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Preface

This book was originally a doctoral dissertation that was completed in 2018 at Durham University. Originally, it included an appendix chapter that did not fit perfectly into the flow of the dissertation. That section was published as a separate article in 2020, entitled “Origen and ‘Angelomorphic Pneumatology’” with *Vigiliae Christianae*. It has not been included in this book.

There are many people to thank for the existence of this book. First, I would like to thank the Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte team at Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht for their helpfulness and assistance. I am particularly indebted to Professor Volker Drecoll for his friendship and for helping me to actually get this book published.

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Finally, I dedicate this book to my family, especially my parents, who have been supportive every step of the way.

SDG.

August, 2022

Justin J. Lee

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Abbreviations

ACT	Ancient Christian Texts
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
CA	Christianisme Antique
CWS	The Classics of Western Spirituality
FOTC	Fathers of the Church
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	Liddell-Scott-Jones (A Greek-English Lexicon)
NPNF	Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies
OECT	Oxford Early Christian Texts
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PGL	Patristic Greek Lexicon
PL	Patrologia Latina
PPS	Popular Patristics Series
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
StPatr	Studia Patristica
VC	Vigiliae Christianae

Introduction

In the history of the church, few figures have attracted as much controversy or have been as misunderstood as Origen of Alexandria. Whether at the turn of the fourth century, highlighted in the literary skirmishes between Rufinus and Jerome, or in the sixth century with Origen's actual condemnation, readers of Origen have differed significantly in their assessments of the Alexandrian master's writings.¹ Origen has been portrayed throughout history in caricatures rightly termed Origenisms, often based on misinterpretations or exaggerations of certain aspects of his creative theologizing.² But few, if any, can deny Origen's importance to the development of Christian theology. As one scholar has noted, Origen is one of two theologians whose theological vision has shaped the entirety of the Christian tradition, the other being the apostle Paul.³ Origen stands as one of the first and greatest creative minds in the early church, an innovator with a knack for bringing together diverse systems of thought to construct his theological vision.⁴

While the events of Origen's life are undoubtedly significant, his unique and various afterlives are also important to understanding his theology and his legacy.⁵

1 See Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). For the sixth century see Richard Price, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553: With Related Texts on the Three Chapters Controversy* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), Daniël Hombergen, *The Second Origenist Controversy: A New Perspective on Cyril of Scythopolis' Monastic Biographies as Historical Sources for Sixth-Century Origenism* (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 2001). See also Dirk Krausmüller, 'Origenism and Anti-Origenism in the Late Sixth and Seventh Centuries', in *Evagrius and his Legacy*, ed. J. Kalvesmaki and R. D. Young (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 288–316; Brian Daley, 'The Origenism of Leontius of Byzantium', *JTS* 27 (1976), 333–369.

2 For a brief summary, see E. M. Harding, 'Origenist Crises', in *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. John Anthony McGuckin (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 162–67. See also various articles in *Origeniana Undecima: Origen and Origenism in the History of Western Thought*, ed. Anders-Christian Jacobsen (Leuven: Peeters, 2016).

3 Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 8–9.

4 Henri Crouzel, *Origen* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 163–69) has called Origen's theology a "research theology". Origen shows freedom to explore in areas in which the apostles are unclear or silent. It also means that he does not always seek to provide balanced, clear explanations for the theologizing he does. Rebecca Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 5, notes: "Like other thinkers of Late Antiquity, Christians revised traditional cosmological forms to address contemporary problems regarding divine action and human life. Thus, cosmology was not static; its very structure reflected theological creativity and deep religious concerns."

5 A standard work is still Pierre Nautin, *Origène: Sa vie son oeuvre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977). For an ancient account, see Eusebius, *h.e.* 6.1–39. Significant also are various apologies written for Origen, first that of Pamphilus (or Eusebius) in the early 4th century and that written by Rufinus in the later fourth century.

There is no better example of Origen's importance than the profound impact he had on the various theological debates of the fourth century. Scholarship is in general agreement on the centrality of Origen's thought in influencing the Arian controversy, on Pro-Nicenes and Arians alike.⁶ For example, his teachings on both the eternal generation and subordination of the Son, drawn from his Christological readings of passages like Ps 2.7 and Prov 8.22 respectively, were significant for both sides of the debate.⁷ Though calling Origen the "father of Arianism" may be a bit harsh, his impact on theological concepts like Trinitarian personal distinctions and divine unity is hard to ignore.⁸ It is also important to note that champions of Pro-Nicene theology like Athanasius of Alexandria and the Cappadocians did not view Origen's theology as unorthodox, but instead praised him for his brilliant theological formulations.⁹ In their youth, Pro-Nicenes Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus famously collected the writings of Origen into the *Philocalia* out of great respect for the Alexandrian master.¹⁰

In the 390s, however, Origen became a lightning rod of controversy. The later fourth century Origenist controversy began with Origenist monks and theological issues that were attributed to Origen. But it is important to note that the theology in question (especially the issue of anthropomorphism) was more of an Origenism of this period, influenced heavily by the thinking of Evagrius of Pontus,¹¹ and that much of the conflict was political in nature.¹² The ensuing conflict, highlighted in the literary debates between former friends Rufinus of Aquileia and Jerome of Stridon, the latter Origen fan turned enemy, may be characterized as an ancient PR war; both sides were concerned with promoting their own view of Origen as the correct one. What was not at debate, however, is Origen's importance: he is either the father of orthodoxy or the arch-heretic.

In the sixth century controversy, we see some repeating themes: political debates and issues with Origenism of this period and not necessarily the thought of Origen himself. Scholars have noted the lack of differentiation between Origen's thought and that of Evagrius in many of the condemnatory fragments.¹³ Origen's resulting condemnation at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 demonstrates his lasting influence as a teacher nearly 300 years after his death, for better or for worse.

6 See especially Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381 AD* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988); Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (London: Darton, Logman & Todd, 1987), 117–57; Christopher A. Beeley, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

7 Origen's Christology will be discussed in Chapter 2.

8 E.g. Jerome, *ep.* 84.

9 E.g. Athanasius, *de decret.* 27.

10 E.g. Basil, *spir.* 29.73 (SC 17:249,3–6).

11 Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 84.

12 Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 14–16, 43–44.

13 See esp. Guillaumont, *Les 'Kephalaia Gnostica' d'Evagre le Pontique*, 124–70.

It also reveals the difficulty people throughout history have had in identifying his actual thought and knowing what exactly to make of him.

Issues in Reading Origen

Origen's posthumous condemnations mean that his writings have not been well-preserved throughout history. Instead, he has been characterized by simplified epithets, for example that his theology is basically "Platonic" (e.g. his belief in the eternality of souls) or universalist ("even the devil will be saved"), ideas which do not capture the essence or the breadth of his thought.¹⁴ Though Origen is recorded to have been one of the most prolific early commentators of Scripture, only a small percentage of Origen's writings have been preserved in their original form; a few more are preserved only in Latin translation.¹⁵ The most prolific translator of Origen is the aforementioned Rufinus, whom we have to thank for the preservation of works like Origen's seminal *On First Principles*. But even these works have their own sets of issues. As he was concerned with presenting Origen as orthodox before his detractors, Rufinus admittedly altered Origen's writings to portray him in a more orthodox light. In his preface to his translation, Rufinus notes about his translation methodology:

Wherever, therefore, we found in his writings anything contrary to that which he had himself piously laid down regarding the Trinity, we have either omitted it, as being corrupt and interpolated, or we have rendered it according to that rule which we frequently find affirmed by him.¹⁶

Rufinus also admits that he has edited certain statements to make them clearer, in some cases even including additional explanations taken from Origen's other writings. But again, this is Origen filtered through Rufinus, the Origen whose theology supposedly agrees with or even anticipates fourth century Pro-Nicene orthodoxy. Though Rufinus did not drastically alter Origen's every last word and concept, his editing is most evident in the areas that which were most controversial in his own day, e.g. the doctrine of the Trinity and *apokatastasis*. This means that the Origen of Rufinus will differ from the Origen of history, which make attaining a perfectly accurate historical portrait of Origen difficult.

¹⁴ See esp. Jerome, *ep.* 124.

¹⁵ Henri de Lubac, *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture according to Origen* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 40, notes that barely a twentieth of his exegetical works have been preserved.

¹⁶ Rufinus, *princ.* Pref.3 (Behr, 1:6,40–43; trans. Behr, 1:7). *Sicubi ergo nos in libris eius aliquid contra id inuenimus, quod ab ipso in ceteris locis pie trinitate fuerat definitum, uelut adulteratum hoc et alienum aut praetermisimus aut secundum eam regulam protulimus, quam ab ipso frequenter inuenimus adfirmatam.*

There are further difficulties that exist when reading Origen: his varying historical portrayals. This is reflected not only in his reception in the 4th and 6th centuries, but also in modern scholarship. Early 20th century scholarship painted him as a Platonist appropriating Christian theology.¹⁷ In the middle of the 20th century, scholarship shifted to emphasize his identity as a man of the church.¹⁸ More recent scholarship has sought to be more balanced, acknowledging the presence of both influences without necessitating contradiction.¹⁹ Other studies have moved away from simply affirming a general “Platonic” character of his thought, but focus instead on identifying the presence of certain philosophical elements in Origen’s theology, particularly Platonic²⁰ and Stoic.²¹ To a lesser degree, scholars have also examined Origen’s relationship with Judaism²² and various forms of Gnosticism.²³ Most recently, Stephen Waers and Kellen Plaxco have written dissertations demonstrating the influence of the Monarchian controversy on the development of Origen’s theology.²⁴ The influence of these factors on Origen, as well a worldview concerned with “fatalism, despair, superstition, and idolatry” must not be ignored.²⁵

17 For a summary, see Mark S.M. Scott, *Journey Back to God: Origen on the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 40–42. The philosophical side includes names like Harneck, Koch, de Faye, von Campenhausen, Bardy.

18 This includes figures like Crouzel, Daniélou, Harl, Völker, Gruber, and de Lubac, many of whom are associated with Catholic *ressourcement* theology.

19 Scott, *Journey*, 42–43, notes: “both operate simultaneously in him as he engages theological problems from a Christian perspective in the terms of his philosophical milieu.” Simply put, Origen himself does not see them as contradictory. On this, see esp. Charles Kannengiesser, ‘Origen, Systematician in *De Principiis*’, in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 395–407.

20 For example, studies like Alan Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars: A History of an Idea* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) and Benjamin P. Blosser, *Become Like the Angels: Origen’s Doctrine of the Soul* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), deal respectively with philosophical influence (primary Platonic) on Origen’s understanding of stars and souls.

21 There has been a particular interest in Stoic logic in Origen’s thought, see esp. Ronald Heine, ‘Stoic Logic as Handmaid to Exegesis and Theology in Origen’s Commentary on the Gospel of John’, *JTS* 44.1 (1993), 90–117; Louis Roberts, ‘Origen and Stoic Logic’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 101 (1970), 433–44; John M. Rist, ‘The Importance of Stoic Logic in the Contra Celsum’, in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in Honor of A. H. Armstrong*, ed. H. J. Blumenthal and R. A. Markus (London: Variorum, 1981), 64–78; Róbert Somos, ‘Is the Handmaid Stoic or Middle Platonic?: Some Comments on Origen’s Use of Logic’, *StPatr* 56 (2013), 29–40.

22 See esp. N.R.M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

23 E.g. Holger Strutwolf, *Gnosis als System: Zur Rezeption der valentinianischen Gnosis bei Origenes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1993); Philip L. Tite, ‘The Holy Spirit’s Role in Origen’s Trinitarian System: A Comparison with Valentinian Pneumatology’, *Theoforum* 32 (2001), 131–164; Matteo Grosso, ‘A New Link between Origen and the Gospel of Thomas: Commentary on Matthew 14,14’, *VC* 65.3 (2011), 249–56.

24 Stephen E. Waers, ‘Monarchianism and Origen’s Early Trinitarian Theology’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Marquette University, 2016); Kellen Plaxco, ‘Didymus the Blind, Origen, and the Trinity’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Marquette University, 2016).

25 Lyman, *Christology*, 47.

As mentioned earlier, one of the biggest challenges in reading Origen has been the issue of Rufinus' Latin translations, especially his most systematic and theological work, *On First Principles*.²⁶ The pendulum of scholarship has swung generally from distrust to trust. The height of suspicion of Rufinus can be found in Koetschau's 1913 edition of *On First Principles*, which was translated into English by G. W. Butterworth.²⁷ Koetschau took seriously Rufinus' claims to have omitted or changed parts of the text, finding the reproductions of Origen found in fragments of the 6th century Justinian's *Epistle to Menas* or Jerome's 4th century *Epistle to Avitus* more reliable.²⁸ In the Koetschau and Butterworth editions, these fragments are given the heading "Greek" and are placed side by side with the "Latin" of Rufinus' text, essentially elevating them to the level of the text itself.²⁹ The placement of these fragments is also highly speculative, based on nothing other than Koetschau's best guesses. The result is a work that favors these out-of-context and condemnatory statements and implicitly suggests that the reader ought to as well.

Subsequent scholarship challenged the reliability of Koetschau's favored Greek fragments and has demonstrated that they are not likely faithful reproductions of Origen's actual writings.³⁰ The editions of *On First Principles* that have followed have generally been critical of Koetschau's method and more accepting of Rufinus' translations.³¹ Koetschau's vaunted parallel Greek fragments are either relegated to appendices or placed below the text itself. The more problematic fragments, e.g. fragments 15 and 17a, which are quite anti-Origen in character, are usually omitted entirely. The most recent and much needed English translation by John Behr has not removed these fragments, but have placed them in an appendix, while placing Greek texts and fragments that actually parallel Rufinus' text under the apparatus itself.³²

These advances in scholarship mean that the portrait we have of Origen now is more accurate than that of 100 years ago. Current scholarship better recognizes the complexity of Origen as a thinker, philosophically minded and a man of the church, a product of both the education of his time and his contemporary theological issues. Rufinus has more or less been vindicated as Origen's translator. The fact still remains, though, that Rufinus has altered portions of Origen's text,

26 For a summary, see Ronnie J. Rombs, 'A Note on the Status of Origen's De Principiis in English', VC 61.1 (2007), 21–29.

27 Paul Koetschau, *De principiis*, Origenes Werke 5, GCS (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913); G. W. Butterworth, *Origen: On First Principles* (London: SPCK, 1936).

28 Note especially the fragments Koetschau labels 15 and 17a.

29 This gives a false impression that these are Origen's actual words (see Behr, 1:xxvii).

30 Rombs, 'A Note', 23–24.

31 Examples include the French translation by Harl, Dorival, and Le Boulluec in 1976, the German translation of Gorgemanns and Karpp in 1976, and the Sources Chrétiennes editions by Crouzel and Simonetti (SC 252, 253, 268, 269, 312). See Behr, 1: xxvii–xxviii.

32 John Behr, *Origen: On First Principles*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). This is following other earlier editions like Gorgemanns/Karpp and even the recent Spanish edition by Samuel Fernandez, *Orígenes: Sobre Los Principios*, Fuentes Patristicas 27 (Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 2015). Behr includes fragments 15 and 17a in his appendix.

even if such alterations do not constitute the majority. Though it is clear that the caricatures of later Origenisms are generally inaccurate portrayals of Origen's theology, particularly those found in the writings of Jerome and Justinian, this does not mean Rufinus' translations are 100 % accurate either. As this study will argue, there is still a need for a small amount of suspicion when using Rufinus' translations, particularly those discussing theological issues that would have been sensitive or even controversial in Rufinus' time. Rufinus does not portray himself as an objective translator; as a self-proclaimed Origen fan, he admits to having edited parts of Origen's writings that do not agree with what he says elsewhere or that are unclear (*princ.* pref. 3). Modern readers of Origen, therefore, must take a hint from Rufinus in dealing with Rufinus, recognizing that *On First Principles* does not constitute the entirety of Origen's corpus and that its theology must be balanced with theological statements that Origen makes elsewhere in his writings.

The State of Scholarship: Trinity and Pneumatology

Recent years have seen a growing interest in the field of patristic pneumatology.³³ Given Origen's theological influence on some of the major contributors to fourth century Pro-Nicene pneumatology, spotlighting Origen's pneumatology is a natural step in better understanding and tracing the development of pneumatology in the early church. Pneumatology is also important for Trinitarian theology; to study patristic Trinitarian theology without understanding how the fathers understood the Holy Spirit is to do a disservice.

The majority of scholarship that addresses Origen's pneumatology has not been concerned with pneumatology per se, but more with the concept of Trinity in Origen's thought. This has led to two major issues: (1) Origen's Trinitarian theology has often been treated anachronistically, whether positively or negatively, or (2) his pneumatology has been overlooked and not given adequate treatment. Certain scholars have evaluated Origen's Trinitarian theology against the standards of Nicaea and have found his theology wanting. Beginning with Harnack, many have been critical in their treatments of Trinity in Origen's thought, particularly for his weak Trinitarian formulations or overall lack of interest in Trinity.³⁴ The issue with such evaluations is that they seem to assume an anachronistic sense of "Trinity" by which to judge Origen's theology. By holding Origen to such a standard, these treatments

33 Examples of this include recent monographs by Anthony Briggman (*Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) and Bogdan Bucur (*Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), as well as a slew of recent doctoral dissertations on the pneumatologies of figures like Novatian, Athanasius, Didymus, and others.

34 Kilian McDonnell, 'Does Origen Have a Trinitarian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?', *Gregorianum* 75.1 (1994), 8–10. McDonnell includes in his list Harnack, Fortman, Trigg, Schutz, and Courth as those who do not think Origen is interested in Trinity.

fall into more sophisticated versions of the errors of Jerome and Justinian. Origen's pneumatology has also received similar criticisms from many of the same figures. One of the most common critiques of Origen's theology has been that it is essentially binitarian in character, containing no real place for the Holy Spirit.³⁵ In some sense this is true; Origen has much more to say about the Son than he does about the Spirit. But rather than making blanket statements, it is more important to ask why this is the case and how Origen actually speaks about the Spirit. It is also significant to note that many of those making such evaluations only engage in cursory examinations of the Holy Spirit in Origen's thought.³⁶

A second tendency has been to portray Origen in a more favorable light, acknowledging the Trinitarian formulations in his theology and praising him for his contributions to this doctrine.³⁷ Examples include Charles Kannengiesser's article on the Trinitarian structure of *On First Principles* or the various publications of Henri Crouzel.³⁸ Such portrayals assume that Trinity is at the heart of Origen's thought and seek to portray him as an orthodox man of the church, a "father of orthodoxy", so to speak. One downside to this has been the tendency of some to try to redeem Origen from heresy, portraying him as a proto-Nicene or superimposing later categories and concepts onto his clearly third century theology.³⁹ This is not to deny Origen's influence in the development of doctrine or to deny where precursors of later formulations appear. But for those who appreciate Origen and admire his thought, there is the temptation to make him more "Trinitarian" or orthodox than he may have actually been.

The stark contrast in understandings of Origen's theology between some of the major figures in patristic scholarship reveal the difficulties in reading Trinity or Holy Spirit in Origen's thought, as well as the general issue of anachronism present in much historical scholarship. This also begs the question: why is scholarship so polarized on the issue of Trinity in Origen's thought? To some extent, this can be explained by two related early 20th century issues discussed in the last section:

35 McDonnell, 'Spirit', 8–10. McDonnell notes that Harnack thinks Origen has no specific interest in the Holy Spirit, while Florensky believes that Origen includes the Spirit for the sake of structure. Koch, Shapland, Hauschild are cited as saying that Origen's theology has no real place for the Spirit. Hauschild even calls Origen's pneumatology "immature" and that sanctification could take place without the Spirit (*Gottes Geist*, 136, 141, 149).

36 Of the studies McDonnell cites, only Hauschild actively examines Origen's pneumatology.

37 McDonnell, 'Spirit', 9–10. Other notable figures McDonnell notes are J. N. D. Kelly and Hans Urs von Balthasar.

38 See Charles Kannengiesser, 'Divine Trinity and the Structure of Peri Archon', in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*, eds. C. Kannengieser and W. L. Petersen (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998). For Crouzel, see *Théologie de l'image de Dieu chez Origène* (Paris: Aubier, 1956); *Origen*, trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989).

39 See e.g. Christopher Beeley, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in the Christian Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2012), 21–31; Ilaria Rameli, 'Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of *Hypostasis*', *HTR* 105.3 (July 2012), 302–50. Bruns' recent study, though fairer in his examination of Origen's Trinitarian theology falls to a similar error.

the unfavorable reception of Rufinus' translations and the portrayal of Origen as Platonist. Earlier scholarship was thus generally dismissive of Origen's theology, viewing it through an unfavorable and narrow lens.

But more recent Origen scholarship has seen the pendulum swing in the opposite direction: to a growing trust in Rufinus' translations and the rehabilitation of Origen's image as a "man of the church". Much scholarship has followed the lead of Henri de Lubac's famous *History and Spirit*, a significant and seminal introduction to Origen's exegesis which highlights the tension between the Origen of philosophy and the Origen of the church, the varying portrayals of Origen from Christians and pagans, and the inherent mysticism in his theology.⁴⁰ Regarding the issue of Rufinus, de Lubac notes the character of Rufinus' adaptations as reliable, taking place mostly in his added explanations for the Latin audience.⁴¹ While some scholars, de Lubac notes, have rejected Rufinus' translations, to do so is to be excessively suspicious; there is much good in them. For example, Origen's *Commentary on Romans* is undoubtedly an abridged work, but many of Origen's exegetical decisions seem to be well-preserved in the translations.⁴² For doubters, de Lubac suggests certain precautionary measures in ascertaining Origen's theology from Rufinus' translations: by increasing the amount of citations sources and comparing across different translations, a clearer sense of Origen can be ascertained.⁴³ Another significant and influential work in this regard is the Crouzel and Simonetti's 1978 edition of *On First Principles*. In the introduction, the authors ably demonstrate that Rufinus' translation is more faithful to the original than Jerome's supposedly "literal" translation⁴⁴ and that the theological issues in Justinian's *Letter to Menas*' Origen fragments are Evagrian rather than Origenian.⁴⁵ The authors also argue that parts of Rufinus' translations are actually more faithful to the original than the *Philocalia* and that Rufinus' difficulties in translating have more to do with technical issues like Greek Stoic philosophical terms.⁴⁶ The authors of this edition also admirably highlight issues that plagued in later anachronistic readings of Origen, e.g. their incomprehension of his philosophical language, misunderstandings about the actual heresies he is concerned with, and reading their own 4th or 6th century issues into his text.⁴⁷ Crouzel also famously highlights Origen's "research theology", i.e. his

40 Henri de Lubac, *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture according to Origen*, trans. Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2007 [1950]).

41 de Lubac, *History and Spirit*, 41.

42 de Lubac, *History and Spirit*, 41.

43 de Lubac, *History and Spirit*, 42.

44 Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti, *Origène: Traité des principes*, SC 252 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1973), 27–29. The authors argue that Jerome and Justinian are prone to exaggeration and abbreviation.

45 Crouzel and Simonetti, *Origène*, 30–32. See also Rombs, 'Note', 23–24. Rombs notes that the contributions of Bardy and Guillaumont have demonstrated that certain Origen fragments in Justinian represent the views of Evagrius rather than Origen.

46 Crouzel and Simonetti, *Origène*, 25.

47 Crouzel and Simonetti, *Origène*, 35–38, 43–45.

propensity to explore and speculate outside of the bounds of the “rule of faith”.⁴⁸ The issues in using the word “system” to characterize Origen’s thought are also highlighted, i. e. it is not “systematic” in our modern terms.⁴⁹

The work of these *ressourcement* scholars is significant; from their work we gain a greater trust of Rufinus and understand better how to read and use him. But an important question remains: have certain aspects of Rufinus’ translations of Origen’s theology, particularly his portrayal of Trinity, been accepted too uncritically? For example, F. H. Kettler has suggested that Rufinus has in places replaced the threefold names of Father-Son-Spirit with *trinitas*.⁵⁰ Given the fact that this alters the shape and character of Origen’s Trinitarian theology, creating more coherence and familiarity for both fourth century and modern readers, should we be so optimistic about Rufinus’ translations, particularly on the issue of Trinity? Rufinus, for example, claims to not have reproduced anything in his translation that does not appear elsewhere in Origen’s writings (*princ.* pref. 3). But two issues arise from this: (1) does changing the wording not change the theology and (2) might Rufinus have included works that we now recognize as not having been written by Origen? In a piece entitled “‘Seek and Ye Shall Find’: Rufinus and the Search for Origen’s Trinitarian Orthodoxy”, I ask the question of the identity of the “other places” where Origen speaks about the Trinity that Rufinus refers to in *princ.* pref. 3.⁵¹ In the article, I highlight two possible examples of such passages: Origen’s use of *homoousios*, which has been well-documented in scholarship, and the presence of the Latin adverbs *substantialiter* and *naturaliter* in *On First Principles*. Regarding the first point, Origen seems to have used *homoousios*, which Rufinus highlights this on his *On the Falsification of Origen*.⁵² But *homoousios* and even *ousia* are used significantly differently than fourth century Pro-Nicene usage; in this sense it is clear that Rufinus is simply looking for markers of orthodoxy.⁵³ Regarding the two Latin adverbs *substantialiter* and *naturaliter*, I argue that they appear throughout Rufinus’ translations (see esp. *princ.* 1.5.5), but that no Greek equivalent is found in parallel passages. Additionally, the Greek equivalent οὐσιωδῶς is never used by Origen of Trinity or Son or Spirit in this way in any of his known Greek writings.⁵⁴ Instead, it is used to speak of the Son’s concrete existence, specifically in anti-Monarchian polemic (e.g. *or.* 27.12, *Jo.* 6.188). I suggest instead that while Origen is able to use such words for the Father, the

48 Crouzel and Simonetti, *Origène*, 48.

49 Crouzel and Simonetti, *Origène*, 51–52.

50 Franz Heinrich Kettler, *Der Ursprüngliche Sinn der Dogmatik des Origenes* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1966) 36, n.156 (from McDonnell, ‘Spirit’, 11).

51 Justin J. Lee, “‘Seek and Ye Shall Find’: Rufinus and the Search for Origen’s Trinitarian Orthodoxy”, in *Origeniana Duodecima: Origen’s Legacy in the Holy Land – A Tale of Three Cities; Jerusalem, Caesarea and Bethlehem*, ed. B. Bitton Ashkelony, et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2019), 447–60.

52 See Scheck, Thomas P., *Pamphilus of Caesarea and Rufinus of Aquileia: Apology for Origen; On the Falsification of the Books of Origen*, (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010). My own conclusion follows closely to that of Mark Edwards.

53 E.g. in the *Dialogue of Adamantius*.

54 Lee, ‘Seek’, 454–55.

status of the Son as Spirit as divine persons who do not receive their attributes “by accident” leaves them in an ontologically ambiguous place.⁵⁵ Therefore, it seems that the inclusion of these terms in *On First Principles*, along with *homoousios*, are examples where Rufinus is freer with his translations than he suggests.

Another notable example is the issue of subordinationism in Origen’s theology.⁵⁶ Scholarship is divided over whether the Son being “less” than the Father and the Spirit “less” than the Son constitutes ontological subordination.⁵⁷ In addressing this issue, there are some points that need to be clarified. The first is this: whichever subordinationism it was, Origen was not subordinating the Son to the Father against a consensus which says otherwise.⁵⁸ As an ante-Nicene theologian, Origen is not concerned with such issues; they are concerns of the fourth century. Rather, his concern is to articulate a Christology, pneumatology, and thus Trinity, which affirm divine power and personality against those who seek to deny it (i. e. the Monarchians). Second, even if Origen was proven to ontologically subordinate the Son the Father and the Spirit to the Son, would it be that significant of an issue? As has been well-documented in Origen scholarship and as we will see later in this study, Origen often uses certain Platonic concepts as frames of reference in order to make sense of the Father-Son relationship, e.g. the “act of will proceeding from the mind of the Father” in *princ.* 1.2.6 or the Son’s titles/roles of Word/Wisdom. Given the non-personal and generally subordinationist ontology suggested in these concepts, as well as Origen’s difficulty in making sense of the biblical language of “creation” and sonship, how does Origen come out with a theology of personal or substantial equality?⁵⁹ Or better yet, what is the alternative explanation? Additionally, compared to the Son, Origen makes even less reference of the Holy Spirit. But what he does have are Bible verses like John 1.3 and Colossians 1.15 that suggest to him that all things that are not the Son or the Father were “created” through the Son. Though the “greater and less” statements that appear in Justinian’s *ep. ad Menam* or Jerome’s *ep.* 124 are likely caricatures or exaggerations of Origen’s thought, is similar language not employed elsewhere or the concept implied in language like “creation”?⁶⁰ Third, does Origen even make the ontological vs. economic distinctions in his theology that others insist exists in his theology of Trinitarian relations? Given the difficulty that theologians a century later have in articulating this concept, can we say without a

⁵⁵ Lee, ‘Seek’, 456–57.

⁵⁶ Another example of this is the idea of “consubstantiality” in Origen’s theology, e.g. in the term *homoousios*, which will be discussed later.

⁵⁷ McDonnell, ‘Spirit’, 10, notes that while many scholars absolve Origen of ontological subordination, some do not, e.g. Pretisge, Danielou, and Forman. We can also include in this list Nigel Rowe, *Origen’s Doctrine of Subordination: A Study in Origen’s Christology* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1987) – see McDonnell, ‘Spirit’, 15 n.69.

⁵⁸ See Ayres, *Nicaea*, 21. I will use this term throughout this study, but with the assumption that Origen is not actively subordinating the Son in this way.

⁵⁹ These will be discussed in Chapter 2.

⁶⁰ We see this especially in the famous passage in *Jo.* 2., where for Origen “sentness” implies being lesser. Contra the “no greater or lesser” statement in *princ.* 1.3.7.

doubt that the language of the Son being “less than” the Father or Origen’s concern of “sentness” equating inferiority in *Jo.* 2 refers only to the economy of the Trinity and not to the nature of their relations? Are the decreasing spheres of work or influence of the Father, Son, and Spirit simply due to arrangement or do they have something to do with the status of the person? Finally, if, on the grounds of what I have stated above, we question the authenticity of some of the more Trinitarian statements in *On First Principles*, e.g. “there is no greater or less in the Trinity” (*princ.* 1.3.7), what implications might that have on Origen’s Trinitarian ontology?⁶¹ Scholarship that addresses “Trinity” in Origen’s theology must, therefore, not seek to overly centralize this aspect of his theology. Doing so can be anachronistic, for good or for ill. As Stephen Waers has noted, “scholars often read Origen with one eye toward Nicaea, looking for anticipation, development, and consonance in every phrase.”⁶²

While there have been a handful of shorter English treatments that examine Origen’s pneumatology more generally, there are few works dedicated specifically to this topic.⁶³ In English, there has only been one monograph published on Origen’s pneumatology which focuses exclusively on Origen’s pneumatology in the *Commentary on Romans*.⁶⁴ Though a thorough examination of the themes of this particular work, Moser’s study does not address pneumatology in the entirety of Origen’s thought, nor does it engage in detail with some of the more controversial and debated pneumatological and Trinitarian passages in either *On First Principles* or the *Commentary on John*. There have been a handful of German studies that touch on Origen’s pneumatology, but the Holy Spirit is only a tertiary interest for these writers and is not examined at length.⁶⁵ Wolf-Dieter Hauschild’s *Gottes Geist und*

61 This also applies to statements like “unity of the Trinity” (*princ.* 1.3.4) or “power of the Trinity is one and the same” (*princ.* 1.3.7), “one fount of divinity” (*princ.* 1.3.7).

62 Waers, ‘Monarchianism’, 15.

63 Studies McDonnell, ‘Spirit’; Tite, ‘Holy Spirit’; George C. Berthold, ‘Origen and the Holy Spirit’, in *Origeniana Quinta* (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 444–448; Pablo Argarate, ‘The Holy Spirit in *Prin* I, 3’, in *Origeniana Nona* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 25–47; Manlio Simonetti, ‘Spirit Santo’, in *Origene: dizionario: la cultura, il pensiero, le opere*, ed. Adele Monaci Castagno (Roma: Città Nuova, 2000), 450–456; Peter Martens, ‘Holy Spirit’, in *The Westminster Handbook to Origen* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 125–28; Miguel M. Garijo, ‘Vocabulario origeniano sobre el Espíritu Divino’, *Scriptorium Victoricense* 11 (1964), 320–58. Other helpful studies include Giulio Maspero, ‘Remarks on Origen’s Analogies for the Holy Spirit’, in *Origeniana Decima* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 563–578; Michael Haykin, *The Spirit of God: The Exegesis of 1 and 2 Corinthians in the Pneumatomachian Controversy of the Fourth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Alasdair Heron, ‘The Holy Spirit in Origen and Didymus the Blind: A Shift in Perspective from the Third to the Fourth Century’, in *Kerygma und Logos: Beiträge zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum. Festschrift für Carl Andresen zum 70. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 298–310.

64 Maureen Moser, *Teacher of Holiness: The Holy Spirit in Origen’s Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005).

65 E.g. Wolf-Dieter Hauschild, *Gottes Geist und der Mensch* (München: C. Kaiser, 1972); Henning Ziebritzki, *Heiliger Geist und Weltseele: das Problem der dritten Hypostase bei Origenes, Plotin und ihren Vorläufern* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994); and most recently Christoph Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos: zur Gotteslehre des Origenes* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2013).

der Mensch traces the historical development of the doctrine of the Spirit, treating Origen's pneumatology as essentially being motivated by Christian ethics, i. e. the making of Christians "spiritual", in opposition to the "Spirit received in baptism" tradition that Origen has inherited.⁶⁶ Hauschild also highlights certain negative aspects of Origen's pneumatology: he claims that the shape of Origen's theology is essentially "binitarian", that the Spirit in his system is "created", and that Origen's pneumatology is superfluous to his overall theology.⁶⁷ Hauschild's study is helpful in that it highlights the Spirit's role as mediator between God and man, the significance of the Holy Spirit to soteriology, and importance of the Spirit's involvement in Christian formation to Origen's overall theological system. Its tracing of historical pneumatological themes means that it highlights points in Origen's theology that can be traced backwards, particularly to Clement of Alexandria. But Hauschild's study also falls prey to the temptation to judge Origen by later standards of orthodoxy and incorrectly places Origen at odds with much of the ecclesiastical tradition involving the Spirit.

A significant and helpful study on this topic is Kilian McDonnell's 1994 article, "Does Origen Have a Trinitarian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?"⁶⁸ McDonnell's article provides a very helpful survey of the literature on this subject, which has been utilized in this study. Overall, McDonnell treats the major issues very fairly; his study is a skillful display of scholarship and is surprisingly extensive given its length. He even finds space to highlight some of the more significant themes in Origen's pneumatology. McDonnell's study, however, is not a comprehensive treatment of Origen's entire known corpus, nor is it a systematic and detailed treatment of pneumatology in Origen's thought. Its length limits it from being a more comprehensive analysis of Origen's pneumatology; its concern is the major scholarly debates surrounding the more controversial Trinitarian passages in Origen's writings. McDonnell's answer to the question he proposes is that Origen's Trinitarianism, though not "Trinitarian" by later standards, is clearly his own, shaped by his own concerns and contexts. This study by and large agrees with McDonnell's conclusions and acknowledges the importance of this study, seeking not to contradict it, but to build on its foundations.

This study, therefore, while taking Rufinus' translations as generally accurate depictions of Origen's theology, approaches the overtly Trinitarian statements with a degree of suspicion, particularly in *On First Principles*, and terms like "Trinity", "essence", or "nature". This study recognizes that this particular area, given the accusation of Origen's subordinationism, is one in which Rufinus is most likely to have altered and added. These types of statements, therefore, must be examined in light of the language used in other parts of his corpus, those we know were not translated by Rufinus. Passages from *On First Principles* will be of course given due

⁶⁶ Hauschild, *Gottes Geist*, 104, 109.

⁶⁷ See esp. Hauschild, *Gottes Geist*, 148.

⁶⁸ Kilian McDonnell, 'Does Origen Have a Trinitarian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?', *Gregorianum* 75.1 (1994), 5–35.

treatment, but will be examined in light of other statements found across Origen's entire corpus, especially his Greek works, more specifically the *Commentary on John* and *Contra Celsum*, in order to be as fair as possible.⁶⁹ It also takes seriously the fact of Origen's restrictions and contexts as a pre-Nicene theologian; he simply does not have the tools to adequately resolve the issue Father-Son or even Son-Spirit relations in a properly "Trinitarian" way. This study thus approaches Origen's pneumatology and concept of Trinity with the assumption that there may be tensions, difficulties, or even inconsistencies in Origen's expressions of his doctrine. Therefore, such difficulties and tensions will be highlighted where they appear.

Another question remains: in examining Origen's pneumatology, is there a proper way to account for his intellectual and theological background? What issues are present in the context of his thought?⁷⁰ The answer to these questions is undoubtedly complex and difficult; there are many different sources influencing his thought. Scholarship has shown that his theology as a whole, particularly his understanding of Father-Son and divine interpersonal relations, draws heavily from Greek philosophy, especially Platonism. We have to recognize, however, that with regard to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, there is not a great amount of pneumatological doctrine that he has inherited. For example, in *princ* pref 4, where Origen discusses the Holy Spirit in his rule of faith, he acknowledges that certain points, e.g. the Spirit's origin/identity, have "yet to be inquired into" and will be treated, through Scripture, as best he can. There is also no precedence for the doctrine of the Spirit in any major philosophical tradition from which he can draw parallels.⁷¹ The Christian tradition prior to Origen does not feature the Holy Spirit very heavily or as a major doctrine of inquiry.⁷² Justin Martyr, for example, calls the Logos the Spirit and at times attributes prophecy to the Logos (1 *apol.* 33).⁷³ Though Clement of Alexandria's pneumatology shares some similar features, from which Origen likely drew, the Spirit is not discussed frequently or consistently in his writings.⁷⁴

69 In this, I am simply following the suggestion of de Lubac (*History*, 42) to consult more sources – to gain a broader, clearer, and fairer picture of Origen.

70 The background to his understanding of the Holy Spirit, both Jewish and Christian, will not be the main focus of this study. It will, however, be addressed where relevant.

71 This, he notes in *princ* 2.7.2, is one evidence of the truth of the faith.

72 One major exception being Irenaeus of Lyons, known best in his Trinitarian theology for his imagery of the Son and the Spirit as the two hands of God. I will ignore western Latin writers like Tertullian, Novatian, and Cyprian, simply because of the lack of influence of these thinkers on Origen himself.

73 Elsewhere, Scripture is often attributed to the divine spirit (*dial.* 9.1) or to the prophetic spirit (1 *apol.* 35–59; *dial.* 32.3, 43.3, etc.). For Justin, this is often because he is trying to understand Logos logic without compromising the unity of God (see L. W. Barnard, 'God, the Logos, the Spirit and the Trinity in the Theology of Athenagoras', *Studia Theologica* 24.1 (January 1970), 87–88).

74 Some examples: the Spirit's inspiration of Scripture (*str.* 1.29.181.1, 3.4.29.2, 6.15; *prot.* 9.68), revelation of the deep things of God (1 Cor 2.10: *str.* 2.2.7.3, 6.18), assistance in explaining Scripture (*prot.* 9.70), indwelling holy presence (*str.* 2.13.58.1, 5.13, 6.17; *paed.* 2.10.100), opposition to the flesh (*str.* 3.6.46.3, 3.11.77.3), consecrating work (*paed.* 1.6.25, 3.11.64; *str.* 4.26, 6.11). Confusion about the Spirit: *str.* 2.2.4.4, 2.2.5.1, 4.25, 5.1.