New Europe College Yearbook 2008-2009

EVELINE CIOFLEC
ȘTEFAN COLCERIU
CHRISTIAN FERENCZ-FLATZ
NICOLAE GHEORGHIȚĂ
ALEXANDRU GICA
ADRIAN MURARU
ALEXANDRU SIMON
ANCA ȘINCAN
ATTILA SZIGETI
ADELA TOPLEAN

Editor: Irina Vainovski-Mihai

ISSN 1584-0298

New Europe College
Str. Plantelor 21
023971 Bucharest
Romania
www.nec.ro; e-mail: nec@nec.ro
Tel. (+4) 021.307.99.10, Fax (+4) 021. 327.07.74

ADRIAN MURARU

Born in 1973, in Roman

Ph.D., Al. I. Cuza University, Iasi, Romania (2000-2004)
Thesis: *Freedom in Origenian Writings*
Lecturer, Al. I. Cuza University, Department of Philosophy, Iasi, Romania
Editor, Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, Romania

IKY scholarship, University of Ioannina, Greece (2002 – 2004)
Research visit, Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan (March-September 2004)
ICR scholarship, University of Ioannina, Greece (September-December 2006; February-May 2007)
ICR scholarship, L'Ecole Français d'Athènes, Athens, Greece (June 2007)
KU stipendium, Konstanz University, Germany (July 2007)
Research visit, University of Ioannina, Greece (October-December 2007; February-May 2008)

Studies and articles: philosophy, classical philology, theology (main topic of research: Late Antiquity)

Research Projects: Translation of the origenian interpretation on Hexateuch (all extant Homelies, Commentaries, and Scholia)

NURC Research Grant (Romania): *Origen: Foundations of the European Philosophical Space (Interpretation on the Bilingual Annotated Corpus of the Origenian Interpretation of the Hexateuch)*

NURC Research Grant (Romania): *Thomas of Aquinas: Mediaeval Foundations of Modern Philosophical Thought*

NURC Research Grant (Romania): *Linguistic Resources in electronic Format: Monumenta Linguae Dacoromanorum. Biblia 1688: Regum I, Regum II*

Coordinator of the collection *The Christian Tradition* (Tradiția creștină), Polirom Publishing House, Romania

Member of editorial board of *Chora - Revue d'etudes anciennes et medievales*, Polirom Publishing House, Romania

Translated and annotated volumes:

Origen, *Omilii, comentarii și adnotări la Geneza* (Homilies, Commentaries, and Scholia on Genesis, bilingual edition), ediție bilingvă (studiu introductiv, traducere și note), *Tradiția crestină* Collection, no. 1, Polirom, 2006

Origen, *Omilii și adnotări la Exod* (Homilies and Scholia on Exodus, bilingual edition), ediție bilingvă (studiu introductiv, traducere și note), *Tradiția creștină* Collection, no. 2, Polirom, 2006

Origen, *Omilii și adnotări la Levitic* (Homilies and Scholia on Leviticus, bilingual edition), ediție bilingvă (studiu introductiv, traducere și note), colecția *Tradiția creștină* Collection, no. 3, Polirom, 2006

ORIGENIAN INTERPRETATION UPON NUMBERS: CONTEXT AND SPIRITUAL EXEGESIS. THEORETICAL ARGUMENTS FOR AN ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION

The discussion regarding the Origenian exegesis, its spiritual layer, founded on the allegorical procedure, is one as venerable as it is irrelevant, perhaps, for a modern man.[1] And at a close look, even the advantage given by its venerable character transforms into disadvantage. Not only the modern bibliography of the subject casts in temerity any attempt of clarification (when the author does not reproduce, cacophonously, previous results), not only the delicate situation of Origen's literary work (kept mostly in Latin translation and not in the original Greek), but also the scale through which, inevitably, the Alexandrian author is read.

The Medieval interlude, in which Origen has been read, quoted, copied, imitated, gives us a great mystic, a good exegete of the Bible, an admirable preacher. In opposition, modernity discovers a systematic Origen, a thinker who lays the basis of Christian Dogmatic, who adds to the biblical, Judaic element, the specifically Greek rationality.[2] So that, the two competitive figures, 'Origen the mystic' and 'Origen the scholar' can be found in the current bibliography, being mixed in different proportions. Naturally, some Origenian subjects are preferentially attached to Origen the 'mystic' (ascetic advices identified in the literary work that has been kept, elements of applied ethics), and others can rather be found in the lot of Origen 'the scholar' (the problem of freedom, of intratrinitarian relations). Predictably, the discussions around these different subjects are limited: the Origenian asceticism, for example, is regarded from the perspective of Christian theories (unfortunately subsequent) of a life spent in spiritual struggle, while the Origenian trinitarian doctrine, for example, is reconstructed following Middle-Platonic and Neo-Platonic models.

The Origenian exegesis, from the perspective of its belonging to these 'types' of explanation ('theological' or 'philosophical') is rather approached from a 'theological' angle: being part of a history of Christian

allegory, the Origenian exegesis has a privileged position, as being the first complex, explicit, and theorized interpretation. Of course, the necessary contextualization compels to a broader discussion: the allegorical 'Greek' tradition is often mentioned when there is a discussion about the spiritual interpretation, the allegorical tradition being already very consistent in Origen's time, there are sometimes discussions about the allegorized procedures and methods from the Judaic area, often in order to remark similarities, which may explain the Origenian interpretation. The aim of the research is, most of the times, that of building up some filiations to explain Origen's exegetic model. The confidence in the 'genetic' explanation, in spite of the risks thus assumed, exhausts the issue of Origenian allegory. The circumstances of the research (which often practice the arbitrary selection of sources, which survived most of the times randomly, debatable dating, comparisons which cannot support themselves in a geographic, linguistic, cultural context) seem to be eluded by research and a subject, once it is 'settled' in an area, can hardly transcend its limits.

In this frequently simplified scenery, the allegorical exegesis practiced by Origen can hardly gain the approval of moderns. The allegory, as an interpretation procedure, is already repudiated by modernity, which cannot see the stake of a 'second' interpretation. Then, the arbitrary of allegory, which seems to be the result of an overflowing imagination, opposes itself to the modern strictness, represented by the mathematical model of knowledge. Thus, most of the times, it is precisely the absence of a base of the procedure that is accused. Of course, one can notice that Late Antiquity is haunted by the mania of interpretation, that some books are privileged, seen as 'inspired' and thus suspected that they say more than it is written. Allegorism is often equated with 'a disease of the century': the allegory undermines Late Antiquity, corrupting literary men, philosophers, theologians, and thus contaminating the entire Middle Age. Most of the times, the lack of the base of procedure is accused, and its results are listed only under an inventory title.

The present study aims at discussing the Origenian exegesis applied to the book of *Numbers*,[3] regarded in the context, privileging the allegorical procedures applied by the interpreter to a text that is not easy at all. As this text is a part of a broader project, which aims at discussing the Origenian exegesis by following the interpretation given to the Hexateuch, its framing within the context compels us first of all to a briefly recall of the obtained results in the previous research. Then, there will be discussed the places

with theoretical value from the Origenian exegesis upon the Numbers treatise, places that denote a careful reflection on allegory, on its stimuli.

But above all, the context that must be discussed is the one regarding the circumstances in which Origen resorts to the allegorical exegesis: he is not the only author who resorts to this, and the motivation of his gesture must be explained. This means that not only classical reasons, less elaborated, will be important, but also the reasons that can be discovered in the Origenian literary works, reasons that are not connected so much to the 'theological' explanations of the gesture, but to the 'philosophical' ones.

1. Why Allegory?

In a famous treatise of the third century, a Neo-Platonic one, while explaining some lines, rather dull, which were describing a common cave, discovered there a whole story of the soul, of its pilgrimages, of its moods and more over, a symbol of the entire cosmos. The author of this allegorical exegesis, Porphyry, gave, besides this treatise (*De atro nympharum*[4]), a publication of Plotinus' *Enneads* (the only one that we can read today), as well as many other philosophical writings. The allegorical practice was, therefore, a common one during the time, and in the first lines of his treatise, Porphyry revealed to us the cause of applying the allegorical reading: the cave described with details by Homer, localized by the poet in Ithaca, cannot be find in any place on this island, and therefore a 'historical' reading (in a philological meaning, namely a real semantically one) is not possible. On the other hand, Porphyry maintains that not even literary demands cannot explain the publication of this description within the given context: Kronos, a philosopher of the second century A.D., was the one noticing this. And the conclusion, both for Kronos and Porphyry, was only one: "It is thus clear, not only for the wise, but also for those with no education, that the Poet allegorizes (*allegorein*) and says something else in an enigmatic way (*ainittesthai*)" (*De atro nympharum*, 3).

The lines above show not only the 'allegorical state' of the cultural context, but also a subjacent theory of the allegory. Thus, the exegete must check the verisimilitude (in the sense of adjusting to the sensible reality) of a writing in order to detect the author's intention. At the same time, the research must check the adjustment of the text to the laws of 'poetical verisimilitude': if not even these are followed, then it is clear that the text has allegorical vocation. The essential effort is to decode, if the

"verisimilitude" from the two registers ('historical' and 'literary') cannot be detected, the message that the author allegorically transmits. From these few lines, one can notice that the ancient allegory, far from being a free game of an inventive mind, is a technical procedure adopted by an author who wants to transmit to a minimally experienced reader something else than what the text says *de plano*.

One can suspect, observing the arguments brought by Porphyry (which actually belong to the predecessor Kronos), that there was an elaborate theory of the allegory, of its 'detection', of the types of public to whom the allegory was addressed. Unfortunately, theoretical texts that should present the ancient theories of the allegory do not exist today: we only have remains of a construction that otherwise seems to have been impressive.[5] For the time being, the first positive result of researching the context in which Origen allegorizes is the finding of a theoretical preoccupation for allegory, obvious in the first centuries AD.

From this point of view, Origen would be one of the allegorists who applies to the Christian Bible the typical procedures of the philology of his time. It is in this way that Origen is read by Porphyry who had personally met the Christian exegete and about whom he did not have a very good opinion: the blame brought to the latter was that he uses the Greek method of understanding in the case of Christian, Barbarian Scriptures. The neoplatonic argument relies on the contrast between the exegetic, elevated method and the poor content of the writings interpreted by Origen. The discussion about the stylistic level of the Greek Scriptures related to the Alexandrian canon will be forgotten in time, but the affiliation of the Origenian allegory to the Greek allegorical tradition can be rediscovered in many subsequent discussions. And modernity noticed this influence bared by the Origenian exegesis, trying to reveal common interpretative practices.

But placing in the allegorical Hellenistic context is not the only possibility. Reading the Origenian interpretations for the Bible offers clues about practicing some *topoi* of the allegory, about using some exegetic techniques typical for that century. But in this way, one cannot obtain an answer to the question: why is the literal interpretation not enough and one must recur to an allegorical one? Is there any argument, besides the text – method combination of interpreting, which can connect any reading method to a given piece of writing? The answer to this question is difficult. The classical arguments in favor of the allegorical exegesis (adapting the text to the "inspired" status of its author, noticing the inadvertences in

the case of applying the text to the reality assumed to be described by him, in contrast with the confidence in the text's 'coherence', written by a 'divinely' inspired author) rather seem circumstantial. Of course, the allegorical Greek tradition, which goes back to the fifth century BC, is important and can explain many things, but for today's reader, the ancient reason of resorting to allegory, as it can be noticed in the ancient discussions on this topic, preserved till nowadays, is rather superficial: modernity does no longer recognize the difference of an ontological level, so that the ancient 'inspiration' is hard to explain, and the internal inadvertences of a writing do not mobilize to an allegorical interpretation, but to clarifying it by using modern literary methods, in the absence of the exigency of an omniscient narrator who would refuse self-contradiction, confusion. It would be nevertheless interesting to observe if, beyond the things that we have noticed, the taste of Late Antiquity for allegory possibly had other explanations. Of course, the experiences assumed by the people from those times (considered to be different from ours, moderns), experiences that could have offered ground for the allegorical option, cannot be known at all. The only answer is to use the few available sources on this topic, many of which have not been efficiently exploited. As we already mentioned, the ancient works that theorize the allegory offer us only insignificant clues and reasons for practicing it: most pieces of information which are briefly presented, can be read in textbooks of rhetoric, where allegory is seen as a figure of speech. The theoretical works about allegory, those that integrated it in the philological practice and the philosophical preoccupations, can no longer be read. Therefore, the foundation that may explain to a modern man the passion of Late Antiquity for allegory, is missing.

Fortunately, the author himself who is the focus of this study, Origen, could help us to better understand the competences of the call to allegory, in this obvious lack of sources. In a fragment that discusses a biblical passage, the exegete gives us a solution of a famous paradox, that of the liar. We must say that Origen's solution is not pointed out either in the treaties of the history of Logic, or in the theological compendiums: one more symptom of the still dominating dichotomy in the field of Origenian studies. Origen's solution, in its consequences, can offer us another perspective on the reasons for which an ancient was inclined, even forced, to practice allegory. Since I have broadly discussed this solution given to the paradox of the liar by Origen somewhere else, and since this matter is not the focus of the present study, I will offer a summary of the

Origenian discussion, conclusive for the way in which an ancient solved an everlasting difficulty, that of self-referential sentences which undermine the consistency / coherence of our language.

1.1. An origenian solution to the Liar Paradox[6]

Origen discusses the liar paradox in connexion with a biblical passage from a Pauline epistle (*Rom* 3. 4): "But let God be true but every man is a liar", *fiat autem Deus verax omnis autem homo mendax*.[7] After a brief philological note about the non imperative meaning of the first verb cited, a desiderative, Origen separates the second part of the citation, observing that it occurs in another biblical writing (*Ps* 115. 11): "I said in my alarm, Every man is a liar", *ego dixi in excessu meo: 'omnis homo mendax'*. As a philosophically exercised mind, Origen reads here the famous liar paradox, vividly discussed in Antiquity,

It is superfluous to discuss about the importance of the liar's paradox for the philosophical enquiry: the response, the solution of the philosopher describes his epistemology, telling us about the possibility and the meaning of philosophy, as a language-based human exercise. For a believer, for a thinker who adopted another epistemological perspective, for Origen, the presence of the affirmation *omnis homo mendax* in the divine books, as revealed sentence, implies another problem. We can observe that the affirmation *omnis homo mendax* is paradoxical: if something implies its own negation, we can infer that the argument is annulled in both senses (we are in the reign of bivalent logic, the only one suitable for Origen). But there is another problem, more serious from Origen's perspective: he considers we can discover the truth because we start our enquiry using the divine word. This is the only one true, as emerging from the sole *magister*, God. If this word is true, all the revealed books communicate us the truth, the semantic one, in each sentence, including the affirmation *omnis homo mendax*.

So if the divine author tells us every man is a liar, this must be true, because of the veracity of the divine word conveyed by the sacred writer. But the writer is a man too and, as a man, he cannot tell the truth, being a liar. Origen had to stop here and the reason is manifest. For a believer it is impossible to affirm the next logical conclusion of the enquiry of the liar paradox (the sentence *omnis homo mendax* is not true, for the man who enunciates it is a liar), the belief in the truth of each revealed sentence giving the very possibility of research. If one affirms that the sentence *omnis*

homo mendax is not true, the knowledge is no longer possible, if the aim of our knowledge is the truth. So the contradiction is here between the truth of the revealed writings, affirmed by the divine word, and the falsity of the same writings, affirmed by the same divine word when telling that every man, including the writer of the inspired books, is a liar. It is annulled, in this contradiction of revealed writing, the truthful and consistent character of the divine word. Therefore we cannot start our enquiry practicing a belief in the truth of revealed writings; the epistemological way, proposed by Origen has no fundament, the *incipit*, and the truthfulness of the belief, has disappeared. We can start our enquiry about the truth without hope to find it. The knowledge is no longer a dialogue, is a solitary experience.

However Origen is a believer: the truth of each sentence from the revealed writings is an unquestionable *datum*. Therefore it is true that every man is a liar. As the problem is now located in the area of biblical texts, he will try to understand the revealed sentence *omnis homo mendax*. The origenian text runs as following:

> *Sed si redeamus ad interiorem scripturae intellectum inueniemus quod omnes profetae uel apostoli ex illis sint ad quos sermo Dei fit, sicut scriptum est: 'Et factum est uerbum Domini ad illum uel illum profetam'. Hos ergo ad quos sermo Dei fit Dominus in euangelio non homines pronuntiat esse, sed deos. Sic enim dicit: 'quod si illos dicit deos ad quos sermo Dei fit, et non potest solui scriptura'. Quia ergo et ad Dauid tamquam profetam et ad Paulum tamquam apostolum sermo Dei factus est sine dubio non erant homines, sed di ad quos sermo Dei factus est. Igitur quia non erant homines sed di uerum est quod de hominibus ceteris pronuntiat ad quos sermo Dei factus non est quia omnis homo mendax sit.*[8]

The Origenian logical solution of the liar's paradox can be easily observed, but is worth noting that this solution is the result of the explanatory effort dedicated to the divine inspired word. No end of confusion, no solution, seems to affirm Origen, without the revealed word. Consequently the solution is uncovered only when the Books are consulted: *si redeamus ad interiorem scripturae intellectum, inueniemus* … To uncover the solution means to find the meaning of the revealed word.

Fundamentally, the lines quoted above try to solve the contradiction that seems to destroy the entire Origenian effort of knowledge. Therefore Origen will start using another revealed sentence that communicates us the same divine word. Using a quotation from the Gospels, from the revelation

produced by the coming of the Word, Origen will affirm the super-human condition of the biblical writers. They were not human beings, following these revealed words, but gods, because the divine word was through them (*factum est uerbum Dei ad illum*). As gods they affirmed that every man is a liar, and this affirmation is true for all the people. We will not discuss here the Origenian understanding of the act of revelation; our subject is different. It is sufficient to understand the logical mechanism of the Origenian solution, because of its applicability: the Origenian solution offers not only the understanding of a revealed affirmation, but also a logical solution to the liar paradox.

In logical terms, Origen recognizes epistemological pessimistic consequences of the existence of paradoxes in the natural language. The paradox, here the liar's, is not a sophism for our author, but a sign of the inconsistency of our language. No solution can be found using this language. Thus, a metalanguage is needed that would decide for our language. A different language, offered by means of the divine word, will be this metalanguage: in this language we will find the solution of our paradoxes. As the Truth created this second revealed and true language, the natural language is deemed inappropriate for the search of the truth. The logical follows the ontological.

On the other hand, we have to point out that the Origenian solution has an advantage, in comparison to modern similar solutions. If it is necessary to add a different language to the first one, a language that decides what is true or false in the previous language, the modern metalanguage is, in one respect, identical with the language. The metalanguage cannot express the truth or falsity of its sentences. Therefore it is needed a third language, the metametalanguage, in order to decide about the logical values of the metalanguage. And for the metametalanguage the problem will be the same: the indeterminate internal character of the true and false for each language is the essential objection opposed to the solution of logical types. The *regressus ad infinitum* can be hardly avoided when the "theology" of difference is the sign for its obliteration. For Origen, the metalanguage is not isomorphic, as are the modern ones, with the first one: it is semantically true because the Truth gave us, deciding about the truth values of sentences formulated in the natural language. There is no need of a third language, a meta-metalanguage that should decide over the true and false values of the metalanguage.

Consequently, the Origenian option is to solve the inherent paradoxical character of our language, to avoid the incoherence of our knowledge,

assuming the sole coherent, consistent language, i.e. the language of the divine word. That seems to be the Origenian conclusion: the thinker believes in the divine word because only this can offer the consistency required by a rigorous philosophical enquiry. The philosophical exigency, the discovery of the truth, will be the reason for the Origenian research that starts from the revealed word. From it only, as we know now that every man is a liar, unable to teach us. The affirmation *omnis homo mendax* is true: all human attempts to find the truth failed. The confusion, the incoherence are generated by the ignorance of the true word. The opinions, expressed in common language, cannot give satisfaction, from Origen's point of view, because of the ubiquity of the contradiction, of the paradox. We will rightly use the second language, the revealed one, as we want to know the truth.

Now perhaps it would be easier to understand, from another perspective than the classical one, Origen's insistence on the divinely revealed writings: if we want to find the truth, we have to practice a logically appropriated search. The minimal logical exigencies have to be revered; otherwise the philosophical inquiry will be exposed to the gravest objections. The liar paradox is one of the indicia for the inappropriate character of our language when used for philosophical purposes. The very existence of this paradox of the natural language in the revealed books offered to Origen the opportunity to argue about the necessity, for us, and the existence, for him, of a coherent and complete language, in contrast with the language used in philosophical and religious discourses. This logical solution will be rediscovered in modern times, in a different ontological scenario.

Therefore the problem will be, from Origen's point of view, not to compose a logically coherent doctrine starting from the natural language: this exercise cannot be completed. Origen's preoccupation will be to understand the sole philosophically relevant language, the revealed one, starting from the vernacular language. The peculiar presuppositions of this philosophical option are different by those of modernity.

In sum, the Origenian option for an inspired text is the only one possible, following the observation of the consequences of the existence of the paradoxes in the natural language. The truth, as a reachable goal, can be received only by acknowledging a revelation, that *datum* that eludes the human fallibility and the aporetics of the fallen creature. The cognitive reconstruction of the world will be possible only by taking upon ourselves a revelation, i.e. that what transcends us: the Origenian theory

of interpretation has this very axiom as its starting point. Aside from the generally acknowledged causality, which brings together, psychologically or sociologically, the man of Late Antiquity and a revealed text, there were other, epistemological reasons to appropriate a text in Late Antiquity, as the Origenian fragments discussed above have tried to argue.

1.2. Allegory in the Christian Context: Origen's Case

Allegory, as an exegesis procedure, is directly or indirectly supportive with a certain conception of language, with epistemological assumptions. The desideratum of a complete and coherent "language", the option for "epistemological optimism" that makes truth an aim that can and must be reached, offers additional arguments for allegory. If the "first" level of signification, common, must be surpassed (and we are convinced about this, for example, by the existence of paradoxes in the common language), then it is obvious that the text "tells us something else", *all-egorein*. If we consider that any natural language bears the burden of confusion, contradiction, insufficiency, then the truth cannot be given by it. It is, therefore, necessary of another language, a language that would offer the guarantee of veracity: it gives the possibility to the truth because its nature is different from that of common language. Consequently, the language will be an inspired one: it is not incomprehensible (because otherwise it would no longer be language for us, human beings), but neither comprehensible in current order. Thus, everybody will be able to read the inspired text in common register, but in this register, it will bear all the defects of our language. We will discover contradictions, inadvertences, confusions in the inspired message (this is what Kronos does as well in the case of the Homeric text: the lines cannot point out a cave in Ithaca since they do not describe a place that would exist, in the semantic applying of the sentence, and the sentence is not plausible from a literary perspective either, because it does not adjust to the aesthetic demands). The insufficiency of the text, in its common reading, with common significant and following the common rules of approach, indicates the necessity of another reading. An allegorical reading.

The lines above offer a reason both to the practiced allegory in the Non-Christian society, as well as to the one assumed by the Christians. For the latter, who took the Greek Bible as an inspired writing, there was an additional argument. And it started right from an accusation often practiced against Christians: from the point of view of the aesthetic canon of Late

Greece, the Christian Bible was a very modest writing. The loan translations from Hebrew, the popular syntax, the frequently careless language, outside the canon, disqualified the inspired writing of the Christians in the eyes of the educated people. From the Christian point of view, this contrast is one more argument for the necessity of the use of allegory: affected by contradictions, confusions, inadvertences, the Christian Bible also takes on the burden of the aesthetic inadequateness to the common codes. For a Christian, this aesthetic discrepancy, by relating it to the aesthetic norm of Late Antiquity, is an additional argument for allegory and it was a good answer in front of the accusations of "naivety" brought to the authors of revealed writings.

But the inspired text, like any other text, appeared in front of the reader in order to communicate a content. From a semantic or syntactic perspective, the truth of the Bible was assumed by any reader. This is how Origen as well will read the scriptural text: even when the difficulty is obvious (in the case of Noah's ark, of apparently modest sizes, which managed to host all species of living beings[9]), the exegete will do his best to prove the verisimilitude of the biblical episode, vehemently and ironically disputed by some readers of the Genesis. To Origen, the dimensions of the ark, insignificant according to the Greek mathematic canon, must be read from the point of view of Moses' training, the author of the biblical treatise of Genesis, who had been trained in the Egyptian sciences and arts: reading the dimensions mentioned by the Scripture in the Egyptian register, the dimensions of the ark were enough in order to build a floating object that should host all species of animals. Thus, this detail, that of the dimensions of the ark, cannot be read as suggesting the improbability of the biblical episode about saving all animals on Noah's ark.

And yet the biblical episode of the rescue through the ark must be read from an allegorical perspective: one mention, within the context, about Noah's father comes in contradiction with what the same biblical treatise asserts about the same character. This internal contradiction of the Scripture, read from the generic point of view of the contradiction that the natural language inherently contains, forces us to resort to a second reading, of an allegorical type.

Consequently, there will be in the Writing assumed as inspired by Christians, passages that can be read in a "historical" register: the internal non-contradictory sequences (or which do not refuse the application to a common corpus of knowledge) indicate what really had happened and thus it is kept the exigency of applying the biblical narrations to reality. This

note of the Origenian interpretation must be pronounced emphatically, since posterity disputed Origen's exegesis precisely on the grounds of the disregard that he showed towards biblical narrations (presenting a history of salvation, assuming the stories included in the Bible is a condition for assuming faith). Better known for his "allegory", Origen is neglected in his attempt, of an amazing minuteness, of rendering credible disputed narrative biblical episodes and considered as incredible. The proof is exactly the passage just mentioned, that of saving all species with the help of Noah's ark: few exegetes strived that much to reply to the challengers of this biblical episode.[10] What Origen offers to us is a complete exegesis: in order to found his allegory, but to also defend the "reality" of some biblical episodes, Origen makes a great effort.

Yet there are some passages which cannot obviously be applied to the sensitive reality: Origen himself notices this and insists on it, mentioning some passages which are apparently lacking the real application. This means, to Origen, that the Scripture itself indicates, indirectly, the necessity of another reading that should not take into account the current rules of interpretation. These passages, obvious to any reader in their vagueness, will help Origen support in front of the heterogeneous Christian auditorium, the necessity for allegory.

But a new objection could have been raised in front of the Origenian option for allegory: not only the writing considered by Christians as being inspired had the vocation of the allegorical reading. The "inspired" authors of Greece, Homer first of all, could also claim an allegorical reading. Origen himself mentions the allegorical readings practiced in the philosophical environment of the second century AD, and his tone is an admiring one. This would mean that the allegory is the vocation of any writing: inapplicable to a common referent (as they inevitably contain *impossibilia*, contradictions, and inadvertences), they demand a second reading, which can be found through allegory. The Jewish exegetes had already applied allegory to biblical writings, and the results were accessible to the Greek speaking world as well. And if so, does the Origenian allegory have a specific legitimacy?

Origen will strive to legitimate the Christian allegory and he will manage to do this by using exactly the inspired book which is being interpreted: being a unique book of its kind (revealed by the divinity), the Bible must be read according to the rules that it contains. Or, a passage in a Pauline epistle allegorically interprets a narrative passage from the Old Testament (Gal. 4. 22-27). Abraham's two sons, who certainly existed

in reality for the faithful Origen, and Abraham's two wives also suggest something else than what the applying to the sensitive reality suggests, and this because the episode is narrated as an allegory, it also says something else (*allegoroumena*). And Paul actually explains what the OT episode means, in allegory: it does not only say the story of a family who once lived in Canaan, but of the two testaments (*diathekai*). Agar gives birth "according to flesh" (*kata sarka*) to a nation destined to slavery, Agar being assimilated to the present Jerusalem (*te nun Ierousalem*), while Sarah gives birth "according to promise" (*kata epaggelias*), being the Jerusalem from above (*he…ano Ierousalem*), which is "free" (*eleuthera*). A few lines further (Gal. 4.29), Paul differentiates between the one born "according to flesh" (*kata sarka*) from the one born "according to spirit" (*kata pneuma*).

Therefore, for Origen, the allegory is a legitimate procedure of interpretation. The Bible, a document inspired by divinity, recommends and practices it. The argument was used by the exegete especially in relation to the internal disputes, inside the Christian Church, which set under discussion the legitimacy of the applied allegorical practice to the Scripture. But the conclusion should not be a rushed one: it is true that Origen uses the argument in the internal disputes of the Christian church because he published (and we were handed over in this way) only what he published for his coreligionists. The argument must have been very efficient in the *ad extra* disputes as well, which set under discussion the legitimacy of using, in the case of Christian Scriptures: in the third century, Porphyry already accused Origen of illicitly adopting the interpretative practices of the Greece in order to apply them to a Barbarian writing, the Christian Bible. To this retort, Origen had a strong argument: among the writings that were read allegorically in Antiquity (Homer, Hesiod, Plato, the Oracles and so on), only the Christian Scriptures contain the suggestion regarding the use of allegory for understanding. The argument was a strong one: since other writings, which were by tradition received with an allegorical key, do not contain recommendations that guide the reader towards an allegorical reading, and yet they are thus assumed, the Christian Bible is the only writing that clarifies itself through the explicit call to allegory (the episode deciphered through this procedure is in the Old Testament, but the allegorical "scale of reading" is suggested by a Pauline epistle, in the New Testament). Thus, from the Christian point of view, practicing allegory, in the case of the Bible, is legitimate: this reading key is recommended by the revealed writing itself, it is not imposed arbitrarily by the reader's will, even if he is well-intended.

There is an obvious correlation between the way of reading chosen by the ancient and a theory on language: the discussion about the paradox of the liar, presented in the section 1.1, tried to convince about this. The limits of natural language, obvious when you encounter paradoxes, as the one of the liar, determine, in an optimistic epistemological scenario, where the truth is an aim that can be reached through language, the search of another language. This second language, which avoids the disadvantages of common language (since it is inspired), says something else, *alla agoreuei:* its reading is not the common one, but another one, for which this language actually exists. Paul, in correlation with deciphering a passage that "says something else" (Gal. 4.22-27), differentiates between what is "according to flesh" (*kata sarka*) and what is "according to spirit" (*kata pneuma*). The two categories are solitary both to the conception on language, as well as to the exegetic Origenian theory: natural, common language offers only a description of the somatic, of what is grasped through senses, and this type of reading is "historical". And the failure of natural language is obvious: applied to a precarious ontological instance, it goes down together with it, and the "literal" reading, of a "historical" type, cannot surpass the confusion, the lack of precision, the contradiction. This register must be surpassed by the one who aims at reaching the truth: another language is necessary, the inspired one, which should have as significant another reality, the spiritual one, and as reading instrument, allegory will be necessary.

Consequently, the allegorical reading is the one assuring the reader of receiving the message of the revealed writing: it does not only tell stories of the old days, referring to those lived in a time and place commonly perceptible, but it tells another story, of what is not somatic, of what does not have sensitive determination. For it is exactly the sensitive determination which made a failure out of the reading in a literal sense: having the consistency of the "matter" which is its reader, natural language, following "history", cannot offer guarantees about the truth. Of course, there were, for the Christian Origen, all the censuses described by the Numbers Book, and their results are in all respects credible. But the revealed language, the one included in the Bible, has as decoding instrument the allegory: it tells a history of the old days, but at the same time it also speaks about what it is not physical, of what it is not material. Therefore, in allegorical key, the Christian Scripture tells us about soul, its tribulations, its "falls", but also about spirit, the one that is closest to God, Who is Spirit.

Of course, the Origenian claim of the existence of a language with a multiple reading (the term "allegory" already indicates a speech that *also* says something else than what is obvious *de plano)* may hardly be accepted today. It rather seems an artifice the appeal to allegory: simplicity tries to wear the clothes of civility. And the exegete's claim, of reading a biblical passage from multiple perspectives, is usually placed in the category of unsuccessful literary attempts. The triple signification of a biblical sentence, first read in the "historical" register, applied to the mundane, corporal reality, then in an allegorical register, once as a "story of the soul" and then as "saga of the spirit", cannot but vex us. From the point of view of common logic, of the one that precisely the mundane imposes and bears. Regarded from the point of view of a classical logic, of the bivalent one, the Origenian claim of a double reading with a triple sense is extravagant. But the bivalent logic, of the truth and the false, of excluding the third possibility, is the result of the meeting between the objects of common perception and our thinking. Or, for the ancient exegete, the logic is determined by the ontological horizon that gives it even the possibility of existing: the logic founded on distinction, typical for the ancient paradigm, is related to the area of the sensitive, of the spirit *embedded* in sensitive. The logic of distinction, of differentiation (without the elementary distinction between A, B and C there would be no sentence, nor demonstrative syllogism), specific to "historical" reading (let us remember that what does not pass the test of non-contradiction cannot be admitted in this register) must be seen as a counterpart of an "unifying logic", given by the allegorical reading, in which the soul gets closer, through virtuous life, to divinity, and what is spirit unites with the Spirit.

In this way, from an Origenian point of view, the hesitation of the modern in front of allegory rather suggests opacity. Knowing no other kingdom except for the sensitive one (the only one that is equipped, subject to control, to the modern experiment), the modern applies his own categories to the Origenian allegorical proposal. Hence the accusations regarding the "lack of reason" of allegory, to the "hazard" of procedure: in a homogenous world, without perceiving any other ontological instance, the claim of the allegory of saying other "narration" can only be excessive. Yet, to Origen, it is this precisely this second narration that is important.

This means that also the "narrative line" is other, in allegorical reading: the interested passages, beyond their "historical" counterpart, indicate a saving history, of the union between man and God. From a moral perspective, what matters is the way in which every individual assumes

this second history: the ethical tint, founded on the individual, on his moral gesticulation, is unavoidable. But the same allegorically founded narration describes us as individuals united in one body, as a whole searching for its completion in God. The simultaneity of the readings, outraging to the modern sensitivity, is natural for the one assuming the Scripture as a revealed document, for the one using allegory, suggested by the same Scripture, for understanding the inspired message, which differentiates among flesh, soul and spirit.

And the revealed Scripture indicates its peculiarity exactly through this triple signification, legitimate from the perspective of Origen the exegete: what is narrated in the "historical" register suits the non-historical, non-sensitive register. It is a correspondence that a good interpreter knows where to find it again and to communicate it to his public: in the "popular" form of the homily, Origen knows how to teach his auditorium this very lesson, of the signification of the Scripture.

2. The Origenian Exegesis to the *Book of Numbers*

In the second part of this study, I will exemplify, following the Origenian interpretation applied to the biblical book of Numbers, the way in which the Origenian exegetic doctrine is applied to its texts. One must mention, from the beginning, that the Origenian exegesis to Numbers can be rediscovered today under the form of homilies (preaches addressed to the Christian public in church) and scholia. It is missing, in the case of Numbers, a commentary, great interpretative work, following a classical model, dedicated by Origen to other biblical treaties. Therefore we will not be able to read the Origenian exegesis in its most comprehensive hypostasis, but only preaches addressed to a public who is obviously heteroclite, as well as short reading notes, which briefly clarify issues of great interest. Unfortunately, only these short Origenian reading notes have reached up to nowadays in their Greek original: the homilies of Numbers have only survived in Latin, in the translation made by Rufinus.

2.1. The Historical Reading

Several times in his homilies (but also in some of his scholia), Origen mentions that what he offers is a "historical" reading. An example from a homily (25, 3): explaining a biblical episode narrating the fights between

Hebrews and Madianites, as well as the plunders taken by Hebrews, Origen is first of all preoccupied with the "historical" signification, namely with the plausibility of the narrative segment, as well as of its agreement with the rest of the biblical narration. In section 3.6 of the homily 25, Origen briefly narrates the sequences from Numbers 31.9-12 and 31.21-47, summarizing the biblical narration (*haec est historiae continentia*). Another passage explicitly indicated from a "historical" perspective is the one in Homily 12: in its fourth section, it is presented the content of a message sent by Moses to the king of the Amorites. Since nothing can vex common sense, the message has a clear "historical" signification: *historia quidem manifesta est.* This does not prevent Origen from looking for a second spiritual signification of the passage: *sed deprecemur Dominum ut aliquid dignum possimus in interioribus eius sensibus pervidere*.

Of course, the "historical" interpretation seems naïve to the reader today, but it was related to the philological tradition of the Antiquity. Understanding a text implied, before any "allegorical" interpretation, the determination of the common signification of the text, of its coherence (internal, but also external). The "historical" reading has therefore the task to clarify a text by following the common signification of words (or, in case where it does not exist, to offer signification to the words considered obscure), to contextualize, to check the respecting of the conventions of the literary genre, to testing the application of the text to the common rules of logic.

The non-"historical" exegesis can be released by any lack of plausibility of the interpreted text. Coming back to the first mentioned homily in this section of the text, Origen notices that a detail narrated by the Scripture can be considered superfluous (from the perspective of the biblical narration), and the lack of purpose of listing names of Madianites emperors killed by the Jewish reinforces his option for a non-"historical" reading of the biblical passage. First of all, the names of the five kings are mentioned: *Sed et nomina eorum curae fuit Scripturae divinae memorare. Evin inquit et Rocon et sur et Ur et Roboc.* And then Origen explains the appearance of these names, which cannot be plausibly justified in a "historical" register: *Ego puto quod nomina haec Scriptura divina non pro historia narraverit, sed pro causis et rebus aptaverit* (25, 3.1).

But it is not only from a narrative point of view the mentioning of names is implausible (since these names are mentioned only once here, this thing being apparently useless), but also the signification of one of these names. For Origen explains the signification of one of these: *Evin* means "wild", or this name would have been the last option of a parent

who was looking for a name for his son. And this observation legitimates the attempt at a non-"historical" reading:

> *Nam putas fuerit aliquis ita stultus qui filio suo nomen Beluinus imponeret? Sed hoc arbitror magis quod institutioni animarum prospexerit sermo divinus, volens nobis ostendere quod adversum huiusmodi vitia militare debeamus et de habitaculis ea carnis nostrae depellere, istos reges fugare de regno corporis nostri* (25, 3.1).

Therefore, the exegete notices the absence of plausibility in mentioning the names of Madianites kings, and this is a sign for teaching a second reading, of a non-"historical" type. Such a competence allows the second reading, allegorical.

2.2. The Allegorical Reading

After finishing the "historical" reading of the revealed fragment, Origen suggests looking for another significant that should fulfill the conditions of a satisfying reading. Abandoning "history" implies, before all, the capacity of receiving another ontological, non-material, non-somatic level. The referent of the biblical text aims at the soul, the spirit, at improving the individual, at bringing him closer to divinity. Thus, after noticing, while commenting the just mentioned biblical passage, in which the names of the Madianites kings killed by the Hebrews are mentioned, that the passage cannot be received in "historical" reading, Origen will explain the signification of these ancient names: if Evin means "wild", then Rocon means "vanity", Ur suggests "urge". The five kings, therefore, cannot mean something in the "history" of this world, but in a "history" of the soul: in fact, according to Origen, the five human vices are mentioned here. The five kings are the five dominant vices of the soul: *Denique hi qui in vitiis regnant, quinque reges esse dicuntur, ut evidentissime doceamur quia omne vitium quod regnat in corpore ex quinque sensibus pendet* (25, 3.5).

Assimilating the five kinds of vices with the senses, which must be repressed by the virtuous one, is a classical theme. And at this point of his exegesis, Origen offers another famous theme, which will give birth to tradition: through analogy, our soul has five spiritual senses that help the virtuous one to go closer to God. In fact, there is a sublimation of the senses attached to the flesh:

> *... non utique effodiendum praecipit oculum corporis nostri nec manum aut pedem abscidendum, sed sensum carnalia sentientem et concupiscentiis carnalibus lascivientem mandat abscidi, ut oculi nostri recta videant et aures nostrae recta audiant et gustus noster verbum Dei gustet manusque nostrae palpent et contingant de Verbo vitae* (25, 3.5).

It is not about senses in their common meaning that the revealed Writing speaks, but about the internal, non-material senses, about perceiving the spiritual by the spiritual.

Another place, from the same homily of Numbers, notices an internal contradiction between the things narrated by the revealed Scripture. The Jewish nation, chosen by God and praised by Him, is presented as "drinking the blood of those wounded" (Num. 23.24). The cruelty placed next to the mildness, often asserted, of the Jewish nation, makes Origen challenge the advocate of "history":

> *In his verbis quis ita erit historicae narrationis contentiosus adsertor, immo quis ita brutus invenietur, qui non horrescens sonum litterae ad allegoriae dulcedinem ipsa necessitate confugiat? Quomodo enim iste populus tam laudabilis, tam magnificus, de quo tanta praeconia sermo dinumerat, in hoc veniet, ut sanguinem vulneratorum bibat...* (16, 9.1)

And the passage is debatable not only from the point of view of the qualities of the Jewish people, but also by noticing the strict prohibition concerning blood consumption, asserted in the Old Testament and enhanced in the New Testament:

> *cum tam validis praeceptis cibus sanguinis interdicatur a Deo, ut etiam nos, qui ex gentibus vocati sumus, necessario iubeamur abstinere nos, sicut ab his quae idolis immolantur, ita et a sanguine?* (16, 9.1)

Further on, Origen will do his best to identify that "nation" that will drink blood, following the biblical text. As one may notice, any inconsistency perceived in the "historical" reading, or discrepancy, its implausibility, noticed through reference to the context of the passage or to the reader, is formed, for Origen, in the justification of allegorical reading. Therefore, the "syntax" of the text, its consistency and internal coherence are important, as well as its "semantics", its plausibility or even the possibility of the existence of a reader that would correspond to the "letter" of the text, to its common

signification. When the "syntax" or "semantics" are missed by the biblical text, the necessity of a second, allegorical reading becomes obvious.

To Origen however, the allegorical exegesis, which indicates the second, non-material significant of the Bible, was triggered not only by the carefully observing of the text, its coherence, its adjustment to the common significant, but also by the author's status. Even in a homily of Numbers (26, 3), meant for the general public, Origen tries to legitimize his allegorical practice by using another argument too: not only the observation of the text, of its inconsistencies that force us to discover another reader, constrains to allegorical exegesis, but also the author of the writing. Beyond the brief explanations given by Origen, one can see an elaborate conception about language, its functions, a conception that is similar to that which differentiates among syntax, semantics and pragmatics.

After mentioning the episode of the plunders taken by Madianites, seeing it in the historical register, Origen considers that the second signification of the text is not only imposed by the analysis of discourse (i.e. of its conformity with reality, of its plausibility, of its compliance with the usages of the genre of which it is a part). Therefore, it is not only the analysis of the "syntax", of the internal coherence of the discourse, of respecting the stylistic "code" to which is subject, that is important, not only noticing the "semantics" of the discourse, of the involved reader. Important is also the "pragmatics" of this discourse, its relation both with the author, as well as with its receiver. First of all, Origen analyses the biblical discourse from the perspective of its author, noticing that a message is taken into consideration by observing its sender: *Omnia qua dicuntur, non solum ex ipso qui dicitur sermone pensanda sunt, sed et persona dicentis magnopere consideranda est* (26, 3.1). It is then the exegete's explanation: a child's message is received in a different register from that where an adult's message is received, as well as a scholar's discourse, which is intercepted in another register of expectations than the one emitted by an illiterate (26, 3.1). Or the biblical narrator is neither a child nor an adult, not even a man or an angel, since tradition bestows the narration on the Holy Spirit:

> *Qui haec gesta narrat quae legimus, neque puer est, qualem supra descripsimus, neque vir talis aliquis neque senior nec omnino aliquis homo est; et ut amplius aliquid dicam, nec angelorum aliquis aut virtutum caelestium est, sed, sicut traditio maiorum tenet, Spiritus sanctus haec narrat* (26, 3.2).

Genesis' narration couldn't have been told by Moses who was not a witness to it, in the same way in which the Old Testament' prophecies about Jesus couldn't have been uttered by a man. Besides, the revealed Writing itself suggests its author, therefore Origen notices:

> *Constat ergo ea per Spiritum Sanctum dicta et ideo conveniens videtur haec secundum dignitatem, immo potius secundum maiestatem loquentis intelligi* (26, 3.2).

Therefore, the revealed writing must be read from the point of view of that who wrote it.

But the "pragmatics" of the biblical text also imposes observing the relation between receiver and text, and this must be analyzed by taking into account the usefulness brought by the text to the receiver. In an extended discussion that corroborates several biblical episodes, Origen shows that the biblical message, the Old Testament's one, aims at saving, rescuing from the fire of the bottomless pit. Or, it is difficult to understand how the minutely, insignificant detail, present everywhere in the Pentateuch, could help at saving the reader. The examples used by Origen (26, 3.3), all present in the Treatise of *Numbers*, convince us of their lack of relevance, from the point of view of the aim meant by the same writing.

The conclusion, to Origen, is obvious: the narrated events in the revealed writing are secret and have a signification that sends to divine things, and in order to understand them, it is necessary to become closer to the Bible's author. Understanding the message implies knowing the sender, Origen suggests further on in his example:

> *Et quidem quod haec mystica sint et divinum aliquem sensum contineant, puto quod ex his quae superius asserta sunt, nullus possit ambigere, quamvis sit ille iudaicis fabulis insatiabiliter deditus; tamen sicut hoc neminem negare puto, ita quae sint illa quae ex istis narrationibus indicentur et quae rerum facies sub hoc velamine contegatur, ad liquidum scire ipsius puto esse sancti Spiritus qui haec scribi inspiravit* (26, 3.5).

The allegory remains, therefore, the privileged method of reading for Origen, and this is because the biblical message is regarded as "pragmatic", from the point of view of its usefulness for the receiver. This does not mean that the entire biblical text must be allegorized. It is still in a homily (11, 1) on Numbers that Origen will discuss about the use of allegory, which

becomes unavoidable in the case in which the benefit of the reader is not obvious in a "literal" reading. In the case of moral prescriptions, of biblical commandments, their usefulness is obvious, so that the allegory is not necessary:

> *Et ideo haec [i.e. mandata] nobis secundum litteram custodienda sunt. Item alibi: iuste, inquit, sectare quod iustum est. Quid opus est in his allegoriam quaerere, cum aedificet litteram?* (11, 1.8)

Analyzing then the texts of the Pentateuch, Origen will notice that some prescriptions must not be followed by Christians, others must be followed literally, and others have their use in improving one's behavior, but must be also assumed allegorically:

> *Ostendimus, ut opinor, auctoritate Scripturae divinae ex his quae in lege scripta sunt, aliqua penitus refugienda esse et cavenda ne secundum litteram ab Evangelii discipulis observentur, quaedam vero omnimodis ut scripta sunt obtinenda, alia autem habere quidem et secundum litteram veritatem sui, recipere tamen utiliter et necessario etiam allegoricum sensum* (11, 1.11).

3. Conclusions

Read especially through the mediaeval scale, and often understood from the point of view of subsequent biblical interpretation, Origen the interpreter is received as an ecclesiastic author, who is understood within an ecclesiastic context. Without denying this perspective (Origen's Christian option is fundamental for his interpretation), one must mention that to a Christian of the third century AD, the context is a multiform one. Educated in the cultural capital of the Roman Empire, accustomed to the philological practice of the time, listener of philosophical lectures, Origen owes a lot to the cultural and philosophical context of his time. His allegorical exegesis is, therefore, less the whim of a theologian who finds himself in difficulty or the product of a poetical mind, as it is a scholar's deliberate option.

The difficulty in perceiving Origen within the context is, mainly, because of a cultural accident: the philosophical, philological writings of the first Christian centuries can no longer be read today. This is also

because, after the third century AD, it becomes harder and harder to acknowledge, even in the educated environments, the intellectual acquisitions of the period that is context for Origen. We cannot read the treaties of language theory, the works of logic published in this time are not available, we cannot understand the competences of the allegory practiced by a Christian exegete. The only "heritage" of the century that interests us is the dichotomy material-intelligible, within platonic scheme, with all the difficulties arising from its suggestion.

This text tried to convince its readers, using Origenian texts, that the option for allegory hides a whole series of reasons: a theory of language, of its limits from a logical perspective, is associated to a doctrine about the functions of natural language, as well as to a distinction between self-sufficiency (logical, ontological) and insufficiency.

Allegory is not just the product of perceiving an ontological divide, which compels to find a new signification. It is also the result of studying natural language, its limits within an optimistic epistemological scenario, which, surpassing the lesson of skepticism, considers possible reaching the truth. It is also the result of the logical exercise, as proven by the Origenian solution offered to the paradox of the liar. It is also the result of philological practice belonging to the Alexandrian tradition, which clarifies a text by using techniques and methods refined for centuries. It is also the result of observing language functions, which is understood as an act that involves the sender, the receiver and the con-text. All these results become parts of the file of Origenian allegory, often read unilaterally from the point of view of the "systematic" passage in *De principiis*. Of course, dealing with the issue of allegory in this Origenian writing is important, but one must mention the fact that the author offers there an explanation addressed to a certain kind of public that is not specialized, too little interested in the theoretical structure sustaining the option for allegory. The arguments there are fundamentally biblical, because the author is addressing to a community of Christians: what is beyond its presumed interest of it, is not, naturally, discussed here. But Origen discretely mixes, as noticed, in his comments, but also in his "popular" homilies, technical arguments of the allegorized option. And it seems he does not offer a writing that would gather all these arguments because the heteroclite public of the homilies would have felt uncomfortable listening to a technical discourse. What is remarkable is that sometimes, from the desire to explain the option for allegory, the exegete brings arguments that seem to suggest a theoretical,

elaborate source (see section 2.2, especially the discussion about the "sender" and the "receiver" of the revealed message).

Unfortunately, the theoretical sources used by Origen (if there are such sources) cannot be identified: they succumbed, leaving just a few traces. Their detection is possible, although searching without knowing what one should find is a temerarious attempt. The Origenian writings use, as it seems, current arguments of allegory, projected in a Christian environment. Identifying these arguments could clarify the context in which Origen chooses the allegory for a second reading of the book revealed to Christians. Even if is kept, mostly, in Latin translation, the interpretative Origenian practice is worth studying in order to understand the reasons for which the exegete resorts to allegory. This research, still ongoing, will be able to offer coherence to a puzzle that has here presented some of its elements.

NOTES

1 A general bibliography of the origenian studies is offered by Henri Crouzel, *Bibliographie critique d'Origène* (Instrumenta Patristica, 8), Nijhoff, 1971, pp. 685, *Bibliographie critique d'Origène. Supplement 1* (Instrumenta patristica, 8.A), Kluwer, 1983, pp. 339, *Bibliographie critique d'Origène. Supplement 2* (Instrumenta patristica 8.B), Brepols, 1996, pp. 262. The bibliography dedicated to the origenian allegory is also extensive (see, for example, Hanson R. P. C., *Allegory and event. A study of the sources and significance of Origen's interpretation of Scripture*, John Knox Press, Richmond, 1959, Hanson, R. P. C., *Origen's interpretation of Scripture exemplified from his* ***Philocalia***, în **Hermathena**, 63 (1944), pp. 47-58, Dublin, * * * *Origeniana Sexta. Origène et la Bible* (Actes du Colloquium Origenianum Sextum, Chantilly, 30 août - 3 septembre 1993), ed. Gilles Dorival, Alain le Boulluec, (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium CXVIII), Leuven University Press, 1995).

2 There are few exceptions from this general trend (see Heine, Ronald E. – *Stoic logic as handmaid to exegesis and theology in Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John*, în **Journal of Theological Studies**, 44 (1993), pp. 90-117, Clarendon Press, Oxford, Rist, John – *Platonism and its Christian Heritage*, Variorum, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Hampshire, reprinted, 1997, Edwards, M.J., *Origen Against Plato* (Ashgate Studies in Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity), Ashgate, 2002.

3 The Origenian editions used in this paper: Origenes, *Adnotationes in* ***Numeros***, în **Patrologiae cursus completus** (series Graeca), vol. XVII, col. 21-24, Migne, Paris, 1857-1866, Origenes, *Selecta in* ***Numeros***, în **Patrologiae cursus completus** (series Graeca), vol. XII, col. 576-584, Migne, Paris, 1857-1866, and Origenes Werke VII, *Homilien zum Hexateuch*, hg. v. W. A. Baehrens (GCS 30), Leipzig 1921, pp. 3-285.

4 Porphyry, *The cave of the nymphs in the Odyssey* (Arethusa Monographs), Department of Classics, State University of New York, Buffalo, 1969.

5 For some hints on ancient allegory, see *Allégorie des poètes. Allégorie des philosophes* (Textes et traditions 10), ed. Gilbert Dahan, Richard Goulet, Vrin, Paris, 2005 and Coulter, James A., *The Literary Microcosm. Theories of Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonists*, Brill, Leiden, 1976.

6 The next lines offer the conclusions of an extensive study on origenian discussion on the liar paradox ("Intellectus quaerens revelationem: Origen's Solution to the 'Liar Paradox'", forthcoming).

7 See In Epistulam Pauli ad Romanos explanationum libri, II, 10, in Hammond Bammel, Caroline, Der Roemerbriefkommentar des Origenes: kritische Ausgabe der Uebersetzung Rufins, Buch 1-3, (Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel. Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel, 16) Herder, Freiburg, 1990, p. 185. 189-190. I used also Origen, Commentarii in Epistula

ad Romanos (Fontes Christiani 2/1), Liber I, II, uebersetzt und engeleitet von Theresia Heither OSB, Herder, Freiburg, 1990. Unfortunately, the origenian discussion of the liar paradox can be read today in Latin, in an abridged version of his Commentary on Romans. The Greek version is sought to be lost.

8 Origen, *In Epistulam Pauli ad Romanos explanationum libri, II, 10,* in Hammond Bammel, C., *Der Roemerbriefkommentar des Origenes: kritische Ausgabe der Uebersetzung Rufins, Buch 1-3* (Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel. Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel, 16), p.188.249. The Origenian commentary continues with a discussion about the next words of the Pauline epistle: "ut iustificeris in sermonibus tuis, et uincas cum iudicaris", another quotation from *Psalms* (50, 6).

9 See Origenes Werke VI, *Homilien zum Hexateuch*, hg. v. W. A. Baehrens (GCS 29), Leipzig, 1920, pp. 22-29.

10 See the origenian argument in Origenes Werke VI, *Homilien zum Hexateuch*, hg. v. W. A. Baehrens (GCS 29), Leipzig, 1920, pp. 25-26.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

* * * *Origeniana Sexta. Origène et la Bible* (Actes du Colloquium Origenianum Sextum, Chantilly, 30 août - 3 septembre 1993), ed. Gilles Dorival, Alain le Boulluec, (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium CXVIII), Leuven University Press, 1995

* * * *Allégorie des poètes. Allégorie des philosophes* (Textes et traditions 10), ed. Gilbert Dahan, Richard Goulet, Vrin, Paris, 2005

COULTER, J.A., *The Literary Microcosm. Theories of Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonists*, Brill, Leiden, 1976

CROUZEL, H., *Bibliographie critique d'Origène* (Instrumenta Patristica 8), Nijhoff, 1971

CROUZEL, H., *Bibliographie critique d'Origène. Supplement 1* (Instrumenta patristica 8.A), Kluwer, 1983

CROUZEL, H, *Bibliographie critique d'Origène. Supplement 2* (Instrumenta patristica 8.B), Brepols, 1996

EDWARDS, M.J., *Origen Against Plato* (Ashgate Studies in Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity), Ashgate, London, 2002

HAMMOND BAMMEL, C., *Der Roemerbriefkommentar des Origenes: kritische Ausgabe der Uebersetzung Rufins, Buch 1-3* (Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel. Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel, 16), Herder, Freiburg, 1990

HANSON, R.P.C., *Allegory and event. A study of the sources and significance of Origen's interpretation of Scripture*, John Knox Press, Richmond, 1959

HANSON, R.P.C., "Origen's interpretation of Scripture exemplified from his *Philocalia*", in *Hermathena*, 63 (1944), pp. 47-58, Dublin

HEINE, R. E., "Stoic logic as handmaid to exegesis and theology in Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John", in *Journal of Theological Studies*, 44 (1993), pp. 90-117, Clarendon Press, Oxford

ORIGENES, *Adnotationes in **Numeros***, în **Patrologiae cursus completus** (series Graeca), vol. XVII, col. 21-24, Migne, Paris, 1857-1866

ORIGENES, *Commentarii in Epistula ad Romanos* (Fontes Christiani 2/1), Liber I, II, ed. Theresia Heither OSB, Herder, Freiburg, 1990

ORIGENES, *Homilien zum Hexateuch* (Origenes Werke VI), ed. W. A. Baehrens (GCS 29), Leipzig 1920

ORIGENES, *Homilien zum Hexateuch* (Origenes Werke VII), ed. W. A. Baehrens (GCS 30), Leipzig 1921

ORIGENES, *Selecta in **Numeros***, in **Patrologiae cursus completus** (series Graeca), vol. XII, col. 576-584, Migne, Paris, 1857-1866

PORPHYRY, *The cave of the nymphs in the Odyssey* (Arethusa Monographs), Department of Classics, State University of New York, Buffalo, 1969

RIST, J., *Platonism and its Christian Heritage*, Variorum, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Hampshire, reprinted, 1997