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Introduction

Considered a controversial thinker during his life as well as after his death and condemned as heretic by the Emperor Justinian in 553 (see Layton), Origen was nevertheless always read by Eastern and Western theologians and his thought deeply influenced, although subcutaneously, the history of theology. Origen's reception in later Antiquity and Western Middle Ages is characterized by a strong ambiguity, which is well expressed in the famous distich from Cassiodorus: "Where he was good, no one was better; where he was bad, no one was worse" (*Ubi bene nemo melius, ubi male nemo peior*, *Inst.* 1.1.8). The exegete, able to explain the most difficult biblical passages, was read, appreciated and used as a model – mostly thanks to Jerome's and Rufinus' translations –, in a hidden form or explicitly, and sometimes even referred to as an authority. On the contrary, the "heretic" thinker of the most controversial doctrines like the apokatastasis or the preexistence of souls was rejected and refuted (de Lubac 1998: 161-224). On the background of this dual legacy we have to investigate Origen's impact on the West at the beginning of the Modern Era, a period marked by a strong discontinuity with the past in theological and in cultural contexts, as the etymology of Re-formation and Re-naissance already makes clear.

Origen in the Reformation

Five centuries ago, Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on indulgence at the door of a church in Wittenberg, starting a new era of Church history.[1] The resulting harsh confrontation between the Augustinian monk and the Catholic Church of Rome could never have been settled in a positive way and brought about a deep split within Western Christianity. The efforts by Luther and his supporters to recover the original spirit of the apostolic time and the pristine pureness of the evangelic message required taking a position in relation to the ancient Christian tradition represented by the authors of the early Christian centuries, until then revered and considered no less authoritative than Scripture. Within this context, the first part of this essay aims to explore Origen's influence on, or absence from, the theology of the Reformation, firstly investigating Luther's assessment of Origen and his thought, then moving to the standpoint of other Reformers.

Origen in Wittenberg: Martin Luther

To analyze the presence of Origen in the Reformation means first of all to ask what Martin Luther (1483-1546) thought of him. His attitude towards the Church Fathers in general and towards some of them in particular (especially Augustine) has long been studied (e.g. Leppin 2015). Traditionally, a gradual change of mind and even self-contradictory judgments have been pointed out (Leppin 2010; Schulze 1997). On the one side, already during his studies, Luther had established significant contacts with humanistic circles where the Church Fathers were read and appreciated. Thus, the writings of Augustine, the founder of his order, played a major role in Luther's monastic formation as well in later periods. On the other side, however, the importance of the Church Fathers as authorities diminished more and more in Luther's theological thought. If they were still referred to

as support for his arguments during the first controversies with his Catholic opponents and in the first exegetical writings, the Fathers were progressively left aside the more Luther strived to emphasize the exclusive authority of Scripture. Therefore, the inconsistencies between the different positions of the Fathers could easily be used by the Reformer to show their relativity and fallibility (deriving just from being human)[2] and the necessity to adopt another criterion of authority, i.e. Scripture, in this way shaping the concept of *sola Scriptura*. This process was named with a very fitting expression "deparentification" (Hendrix 1993): the fathers were no longer unquestionable authoritative figures. They lost such authority *ex officio* and had to regain it. Their doctrines would be proven from time to time and accepted only if respondent to precise preconditions, namely whether they agree with Scripture. This idea was also explicitly codified in a rule, the so called *regula Lutheri*: "When the Fathers speak, they should be accepted according to the canon of Scripture. But if they seem to write anything to the contrary, they should be helped with a gloss or rejected" (*Quando patres loquuntur, accipiatur juxta canonem scripturae. Quod si videntur contra scribere, adjuventur glossa, vel rejiciantur*).[3] In other words Luther, inverting the traditional order, affirms that the Fathers should be interpreted by Scripture and not the other way around. Thus, he reduced their authority and made selective use of their doctrines and opinions. More recent studies have tried to challenge the traditional idea of a gradual change in Luther's attitude towards the Church Fathers, emphasizing its historical dimension: his criticism against the Fathers should be seen as a reaction to papal condemnation and a consequence of the controversies with Rome of the years 1519-21 and be considered as definitively shaped already at the end of 1521 (Büttgen 2012: 57-66). In any case, it is sure that the critiques to the Fathers arose simultaneously to the elaboration of the two ideas of *sola Scriptura* and *claritas Scripturarum*, which build the foundation of Luther's theology and exegesis (Büttgen 2012: 47-9). Once condemned as heretic, the former Augustinian monk established his legitimacy on a new exegetical method, free from any other authority and based uniquely on Scripture, which must be considered absolutely clear in its literal, historical sense

so that no other meaning needs to be investigated. Since he admitted these two assumptions, Luther could easily avoid every argumentation based on the Fathers.

But what about Origen? In a sermon from 1518 one reads a positive mention of the Alexandrian, described as "the wise and acute schoolmaster";[4] apart from this passage, however, a negative attitude can be observed. As Luther himself admits, he was enchanted by allegories at a young age, following the example of Origen and Jerome. But later he started to dislike the allegorical method.[5] Accordingly, he criticized Origen repeatedly and openly – often together with Jerome – for his inclination towards allegories which destroy the literal, i.e. the true sense of the Holy Scripture. Already in the early treatise *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520) Luther makes clear the reason why he rejects Origen's interpretative method: abandoning its simplest meaning, i.e. the proper and grammatical sense, Origen abused Scripture and so he was rightly repudiated by the ancient Church.[6] Even more, allegories are a danger for a theologian, as Origen himself experienced during his life,[7] being – as Luther ironically once defined him – "a prince and a king of allegories" (*Sermons on Exodus* [1524-27]: WA 16, 68,32-4). Indeed, for Luther allegories altered the obvious meaning of the Bible, depriving it of its historical foundation which is essential to the Christian understanding of the history of salvation (Schulze 1997: 618-19; Schär 1979: 265). In the preface to his German edition of Revelation (1530), interpreting the good and the four evil angels of Revelation 7-8, Luther recognizes in the third evil angel Origen, the corruptor of Scripture by means of philosophy and rationality (WADB 7, 410,34-5; Hofmann 1982: 418-21; 470-80). The specific criticism against allegory has thus been transformed into a wider allegation: by importing philosophy and rational speculations into exegesis (what that really means is never explained by Luther) Origen corrupted the pure and simple message of the Bible, making it uncertain. By marginalizing the historical meaning and consequently multiplying the senses of Scripture (which is a *mysterium iniquitatis*!) Origen started a long historical process, developed during the Middle

Ages, that rendered the Bible incomprehensible (Schulze 1997: 616-17).[8] To oppose this fault Luther references the already mentioned doctrine of the *claritas Scripturarum*: the author of Scripture, the Holy Spirit, has written the clearest book on earth for interpreting which no spiritual and profound sense, hidden behind the letters, has to be detected (Schulze 1997: 618).[9]

Some famous statements from his *Table Talks* of 1532 plainly express Luther's definitive assessment of Origen: "Origen I have already banned" and, with a statement we can perhaps read as an explanation of this banishment and which also introduces a new reproach: "in all of Origen there is not one word about Christ" (WATr 1, 106; 136 = AE 54, 33; 47). Reading such a striking opinion, a modern patristic scholar cannot but ask himself whether Luther really knew Origen (Crouzel 1985: 132), and the question is legitimate. Before answering this question we should try to understand what Luther really meant with such a provocative claim. It is worthwhile to notice that this is not just an occasional declaration: In a sermon from 1530 Luther wrote almost the same, "Neither Jerome nor Cyprian nor Origen nor any of them preached Christ" (WA 32, 241,28-31). A comparison with other Lutheran statements allows us to understand that "preaching Christ" for Luther means teaching his own doctrine of justification by faith alone, the core of his theology which he had discovered in Paul (Pani 2009: 137; Scheck 2008: 176). In a clarifying passage from 1530, which deserves to be quoted fully, Luther justifies his contempt for Origen and Jerome with both the absence of the doctrine on justification and the excessive predominance of allegories in their works: "I have consequently been the more frequent amazed, almost indignantly, about what earned for Jerome the title of a Doctor of the Church and for Origen that of a Master of the Churches after the Apostles, although it is hard to find three lines in them which teach the doctrine of justification, and although one cannot make anyone Christian on the basis of any of their writings, as they come sweeping in so arrogantly with their allegories or allow themselves to be entrapped by the showiness of works" (Preface on *In prophetam Amos Iohannis Brentii expositio*:

WA 30/2, 650,24-30). Indeed, in Luther's view, Origen – like most of the Fathers – misunderstood Paul completely.[10] Even the above mentioned *mysterium iniquitatis*, the multiplication of scriptural senses, which is Origen's biggest fault, has its origins in a wrong interpretation of 2 Corinthians 3:6 (*littera occidit, spiritus autem vivificat*) proposed by Origen, for whom *littera* means the historical sense of Scripture and *spiritus* the mystical one.[11]

Summing up, the primary critiques that Luther had of Origen were his exaggerated inclination towards allegory – a method which alters the plain meaning of Scripture and makes it uncertain –, then the adoption of philosophical opinions into exegesis and, lastly, a misunderstanding of Paul's theology, including the absence of the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

Keeping this in mind we can turn to the question of Luther's knowledge of Origen, which very likely was not derived from a direct reading of Origen's works but rather based on a traditional opinion. Normally he does not refer to a specific work of Origen, mentioning just his name, sometimes accompanied by general statements about his person. Furthermore, which Origenian works could have been accessible to Luther? Editions of Origen began to circulate from the last decades of 1400 (see below), but it is impossible to know which books could have been available to the Reformer. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 16th century, a very common way to diffuse the Church Fathers was represented by patristic anthologies, which collected thematically organized patristic quotations in order to provide a set of arguments for a controversial purpose (Pani 2009: 143; Lane 1993: 71-93). Many elements let us assume that Luther's knowledge of Origen – if it existed at all – depended only on such compilations and relied essentially on the traditional image of the Alexandrian as it was transmitted from Late Antiquity, especially by (the late) Jerome and further developed during the Middle Ages.

Regardless, Luther was able (at least in the first years of his literary activity) to found his argument on the writings of the Fathers, referring to their authority to sustain his own opinions, exactly like the Catholics did. Many polemic writings testify to this common practice, and it is not rare to read Origen's name there, often within lists of authorities. In such a context, when passages from the Fathers are quoted, they are usually extrapolated from their original background and very probably derived from the patristic anthologies mentioned above. Accordingly, a real confrontation with Origen's exegesis or theology cannot be found here, neither on the Lutheran nor on the Catholic side (e.g., Villani 2012: 251-3). The only exception is provided by the famous literary debate between Erasmus and Luther on the free versus slave will, where the Fathers, and Origen in particular, played a central role (Bertrand 2012). Urged by many of his Catholic friends, in 1524 Erasmus wrote the treatise *De libero arbitrio diatribé sive collatio*, to which Luther opposed one year later his *De servo arbitrio Martini Lutheri ad D. Erasmum Roterodamum*. Another contribution of this handbook is dedicated to Erasmus (see Scheck above) and will not be treated here in detail. We should nevertheless notice that, thanks to him, Luther was compelled to cope with Origen's theology and exegesis. Indeed, in his treatise Erasmus followed Origen (though not mentioning him very often) as a model both in the structure, presenting a similar double series of biblical quotations which affirm or deny human free will, and in the exegesis of such quotations, whose apparent inconsistencies are harmonized in order to show how God and human beings cooperate in the history of salvation (Godin 1982: 469-70). In *Peri Archon* and *Commentary on Romans* Origen had already collected and explained almost all biblical passages cited by Erasmus, who resorts to Origen's exegesis copiously, only with the exclusion of the heretical doctrines, such as the preexistence of souls (Walter 2012: 173-80; Godin 1982: 469-89). As a result, Erasmus' position sounds very similar to Origen's: no passage in the Bible really denies human free will, which on the contrary acts together with the grace of God. Indeed, the causes of man's salvation are

grace and human will; the former being the first cause, and the latter the second cause. In order to meet Luther half way, Erasmus reduced the relevance of free will from what can be read in the writings of Origen, while nevertheless following much of Origen's general intention and specific interpretations.

In his response Luther denied his opponent's theological competence, refuted Erasmus' biblical interpretations item by item, and rejected the allegorical exegesis through which Erasmus interpreted the biblical passages concerning free will. This method allowed Erasmus to emphasize the notion of human free will establishing the image of a primarily merciful God, which Luther did not accept, thinking that this idea originates in human pride and is nothing but a comfortable way to escape divine justice as it is clearly expressed in the Holy Scripture (Terracciano 2012: 138; 159). For him, the human will is enslaved, as sin has completely erased freedom. God in his omnipotence does not need any human cooperation to save mankind.

Apparently Luther did not grasp the Origenian structure lying behind Erasmus' argumentation in its entirety. For this reason he restricted himself to attacking the Alexandrian only when he found a direct mention of Origen in the writing of Erasmus (Walter 2012: 181). The criticism is focused on exegesis and touches upon the major doctrines of Scripture alone and the clarity of Scripture. In an interesting passage, while reminding Erasmus about their agreement to argue only by Scripture, Luther expresses a very negative judgment of the hermeneutics of Jerome and Origen, employing this argument to support the need of arguing only by Scripture: "In any case, we have an agreement that we are willing to fight each other, not by appealing to the authority of any doctor, but by that of Scripture alone. Who are these Origens and Jeromes, then, that Diatribe, forgetting our compact, throws at us? For hardly any of the ecclesiastical writers have handled the Divine Scriptures more

ineptly and absurdly than Origen and Jerome" (WA 18, 703,24-8 = AE 33, 167). In another passage Luther uses the methodological argument of the *claritas Scripturarum* against his opponent, arguing that for a text as clear as the Bible there is no need of any spiritual or allegorical interpretation, which is ironically and at the same time contemptuously defined as a bagatelle (*nuga*): "But is there any wonder that the Scriptures are obscure [...] when you are allowed to play about with them as if you wanted to make a Virgilian patchwork out of them? That is what you call solving problems, and removing difficulties by means of an 'explanation'. But it was Jerome and his Origen who filled the word with such trifles, and set this pestilent example of not paying attention to the simplicity of the Scriptures" (WA 18, 734,22-735,3 = AE 33, 213). Origen's allegorical explanations of Scripture are for Luther no more than trifles, fruits of the pestilent habit of going beyond the simple and clear biblical sense. The Alexandrian is accused of playing with Scripture, i.e. of not interpreting it with the necessary gravity and reverence, and of neglecting the literal meaning. As we can see, the main points of Luther's criticism against Origen are very well expressed in the debate against Erasmus.

On a methodological level, if in such passages Luther seems to refer to and attack Origen directly, his confrontation is nevertheless mediated by Erasmus. He never investigates Erasmus' sources autonomously, nor is he interested in the specific exegesis of Origen. Rather, he is content with deriding the detested allegorical method and its "inventor", whose biggest guilt was to dislike biblical simplicity and clearness (Pani 2009: 147).

From the viewpoint of the history of Origenism, if Erasmus gave Luther an opportunity to become a bit more familiar with Origen and his theological optimism, then the Reformer missed the occasion. Hostile to Origen's spiritual exegesis already before the debate, his not well informed image of the Alexandrian was not subjected to change afterwards. His old prejudices are even strengthened by

the dispute with the "new Origen" represented by Erasmus. Luther remained completely insensitive to Origen's theological suggestions. On the contrary, he followed the dominant pessimistic anthropology typical of Augustine with its radicalization of human sin and divine grace (Lettieri 2000: 308).

Origen from Wittenberg to Strasbourg: Philipp Melanchthon and Martin Bucer

Most of the other Reformers shared Luther's judgment, as the case of Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560) proves. Still appreciating and often referring to Origen in his *Lectures on Matthew* of 1519/1520, where Scripture is not rarely interpreted by means of allegory, from the summer of 1520 on Melanchthon started criticizing him, for example for his incorrect understanding of the Pauline concept of *littera* as the literal or historical meaning of Scripture (Schär 1979: 265).[12] Already in 1521 – at the same time when Luther fixed his opinion on the Church Fathers – Melanchthon expressed, in the preface to the *Loci communes*, his most negative judgment on the Alexandrian, attacking and mocking his allegories and the excessive influence of philosophy in his theology (Pani 2009: 139-40; Fraenkel 1961: 30; 86-90).[13] These allegations, which recur again and again in Melanchthon's writings, are the same as Luther's critiques of Origen. In regards to the theological content, however, Melanchthon's criticism is more specific than Luther's. At least in his *Commentary on Romans* (1532) the Reformer shows himself to know Origen much better than his master and, indeed, he is willing to discuss Origen's interpretations of Pauline passages – something which Luther never did. Also in the section devoted to Origen in the programmatic work *De autoritate Ecclesiae et erroribus Patrum* (or *De ecclesia et de autoritate verbi Dei*, 1539)[14] Melanchthon, after a short reference to Origen's *prodigiosos errores*, namely the series of worlds and the salvation of the devil,[15] focuses almost exclusively on Paul's interpretation. Even if in these

works he is disposed to admit that in some passages Origen interpreted correctly the justification by faith, nevertheless he adds that the Father, immediately after, corrupted the good interpretation he had provided.[16] Even more often, however, Melanchthon blames Origen's doctrine of justification (Meijering 1983: 74-9). In his monograph on the reception of Origen's doctrine of justification Thomas P. Scheck has dedicated a deep analysis to Melanchthon, showing how, in his opinion, Origen failed in the interpretation of Paul's message, precisely in his doctrine of justification by faith alone, as expressed in Romans 3:28 ("we maintain a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law"), which is also the core of the gospel. Origen read this verse as a synecdoche, which is for Melanchthon just a trick to introduce human works into Paul's view on justification, so that his interpretation is repeatedly qualified as absurd (*ridiculum*).[17] Furthermore Origen, pointing out the continuity between the Old and New Testaments several times, failed to grasp the fundamental distinction between law and gospel, missing thus another significant point of Paul's message.

An even wider allegation has been directed at Origen by Melanchthon first in the *Funeral Oration for Luther* (1546), then in the *Oration on Luther and the Ages of the Church* (1548) and then inserted into the *Life of Luther* (1548). Here the Reformer, following the same intent we have seen in Luther's preface to his German edition of Revelation and even going far beyond it, sketches a short Church history, divided into four periods which follow the Apostolic era. The first of these periods, the *aetas Origenica*, is portrayed as a dark time, in which the pure message of the gospel begins to be deteriorated by the influence of philosophy, which is clearly assimilated to a false doctrine (Pouderon 2013/14: 21), and by the neglect of the literal sense of Scripture due to the excessive regress to allegory (Scheck 2008: 177-83; Fraenkel 1961: 86-90). Origen here is depicted as the corruptor of the original Christian message, the source of Pelagius' errors, and the very starting point of the Church's decadence. In the following *aetas*, Augustine reformed the Church for the first time, opposing the doctrines of Origen and Pelagius. Nevertheless, during the third era,

marked by monasticism and scholasticism, Christian doctrine was corrupted once more and transformed into philosophy. Finally Luther, assuming the role of a true prophet, in the fourth *aetas* reformed it anew and brought the Church back to its pristine pre-Origenian period. The parallelism Augustine/Luther fighting against Origen and his monastic heritage allows one to see the Reformation as a process of "de-Origenizing" the Church, i.e. of purifying it from the errors and impurities introduced by the Alexandrian Father. In this sense, it is not inappropriate to speak of Origen as "the archenemy of the Reformation" (Terracciano 2012: 161). What needs to be pointed out once again is the fact that the Reformers introduced a new allegation into the history of Origen's reception: the Alexandrian is no more – or at least not primarily – criticized for his traditionally heretical doctrines (e.g., apokatastasis or preexistence of souls), but rather for his allegorical hermeneutics as much as for his incorrect interpretation of Paul and in particular of his *Epistle to the Romans*.

In the complex world of the Reformation, however, other thinkers were willing to look at Origen less harshly than Luther or Melanchthon did. The most interesting case is perhaps offered by the Reformer of Strasbourg, Martin Bucer (1491-1551), a great admirer of Erasmus at his young age, who was later conquered by Luther and moved consequently into the Reformation party (Villani 2016). Contrary to the experience of Luther, the Fathers of the Church seem not to have been relevant for Bucer's theological and spiritual formation or for his choice to abandon the Dominican order and to embrace the Reformation. In his texts, the role of the Fathers became more significant, starting with some public disputes in the 1520s, and their presence becomes truly remarkable in the *Commentary on Romans* published in 1536.[18] There, patristic sources are systematically discussed in a separate section and the author seems even to be striving to reproduce a sort of *consensus patrum*, a goal which was normally followed exclusively by the Catholics. Without accepting them every time or considering them as authoritative *per se*, the interpretations of the Fathers are

nevertheless always regarded by Bucer worthy of being discussed, and sometimes he examines them quite profoundly. This is also true for Origen: although in the preface of the commentary the readers are warned of the danger of reading Origen's writings without possessing the necessary theological expertise, on the following pages he is nevertheless a constant reference and a valuable interlocutor both for historical topics and for exegetical issues. For instance, Origen's understanding of the verb *iustificari* (δικαιοῦσθαι) is presented as perfectly compatible with Bucer's own exegesis and similar to Augustine's opinion.[19] Accordingly, Bucer's commentary considers a typical idea for the Reformation, namely the exclusion of human works from the process of justification, to be a doctrine shared by both the Reformers and the two great Fathers, whose positions were typically considered to be opposed. The Reformer of Strasbourg, who sometimes criticizes Origen's excessive inclination towards allegory,[20] still strives, however, to have him at his side when central issues are concerned. It is not by chance that Origen is repeatedly quoted in the section dedicated to the exegesis of Romans 3:20-28 and presented by Bucer as a genuine supporter of justification by faith alone (Terracciano 2012: 266-7),[21] in an obvious disagreement with Melanchthon's position (see above).

To conclude, we can notice that Bucer, representing a rare exception in the reformed panorama, was not only willing to read Origen without prejudice, although with a critical eye, but was also inspired to enrich his own exegesis with the provocative and challenging interpretations of the "master of allegories". It would be interesting to investigate whether – and to what extent – Bucer's attitude is owed to Erasmus' influence.

Origen in the Renaissance

In Renaissance humanism the revival of patristic literature was one of the goals pursued by intellectuals. During the 15th century various historical events contributed to the promotion of a new interest in the longtime neglected texts of Greek pagan and Christian antiquity among cultivated people. Many Byzantine and Western theologians came together in Italy to take part in the ecumenical council of Ferrara and Florence (1438-39), which was convoked with the intention of reunifying the Roman Church and Greek Orthodoxy (Geanakoplos 1989). They scrutinized the writings of the Fathers, looking for authorities to support their own views presented in the assembly. Furthermore, after the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans (1453) many Greek scholars converged in the West, bringing along their Hellenistic cultural background and making it available to their western colleagues, whose chance to learn Greek was then strongly increased (Wilson 1992). By coming back to the ancient pagan and Christian sources, humanists founded a new understanding of culture, education, and religion simultaneously rejecting the old Medieval tradition marked by scholasticism. Among the first humanists, Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439), a Camaldolese monk, devoted his entire life to discover and collect patristic manuscripts and to provide Latin translations of the Greek Fathers. With his activity he tended to promote a wider diffusion of patristic literature as well as to support a reform of monastic and religious life based on patristic spirituality (Stinger 1977). Traversari discovered the *Homilies on Luke* in Rome and attributed to Origen the *Homilies on Isaiah*, which he found in a manuscript at Montecassino (Terracciano 2012: 35-6; Schär 1979: 91-2). Also cardinal Basilius Bessarion (1403-1472), whose role at the Florentine council was of primary importance, and around whom in the following years many Greek émigrés gathered, possessed manuscripts of Origen's texts (e.g. of *PArch* and *CCels*) and admired them, at least at first (Terracciano 2012: 36-7; Schär 1979: 97-9).

These two leading figures of the humanistic movement, both familiar with Origen and promoters of a broader diffusion of his writings, can well introduce the chapter on Origenism in the Renaissance.

Worth noting is the fact that, unlike the Reformers, Renaissance humanists were not interested in Origen's exegesis but rather in deepening his speculative thought, seen as the first attempt at combining Christian doctrine and Platonic philosophy. The latter was considered not as a potential corruption of the biblical message but rather as an essential part of a new complex theological system including the old religious wisdoms of the Egyptians and Chaldeans and the Cabalistic as well as the Hermetic traditions, in addition to Christian doctrines. In such a context, many Renaissance thinkers felt a special affinity for Origen's unequivocal optimism regarding human potential. The Alexandrian Father thus became one of the most favored ancient Christian thinkers for Renaissance Platonists and an inspiring source for their new anthropology (Nodes 1999: 52).

Origen in Florence: Matteo Palmieri, Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

Matteo Palmieri (1406-1475), a Florentine politician and humanist familiar with Traversari, was surely a forerunner of such a new approach to Origen. In his poem *Città di vita*, composed between 1455 and 1464 and inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Palmieri describes his journey in the netherworld under the guidance of the Cumaean Sibyl (Mita Ferraro 2005: 353-419). In this theological poem some of the most specific Origenian ideas appear, like the predominance of human free will along with some of Origen's heretical doctrines, the preexistence of souls or the fall of angels (Terracciano 2012: 38-45; 105-11; Carpetto 1984: 114-16). For suspicion of heresy the poem was never published or circulated apart from its handwritten form. A few years after Palmieri's death, the connection between him and Origen started to be discerned, although the name of the Father does not appear explicitly in the poem (Mita Ferraro 2005: 419-78). Nevertheless, the influence of Palmieri in Florentine circles was not irrelevant. Some scholars even hypothesized that through the mediation of Palmieri's poem Michelangelo inserted Origenian elements in his frescos on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (Cumbo 2006: 96-100; Wind 1983: 50).

The very turning point in the history of Origenism is undoubtedly marked by the intellectual activity of the Platonic Academy in Florence with its main representatives, Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. While Palmieri never mentioned Origen explicitly and tried to hide his presence behind the lines of the poem, Ficino (1433-1499), the Neo-Platonic philosopher protégé of Cosimo de' Medici and head of the Academy, does not only refer often and openly to the Alexandrian Father ("our Origen")[22] but rather he praises him, e.g. as a "man of impressive life and doctrine".[23] Ficino's opinion differs drastically from the previous judgments of Origen in the belief that his greatness is not diminished by being a Platonic thinker, but rather is founded on that fact. With pride, Ficino once defined Origen as *Platonicus nobilissimus*[24] as well as *Platonicus excellentissimus* along with Ps. Dionysius the Areopagite and Augustine.[25] On the other hand, Ficino also calls him *Christianissimus Origenes*.[26] These different definitions allow one to grasp Ficino's image of Origen, namely that of a perfect representative of a movement which strives to harmonize Platonism and Christianity in a philosophical-religious synthesis, the former being the perfect philosophy which can implement the latter, the perfect religion. In this view, Platonism and Christianity are regarded as compatible mindsets originating from a common source, the *prisca theologia* (Fürst 2015a: 52-3; Edelheit 2008: 205-6).

This holds true if we remain at Ficino's general statements on Origen – but can the same be proven by a look at single elements of his doctrine which testify to the closeness between the Father and the Renaissance thinker? As a premise, we can notice that, in Ficino's texts, we find uniquely the speculative thinker, not the exegete, as the quotations themselves, coming almost exclusively from *Peri Archon* and *Contra Celsum*, prove. The scholarship on Origen's reception, however, warned of the danger of overestimating Origen's relevance for Ficino: if compared with Neoplatonists like Plotinus, Porphyry, or Proclus, he played a minor role as a source for Ficino's thought, nor is

Origen quoted as often as Augustine. Already some decades ago, E. Wind wrote in this regard: "And in the Platonic Academy the adoption of Origen merely added one more exotic figure to an assembly that already included Hermes Trismegistos and Zoroaster. Ficino's admirable powers of assimilation were never impeded by a gift for analysis" (Wind 1983: 52). This opinion has been confirmed by the most important study on the fortune of Origen (Schär 1979: 110) and is still today the most affirmed one among the scholars (Leinkauf 2015: 117). That Ficino's interest in Origen was derived from the Platonic background of Origen's theology is an obvious fact which should not be neglected. At the same time, however, this does not imply that Ficino did not really know and appreciate the Church Father or look at his works as a source of inspiration. For example, recent analysis of some manuscripts which were read and annotated by Ficino, like the *Laurenziano San Marco 609* containing *Peri Archon*, testify to his intense and first-hand work on Origen's text (Gentile 2000: 108-10). The passages marked by Ficino on the margins of the manuscript recur also in his writings, especially in the *Platonic Theology*, revealing thus that the reading of Origen's writings aroused in Ficino a true interest in his thought. An analysis of these notes made by Terracciano (2012: 47-9) identifies free will, Trinitarian doctrine and the connected subordinationism, and the identity of the God of the Old and New Testament as some of the main Origenian points Ficino took interest in. Furthermore, it is worth noticing that Ficino strives to offer the image of a perfectly orthodox Origen: for example, his subordinationism is presented in a very moderate version and the dialectic and not dogmatic character of Origen's reflections is underlined (an argument used already in Antiquity by Rufinus and which will be a fundamental point in Pico's apology). Furthermore, the mentions and quotations of Origen in other writings (e.g. the *Commentaria in Plotinum*) seem to reveal Ficino's attempt to release Origen from the more dangerous allegation addressed to him, namely that of supporting metempsychosis. Considered together, all these elements show how Ficino aimed at making Origen acceptable for Christian orthodoxy, probably in order to include him among the representatives of the Christian and (Neo-) Platonic philosophical-religious system he was elaborating on the basis of the *prisca theologia*, the

original source of every religious tradition (Terracciano 2012: 49). Also an extensive examination of the similarities between Origen and Ficino on various topics like the transmigration of souls, the image of the netherworld and of the eternal punishments and the condition of the resurrected body confirm that Origen's influence on the Florentine philosopher (at least on eschatological topics) was not as superficial as normally assumed by scholars (Terracciano: 50-74; Nodes 1999: 54; contra Leinkauf 2015: 119-34; Schär 1979: 109-11). Maybe it is not only a general affinity, due to the common Platonic interest, which connected Ficino to Origen (Leinkauf 2015: 118; Fürst 2015a: 51-3), and the head of the Platonic Academy should be considered – in contrast to Schär's judgment (1979: 111) – more than only a forerunner for a following revival of Origen, in which he would not participate.

Conversely, no doubt clouds the presence of Origen in the writings and in the thought of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494). In December 1486 the young count of Mirandola and Concordia published his 900 philosophical and theological theses (*Conclusiones nongentae*) with the intention of discussing them publically in Rome the following January. The discussion should have been introduced by the famous oration *About the Dignity of Man* (*Oratio de hominis dignitate*). It was however never pronounced (and was published only posthumously) since Pope Innocent VIII inhibited such a public discussion and established a commission to verify the orthodoxy of Pico's writing. Thirteen of these theses were declared as heretical or suspected of heresy by the papal commission. Pico replyed by composing in a few days an apology, published in May 1487. The pope did not appreciate Pico's defense and started an inquisitorial process against him. As a result of these contrasts, at the end of 1487 the *Conclusiones* were condemned en bloc and Pico was sentenced to prison. In February 1488 the count escaped to France where he was arrested. Some months later, he came back to Florence where Lorenzo de Medici took him under his protection and he was able to devote himself to philosophical and religious studies. The dispute with Rome came

to a definitive conclusion only in 1493, when the new Pope Alexander VI absolved Pico totally (Fürst 2015b: 197-200).

Among the theses condemned as suspected of heresy one reads: "It is more rational to believe that Origen is saved, than to believe that he is damned".[27] With such a statement, as clear as it was provocative, Pico put forward his opinion on a long-standing debate about Origen's salvation, which arose in the Middle Ages and lasted until the 17th century. The matter in dispute was: how is it possible that a Christian as virtuous and erudite as Origen could have supported many heretical doctrines, have been condemned by the Church, and suffer eternal punishments in hell? According to a story reported by the Byzantine monk John Moschus, Origen had been seen burning in the hellfire, while, on the contrary, many Medieval authors believed that he had not even been condemned, and some nuns, referring to visions they had from Mary or God, confirmed Origen's salvation (Fürst 2015b: 200-7). The extensive contribution to such debate exposed by Pico in his *De salute Origenis disputatio*, the longest section of the *Apology*, should be placed in this context. There the count defended his thesis on Origen, which the papal censors have esteemed to be "rash and blameworthy and smacking of heresy and contrary to the declaration of the universal Church."[28] In order to prove the contrary, Pico wrote a passionate and erudite text, although not without inaccuracies. Relying to a great extent on ancient sources like Pamphilus and Eusebius, Jerome and Rufinus and many others, Pico starts by presenting the issue of Origen's questionable orthodoxy. After having mentioned the principal critiques addressed to him by his opponents Pico replies by adducing Origenian texts by which his orthodoxy on such topics can be proved. Only the preexistence of souls is considered by Pico as doctrinally unacceptable. Origen is, however, justified also for this doctrine, since at his time – as Pico notices with remarkable historical awareness – the Church had not yet pronounced a clear and official statement on the origins of souls (Scheck 2008: 160-1; Crouzel 1977: 41). Pico reports furthermore the idea, which dates back to

Rufinus, that Origen's writings have been interpolated by heretics or enemies (Crouzel 1977: 46-52). Developing another suggestion from Rufinus (who derived it from Pamphilus), he points out that Origen did not propose his opinions in a dogmatic manner but always in a careful hypothetical and scholarly manner,[29] indirectly advocating the opportunity to do unrestricted theological research (Terracciano 2012: 89-91; Crouzel 1977: 55). Moreover, to condemn someone as heretic, Pico continues, he should have supported heretical doctrines willingly and pertinaciously, which is not true in the case of Origen. Even if Origen had committed mortal sins, he repented at the end of his life, according to Jerome's witness. As a result, he cannot be viewed as a heretic nor be considered to be damned (Crouzel 1977: 71). Pico was however aware that the Church had already condemned Origen as heretic. Should it then follow that he had also been damned by God to eternal punishment? Against the positive answer offered by the pontifical commission, Pico replies that the Church has condemned Origen's doctrines and opinions, or possibly Origen as theologian, but not Origen's soul. The final destiny of a soul is a question which should be left solely to God. Accordingly, unless confirmed by a special revelation from God, it is impossible to know for certain whether someone has been condemned to hell or not. Finally, even if the Church declared that Origen's soul has been condemned, Christians are not obliged to believe it for such an opinion does not pertain to the essence of the faith. (Crouzel 1977: 73-5; Scheck 2008: 161).

When compared with the Medieval disquisitions on Origen's destiny, Pico's originality stands out immediately. The incipit of the thesis itself, *rationabilius*, "it is more rational (or reasonable)", emphasizes reason as the principle according to which the issue on Origen's salvation should be treated and thus shows the modernity of Pico while simultaneously highlighting his spiritual affinity to the Alexandrian (Fürst 2015b: 209-11). This was probably the cause of the sudden and aggressive reaction from the Roman Curia. Furthermore, while at first glance Pico's *Apology* seems only to illustrate a narrow historic-theological debate, it actually constitutes an extraordinary document in

which the more questioned among Origen's doctrines are openly discussed and defended as orthodox (Fürst 2015b: 224). With this text Pico has shown a high level of spiritual autonomy and intellectual freedom, thus paving the way for the following development of the idea of tolerance (Fürst 2015b: 235; Schär 1979: 135). Furthermore, although in this point there is no general consensus (see e.g. Craven 1981: 62) many Pico and Origen scholars believe that with the apology of Origen Pico was aiming at defending himself (e.g. Fürst 2015: 211-12 and n. 72 with previous literature). Albeit not supported by strong evidence, it is an intriguing hypothesis that Pico, during the papal process against him and while writing the apology for Origen, perceived a similarity between his own destiny and that of Origen, identifying himself with the Alexandrian Father (Pico, *De salute Origenis disputatio* 50 and Bastitta Harriet 2011).

While in the *Apology* Pico's Origenism can be seen in continuity with the ancient advocates of Origen like Pamphilus or Rufinus, other texts testify to a different kind of reception, namely the interest in Origen as a speculative thinker. Already some notes written by Pico (probably in 1484-85) in the margins of a manuscript of *Peri Archon* give evidence that heterodox doctrines like the preexistence of souls or the apokatastasis captured his attention (Gentile 2000: 104 and 111-12; Terracciano 2012: 175-6). Pico's philosophical writings then show the influence of the Alexandrian Father on his thinking. For example, some of the essential topics and some minor ideas from the oration *On the Dignity of Man* bear an undeniable analogy to the reflections developed by Origen in *Peri Archon* on the same issues. In the oration, the most characteristic thesis set forth by Pico is the indeterminacy of humans in the universe. Speaking in the first person, God tells Adam – as a representative of mankind – that he had placed him in the middle of the world providing him with free choice so that he would be able to shape his own nature, which was not already predefined. Accordingly, humans are able to move upwards, becoming like angels and even like God but also downwards becoming similar to animals. Similarly, Origen tirelessly emphasizes the eminence of

human free choice and will, through which humans can fashion their own nature according to their moral behavior (Mahoney 1994: 362-72; Wind 1983: 44). In this respect, "a general similarity between Pico's conception of the indeterminacy of humans according to his *Oratio* and Origen's *De principiis*" (Mahoney 1994: 376) cannot be denied. Even more than a "general similarity", to place the higher dignity of man precisely in his capability of self-determination by means of his free will, corresponds perfectly with Origen's Christian metaphysics and anthropology (Fürst 2015a: 74-5; Kobusch 2015: 145-7). For Origen, as for Pico, man should strive throughout his life to proceed in spiritual progress, coming closer and closer to God (Fürst 2015a: 67-8). In addition, the ways that Pico proposes to reach such divinization, namely a moral formation and an intellectual education of the soul, can be easily compared to the pedagogy of Christian life developed by Origen (Fürst 2015a: 69-70).

The oration *On the Dignity of Man* is not the only text where Origen can be seen as a source of inspiration for Pico. In his commentary on Genesis, the *Heptaplus* (1488-89), Pico was inspired by Origen's theology as well as by his exegesis. For example, the idea of freedom as a dynamic self-creating power, which was only sketched in the oration, was elaborated more organically in the *Heptaplus* and further developed by adding new perspectives, e.g. by moving the focus from man to the whole cosmos (Hengstermann 2015: 163). Without going into detail about Pico's speculations, we can mention some of the common themes that Pico shared with Origen. Pico's hermeneutics, based on seven levels of biblical meaning, is nothing but a development of the Origenian doctrine of the four scriptural senses. It is not by chance that much of the exegesis proposed by Pico has parallels in Origen's understanding of Genesis (Fürst 2015a: 82-3). In the seventh book of the *Heptaplus* the typically Origenian doctrine of apokatastasis appears. Furthermore, Pico drafts here a doctrine of the grace of God completely in Origenian terms, which is contrary to the dominant Augustinian view (Fürst 2015a: 88-9). To conclude, it is interesting to observe that in Pico's

Genesis commentary Origen seems to be considered as a witness of the esoteric tradition represented by the Cabbala, an idea which assures him of Pico's long-lasting interest. The Alexandrian Father, who was in contact with Jews and inspired by Jewish wisdom, testifies that the Cabbala contains veiled truths which are not opposed to the Christian message but rather confirm it and even expand its understanding (Terracciano 2012: 97-101). The renewal of Origen's anthropology and metaphysics of freedom, as Fürst defined Pico's enterprise (2015a: 74-5; 97-8), as well as the historical rehabilitation of the person of Origen contained in his *Apology* – both signs of a remarkable "theological optimism" (Nodes 1999: 56) – did not end abruptly with the condemnation of Pico's theses as it has been argued (Schär 1979: 142-3), but offered many arguments and many stimulating impulses to Origen's later admirers such as Manutius, Merlin, and even, through the English humanist John Colet, Erasmus (Scheck 2008: 161).

Origen between Venice and Paris: Francesco Giorgi Veneto and the debate Merlin vs Béda

The observations on the cabbalistic interest in Pico's *Heptaplus* brings us to consider another author who is suitable for discovering the presence of Origenism in the Renaissance and who is normally not taken into consideration. The Franciscan friar Francesco Giorgi Veneto (1466-1540) is the author of the treatise *De harmonia mundi* (1525), an encyclopedic work which depicts the universe as a musical harmony and where a great number of doctrines of very different origin, like Hermetism, Platonism, and Cabbalism are mixed together with Christian ideas (Yates 1979: 34). Although published in 1525 in a time marked by the religious polemics following the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, the treatise exhibits many elements derived from the philosophical and religious experiences of Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, such as the centrality of man in the universe, the relevance of human free will, and the search for the *prisca theologia*. This is the

context in which the numerous references to Origen made by the Franciscan should be read. For Giorgi, the Alexandrian is essentially a custodian of the ancient and mysterious wisdom who, in his exegesis, has explained the obscure and veiled message of Scripture (Terracciano 2012: 184). Thus he turns to him as to a Christian authority quoted to support some of his own spiritual interpretations of biblical passages. Like in the works of Pico, in the pages of *De harmonia mundi* Jewish and Origenian exegesis often appear together as sources for Giorgi's biblical understanding. This was possible because Giorgi shared the same conception of the Bible with Origen and with Jewish wisdom as a text in which the truth is hidden by a veil and consequently needs an exoteric interpretation to be unveiled (Terracciano 2012: 206-7). Already at the beginning of the treatise on the cosmic harmony Giorgi writes that Origen's works contain Platonic as well as Jewish doctrines (*De harmonia mundi* I,2,7), and the number of Origenian quotations in the whole work is impressive. Remarkable above all is that, compared with *Peri Archon* or *Contra Celsum*, there is a huge amount of space given to Origen's exegetical works, mostly on the Old Testament, like the homilies on Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and the commentary on the Canticle, and sometimes also on the New Testament, such as the commentaries on Matthew and Romans. The audacious interpretations proposed by Origen in his Old Testament exegesis help Giorgi to discover symbols and hidden meanings in the Bible by which he can explain the cosmic harmony. Moreover, the presence of the Alexandrian is not limited to doctrinally unquestioned topics but permeates also the sections devoted to problematic issues like Christology, Trinitarian doctrine, angelology, and even the potential final redemption of the whole mankind (Terracciano 2012: 208-9; 223).

If we move beyond the Alps we will observe that Origen's reception on Renaissance authors of North European countries was deeply characterized by the image of the Alexandrian shaped by Erasmus (see Scheck above). A French dispute during the 1520s can offer another example of how the figure of Origen was capable of raising strong sympathies or aggressive repulsion. In 1512 the

first complete edition of Origen's works surviving in Latin appeared in Paris, edited by Jacques Merlin, containing also an apology which was very favorable to the Alexandrian (see below). One decade later, the syndic of the theological faculty of the Sorbonne University, Noël Béda (ca. 1470-1537), started a long lasting dispute against Merlin and his edition with the intention to prohibit the publication of his Origen edition and of his *Apology for Origen* (Walker 1959: 109-11). After many years of polemic, including theological commissions established to study the case, petitions to the parliament and so on, the theological faculty approved Béda's position. His victory was, however, only apparent: Merlin was able to print his edition, which included the apology, again and again without difficulties making it a true editorial success. Béda's anti-Origenism did not diminish after this dispute and found a new victim in the father of the North European revival of Origen, namely Erasmus of Rotterdam (Terracciano 2012: 122).

The "printed Origen" at the beginning of Modern Era

A last question should be dealt here before concluding: which sources made Origen's revival at the beginning of the Modern Era possible? While during the Middle Ages only the Latin Origen was widespread, thanks to a copious number of manuscripts of the ancient Latin translations by Jerome and Rufinus, modern editions of the Greek texts did not flourish until the 17th century. In between massive editorial activity developed, starting in Rome in 1481 when Cristoforo Persona (1416-1485), prior of Santa Balbina on the Aventine hill and later chief librarian of the Vatican Library, published a Latin translation of *Contra Celsum* by Gerold Herolt (Villani 2013). This is the first modern translation of an Origenian Greek work and at the same time the first "printed Origen". Although the quality of the translation is discontinuous, it was often reprinted and included in the later complete editions of the Latin Origen up to Erasmus' edition in 1536 (the revised edition of Erasmus from 1557 replaced it with a new translation by Gelenius). Even though Persona's

translation did not derive from a specific interest in Origen but in a more general humanistic intent of diffusing ancient texts, the dedication to Pope Sixtus IV (other dedications – to the doge and the senate of Venice and to the emperor Ferdinand II of Aragon – also exist) proves to be particularly interesting for the history of Origenism. There, Origen is presented as a true hero of the Christian faith, which means that just five years before Pico's condemnation, the papal milieu had no concerns with the figure of the Alexandrian (Villani 2013: 28-30).

From that time onward editions of single Origenian works in Latin translation were published at an increasing rate. Venice was an important center for such editing activity. In 1503 Aldus Manutius (1449-1515) published an anonymous edition of Origen's Latin *Homilies on the Old Testament.* The publisher himself wrote the first prefatory letter, dedicated to the humanist and Augustinian friar Egidio da Viterbo (1469-1532), an admirer of Origen. Here Manutius adopted a halfway position towards Origen, to some extent defending him but also alluding to the traditional distich *Ubi bene nemo melius, ubi male nemo peius*, which reflects the more orthodox viewpoint of the Church. Differently, in a second anonymous preface which was probably composed by Jerome Aleander (1480-1542), the Alexandrian is openly praised with "an enthusiasm that is virtually boundless" (Scheck 2008: 163). In Venice 1506, Simon de Lueres (active between 1489 and 1520) published the *Commentary on Romans*, edited by the friar Theophilus Salodianus (Scheck 2008: 164-5). Again in the lagoon city, the publisher Lazaro de Soardi (ca. 1450-1517) printed many volumes with Origen's works (Schär 1979: 160-71). In 1513 a volume appeared containing a selection of homilies on the New as well as on the Old Testament (some of them however spurious), published with papal printing privilege without mention of the editor. In 1514 *Peri Archon* was released (together with Pamphilus' *Apology for Origen* and Rufinus' *On the falsification of the works of Origen*), under the editorship of Constantius Hyerothaeus, author also of a long and erudite preface where Origen is evaluated critically. While his doctrinal errors are mentioned and ascribed to Plato's influence, some of his doctrines are defended. In the same year *Contra Celsum* also

appeared with Persona's translation revised by the same Hyerothaeus. In this case a short preface was added which offers a much more positive image of Origen. These two different prefaces show once more that, if presented as a defender of the Christian faith, Origen could be distributed without concerns while to publish Origen's speculative works precautionary measures should still be taken. In 1516 Lazaro de Soardi completed his edition of Origen with a new volume of homilies on the Old and on the New Testament.

The knowledge of Origen's writings has already been increased thanks to the above mentioned first complete Latin edition composed by the Sorbonne theologian Jacques Merlin (1490-1541) which was published in four volumes by Jean Petit and Josse Bade, Paris 1512, with royal printing privilege (Scheck 2008: 165-8; Schär 1979: 191-208). When possible, Merlin collected Origen's texts from previous Italian editions, while for the still unedited titles, like *Peri Archon* and some homilies, he resorted to ancient manuscripts, though limiting himself to reproduce just one codex without collating further copies. Also in the case of this edition, the two prefaces offer interesting insights into the author's intent as well as his image of Origen. In the first preface Merlin, who himself was a passionate and esteemed preacher, praises Origen with enthusiastic and hyperbolic language, exalting the exegete as being able to uncover the mysteries of the Holy Scripture by destroying the veil of the letter and releasing its true meaning by means of allegories. Despite his enormous erudition and holiness of life – writes the French theologian – Origen was so mishandled during his lifetime and afterwards that he can be compared to the traveler of the parable of the Good Samaritan, who was robbed of everything, left on the road half dead by the thieves and neglected by a Levite and a priest going the same road. Merlin wanted to play the role of the Good Samaritan towards Origen, restoring him and letting him breathe enlivening French air. The second preface, at the beginning of the third volume, is actually an *Apology for Origen*, where Merlin aims to prove Origen's orthodoxy in all respects. He led a holy life, he died blameless, and his writings are totally

orthodox. Without bringing new arguments in comparison with the older defenses of Origen written by Rufinus and Pico, on which he relied, Merlin revealed himself as the most impassioned and audacious advocate that Origen had ever had. Merlin denied every doctrinal error which has been attributed to Origen, also presenting doctrines like the apokatastasis or the preexistence of souls as orthodox or as interpolations by heretics. Moreover, Merlin did not even mention Origen's condemnation in 553. By editing the writings of Origen, Merlin wished, as he himself poetically states, no less than to offer a morning star to the Church, in hopes that many people could hold them in their hands. Merlin's complete edition was reprinted many times (1515, 1519, 1522 etc.) becoming the basis of every following edition of Origen's writings and was not replaced until 1536 by the Basel edition compiled by Erasmus and Beatus Rhenanus.

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[1] Although normally considered as the founding event of protestant Reformation, there is a historiographic debate about the authenticity of the posting of Luther's thesis which arose from the 1960s and has continued to present: see V. Leppin, 'Lutherforschung am Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts'. Pages 19-34 in *Luther Handbuch.* Edited by A. Beutel. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010[2]. See especially pages 27-28.

[2] Cf. e.g. *Church Postil* (1522): WA 10,1, 582,3-7 = AE 52, 176.

[3] The rule is quoted by Martin Bucer: MBDS 4, 348 (cf. WA 59, 585,4787-4788).

[4] Luther, *Two Lenten Sermons*: WA 1, 269,34 = AE 51, 39.

[5] Cf. *Lectures on Genesis*: WA 42, 367,7-10; 12-14 = AE 2, 150.

[6] Cf. WA 6, 509,8-15 = AE 36, 30.

[7] WA 6, 562,23-26 = AE 36, 110.

[8] Cf. *Operationes in Psalmos* (1519-1521) on Ps. 22,19: WA 5, 644,2-18.

[9] Cf. *Answer to the Hyperchristian, Hyperspiritual and Hyperlearned Book by Goat Emser in Leipzig* (1521): WA 7, 650,21-34 = AE 39, 178-179.

[10] Cf. *Lecture on Galatians*: WA 40/1, 302,5.

[11] Cf. *Operationes in Psalmos*: WA 5, 644,2-18, esp. 5-10.

[12] Cf. Philipp Melanchthon, *Lectures on Romans* (1523), fol. 13r.

[13] Cf. StA 2/1, 4,38-5,3.

[14] Melanchthon inserted this text also in the second edition of his *Commentary on Romans* (1540) under the new title *De Ecclesia et autoritate verbi Dei*: cf. CR 15, 733-782 and StA 1, 324-386.

[15] StA 1, 334,1-5.

[16] Cf. *Commentary on Romans* (1540 edition), section *De Origene*, on Rm 14: CR 15, 749.

[17] Cf. e.g. *Commentary on Romans* (1532) ad Rm 3:28: StA 5, 118-119; or ad 4:28: StA 5, 128.

[18] *Metaphrases et enarrationes perpetuae Epistolarum D. Pauli Apostoli ... Tomus primus. Continens Metaphrasin et Enarrationem in Epistolam ad Romanos... per Martinum Bucerum*, Argentorati, Rihelium, M.D.XXVI (online at *The Digital Library of Classic Protestant Text*).

[19] Cf. Martin Bucer, *Commentary on Romans*, *preface* VIII (*Quo D. Paulus significatu usurpet verbum iustificari, et iustificatio*), f. 13.

[20] E.g. *Commentary on Romans* ad cap. III, f. 150.

[21] M. Bucer, *Commentary on Romans* ad cap. III, f. 213, with a quote from Orig. *ComRm* III,6(9).

[22] Marsilio Ficino, *Tractatus de Deo et anima vulgaris* (P.O. Kristeller. *Supplementum Ficinianum*. 2 Volumes. Florentiae: Olschki 1937. Volume 2: 147).

[23] M. Ficino, *De christiana religione* 7: *Origenes vir doctrina, vitaque apprime mirabilis...* (Op. 1, f. 72).

[24] M. Ficino, *De voluptate* 4 (Op. 1, f. 994).

[25] M. Ficino, *Theologia Platonica* V,13 (Op. 1, f. 147).

[26] M. Ficino, *In Plotinum* (Op. 2, f. 1663).

[27] *Rationabilius est credere Origenes esse salvum, quam credere ipsum esse damnatum*, thesis 4>29. from "Theological Conclusions Opposed to the Common Mode of Speaking": S. A. Farmer. *Syncretism in the West: Pico's 900 Theses (1486). The Evolution of Traditional Religious and Philosophical Systems*. Tempe, Ariz.: Medieval and Renaissance Text and Studies 1998, 434-435.

[28] Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *De salute Origenis disputatio* 1: *Dixerunt isti magistri, quod haec conclusio est temeraria et reprehendenda et haeresim sapiens et contra determinationem universalis ecclesiae*, quoted from the following critical edition: *Origenes Humanista. Pico della Mirandolas Traktat* De salute Origenis disputatio. Edited by A. Fürst and Ch. Hengstermann. Münster: Aschendorff 2015, 280,2-3.

[29] *De salute Origenis disputatio* 32: *… in illis scribendis neque dogmatice neque assertive, sed dubitative semper et inquisitive procedit* (*ibid*. 324,9-10).

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