, has yet to be translated into English.

20. See Gunton, 1983, pp. 38-39.

as either a sound basis for belief, or, more importantly, an historical event. As Daniélou cleverly points out:

" he does not dwell for long on the historical aspect of Christ, because he is in a hurry to examine its spiritual significance."²¹.

This is not at all surprising, given Origen's ascetic way of life. In any case, Gunton produces scant evidence to justify this point of view. We shall return to his analysis later.

Probably the most comprehensive attempt to clear Origen's name has come from Henri Crouzel. His general book on Origen not only offers a coherent explanation of why Origen's theology is as it is, but it also allows many insights into his christology, especially where it has been criticized in the past. It has certainly been invaluable in the production of this thesis and has been referred to throughout. Crouzel is probably the best of a relatively large number of French scholars who have specialised in Origen in the course of this century. He makes no apologies for defending Origen and comes close, I believe, to re-establishing Origen's orthodoxy.

He is not alone in attempting this task. For example, only recently in 1991, Takis Tjamalikos, a Greek scholar, submitted a Doctoral thesis in Glasgow entitled *The Concept of Time in Origen*, which has now been

21. See Daniélou, 1955, p. 264.

published²², but which has unfortunately not been available to me. The central argument of this thesis was an attempt to exonerate Origen completely from the charges levelled at him²³.

Even in this brief and incomplete review of the state of modern Origen scholarship, we can begin to see that there are few out and out detractors of Origen's christology. Certainly, some are more sympathetic than others to his cause, but most accept that Origen's thought contains a great deal of good. It is how, and to what extent, they qualify that which is in debate. In short, the two main opponents in what Crouzel calls the "controversy between us and the supporters of a 'system' in Origen"²⁴, himself and Trigg, would certainly agree on the importance and greatness of Origen overall. Trigg ends his book on Origen with a plea for a greater appreciation of Origen's work²⁵, and there is no doubt that Crouzel would agree with that, even if he does doubt the quality and value of Trigg's work²⁶. It appears, then, that Origen's thought, and in particular, Origen's christology, is finally receiving the fair hearing which it deserves.

22. 1991, Peter Bern, Switzerland. (As it is not available to me I have not included it in my final bibliography).

23. This, in the opinion of Dr. Dragas from Durham University, Tjalamikos has successfully managed.

24. Crouzel, 1989, p. 266.

25. Trigg, 1983, p. 258.

26. Crouzel, 1988, p. 505.

We shall now move on to Origen's legacy within modern christology, rather than modern Patristic scholarship. In order to do this, it will be necessary to identify the difference between ancient and modern christologies, in order to be able to place Origen within some sort of framework, and this is what I will now proceed to do.

The central characteristic of most ancient christologies, excepting some heretical ones such as Ebionism²⁷, was their high starting point. This means that they began with an idea of the divine, and then moved to the human; a kind of movement from the heavenly down to the earthly. This idea was based on both Scriptural and philosophical evidence.

It began with the earliest realisation of who Jesus was, and in the christological titles applied to Him in the Gospels and the New Testament. This, coupled with a Christian reading of the Old Testament then gave rise to the belief, from very early on, that Jesus was somehow God. Ancient thinkers then tried to explain how it was possible that the divine could become human, and it was the Greek philosophical framework and language that would be employed for this purpose, concretely the term *Logos*. This was not altogether surprising since the majority of converts to Christianity came from a Hellenistic

27. The Ebionites were strict monotheists in the Jewish tradition, and therefore saw Jesus as the most perfect human, the ultimate man, but definitely not God.

background, or were at least heavily influenced by it²⁸.

These christologies are commonly referred to as "high" or "descending" or "from above". In them therefore, the Incarnation becomes the focus of what must be explained, while all other events such as the preaching, the suffering, death and resurrection are merely proof of the Incarnation. The important thing is that God has come down to humanity in order to save it; everything else is secondary. These christologies begin with an image of God, then transfer the divine attributes to Jesus and hence explain his miracles and authoritative preaching. The Jesus of these high christologies knows what will happen next and has full knowledge of his own true identity - He is the ultimate magician because He is first and foremost God.

The problem with such christologies is that they concentrate on the divinity of Jesus while downplaying, or even completely overshadowing, his humanity; in short, they have a tendency towards Docetism. Also, in beginning with an idea about what God is like, they start with assumptions about the attributes of God, and then apply those assumptions to Jesus. In short, they say "if God is like this, then Jesus must also be like this"; the problem is that no-one has ever seen God, hence these

28. Some have even suggested that Jesus himself spoke Greek. This is highly debatable, but what is beyond doubt is that influence of Hellenistic culture and language stretched even to such a closed community as Jewish nation.

christologies are based on what is, in the final analysis, simply a guess about what God is really like.

Modern christologies, however, start with the historical Jesus and then work up to a picture of God based upon their discoveries of what Jesus was like. These christologies are often called "low", "ascending" or "from below". They arose because of the advent of modern Biblical scholarship, and because of the gradual realisation that the language of the Chalcedonian compromise definition had become dated in the light of that Biblical scholarship and language. Thus began the famous "quest for the historical Jesus"²⁹.

In the eighteenth century, Herman S. Reimarus (d. 1798) was the first to suggest that the Gospels did not present a lucid and historical account of the life of Jesus, and that the historical Jesus had been hidden amid layers of superstition, dogma and faith. He therefore proposed that scholars should try to peel away those layers and arrive at a real historical account of Jesus' life. This caused a major christological crisis. As Dermot Lane states:

"A wedge was driven between the historical Jesus and the Christ of the gospels. A road block was set up on the traditional highway between Jesus and Christ or what is now called the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith."³⁰

29. See Dermot Lane, 1975, pp. 20-23, for a fuller account.

30. Lane, 1975, pp. 20-21.

The result of this was that a much more critical approach to Biblical studies was initiated, in an attempt to discover the real, historical Jesus. The historical Jesus emerged as much more human than had ever been dreamt, but there was a knock on effect to traditional christology. The Chalcedonian definition was seen to be inadequate in the light of these new studies, both in terms of language, and in terms of doing justice to the "newly discovered" humanity of Jesus. Traditional christologies from above seemed to down play Jesus' humanity and therefore a new christology was needed to address these issues; one that began with Jesus the man. In any case, it seemed logical to begin any line of argument with what is known, and progress from there to what is not known; hence, if we want to know what God is like, we should begin by looking at what Jesus is like and use what we learn there to "move upwards" and build up a picture of God in that way.

Modern christologies, "from below", are concerned with retaining the humanity of Jesus, which many believe has been obscured by ancient christologies. Because of this, their main aim is to explain how a man can become divine, and hence they stress the Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Jesus as opposed to the Incarnation. In Helmeniak's words:

"This is an Easter christology. In the resurrection, humanity and divinity achieve perfect union in Jesus Christ. The story

comes to its completion: the human Jesus is the divine Christ. Furthermore, the resurrection is saving for us. Through it, Jesus' humanity, shared with all of us, comes to divinity. The high point of human history is achieved."³¹

It seems then, that these contemporary christologies have a definite advantage over the ancient ones. They update the language of the Christ event. They fit our modern psychological and anthropological ideas of ourselves as human beings. They are based on historically real events rather than preconceived ideas about God. They help us to focus on the causes of the Crucifixion in terms of Jesus' actual teaching. And finally they bring Jesus closer to us in His humanity and in His saving act of resurrection.

What place then, has an ancient christology such as Origen's in contemporary theological thought? Why bother to study ancient christologies at all, other than as a way of demonstrating the superiority of the new ones? The answer lies in the fact that modern christologies suffer from a number of flaws. Firstly, many of them claim to work from below, rising from the humanity of Jesus to the divinity, but such an approach only works if you know where the divinity is. We could use the analogy of a dome to illustrate this; the ground on which the dome rests represents the humanity of Jesus, and the top of the dome, His divinity. Crawling along the inside of the dome, like an insect, we could imagine our modern

31. Helmeniak, 1986, p. 41.

christology³², leaving the ground and rising towards the divine. If we do not know in exactly what direction the very apex of the dome is, we may travel seemingly upwards, miss the top, and return to earth on the other side of the dome. In other words, ascending christologies need to know beforehand, *a priori* as it were, the location of the divinity in order to be able to "ascend" in the right direction; they presume the divine, so begging the question they are trying to resolve, and indeed, can be seen as high christologies in disguise (ironically, almost like a reverse "docetism").

Secondly, most christologies from below fail to get off the ground, such that we are left with Jesus as a great man, but not God (Ebionism):

"Humanity, even to the nth degree is not divinity and does not necessarily indicate divinity in humanity"³³

Thirdly, more radical forms of low christology suggest that Jesus Christ began as a human and *became* God. Somehow, the potential of human development is seen as limitless, perhaps due to our own contemporary scientific and evolutionary patterns of thought. Jesus is then, the ultimate human being, so much so that He evolves into the divine, allowing us to do likewise after He has been first to do this. But a closer examination of such a scheme requires that God be in process (ie.

32. What Dermot Lane describes as a "low-ascending christology". Lane, 1975, p. 18.

33. Helmeniak, 1986, p. 43.

Jurgen Moltmann), which is itself highly debatable, and can end only in Adoptionism at best, or Arianism at its worst, with shades of Panentheism and Pantheism in between.

Indeed, the advent of modern christology based on critical biblical study has led to what many believe to be a new age of Arianism, and the evidence for such a view is apparent to any who seek it. What is more it has escaped from the relative obscurity in everyday terms, of the theologians' tomes, and into the very heart and soul of our society which is our children, via the dubious quality of many schemes of Religious Education currently in use within our schools. For example, in the course of my career, as a teacher of Religious Education in Roman Catholic secondary schools, I am compelled to ask my pupils, who range from eleven to nineteen years of age, who they think Jesus is; and it always surprises me, and indeed concerns me, the high number of them who express views that can only be described as either Ebionite, Adoptionist or Arian. Modern christology has, in the way that it filters down to the young, fostered the idea that anything goes, as long as you think Jesus was a "nice" person; a view that in the end trivialises Jesus Christ and leads them to regard Christianity as irrelevant.

In conclusion, it can be seen that modern christologies fail to bridge the gap between the human and the divine, in much the same way that ancient

christologies fail to bridge the gap between the divine and the human. What is more, they stumble at almost exactly the same points, modern theologians arriving at essentially ancient heretical views from below, rather than above. In the end, the issue which, as Helmeniak rightly states, cannot be fudged³⁴, is that to be God means to be necessary, while being human means to be contingent. To echo St. Athanasius, you are either God or you are creature. There are no half measures.

Nevertheless, Christians believe that Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human, in the tradition of the Chalcedonian compromise formula. This basic tenet of faith still requires some sort of explanation, lest we are to emulate Wittgenstein and refuse to talk about what we cannot know. It is in the Christian tradition to constantly seek to explain the unexplainable, and while we may not succeed, it does us good to wrestle with the problems.

What appears to be required is a christology that bridges the human and the divine more convincingly than either the high or the low. It is here, where Origen's christology may be of use, and in order to show how this is the case, we will need to see where his christology fits into the high-low framework examined above.

There is no doubt that Origen's christology has, like most ancient christologies, been considered to be

34. Helmeniak, 1986, p. 45.

"from above" since it does contain most of what we would expect to find in such a christology. But it retains certain features which are at odds with those other high christologies. This will be examined presently.

Dealing first with the way in which his Christology conforms to a high model, we can observe Origen's starting point as one of belief and faith. We have seen previously in chapter 1 how his entire life was devoted to his firm and unflinching belief in God. We can also see that in formulating his christology, he begins with the Father, from above, eternally begetting the Son, who is therefore co-eternal with the Father³⁵. Whether or not we choose to believe that Origen is systematic or not, he nevertheless begins with a picture of Heaven, with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Creation then follows.

So far we have the beginnings of a high christology. But it is not Earth and the physical Universe which is created, but the first order of creatures, the pre-existent souls, the Angels³⁶. The division between divine and creature occurs in Heaven, rather than between Heaven and Earth. Earth is created as a result of the falling away of the pre-existent souls from around the Logos, so they have somewhere to go, rather than to oblivion. The Incarnation is explained by having the

35. *De Princ.* I, 1 deals with the Father, while the following I, 2, 2 outlines his doctrine of the eternal begetting of the Son from the Father.

36. *De Princ.* I, 7, 1 - 8, 2.

pre-existent soul of Jesus, the only soul not to fall away, joining with the Son³⁷, as we have seen in chapter 3 above. In this way, it is possible for the Son to enter into the material world by way of a mediator in the soul of Jesus:

"This soul then acting as a medium between God and the flesh (for it was not possible for the nature of God to mingle with a body apart from some medium), there is born, as we said, the God-man, the medium being that existence to whose nature it was not contrary to assume a body."³⁸

But Origen seems reluctant to say very much about the mechanism of the actual birth of Jesus from Mary's womb, suggesting that he is not altogether happy about the Incarnation. We have examined Origen's weakness on the Incarnation above, in chapter 3, where, in the end, we were forced to examine his views on the Resurrection and the Redemption in order to piece together his thought on the Incarnation³⁹. This is perhaps the first clue that Origen's christology does not fit neatly into the traditional framework of a christology from above. Origen has indeed moved the mystery of the Incarnation from the material, earthly realm, to the heavenly, explaining how the divine and the created could be joined, before even the material world exists. But in

37. *De Princ.* II, 6, 3. Origen goes on to use the famous analogy of the bar of iron entering the hot fire in II, 6, 6.

38. *De Princ.* II, 6, 3.

39. In Origen's short chapter on the Incarnation, he rather negatively asserts its incomprehensibility and mysteriousness. *De Princ.*, II, 6, 2.

doing so , he simply shifts the stage from the divine/human area, to the divine/creature area; the question of how Christ can be both divine and creature at the same time is essentially the same as the question of how He can be both divine and human at the same time. The setting has changed but the question remains. We can see how, whether we speak of the Earth and the Universe, or the first order of *created* beings, we are essentially talking about the same divide, the same, seemingly unbridgable gap: what is God and what is not.

If we accept this, then there is an element of a christology from below within Origen's thought. The pre-existent but *created* soul of Jesus chooses to remain fast and true to the *divine* Son, and it does so from a position of freedom, not compulsion; the soul of Jesus has to freely choose to join with the Son else there would be no real union, and more importantly, there would be no Incarnation! This idea can be seen to be remarkably similar to modern, low christologies.

What is more, while the initiative remains with the divine, in that the Son wishes to save his creatures, he can only do so if they want to be saved, if they are freely willing to give their lives, and the soul of Jesus is. The saving act then, becomes the death and Resurrection. Again we have what purports to be a modern christological point of view. Indeed, it is Origen's view of the resurrection in general, and his use of the

much misunderstood concept of the "form" or *eidos* to explain our continuity between the ethereal and the material, which shows us that whether we exist materially or ethereally, we are essentially in the same order of existence: that of finite, contingent and created beings. This then enables us to see the Incarnation in Heaven as containing elements of a christology from below.

More clearly, we can detect another element of a christology from below in considering, as Grillmeier and Gunton do⁴⁰, the movement in faith of the "true believer". In Gunton's words:

"The movement from above is a movement of thought from eternity to time in which the temporal particulars are firmly subordinated to the initial theological scheme. But corresponding to this movement and answering to it is the movement whereby the believer may ascend from what Origen clearly believes to be an inferior form of belief, that in Christ as crucified, to the more elevated belief in Christ as the Logos."⁴¹

Essentially, Origen puts forward a scheme of degrees of belief, or faith. Some believe only in the crucified Jesus, others believe in the Logos as a result of their philosophical inquiries, and so on. These different degrees or stages of belief became like a ladder which believers climb in their faith struggle, and hence they attain the next degree or step of faith as their belief deepens⁴². Now while Origen may have seen this as a

40. Grillmeier, 1975, pp. 143; Gunton, 1983, p. 38.

41. Gunton, 1983, p. 38.

42. See *C.Cels.* III, 62 for example. It is curious to contrast this idea with Antonio Gramsci's scheme of religion in society, where he puts forward the idea of

"ladder of belief", he is certainly not suggesting that the simpler faith is not faith, or is somehow not as important, much as we would be foolish to devalue the simple faith demonstrated in the wonderful and famous story about the French coal man, who simply sits in church and looks at God, and God looks at him.

We can then see that Origen's christology, while being generally from above, contains elements of those from below. It is also clear that the distinction between high and low christologies is not a straightforward and clear cut one; it is possible for christologies to fit into both camps, or between them. As Gunton concludes:

"...the example of Origen should make us cautious of an oversimple contrast between the two supposed methods, and between ancient and modern Christology."⁴³

There are, of course, major differences between his christology and modern low christologies in general. But there does indeed seem to be some connection between the modern approach and Origen's, as a short comparison with one of them will demonstrate.

As an example of a typical modern christology, we shall take James Mackey's. The reason for this choice is that his position straddles the spectrum of the different types of modern christology which we have already

three different levels of belief: a) the Religion of the Intellectuals, b) the Religion of the People and c) Folklore. See John Fulton's 1987 article in *Sociological Analysis*, 1987, for a fuller account of Gramsci's scheme. 43. Gunton, 1983, p. 39.

outlined above. It is certainly not the most radical of christologies, but just borders the extremes of Liberation Theology, while still attempting to keep faith with the more traditional models. It can therefore be representative of christologies below in its central approach.

In his book, *Jesus, the Man and the Myth*, Mackey begins with the notion that the historical Jesus bears little resemblance to the mythical Jesus, as St. Paul presents him in his letters. It is Paul who has reshaped Jesus into the kerygmatic myth that leads Christianity to consider the Incarnation as its central feature⁴⁴. Mackey attempts to uncover the historical Jesus and falls just short of attesting that the Resurrection did not happen:

"The resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament is not primarily an event like birth, baptism or biological death"⁴⁵

The myth of Jesus, he explains, grows over time and is finally established with the defeat of Arianism at Nicea in 325⁴⁶. He demonstrates considerable sympathy with Arius along the way, regretting that he was not reconciled to the Church because of his death⁴⁷. So far we find nothing that coincides with Origen, and some would add nor with Christianity.

44. Mackey, 1979, pp. 173-194.

45. Mackey, 1979, p. 119.

46. Mackey, 1979, pp. 210-240.

47. Mackey, 1979, p. 227.

What makes Jesus special is his relationship with God. His basic humanity opens the door to the Father, in that the disciples met God through the man, but only met the man⁴⁸. This rather confusing view is based on John 1:18 - "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known", 14:9 - "He who has seen me has seen the Father", and 19:5 - "Here is the man". Mackey appears to be arriving at some sort of mediating Christ, but only on a human level. Whatever else we may think of Mackey's christology, here, at last, there is some sort of similarity with Origen's idea of the Son as image of the Father and of the Christ as mediator. In a similar way, Origen's christology also centres on the relationship between the Father and the Son.

It is a pity that Mackey's christology leads him, in the end, to the brink of heresy, if not actually over it; if Mackey is right, then we are worshipping a man. Granted that he is a special man with the only direct "hotline" to God, but he is still only a man, and to worship him the way the ancient church did would simply be idolatrous. We could then worship anyone who had a particularly close relationship to God!

It is also a pity that Mackey has discarded all ancient christology, else he would have noticed the similarities between Origen's thought and his own. In

48. Mackey, 1979, p. 233.

the one place where he does mention him, he shows that his knowledge of his Christology is a fleeting one, by using him to back up Arius' position at Nicea; we have already seen how that is a gross oversimplification.

But there does appear to be some mileage in trying to match up pairs of complementary ancient and modern christologies, so that the lower christology can jump the gap from man to God, and the higher christology is forced to take Christ's humanity seriously. This is why many more comparisons between individual ancient and modern christologies must be carried out, and this is precisely what the late Fr. James Lyons was attempting to do in his posthumously published book *The Cosmic Christ in Origen and Teilhard de Chardin*. We shall examine some of its content presently.

Lyons' book first deals with the history of the term, "Cosmic-Christ", tracing its beginnings back to Germany in the early nineteenth century, and looking at the development of its meaning up until Teilhard de Chardin. Teilhard appears to have formulated his idea of a Cosmic-Christ in order to reconcile christology to the scientific world. The advances in Astronomy in particular seem to have prompted questions about the uniqueness of the Christ event given the fact that life may well exist in other star systems and galaxies. Teilhard suggests therefore a Cosmic-Christ, who is intermediary between the realm of the transcendent God,

and the whole of the Universe. Certainly, this would place christology in the centre of a process of evolution that may well be occurring elsewhere in the Universe. It forces christology to take into account the whole of creation, and not just the planet Earth⁴⁹. He sees the Universe unfolding and developing towards a final, transcendent aim which he calls Omega⁵⁰, and with which Christ must be involved if he is to be the Alpha and the Omega. For Teilhard, Christ's cosmic nature is involved in sustaining the Universe, as well as being party to its creation, and being present inside of it in terms of His humanity.

Teilhard moves to a "triple distinction of the nature of Christ"⁵¹, such that the historical Christ and the Cosmic Christ (Christ as Omega) can be reconciled with the divinity of Christ. He did this in order to ensure that while he had room to develop his christology along evolutionary and developmental lines, he could remain true to the past as well. As Lyons states:

"But with the aid of this triple distinction he was able to make what he regarded as a necessary move in Christology, without neglecting the insights of its classical position confirmed at Nicea and Chalcedon"⁵²

Teilhard then remains open to the ideas that he finds in the Fathers of the Church, and in particular, Origen, with whom he shares this Cosmic-Christ concept.

49. Lyons, 1982, pp, 69-73.

50. See Lyons, 1982, pp. 205-210.

51. Lyons, p. 71.

52. Lyons, 1982, p. 71.

There are subtle differences between the two men's respective concepts of a Cosmic-Christ, the main one being that while Teilhard has come to his viewpoint from below, from a recognition of the evolutionary nature of the Universe to some as yet undefined role, Origen has arrived at the idea of a mediating Cosmic-Christ from above, from an idea of efficient causality⁵³. However, the two concepts together produce, to my mind, a tension which approaches the position of Christ in the Cosmos both from his humanity and from his divinity, and which might be very close to the ideal christology which takes both the high and low wings of christology into account without each one threatening the other. Lyons study shows that there is a need for further research into matching up ancient high christologies with modern low ones.

Curiously, a final issue is raised by the very fact that although Teilhard's concept of the Cosmic-Christ appears not to have been arrived at from above, it cannot really be said to have evolved from the historical Jesus alone; it does still rely on some form of pre-existent Christ (whether you call it Logos or not, in the traditional sense). So again, we return to the thorny and allegedly heretical doctrine of the pre-existence. This doctrine of the pre-existence returns time and time

53. Lyons, 1982, pp. 211-213.

again in any discussion of Origen's christology, and therefore deserves a closer inspection.

So far we have seen how Origen uses the idea of the pre-existent soul of Jesus in order to explain the mechanics of the Incarnation before it actually happens in the earthly realm⁵⁴. As we have also seen, this in turn forces him to employ a doctrine of the pre-existence of all the souls, else Jesus' soul would be more than human, and there would be no humanity in Christ, with all the implications that that carries⁵⁵.

Further, Origen adds that these souls, although created, have in a sense always existed, else God could not be called all powerful if he has nothing to be powerful over⁵⁶. To put it simply, God has always created.

It is also clear that although there are similarities between this doctrine, and the Platonic scheme of things, Origen did not get it from Platonism directly, but via Philo, and more importantly from Scripture⁵⁷. However, the doctrine was condemned as heretical in the sixth century, after having been raised as objectionable by Epiphanius, back in the fourth

54. Note that it has happened in the created, contingent world which is the first order of creation, which is precisely the realm of all the pre-existent souls.

55. Origen is in fact guarding against the erosion of the humanity of Christ, much like the modern christologies claim to do, but without undermining his divinity.

56. *De Princ.* I, 2, 10 coupled with I, 4, 5.

57. Bostock, 1987, pp. 257-263. See also chapter 4, pp. 122-124 above.

century. But is this condemnation merited? Should we not reconsider it if it helps up to bridge the gap between the divine and the human? I believe the answer to these questions must be yes, even at the risk of attracting criticism. Certainly, if Mackey can be sympathetic towards Arius, then the matter of resurrecting an ancient condemned doctrine and using it to inform our christology can be performed in relative safety.

But how can Origen's doctrine of the pre-existence of souls enable us to find a link between high and low christological positions? Bostock states the problem thus:

"Most modern theology, concerned as it is to maintain the parameters of a reductionist rationalism, has insisted that the pre-existence of the soul is simply a poetic description of personal significance. This viewpoint however has impaled modern theology on the horns of a dilemma. Either it rejects the clear Biblical evidence for the pre-existence of Christ, and reduces this to mere metaphor. Or it accepts that Christ was a pre-existent heavenly being, who was apparently sui generis. But in that case his humanity is in serious doubt, while the defence of his divinity will lead almost inevitably to a form of Apollinarianism. And so the horns of the dilemma remain: either the Biblical evidence is rejected, or the humanity of Christ is undermined. The end result, as has been said, is that the Chalcedonian definition dies the death of a thousand qualifications."⁵⁸

But is Bostock right? Is there no way to solve the dilemma? If we accept the doctrine of the pre-existence

58. Bostock, 1987, p. 259.

of all the souls, then there may be a solution. This concept effectively moves the christological action in terms of the Incarnation from the earthly to the heavenly, but it takes with it all of humanity too! As I stated previously in this chapter, if you can see that the first order of creation is essentially equivalent to the earthly realm of existence, then what is being said is that the attributes which make us human are the same as those which make us creatures in the first place. God does not change position; he is still necessary. But we, whether in the form of pre-existent souls, or bodily humans are still creatures and therefore contingent. It follows then that the difference in "height", for want of a better word, between the realm of the created pre-existent souls, and the realm of the material earthly created humans, is just a matter of degree, rather than nature. From God's point of view, there will be a minimal amount of difference between them if we consider how large the gap between God and creature is. The two levels of created existence are therefore veritably interchangeable.

If this is the case, then we could consider the soul of the pre-existent Jesus to be identical with the human, historical Jesus as he was seen by his human contemporaries. The historical Jesus then, joins with the Logos as a result of his freely choosing to do so, full stop. Once the two become one, and here we could

again refer to Origen's analogy of the iron entering the furnace⁵⁹, we have the Incarnation. The difference is that this time, we are able to consider this event from below as well. The historical Jesus could be said to be that man who, as a result of his evolutionary development, and as a result of, more than anything else, the cross, is able to reach into and become joined to God, opening the way for us to follow if we can do the same. It is the cross which is the culmination of this development, and finally determines this, representing the ultimate death to one's self for the historical Jesus; the ultimate self sacrifice, the ultimate turning towards God, and the ultimate obedience and loyalty to God's will, in the same way that the pre-existent soul of Jesus must become incarnate and deny itself the comfort of existing in a higher realm, even to the indignity and pain of having to descend to Hell. In both cases, the decision is made due to free will, and due to a willingness to give all in order to follow God's plan.

We have then arrived at an explanation of the Incarnation from below, via the Crucifixion, and in agreement with Origen's christology.

We could be criticized on a number of points though, so each will need to be addressed. Firstly, if the two realms are interchangeable, then why do we need the first one at all? We could do away with the first order of

59. De Princ. II, 6, 6.

creation altogether. We would not need to have souls, our humanity would be enough. But this would mean that we would not all start off as equals, the cards being stacked heavily against those who are the most defenceless in the world, like the handicapped, or the unborn aborted babies, having no real chance to choose freely to die to themselves. The answer must therefore be no, we cannot do away with the realm of the pre-existent souls, and it is important to realize that it is because of this that Origen argues for that pre-existence in the first place⁶⁰. In this case then, the two levels are not interchangeable, so our christology seems to fail.

Secondly, it could be argued that we have to accept an ontological concept from above, in the form of the doctrine of pre-existence, in order then to proceed from below. Surely then, our so called christology from below presupposes the one from above first, and if this is the case, then our Origen-based christology must fail to achieve its goal. In reply, we could employ the following argument from experience, or from non-experience as the case may turn out to be.

Let us think back to a time when we did not exist. This is not an easy task as we were not here to remember what happened. We have two choices: we can look at historical evidence and find out about that time when we

60. *De Princ.* I, 8, 1.

did not exist, but this is not the point of the exercise; or we can try to imagine a time before we were born personally. This is what is required. However, we still cannot remember anything. Either we existed and cannot remember or we did not exist at all. The first answer could be explained by means of all manner of reincarnation theories, but we would be unlikely to take them too seriously. The second however, is impossible to conceive; we cannot remember a time when we were not, and we cannot conceive of one either. As far as we are concerned we have always existed. Perhaps we have always existed. Perhaps we have always existed, even if it is just as a potential existence in the mind of God. Perhaps we pre-existed. Now while this argument does not prove that the pre-existence is real⁶¹, it does demonstrate that the concept of a pre-existence is not necessarily incompatible with our own human experience.

However, whether this christology stands or falls, we can clearly see that the doctrine of the pre-existence is not only one of the most important parts of Origen's christology, but that it also has much to offer as a theological concept, despite its condemnation. Certainly it is worthy of further investigation in the future.

In conclusion then, we have briefly examined some of the ideas raised by modern scholarship concerning

61. We could add "Perhaps we didn't exist but are too self centred and full of our own self importance to consider it seriously".

Origen's christology. As a result we have seen how the study of Origen has gained in popularity in recent years, and how it is beginning to be considered both orthodox and relevant today.

We have also attempted to place his christological ideas back into the limelight as far as modern christology is concerned, and we find that while there are problems with adapting it to contemporary christology, Origen does not compare that unfavourably with many other christologies that claim to have made a step forward in this field.

Having completed our examination of Origen's modern legacy as far as is possible in this work, we shall now move to evaluate his christology in the light of what we have learned in the course of this study.

CONCLUSION.

In summing up this study it will be useful to examine the limited nature of the work carried out. In short, we shall look at what it does not do, before we look at what has been achieved.

It was hoped to compare Origen's christology with some of the more radical Liberation christologies, such as that of Jon Sobrino. However it has become apparent as this study has progressed, that such a comparison would bear little fruit as it is difficult to find much common ground that could be used as a starting point. Origen's christology contains little that the Liberation theologians would consider relevant. Firstly there is no real political element to his christology as there is in Liberation Theology. This in itself is hardly surprising given Origen's ascetic life style and endurance of suffering.

Secondly there appears to be little appreciation of the struggle of the poor in a sense that it does not inspire them to direct action, as has been the case with Liberation Theology. Yes, there is suffering and oppression, but it is a suffering to be endured and rejoiced over, and not fought back against, as can be seen from Origen's view of martyrdom¹. This would be unacceptable to the Liberation theologians.

1. In chapter 1, pp. 13-14, above, we saw how Origen was attracted to martyrdom, like many Christians of his time.

There is obviously no Marxist slant to Origen's thought; his solutions to the injustices in the world lie in the doctrine of pre-existence, and hence the "reward in Heaven" idea that Marx hated because it helped to legitimate the oppression of the poor.

Origen's christology cannot really see Jesus in the mould of revolutionary political leader, striving to better the lot of the poor. Nor does he see any need to do so as the salvation Christ is offering is not earthly but heavenly, given the transient nature of peoples' stay on the Earth.

These observations do not mean that such a comparison will not be possible in the future, but it falls beyond the scope of this study. Therefore we shall move on now to the more positive conclusions that have arisen in the course of this study.

In chapter one we placed Origen within the historical context of his own life and times, which enabled us to interpret parts of his christology as products of his own particular historical concerns throughout the thesis. It has helped to make sense of some of the more difficult aspects of his thought, and explained them as pre-occupations of his own time and situation. As an example, the fact that Origen tends to contradict himself in many places can only be explained if we realise the conditions under which he uttered many of these contradictions: those conditions included his

method of teaching, the fact that many of his "writings" were in fact reported by his stenographers in the most unlikely situations, and that most of his sermons were given without any prior knowledge of which texts were to be expounded on, and indeed from memory.

We also came across the current debate between the two schools of thought on Origen's work; those who see his theology as a system, and those who see his theology as an intellectual and spiritual exercise (*gymnasíkos*). This too has permeated the entire thesis.

In chapter two, then, we examined the corpus of his written legacy, and what remains of the original works. We discovered the difficulties of trying to piece together his thought from only a partial perspective of his whole work. We also came across a particular problem which may cause difficulties for the English speaking student like myself, and that is the lack of recent, critical translations of all of Origen's work. I would suggest that what is needed is a complete edition of all of Origen's surviving work in English, and incorporating the latest critical discoveries. To my knowledge, there is no such work, and unless one is currently being undertaken, or has been produced very recently, it is a need which needs to be met. This is particularly true if, as we concluded earlier should happen, Origen's work is to reach a wider public.

Certainly the fact that much of the French scholarship has been translated into English is a welcome development, but much scholarship remains available only in German which I have not been able to make much use of except through the help of German friends, and particularly in Spanish, which while I am able to understand fully, I have not always been able to obtain in this country. It is hoped that the continuing trend to translate important books on Origen also extends to monographs and articles.

In chapter three we undertook to identify the constituting elements in Origen's christology, and assess each one in turn. We were then able to identify the main thrust of his christology.

God the Father eternally begets the Son, for whom there are a series of *epinoia* or titles. The exact relationship between the father and Son remains problematic for Origen, and contains elements of subordinationism. The Holy Spirit, while also being God and also being begotten in a sense, appears further subordinated. This subordination however is held in tension with the unity and equality of the Trinity, such that it is only an apparent subordination, and effectively one of the economy of the Trinity, as opposed to its ontology. It is the Father who creates, through the Son (who will act as mediator), the first order of rational beings, the pre-existent souls. They are

created with free will and this leads to their fall, which results in the creation of the Universe and especially the earth and Hell, as places where the fallen can exist in material bodies. The pre-existent soul of Jesus then joins permanently with the Son so that the pre-existent Christ is then able to become incarnate. The death and Resurrection of Christ is the saving act which enables the fallen souls, now embodied, to find a path back to God. Equally though, they continue to have free will and may fall further into Hell. Christ's redeeming act in the Passion enables the souls to have a pathway to the divine, so that Christ is now the mediator between the divine realm and the created realm; this gives Christ a cosmic dimension, which we examine later in chapter five. The *epinoia* were then examined briefly, and it was discovered that they are central to the Son's identity and begetting.

In the course of this chapter, objections and criticisms to his christology are raised and addressed, and the tensions between the "systematic" and the "speculative" become clear. It becomes apparent that his christology is bound up with other elements of his theology, so that they appear to form a system. But the difficulty in summing up his christology neatly is apparent even from trying to write the previous paragraph.

It is not so much that Origen's theology does not form some sort of "system" or scheme, but that it is not a fully coherent scheme, in that it has not been arrived at in a "Systematic" way. This is why his christology can often appear to be confused. It is fairly clear then, that the only way to make sense of it is if it is not considered systematic, in the way that Crouzel has suggested throughout his long scholarship.

The final important point to be raised in this chapter is the position of Origen as regards his subordinationism. Again, it depends on what we consider to be subordinate, and the argument that the subordination is really to do with the economic roles of the Trinity, rather than an ontological one, seems to make good sense. It does however raise the problem of Origen's orthodoxy, and it is in chapter four that the ancient controversies surrounding Origen are examined.

In the fourth chapter, a historical overview of the controversies and accusations that faced Origen's thought is undertaken, and the role in these of his christology is emphasized. The conclusion we reach from this overview is that Origen has been unfairly treated over the centuries, especially as regards his christology, and for reasons beyond his control because he is already dead and because certain later historical events such as the Arian conflict substantially changed the christological goalposts. Nobody would dream of judging and condemning,

say, Pope Pius V who was Pope during the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, because he would not have agreed to the content of the Second Vatican Council. Yet this is what happened to Origen.

It would be fair here, to raise the peripheral question of Origen's salvation. In the traditional framework of, for example, the Roman Catholic Church, the only real obstacle to stating this would be his condemnation at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, but we have examined evidence to show that the anathemata allegedly presented there formed no part of the minutes of the Council, and that the whole inclusion of them as part of the Council's decrees is somewhat suspect². Should Origen then be made a Saint? Should there be a campaign to have him beatified? It is doubtful whether such an event would ever be considered, but it has indeed become "more reasonable to believe that Origen was saved than it is to believe that he was damned"³.

In the final chapter we dealt with Origen's christology in the present time, covering the direction of Origen scholarship, and the relevance of his christology today. We find that Origen at last is beginning to get the acknowledgement that he rightfully deserved, and that was denied him through no real fault of his own.

2. See Chapter 4, p. 104, n.17, above.

3. John Pico, quoted by Trigg, 1983, p. 255.

As for his relevance today, our comparison of his thought with some modern christologies revealed that Origen may well have much to offer still, while it was acknowledged that that contribution is necessarily limited.

Moving on to areas for further study, we concluded that the way forward might be by a series of dialectic ancient to modern christological comparisons, so that a synthesis christology may emerge that fulfills the criteria of both those who see the need for approaching Christ from above, and those who prefer to approach Him from below. Origen's christology represents a good candidate to represent the ancients. This was evidenced both by the excellent comparison that Lyons produced of Origen and Teilhard de Chardin. On that point, the concept of the Cosmic-Christ in Origen deserves further investigation. The same must be true of the doctrine of Pre-existence, but with that concept much work has already been done.

The study of Origen's christology, and especially the comparison of it to modern christological concepts, does raise the issue of the nature of christology in the first place. Christology has not only changed from the high to the low, but it has also, as a result of becoming low, attached soteriology to itself, in the concentration on the Passion of Jesus, which modern christologies from below invariably do. When we compare ancient

christologies to modern ones we must be able to take this into account. So what is christology?, what should its aim be? If it is to prove that Jesus is God, then how can we have faith if we have proof? If it is to prove how God became Man, how can we ever take Jesus' humanity seriously? At both ends of the christological spectrum we fall short of proof. A christology that claims to prove something will almost certainly be suspect in that the tension between God and man will be missing; there will be no mystery, no faith, no wonder, in this christology. Perhaps christology ought to be considered as merely a tool by which one can approach Jesus Christ personally, whether it be from above or below.

A final simple observation, which is strictly speaking not in the context of this study, but which is worth considering is the remarkable accord between modern science and Origen. Throughout this thesis we have had occasion to compare Origen's allegedly outmoded ideas to those of the world of science, and we have seen that those outmoded ideas contained a spark of truth to them. Here are a few examples. Origen's ideas on how the body can be resurrected, using the idea of the changing material substrata but the same form, fits remarkably well with what science is beginning to show about the way matter filters through the body. Likewise, the idea that stars and planets might be living beings sounds almost ridiculous. We are about to remark on how backward the

Alexandrian is in his scientific knowledge, when along comes science again and begins to say similar things about stars and planets; for example the "Gaia" theory. As a further area of study and research, it would be interesting to make a comparison between modern science and the nature of things as explained by Origen.

To sum up then, in order to explain Origen's christology we must consider its historical and cultural setting in the church of the third century. To remove all historical context from it will not do it justice. Sadly, over time, this is precisely what has happened to it, as many of the criticisms leveled at it were due to the misunderstandings of later detractors, caused by not taking into account the historical, linguistic context of it. If we are going to reclaim it and make it relevant today, we must be prepared to do a certain amount of investigation, explanation and "translation", so that it becomes intelligible to the modern mind. This is what modern scholarship has demonstrated in recent years, and what it has been the aim of this thesis to demonstrate also.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) Alcaín, J-A. 1973, *Cautiverio y Redención del Hombre en Orígenes*. Universidad de Deusto - Mensajero, Bilbao, Spain.
- 2) Bardy, G., 1923, *Recherches sur l'histoire du texte et des versions latines du De Principiis d'Origène*, Champion, Paris.
- 3) Bettenson, H., 1956, *The Early Christian Fathers*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- 4) Bostock, G., 1987, "The Sources of Origen's Doctrine of Pre-existence", in *Origeniana Quarta*, Insbrucker Theologische Studien, Vol. 19, Tyrolia-Verlag Innsbruck, Vienna.
- 5) Chadwick, H., 1967, *The Early Church*, Pelican History of the Church No. 1, Penguin, Harmondsworth, Middlesex.
- 6) Chadwick, H. and Oulton, J. E. L., 1954, *Alexandrian Christianity*, Library of Christian Classics, Vol. II, SCM Press Ltd., London.
- 7) Comblin, J., 1979, *Jesus of Nazareth Meditations on his Humanity*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin.
- 8) Crouzel, H., 1976, "Les Personnes de la Trinité sont-elles de puissance inégales selon Origène, Peri Archon 1, 3, 5-8?", in *Gregorianum*, Vol. 57, pp. 109-125, Rome.
- 9) _____, 1988, "The Literature on Origen, 1970-1988", in *Theological Studies* 49(s), 1988, pp 499-516.

- 10) _____, 1989, (Orig. French 1985)
Origen, T. & T. Clark,
Edinburgh.
- 11) Daniélou, J., 1955, (Orig. French 1955)
Origen, Sheed and Ward,
London.
- 12) De Faye, E., 1928, *Origène: sa vie, son
oeuvre, sa pensée*,
Vol. 3, *La Doctrine*,
Ernest Leroux, Paris
- 13) De Lubac, H., 1950, *Histoire et Esprit:
L'intelligence de
l'Écriture d'après
Origène*, Aubier, Paris.
- 14) _____, 1959, *Exégèse Médiévale*,
Part One/I, Paris.
- 15) Dechow, J. F., 1987(a), "The heresy charges
against Origen", in
Origeniana Quarta,
Innsbrucker Theologische
Studien, Vol. 19, Tyrolia-
Verlag Innsbruck, Vienna
- 16) _____, 1987(b), "Origen's 'Heresy':
From Eustathius to
Epiphanius", in *Origeniana
Quarta*, Innsbrucker
Theologische Studien,
Vol. 19, Tyrolia-Verlag
Innsbruck, Vienna.
- 17) Dörries, H. 1956, *De Spiritu Sancto. Der
Beitrag des Basilus zum
Abschluß des
trinitarischen Dogmas*,
Göttingen, Germany.
- 18) EUSEBIUS 1932, *The Ecclesiastical
History*, Vol. II (Greek
and English) The Loeb
Classical Library,
William Heinemann,
London. (Translated by
J.E.L. Oulton)

- 19) Fortman, E.J., 1972, *The Triune God. A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity.* Hutchinson of London & Westminster of Philadelphia.
- 20) Frend, W.H.C., 1965, *The Early Church* Hodder and Stoghton, London.
- 21) Fulton, J., 1987, "Religion as Politics in Gramsci: an introduction" in *Sociological Analysis*, London.
- 22) Gallagher, E. V., 1982, *Divine Man or Magician? Celsus and Origen on Jesus*, Society of Biblical Literature, No.64, Scholars Press, Chicago. (Orig. Ph.D. Thesis, 1980, University of Chicago).
- 23) Grillmeier, A., 1975, (Orig. German 1964) *Christ in Christian Tradition, Vol.I. From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, Mowbrays, London and Oxford. (Second revised edition, translated by J. Bowden).
- 24) Gunton, C.E., 1983, *Yesterday and Today, A Study of Continuities in Christology*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London (American Edition).
- 25) Hanson, R.P.C., 1962, *Tradition in the Early Church*, SCM Press, London.
- 26) _____, 1972, "Did Origen apply the word Homoousios to the Son?", in *Epektasis*, (Melanges Jean Danielou). Paris, pp. 293-303.

- 27) _____, 1987, "The Influence of Origen on the Arian Heresy", in *Origeniana Quarta*, Innsbrucker Theologische Studien, Vol.19, Tyrolia-Verlag Innsbruck Vienna.
- 28) Helmeniak, D. A., 1986, *The Same Jesus*, New York.
- 29) Kannengiesser, C., 1982, *Holy Scripture and Hermeneutics in Alexandrian Christology*, Berkley (editor)
- 30) Kelly, J.N.D., 1972, *Early Christian Creeds*, Longman, Harlow, Essex. Third Edition.
- 31) _____, 1975, *Jerome*, Harper & Row, New York.
- 32) _____, 1977, *Early Christian Doctrines*, Adam & Charles Black, London., Fifth Edition.
- 33) Lane, D., 1975, *The Reality of Jesus*, Veritas, Dublin.
- 34) Llorca, B. ,1960, *Historia de la Iglesia Católica, Tomo I, Edad Antigua*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid. Third Edition.
- 35) Logan, A.H.B., 1987, "Origen and the Development of Trinitarian Theology", in *Origeniana Quarta*, Innsbrucker Theologische Studien, Vol.19, Tyrolia-Verlag Innsbruck Vienna.
- 36) Lyons, J.A., 1982, *The Cosmic Christ in Origen and Teilhard de Chardin, A Comparative Study*. Oxford Theological Monographs, Oxford. University Press, Oxford.

- 37) Mackey, J. P., 1979, *Jesus the Man and the Myth: A Contemporary Christology*, SCM Press, London.
- 38) Marcus, W., 1963, *Der Subordinatianismus als historisches Phänomenen*, Munich.
- 39) McGuckin, J. A., 1987, "The Changing Forms of Jesus", in *Origeniana Quarta*, Innsbrucker Theologische Studien, Vol.19, Tyrolia-Verlag Innsbruck Vienna.
- 40) McClelland, J. C., 1967, "The Alexandrian Quest of the Non-Historical Christ", in *Church History*, Vol.37, pp.355-364. Chicago
- 41) Nautin, P., 1977, *Origène, Tome 1, Sa vie et son oeuvre*, Beauchesne, Paris.
- 42) ORIGEN, 1920, *Gregory Thaumaturgus Address to Origen*, Translations of Christian Literature Series I - Greek Texts. S.P.C.K., London. (Translated by W. Metcalfe, originally published as *Origen the Teacher*, 1907).
- 43) ORIGEN, 1929, *Selections from the Commentaries and Homilies of Origen*, Translations of Christian Literature Series I - Greek Texts. S.P.C.K., London. (Translated by R. B. Tollington)
- 44) ORIGEN, 1936, *Origen On First Principles*, (Koetschau, s text of *De Principiis*, translated into English, with notes by G. W. Butterworth), S.P.C.K., London.

- 45)ORIGEN, 1953, *Origen: Contra Celsum*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. (Translated by H. Chadwick).
- 46)ORIGEN, 1954, *Origen's Treatise on Prayer*, (Translation and notes by E. G. Jay), S.P.C.K., London.
- 47)ORIGEN, 1979, *Origen*, (Selection of Origen's writings), The Classics of Western Spirituality' Series, S.P.C.K., London. (Translated by Rowan A. Greer)
- 48)Patterson, L.G., 1982(a), "Methodius, Origen, and the Arian dispute", in *Studia Patristica* Vol.XVII, Part Two. (Edited by E. A. Livingstone), pp.912-923. Pergamon Press, Oxford.
- 49) _____, 1982(b), "Origen: His place in Early Greek Christian Theology", in *Studia Patristica* Vol.XVII, Part Two. (Edited by E. A. Livingstone), pp.912-923. Pergamon Press, Oxford.
- 50)Pollard, T.F., 1958, "The Origins of Arianism", in *JTS* 9 (NS) 1.
- 51)Prestige, G.L., 1936, *God in Patristic thought*, S.P.C.K., London.
- 52) _____, 1940, *Fathers and Heretics*, Bampton Lectures 1940, S.P.C.K., London.

- 53) Quasten, J., 1953, *Patrology, Vol. II, The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus*, Spectrum, Utrecht, Antwerp, Holland.
- 54) Rahner, K. 1959, *Écrits théologiques, Volume I*, Paris
- 55) Rowe, J. N., 1987, *Origen's doctrine of Subordination: A Study in Origen's Christology*, Peter Lang, Bern, Switzerland.
- 56) Sellers, R.V., 1940, *Two Ancient Christologies. A Study in the Christological Thought of the Schools of Alexandria and Antioch in the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, S.P.C.K., London.
- 57) Tripolitis, A., 1985, *Origen, A critical Reading*, American University Studies - Series VII, Theology and Religion Vol 8, Peter Lang, Bern, Switzerland.
- 58) Trigg, J. W., 1981, "A Decade of Origen Studies", in *Religious Studies Review*, Vol.7, No.1. January 1981. pp.21-27.
- 59) _____, 1985, *Origen. The Bible and Philosophy in the Third Century Church*, S.C.M., London. (Orig. U.S. 1983 John Knox Press, Atlanta).
- 60) Vatican II 1965, *Lumen Gentium. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Ecumenical Council*, (De Ecclesia), CTS, London.

- 61) _____, 1966, *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (De Ecclesiae Habitude ad Religiones Non-Christianas)*, CTS, London.
- 62) Vatican Library
The Roman
Catholic Church 1994, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (English Translation for the United Kingdom), Geoffrey Chapman, London.
- 63) Wintersig, A., 1932, *Die Heilsbedeutung der Menschheit Jesus in der Vornizanischen Theologie*, Tübingen, Germany.

