Abstract. The 29 Homilies of Origen on the Psalms discovered in 2012 by Marina Molin Pradel in a Munich Codex (Cod. Graec. 314) constitute an unexpected and very important source for retracing the doctrinal traditions and the cultural heritage that support the Alexandrian’s biblical interpretation. The article first investigates the presence of Philo, much more discernible than the doctrinal influence of other Alexandrian predecessors such as Clement. Origen occasionally pays homage to Philo and reuses independently his exegeses. Further, as far as the Hellenistic culture of Alexandria is concerned, the Homilies reveal its influence under several aspects, especially with regard to music and astronomy. Scholarly notions concur to elaborate a vision of the cosmos which is now considered by Origen more fundamentally as a source for attaining the knowledge of God next to the witness of the Scriptures. Since the homilies are to be dated in the final period of Origen’s activity, we are allowed to see in them a new emphasis, probably dictated by the preacher’s concerns regarding the Marcionite criticism of the Old Testament.
The collection of 29 Greek homilies of Origen on the Psalms (Codex Monacensis Graecus 314), discovered in Munich two years ago by Marina Molin Pradel, offers a unique opportunity for a new assessment of his work and significance after a century of intensive research on the Alexandrian author. These texts, besides being the largest series of his sermons in the original language, help us to retrace the picture of Origen as a preacher and commentator of the most familiar book of the Hebrew Bible. In fact, no other author has contributed in such an impressive way to developing the interpretation of the Psalms in the ancient Church. If we were already aware of the traces left by Origen in many of the later interpreters, both Greek and Latin (for instance, Eusebius of Caesarea, Didymus the Blind, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose or Jerome), despite the fragmentary preservation of his writings, the Munich homilies now reinforce his status as the exegetical authority for the Christian reception of the Psalms.

Leaving aside for the moment a new investigation into the impact of his interpretation in light of the new sermons, I would like to deal briefly with some aspects that concur in redefining the portrait of Origen as a biblical scholar. It was precisely through the explanation of the Scriptures, seen by the Alexandrian as the book of God’s revelation to men, that he came to elaborate what we should continue to term properly his ‘biblical theology’. Also in the case of the Munich Codex there is no room to speak of a ‘philosophical exegesis’, of the kind we find, for example, in Philo of Alexandria. Not incidentally, Origen, at the end of the Homily on Psalm 74, distances himself from the two professions that we customarily connect with his biographical and scholarly profile: the grammarian and the philosopher. For our preacher, both the grammarian and the philosopher after a while have nothing new to say, since they are condemned either to repeat their teachings or simply to forward a doctrinal tradition without creative

1 On the find of the Munich Codex see Molin Pradel 2012; Perrone 2013; Fürst (2014) cites the unedited homilies in support of his general presentation.
2 Our evidence was previously limited to the twenty Homilies on Jeremiah and the Homily on the Witch of Endor (1 Sam 28).
3 See e.g. Fürst 2014b. Yet the same author in his general presentation (supra, n. 1), in spite of his propensity for a ‘philosophical’ approach to Origen, cannot avoid himself using ‘theology’ as the most apt definition for his intellectual endeavor.
development. On the contrary, the master of Scriptures, who first and foremost is the Logos himself, is a teacher “for eternity.”⁴ There is no doubt that Origen, when he gave the sermons, had such a model in his mind. As he openly avows in the 2nd Homily on Psalm 15, he was yearning to receiving his ‘glory’, as a master of Scripture, both from God and from men.⁵

Nonetheless in the 1st Homily on Psalm 77 Origen presents a different appreciation of philosophy. Dealing with verse 2b (Φθέγξομαι προβλήματα ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, “I will utter problems from of old”), he observes that those who are used to practise philosophy among the Greeks, both teachers and students, exert themselves with topical ‘problems’ (προβλήματα). In the same way those who study the Bible should concern themselves with its ‘problems’, as paradigmatically shown already by its beginning, since the narrative of creation in the book of Genesis is full of difficult questions.⁶

The similarity between the Bible and philosophy claimed here by Origen with regard to the methodic approach helps us to situate the Munich sermons within their larger doctrinal and cultural horizon. Certainly one of their premises is based on the practice of quaestiones et responsiones (or ζητήματα καὶ λύσεις), which on the other hand was not an exclusive to the philosophical schools. In fact, the Alexandrian, acting essentially as a commentator on the Bible, places himself inside the rich stream of the tra-

---


⁵ H15Ps II,7 (f. 25v): Καὶ ὡσπερ τοῦ ἀθλητοῦ ἡ δόξα τὸ γενναῖον αὐτοῦ σώμα ἐστι, τοῦ ἰατροῦ ἡ δόξα ἡ ἰατρική ἐστι, τοῦ χειροτέχνου ἡ δόξα αἱ χεῖρες εἰσιν, οὕτω τοῦ σοφοῦ ἡ δόξα λέγοντος θεία καὶ ἱερὰ ἡ γλῶσσά ἐστιν, ὡς μὴ ἑτέραν εἶναι τὴν γλώσσαν τῆς δόξης, ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι δόξαν καὶ γλώσσαν. Εὐδακτύλοι περὶ έμου, εἰ καὶ ἀνάξιος εἰμί, ἵνα ἐκ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ καὶ ἑμῶν δῷ ὁ θεὸς γλώσσαν μοι καὶ δόξαν, ὡστε δοξάζεσθαι με παρά θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώποις ἡ γλώσσα μου.

⁶ H77Ps 1,6 (f. 225v): Φθέγξομαι προβλήματα ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς (Ps. 77,2b): ὡσπερ παρά τοῖς φιλοσοφοῦσι τὰ Ελλήνων ἔστι τινα προβλήματα, ἀ προτειέασι τοῖς μέλλουσι μελετάν, ἵνα ἀναπολώσιν ἑκείνου, ἡ οἱ διδάσκοντες ἡ οἱ πείθαν λαμβάνοντες τῶν ἐπίδεικνυμένων ἑκείνα τὰ μαθήματα, οὕτως ἔστι τινα καὶ τῆς γραφῆς προβλήματα. The English translation of the Psalms is taken from Pietersma 2000.
dition of ancient commentaries (philological, philosophical, medical, and so on). This literary heritage of Greco-Roman antiquity was shared first by Hellenistic Judaism and then by early Christianity. Both did so by replacing the ‘canon’ of classical poets and authoritative philosophers with the Bible. The Munich homilies provide a novel witness for this widespread tradition, starting with the recourse to the philological techniques of textual and literary criticism or with the application of the familiar tools of late antique rhetorics with whom the Alexandrian, as a former grammarian, was well acquainted.7

To our modern perception a sermon does not immediately evoke the idea of a substantial investment of philological skills or doctrinal considerations on the part of the preacher, especially when treating a text such as the Psalms, which is first and foremost characterized by implications of a moral and spiritual kind. Origen was fully conscious of these aspects, as we can already observe in the nine Homilies on Psalms 36, 37 and 38 translated by Rufinus into Latin and regarded by him as a ‘moral interpretation’.8 Yet the Alexandrian did not restrict his view of the Psalms to their recognition as a source of inspiration for the life of the faithful. As emphasized both by the amount of the writings he devoted to commenting on the Psalms and by the mass of their quotations dispersed throughout his œuvre (the second largest number of quotes after the Gospel of Matthew), they played a major role in the development of his theological thought. For Origen the Psalms, as a main prophetic book from their early use in the New Testament onward, lent themselves to nourish and support the most important doctrines concerning God, man and the world.9 Consequently also the new homilies mirror the principal themes of his theology.10 As such they cannot avoid, at least to some degree, a dependence on

7 See Neuschäfer 1987; Martens 2011.
8 Rufinus, Praef. (Prinzivalli 1991, 26, 1-5): Quoniam tricesimi sexti et tricesimi septimi et tricesimi octaui psalmi expositio tota moralis est. This corresponds to Origen’s remark in H36Ps I,1 (f. 30r): δι’όλων ὁ ψαλμός ἠθικός ἐστι. See also FrPs 118 (Harl 1972, 182, 7): περιέχει γε ὁ ψαλμός οὗτος ὅλον τὸν τόπον τῶν ἠθικῶν. For the distinction between ethics and theology as well as their reciprocal connection on the path towards perfection, see H77Ps I,5 (f. 223v).
9 Though the author addresses only the evidence of Prin, eloquently proves the constitutive value of the Psalms for the essentials of Origen’s theology (McGuckin 2011).
10 I have tried to prove it in some contributions: Perrone 2014a; 2015b; “Et l’homme tout entier devient dieu” … (forthcoming).
preceding doctrinal traditions or more generally the influence of a cultural heritage exploited by the preacher on behalf of his arguments.

DOCTRINAL TRADITIONS: PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

Origen is a unique genius, but he does not stand alone in the doctrinal landscape of early Christianity. On occasion he is even willing to recognize that he has predecessors upon whom he can build. However, unless he explicitly states it or at least voices some recognizable hints, we do not easily find out more precisely the sources on which he might depend. Therefore we do not always get a clear picture of the theological traditions that contributed to shaping his thought, although we generally admit his debt to his predecessors in Jewish and Christian Alexandria (obviously including also his Gnostic adversaries). That notwithstanding, only the case of Philo can be illustrated in detail; it is difficult to do the same with Clement, in spite of the evident affinities existing between the two Christian teachers of Alexandria. The Munich homilies support the same impression, while adding further evidence to Origen’s well-known acquaintance with Philo.

As in most other cases Origen does not mention the Jewish author by name, but he is honest enough not only to let the reader identify him easily but also to accompany the quotation with an appreciative judgment. For example, in the Homily on Psalm 75 Origen refers to Philo with one of his typical formulations pointing to both aspects: “Another before me observed, and he observed well” (Ἐτέρους πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἐτήρησε, καὶ καλῶς).

11 I have discussed this problem in connection with Origen’s practice of quotation (Peronne 2011).

12 For this impression see Van den Hoek 1992. Origen never mentions his ‘predecessor’ in the Didaskaleion, according to Eusebius’ reconstruction of its diadochhai, whereas he remembers Pantaenus and Heraclas.


14 The only mentions of Philo by name are in CC IV,51; VI,21, and CMt XV,3.

15 For similar introductory sentences, see e.g. CMt X,22 (30,5-6): Ἐτήρησε μὲν οὖν τὶς τῶν πρὸ ἐμῶν τὴν ἀναγεγραμμένην ἐν Γενέσει τοῦ Φαραώ γενεθλίον; XIV,2 (277,30-278,1): Ἥδη δὲ καὶ ἄλλης διηγήσεως ἀψωμέθα, ἢν ἐλεγέ τις τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν; XVII,17 (635,16-18): Τῶν μὲν πρὸ ἡμῶν ποιήσας τὶς βιβλία νόμων ἱερῶν ἀλληγορίας; CC V,55 (58,24-25): Τοῖς δυναμένοις ἀκούς τὴν προφητικοῦ βουλήματος πείσομεν ὅτι καὶ τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν τὶς ταῦτα ἀνήγαγεν εἰς τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς λόγον.
The passage clearly echoes Philo’s distinction between the term ἀναβάτης (‘one who mounts’ a horse) and ἰππέας (‘horseman’) in the Allegorical Interpretation, if not also in On Husbandry, inasmuch as Origen elaborates on it similarly with regard to the lack of control over passion and desire. Thus the ‘one who mounts’ a horse is connected in both authors with the Egyptians in the Exodus narrative, symbolically viewed as those who lose their reins over the body and are caused to fall because of their passionate movements. Origen, while appropriating the Platonizing allegory of Philo, clarifies it philosophically by opposing the body with its ‘appetencies’ (ὁρέξεις) to the ‘science’ (ἐπιστήμη) governing rational behavior. In the wake of his predecessor he also reformulates the argument bibliically, since he opposes the Egyptians to the model of Elijah as the true ‘horseman’ in light of 2 Kings (4 Kingdoms LXX) 2,12. The homiletic context with its didascalic necessities does not allow room for a wider weav-
ing of the Philonian motif, as we perceive also shortly before this passage with the allegorical interpretation of the ‘horse’ as the ‘body’.\textsuperscript{19} However, we should note the very rare word that negatively qualifies the ‘appetencies’: they are said to be \textit{σαρκοδακάς}, that is “the biting” or “eating of the flesh.” This adjective is attested only once in an Orphic fragment transmitted by Sextus Empiricus\textsuperscript{20} so that such rarity itself provides a clue to the preacher’s distinctively high level of discourse.

The 2\textsuperscript{nd} Homily on Psalm 76 introduces a similar reference to Philo: “One before me criticized Jothor, and he criticized him well, who said: ‘Now I know that the Lord is great above all gods.’”\textsuperscript{21} Origen is surely referring to a passage in \textit{On Drunkenness}, where Philo reproaches Jothor for the fact that he does not know God in the proper sense since he dares to compare him with other deities.\textsuperscript{22} Once more Origen simplifies the allegorical explanation given by Philo, for whom Jothor is the symbol of an ‘empty presumption’ conforming to the majority opinion. On the other hand, he expands the biblical setting on account of the verse on which he is commenting: Ps. 76,14b-15a (τίς θεὸς μέγας ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν; σὺ εἶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ὁ ποιῶν θαυμάσια, “What god is as great as our God? You are the God who works wonders”). He therefore shifts from the words of Jothor to the passages in which the Scripture speaks positively of men as ‘gods’ (Ps. 81,6 being the main text-proof). Consequently Origen draws the attention of his audience to the theme of ‘deification’, one of the recurrent issues emerging from the new homilies.

In both of the cases we have examined, Origen not only points to Philo as his predecessor but also stresses the positive value of the track provided by Philo for his own interpretation. Interestingly, his use of Philo proves to

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{H75Ps} 6 (ff. 167r-v): Τροπικῶς πολλαχοῦ τῆς γραφῆς ὁ ἵππος τὸ σῶμα λέγεται, οἷον ψευδής ἵππος εἰς σωτηρίαν (Ps. 32,17a).
\textsuperscript{20} See above n. 16: ἵνα μὴ φέρηται εἰς τὰς ὀρέξεις τὰς σαρκοδακάς (the manuscript has the reading σαρκοδακάς) and, in a slightly different form, \textit{IX,15}: ἢν γὰρ χρόνος, ὡς φησίν ὁ Ορφεύς, ἥνικα φῶτες ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων βιον εἰχον/σαρκοδακῆ, κρείττων δὲ τὸν ἥττονα φῶτ’ ἐδάιζεν.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{H76Ps} II,4 (f. 190r): ἐμέμψατο τις τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν, καὶ καλῶς γε ἐμέμψατο, τὸν Ἰοθὸρ εἰπόντα ὅτι νῦν ἔγνων ὅτι μέγας κύριος παρὰ πάντας τοὺς θεοὺς (Ex 18,11), ὅτι καὶ ἐδοξέ τι λέγειν περὶ θεοῦ συγκρίνων αὐτῶν εἰδώλως, οὐ νοήσας ἄλλους θεοὺς ἢ ταύτα.
\textsuperscript{22} Philo, \textit{Ebr.} 45 (178,28-29): Θεοῖς οὖν τοῖς ψευδωλύμοις οὐκ ἃν τίς τῶν ἀληθῆ θεῶν συγκρίνειν ὑπέμενεν, εἰτερ ἀφευνῶς ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτῶν. See also \textit{ibid.}, 41-44.
be at once faithful and creative. We can observe this again in other passages alluding to the Jewish author, though Origen no longer endorses his Alexandrian antecedent or even hints generically at Philo by simply mentioning some interpreters that preceeded. In the *Homily on Psalm 74* he presumably goes back to Philo’s ζήτημα on Ps. 74,9a-b in the treatise *On the Unchangeableness of God* (Ποτήριον ἐν χειρὶ κυρίου οἶνου ἀκράτους πλήρες κεράσματος, καὶ ἐκλινεὶ ἐκ τοῦτον εἰς τούτο, “in the Lord’s hand there is a cup of pure wine, full of a mixture; he tipped it from side to side”). However, the verse is exploited for various explanations: Origen applies it to the sinners, whose ‘cup’ is filled in varying measure with evil and good, as long as they have also done virtuous deeds, whereas Philo refers it to the privilege of the ‘Powers’ (δυνάμεις) over men since they participate in God without any mixture. In other words, Origen here shares the problem with Philo but not his answer.

Another point of contact with the Jewish teacher figures in the 7th *Homily on Psalm 77*, where Origen deals with the narrative of the plagues in Egypt. In his comment on Ps. 77,45a (ἐξαπέστειλεν εἰς αὐτοὺς κυνόμυιαν καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτούς, “He sent among them the dog-fly, and it devoured them”) he compares the order of the plagues in the Psalm which differs from that appearing in Exodus and in Ps. 104. Apparently he is referring to Philo when he afterwards mentions the explanation proposed by ‘others’, for whom the dog-fly, a ‘shameless’ insect, refers to the exce-
ding ‘shamelessness’ of the Egyptians. Actually Philo elaborates more thoroughly on the motif of ‘shamelessness’, when he comments that the dog-fly is a plague inflicted directly by God: actually, when God deals with human affairs he does not need anybody as his intermediary. Origen instead asks himself about the source of Wis 16,9 (“For them the bitings of grasshoppers and flies killed”) and finds it in the passage of Ps. 77,45a. This connection then offers him a key for his own interpretation of the ‘dog-fly’: God can use a worthless insect to carry out his punishments, avoiding wild and more cruel animals because he wants to leave room for conversion and penance. In this way the perspective of the divine pedagogy of salvation in the book of Wisdom impregnates the Origenian interpretation of the Psalm passage. As a matter of fact, Philo shares the same motif by alluding to Wis 11,17-19, though he does not quote this passage in extenso as does Origen, who also refers to Wis 12,26. In the end the Jewish and the Christian interpreter converge in the essentials of their explanation. Yet Origen once more uses the Philonian materials although he inserts them into a different setting.

26 H77Ps VII,3 (f. 290r): Ἀλλοι δὲ οὕτως δηγήσαντο· ἐπεὶ πάνυ ἀναιδὲς ἦν τὸ πεμφθὲν ζῷον τοῖς Ἀιγυπτίοις, δύο ἀναιδή ζῷα συλλαβὼν ἐδειξε τῷ ὀνόματι, ἵνα παραστήσῃ τὴν ύπερβάλλουσαν ἀναίδειαν αὐτῶν.

27 See Philo, Mos. I,130: Ἡ γενομένη διὰ ζώων τῶν ἐν τῇ φύσει πάντων θρασυτάτων, κυνομυίας, ἢν ἐτύμως ἐκάλεσαν οἱ θετικοὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων - σοφοὶ γὰρ ἦσαν - ἐκ τῶν ἀναιδεστάτων ζῴων συνθέντες τούνομα, μυίας καὶ κυνός. Origen exploits the Philonian distinction regarding the identity of those who initiate the plagues (Aaron, Moses and God himself) in HEx IV,3-4.

28 Philo, Mos. I,109: Ἦσως ἄν τις ἐπιζητήσει, διὰ τί τοῖς οὐτῶν ἁφανείς καὶ ἡμελημένοις ζῴοις ἐτίμωσει τὴν χώραν παρεῖς ἀρχτούς καὶ λέοντας καὶ παρδαλέες καὶ τὰ ἄλλα γένη τῶν ἀνθρώπων θηρίων, ἀ σαφὼν ἀνθρωπεῖων ἀπετεῖ, καὶ εἰ μὴ ταύτα, τὰς γοῦν Ἀιγυπτίων ἁσπίδας, ἃ σαρκῶν ἅπτεται, καὶ εἰ μὴ ταῦτα, τὰς γοῦν Ἀιγυπτίων ἁσπίδας, ἃ σαρκῶν ἅπτεται, καὶ εἰ μὴ ταῦτα, τὰς γοῦν Ἀιγυπτίων ἁσπίδας, ἃ σαρκῶν ἅπτεται, καὶ εἰ μὴ ταῦτα, τὰς γοῦν Ἀιγυπτίων ἁσπίδας, ἃ σαρκῶν ἅπτεται.

29 H77Ps VII,3 (ff. 288v-289r): Ἀναγινώσκων τὴν ἐπιγεγραμμένην Σολομῶντος Σοφίαν, ἐφίστημι πόθεν ἐλήφθη τὸ γράψαντι τὸ βιβλίον ἐκείνον τοὺς μὲν ἀκρίδων καὶ μυίων ἀπέκτεινεν δήγματα (Wis 16,9). Καὶ εξήτουν εἰ εκεῖ πρῶτον εἰσήταν θεοὶ δὲ διδόντος τιηείν καὶ προσέχειν τῇ ἀναγνώσει, εὗρον ὦτο ἐντεύθεν ἐλήφθη.
CULTURAL HERITAGE: THE POLYMATHEIA OF ALEXANDRIA

There are further points of contact between the new homilies and Philo, but in part they have to do with their shared cultural heritage. So we should now, albeit once again quickly, review some aspects of the intellectual patrimony that comes to light in the Munich Codex. As hinted earlier, our sermons might be exploited for lexical investigation, inasmuch as we detect therein an interesting group of *hapax legomena* together with other words rarely used. On the whole, the texts convey several traces of the πολυμάθεια fostered by Alexandrian Hellenism. For instance, when Origen explains the plague of the ‘frogs’ in the 7th Homily on Psalm 77 (Ps. 77,45b), leaning upon a precedent interpreter he applies zoological (and perhaps also medical) notions to trace the difference between the ‘frog’ (βάτραχος) and the ‘toad’ (φρῦνος). It is not possible to establish the source from which the Alexandrian derived such a distinction, but his assessment explicitly relies on its zoological evidence (ἡ ἱστορία ἡ περὶ τοῦ ζώου τούτο παραδίδωσιν). Origen read therein about the toad being an animal that becomes poisonous when living outside its aquatic environment and as such dangerous, like snakes. We may notice affinities with a textbook of Alexandrian medicine – Philumenos’ work on poisonous animals and the remedies against them (Περὶ ιοβόλων ζώων καὶ τῶν

---

30 As for the *hapax legomena*, the list includes the following items: ἀντινύμφιος (*H67Ps II,7* [f. 113v]); ἀφθητή (*H67Ps II,3* [f. 102r]); ἐβιωνισμός (*H76Ps II,1* [f. 184v]); ἐννηξις (*H77Ps VII,3* [f. 290v]); ἑπιστεφανώματα (*H73Ps III,7* [f. 148v]); ἡμιμήνιος (*H80Ps I,6* [f. 339v]); ὁλιγόκρατον (*H74Ps 5* [f. 160v]); ὀλιγόφωνος (*H80Ps I,6* [f. 340v]); παπαθητική (*H73Ps I,7* [f. 125v]); πονηρική (*H77Ps IX,1* [f. 317v]); τριαστεῖν (*H15Ps I,3* [f. 14v]); ἐπιστεφανώματα (*H73Ps III,7* [f. 148v]); ἠμιμήνιος (*H74Ps I,6* [f. 122v]); περαπαθητική (*H80Ps I,6* [f. 340v]). As for the unusual expressions, Origen shares for instance with Sextus Empiricus the term κενοπάθεια, “unreal sensation”, in *H77Ps VIII,4* (f. 306v), confirming by the way his use of the verb κενοπαθεῖν (three times), a word also present in Sextus Empiricus (four times). For further expressions, see supra n. 20.

31 *H77Ps VII,7* (f. 290v): Ἑλεγε δὲ τις τούτων τὸν βάτραχον τὸν καλοῦσιν εἶναι φρῦνον. Η γάρ ἱστορία ἡ περὶ τοῦ ζώου τούτο παραδίδωσιν, ὅτι ἀποχερσωθεὶς βάτραχος καὶ εξ ὑδατος γενόμενος γίνεται δηλητήριον φάρμακον, ὅτε αὐτὸν ἐνδάκτυον τὸ παραπλήσιον ποιοῦσι ἐχίνη καὶ ἀσπίδα καὶ τῶν ἀλλίων ζῴων, ἀπερ ιοβόλα ἐστίν. Στερηθὲν γάρ τοῦ ζώου τὴν ὑγρὰς ἱστοὺς καὶ τῆς ἐννηξις ἐν τῷ ὑδάτω, ιὸν ἀπὸ τῶν πτωχῶν συνάγει καὶ ποιεῖ παραπλήσιον τῷ ἐκείνω τῇ δύναμις τὸν ιὸν βάτραχος· ὅθεν ἀσπίδων καὶ τῶν ιοβόλων τροφή ἐστιν βάτραχος, καὶ λαμβάνει τὸν ιὸν τῆς ἔξω καὶ ἐκ τῆς τοιαύτης τροφῆς.
bοηθημάτων)\textsuperscript{32} –, or even catch some echoes of a similar topic dealt with by Origen’s colleague and friend Julius Africanus in his Kestoi.\textsuperscript{33}

From another vantage point we discern evidence of historical reading, though we cannot exclude a more personal and immediate familiarity with the subject. Actually Origen often resorts to agonistic (as well as theatrical) metaphors, so that it does not come totally as a surprise when in the 4\textsuperscript{th} Homily on Psalm 77 he evokes “the so called ‘Great Games’ (Μεγάλα γυμνικά),” apparently a unique designation of the Olympic or Panhellenic games. His mention is far from being stereotypical, because he sketches a lively description of the training of the athletes and the control of their diet in preparation for the games, undertaken by inspectors sent by the organizers (or referees) of the games.\textsuperscript{34} In this passage we find also the technical term for such organizers starting with Herodotus’ Histories: the Ἑλληνοδίκαι.\textsuperscript{35}

A more pervasive cultural impact is the presence of music, which is also as an expected response to the biblical book that is most of all connected

\textsuperscript{32} Cf. Philum. 36,1-3 (39,1-12): Ο ὁ Θεόδωρος ἐν τῷ οὗ αὐτοῦ συγγράμματι περί φρύνου τῆς τε ιδέας καὶ τῆς φύσεως ἡμίν ἐξηγούμενος οὗτος λέγει · ὁ φρύνος βατράχῳ εἴδος εἶναι μοι δοκεῖ, ὑθόβιον δὲ τὸ ζώον καὶ ἐκ τῆς λιμνοβίου φύσεως μεταβεβληκός ἐπὶ τὸ χερσόβιον. Φρύνος δὲ προσαγορεύεται εἰμίφρος τῶ χερσόδωρο, δυσαλθῆ δὲ τὴν κάκωσιν παρέχει τοὺς ἐντυγχάνουσιν ἐπὶ γὰρ τὸ ζώον ἐτεμέγεθες, ὡς μηδέν ἀποδείξει βραχείας χελώνης, ὑπακούετε τὰ τά νόστα καὶ πολὺ ἐπὶ τῇ τῆς πνευμάτων ἐμφάνισε διοίκητε. Τομηρότερον δὲ ἀμύνεται πρὸς τὸ ἀντίκρος καὶ τοῖς πηδήμασιν παραμερίζεται διάστημα, ὡς κάνον μίν προσβήσῃ τῷ ἀσθματικῷ, βλαπτέται τοὺς πλησίον γινομένους.

\textsuperscript{33} See Julius Africanus, Kestoi 33: Ἀφρικανοῦ· πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἄδικείσθαι κτήνη ὑπὸ φρύνου νύκτωρ ἡ ἐν ζῷοφώτω τόπων ἐμφανεῖσθαι προσφυγόμενο. Ο φρύνος προσφυγάων εἰσθαι τόις κτήνεσιν ἐμπολείται, ἡν ποι ἐν ἱπποστασίω νύκτωρ λάθη ἡ ἐν ζῷοφώτω τόπω, καὶ νόσοι παρακολουθοῦσιν ἐκ τοῦτοι λοιμικά τοῖς ζώοις καὶ οἰδήματα δυσίματα, ὡς ἀργεῖν πασαν ἐπικουρίαν πρὸς τὸ δεινόν. Χρή ὁν πρὸς τὸ μηδέποτε αὐτὸν τοιώντον δράσαι πῦρ ὑπὸ τούς ἱπποστασίας διαφέρεῖς ὑφήπτειν· τοτε γὰρ τὸ ζώον ὡς ἑλέγχον αὐτοῦ φοβεῖται τὸ πῦρ.

\textsuperscript{34} H77Ps IV,4 (f. 251v): Ἡ οὐχ ὅρασις τι ἱστορεῖται περὶ τῶν αγώνων τούτων τῶν ὁνομασμένων Μεγάλων Γυμνικῶν; Οὕς· παρείσχετε περιτόμενοι ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλληνοδίκων οἱ εἰπτηροῦντες τὸν ἀθλητὴν πᾶς ἐσθίει καὶ ὄσπερ τοὺς γυμνάσιους παρατηρήσεως, καὶ ἐπιτρέποντος καὶ κατὰ νόμον γίνεται καὶ κατὰ λόγον τὰ γυμνάσια.

\textsuperscript{35} Cf. Hdt. Hist. V,22: Πρὸς δὲ καὶ οἱ ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ διεστάντες αγώνα Ἐλληνοδίκαι οὗτο ἐγνώσαν εἶναι. The most usual form of this term is Ἐλληνοδίκαι.
with the practice of singing and playing. In his *Letter to Gregory* Origen counts music among the *artes liberales* that for the Greeks were propaedeutic to the study of philosophy, whereas for him all these disciplines should be put at the service of biblical interpretation. His Alexandrian predecessors Philo and Clement had already manifested the extent to which they were interested in music. They, in fact, worked out elaborate patterns addressing the music of the *kosmos*, also that of the Church as the corporate body of Christ or, with an additional allegory, that of the individual and his body. Origen in his turn would make use of these models, though proving again his autonomy with regard to such premises. If occasionally he seems to play down his own expertise in music, as in the 1st *Homily on Psalm 80*, he does so only to open the way for an allegorical interpretation of the passage on which he is commenting. Elsewhere he introduces the performance of both instrumental and vocal music in some details, as in the 2nd *Homily on Psalm 67*. Here the preacher, as he interprets verse 5a-b (*ἀσατε τῷ θεῷ, ψάλατε τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ, “Sing to God, make music to his name”), exhibits a lexical creativity: namely, he shapes a new word for the training of the voice – *φωναλειπτική* – and illustrates its meaning by associating it with the better-known term *φωνασκική*, “for exercising the voice” (*τέχνης φωνασκικῆς καὶ φωναλειπτικῆς*).  

36 *EpGr* 1: Διὰ τούτων ἢν ηὐξάμην παραλαβεῖν σε καὶ φιλοσοφίας Ἐλλήνων τὰ οἰόνει εἰς χριστιανισμοῦν δυνάμενα γενέσθαι ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα ἢ προπαιδεύματα, καὶ τὰ ἀπὸ γεωμετρίας καὶ ἀστρονομίας χρήσιμα ἐσόμενα εἰς τὴν τῶν ἱερῶν γραφῶν διήγησιν ἓν, ὅπερ φασίν φιλοσόφων παιδεύς περὶ γεωμετρίας καὶ μουσικῆς, γναμματικῆς τε καὶ ὑπορικῆς καὶ ἀστρονομίας, ὡς συνεργῶν φιλοσοφία, τοῦτ' ἦμεις εἰπόμεν καὶ περὶ αὐτῆς φιλοσοφίας πρὸς χριστιανισμοῦν.  

37 *H80Ps* I,4 (ff. 334v-335r): Τί δὲ δυνάμθαι ἄνθρωποι μηδέποτε ἐκ παιδῶν μεμαθηκότες μήτε κιθαρίζειν μήτε ψάλλειν ἐν ψαλτηρίῳ, τούτῳ τῷ ὀργάνῳ ψάλλειν οὕτως, ὡς οἱ εἰκ παιδῶν ταῦτα μεμαθηκότες, ἵνα ἐτοιμάζωμεν ψαλτήριον τερπνὸν καὶ κιθάρας, ἐπεὶ τοῦτο λέγει κατ' αὐτοῦς ὁ λόγος· λάβετε ψαλμόν (Ps. 80,3a).  

38 *H67Ps* II,2 (f. 99v): Ζητῆτων όντι καὶ τοῖτο προσέταξεν ὁ τῶν ὅλων θεός ἢ ὁ Χριστός ἢ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἄγιον, ἵνα μηδὲν ἄλλο νοῆται κατὰ τὸ ἀσατε τῷ θεῷ ἢ ἐκκλίσις τῆς φωνῆς, ἢ μήν μᾶλλον δύνανται ποιεῖν οἱ μουσικοὶ καὶ ὅσοι μεμελετήσαντο ἀσκεῖν αὐτῶν τὴν φωνὴν καὶ μεγαλύνειν καὶ μεγεθύνειν διὰ τούτος τέχνης φωνασκικῆς καὶ φωναλειπτικῆς. Unless we should emendate the manuscript, there seems to be a further *hapax* in connection with the voice; it is the term ἀρθητή in *H67Ps* II,3 (ff. 101v-102v): Καὶ ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς ἀρθητής φωνῆς βλέπω διαφορὰν τοῦ λέγειν μὴ ἀδοντα καὶ τοῦ ἄδειν μὴ πεζῇ λέγοντα. 
As for the τέχνη itself, the art of playing, in the 4th Homily on Psalm 76 Origen acknowledges the seductive power of music, which distracts man from enjoying the beauty of the world created by God or, to use the eloquent image employed by the preacher, from appreciating the ‘manifold symposion’ prepared by Him for mankind.39 Contrary to that, thanks to the relaxation provided by music, man is led to superstition. Indeed, God has endowed the creation with its own musical ‘art’ – the thunder (βροντή) –, which should awaken man from his spiritual sleep and arouse him to worship the Creator.40 However, the Logos further exploited the resources of music, since he admitted the necessity for man to have some recreation, instead of keeping his mind in perpetual tension.41 Consequently, according to the 2nd Homily on Psalm 67, he endowed the Scriptures with all the different genres that correspond spiritually to mundane music, including equivalents for erotic and wedding songs.42

A good player should know how to touch the strings of his ‘harp’ (ψαλτήριον) and our preacher lists their names even more meticulously

39 H76Ps IV,1 (ff. 204v-205r): Πεποίηκε γὰρ οἱονεὶ αὐτόθεν καὶ αὐτόματα γευστὰ χωρὶς ἀνθρωπίνης τέχνης, ἵνα πάλιν ἡ αἰσθήσις τοῦ φυτοῦ προσβάλλουσα ζητήσῃ τοῦδε μὲν τοῦ φυτοῦ τὴν αὐτόθεν γλυκύτητα, τοῦδε δὲ τὴν στρυφνότητα, τοῦδε δὲ τὴν τοιάνδε ποιότητα καὶ ζητήσασα ἡ φύσις ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη θαυμάσῃ τὸν εἰς ποικίλον καὶ τοιούτον συμπόσιον εἰσαγαγόντα ἡμᾶς.

40 H76Ps IV,1 (ff. 204v-205r): Βροντὴν εἰργάσατο, ἵνα διὰ τῆς βροντῆς κοιμωμένην ἐγείρῃ καὶ δυστύνη τὴν ψυχήν, ὡστε ζητήσῃ τις ὁ τάς βροντάς ποιήσας καὶ ὁ τὰς τηλικαύτας ἐργαζόμενος ἐν τῷ παντὶ φωνῇ, ἡμεῖς δὲ οἱ τάλανες καταλιπόντες βλέπειν τὸν κόσμον καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ, μᾶλλον περὶ τὰς τέχνας τὰς ἀνθρωπίνας καταγινόμεθα, ὅσα τὰς τέχνας πρὸς ἀπάτην ποιοῦσι, ταῦτα ἡμῖν βλέποντες τοῦ κόσμου.

41 H67Ps II,2 (f. 100r): Ἰσμὲν δὴ ὅτι πάντες ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἀνέσεως δεόμεθα καὶ οὐκ οἶδα τέ έστιν αἰ η τετάσθαι τὸ ἡγεμονικόν ἡμῶν οὐδ’ ἂν πάνυ σπουδαῖοι γενόμεθα.

42 H67Ps II,2 (ff. 100r-): Ἡμᾶς δὲ ἠθέλησεν ὁ λόγος περισπᾶσαι καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τῶν πιστεύοντων ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνικῶν ὠδῶν ἐπὶ τὰς κρείττονας κατὰ θεόν, ἵνα τῇ παραθέσει τῶν δοκοῦντων μὲν ὁμογενῶς κρείττονυν δὲ ἀποστῇ τὴν ψυχήν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἐκείνουν. Καὶ φησιν ὁ λόγος· ἀδείν θέλεις καὶ χρῆσθαι ὑποθέσει τοῦ ᾀσμάτων ἐρωτικῆς; Μάθε ὅτι ἔστι τις ἀληθῶς καὶ θεῖος οὐρανιός ἔρως καθὸ γέγραπται τὸ Λέγοντος τῶν ἠσμάτων. Αἱ ἀδείν θέλεις ἐπιθαλαμίους ὠδᾶς; Μάθε τὸν θεῖον γάμον τοῦ κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον υἱοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς τὴν νυφίαν, καίναι τὴν νυφίαν, καὶ ἐναύων ἀνά ἄσμα ἀλλὰ ἐξαιρέτως, ὡς ἄγια τῶν ἄγιων ἐστὶν τίνα, οὕτως ἄνεστι τὸ ἄσμα τῶν ἠσμάτων. Αἱ ἀδείν θέλεις ἐπιθαλαμίους ὠδᾶς; Μάθε τὸν θεῖον γάμον τοῦ κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον υἱοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς τὴν νυφίαν, καίναι τὴν νυφίαν, καὶ ἐναύων ἀνά ἄσμα ἀλλὰ ἐξαιρέτως, ὡς ἄγια τῶν ἄγιων ἐστὶν τίνα, οὕτως ἄνεστι τὸ ἄσμα τῶν ἠσμάτων. Αἱ ἀδείν θέλεις ἐπιθαλαμίους ὠδᾶς; Μάθε τὸν θεῖον γάμον τοῦ κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον υἱοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς τὴν νυφίαν, καίναι τὴν νυφίαν, καὶ ἐναύων ἀνά ἄσμα ἀλλὰ ἐξαιρέτως, ὡς ἄγια τῶν ἄγιων ἐστὶν τίνα, οὕτως ἄνεστι τὸ ἄσμα τῶν ἠσμάτων.
than did Philo and Clement of Alexandria. David is an example of a good player or, rather, he is regarded as such inasmuch as he is the ‘type’ (τύπος) of Christ, the ‘new David’, who shaped the Church as his ‘instrument with many chords’. Yet the supreme performer of music for our homilies is “the artist God” (ὁ τεχνίτης θεός); he makes men, especially the prophets, his instruments as we hear in the beautiful prologue to the 2nd Homily on Psalm 80. God seeks for himself the most harmonious instruments among those who have prepared themselves to play “the celestial music” – seemingly a unique formulation for more common expressions, such as ‘the music of God’ or ‘divine music’. Origen does not elaborate on the notion of “celestial music,” apart from regarding man, and more specifically his body, as a “spiritual harp” (πνευματικὸν ψαλτήριον); Clement applies a similar concept both to the universe as macrocosm and to man as microcosm, through which the Logos sings his song to God.

43 H67Ps II,4 (f. 105v): Ὁ τεχνίτης ἐν τῷ ψάλλειν οὐ συγκεχυμένως κρούει τὰς χορδὰς, ἀλλ’ οἶδε τοὺς καιροὺς καὶ τοὺς τόπους, καὶ πότε μὲν κρούει τὴν υπάτην, τὴν παραπάτην, ὅτε δὲ τὴν νήπιον, πότε κρούει τὴν ἀνωτέρω, καὶ πότε δὲ ὄργανον κατωτέρω. For similar passages in his predecessors, see Philo, Leg. III,121: Ὁ μουσικὸς λέγη τῷ πρῶτα εἰσαγομένῳ δεικνύς τὸ ἐναρμόνιον ὅτι χρῶμα ἐστὶν, ἢ τὸ χρωματικὸν ὅτι διανοικόν, ἢ τὴν υπάτην ὅτι μέση; Clem. Al. Str. I,13,57,5: Ἡθί δὲ καὶ ἡ υπάτη ἐναντία τῇ νεάτῃ υψύση, ἀλλ’ ἄμφω γε ἀρμονία μια.

44 H67Ps II,3 (ff. 102v-103r): Δαυίδ δὲ πολλαχοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν τύπος ἐστί· κἀκεῖνος μὲν ὄργανον ἑαυτῷ εὐτρεπίζει δεκάχορδον ‹ἢ› ἐξ ὁπόσως δέμπτην ὁ θεός ἔχον τὴν σύστασιν, ὁ δὲ μέγας μουσικὸς Δαυίδ, ὁ “ἱκανὸν τῇ χειρί” – τοῦτο γάρ φασιν ἑρμηνεύεσθαι τὸ ὄνομα, ἀπὸ τοῦ “Δαυίδ” μεταλαμβανόμενον εἰς “ἱκανὸν χειρί”, περὶ οὗ προφητεύουσιν οἱ προφῆται ἄρξαι τοῦ λαοῦ, ἦλθεν εἰς τὸν βίον καὶ ὄργανον μέγα πολύχορδον κατεσκεύασεν ἐκκλησίαν.

45 H80Ps II,1 (f. 345v): Καὶ ζητεῖ ὁ τεχνίτης θεὸς λύραν μουσικῶς ἡμοσμένην, κιθάραν καλῶς ἡμοσμένην ὅν δεί τρόπον τὰς χορδὰς ἔχον τετονωμένας· καὶ συγκρίνας ὅπου εὑρίσκοι τὰ τοιαῦτα ὁ θεός, δείκνυσι τὴν οὐρανίον μουσικήν.

46 Clem. Al. Strom. I,5,3-4: κόσμον δὲ τὸν κύριον κιθάρας ἔχει τὸν κύριον, κατὰ τὸν κύριον κιθάρας ἔχει τὸν κύριον ἀμοιφόμενον, ἀγών πνεύματι ἀμοιφόμενον, ψάλλει τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ πολυφώνου ὄργανον καὶ προσάδει τῷ ὄργανῷ τῶν ἄνθρωπων. As for the ecclesiological implications, see also VI,11,18: εἰ ἡ δ’ ἂν τῷ φαρμακίῳ κἀκεῖνα ἀλληγορισμοῦντος κατὰ μὲν τὸ πρῶτον σημαινόμενον ὁ κύριος, κατὰ δὲ τὸ δεύτερον ὁι προσσεχῶς κρούνοντες τὰς ψυχὰς ὑπὸ μουσηγητῆς τῷ κυρίῳ. Κάν ὁ σωζόμενος λέγηται λαός κιθάρα, κατ’ ἐπίπνοναν τοῦ λόγου καὶ κατ’ ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θεοῦ διαλύουσαν κιθάρας ἐξακούεται, κρουόμενος εἰς τίσιν τῶν λόγων. λάβοις δ’ ἂν καὶ ἄλλως μουσικῆ συμμομίλησαν τὴν ἔκκλησιαστικῆς νόμου καὶ προφητῶν ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀποστόλων σὺν καὶ τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.
Finally, the perspective of music helps us to approach a contiguous aspect of the cultural heritage mirrored by the Munich homilies in the wake of Alexandrian Hellenism. Origen famously possessed a remarkable knowledge of astronomy, and the new homilies add further elements in support of that knowledge. In the Munich codex astronomy is much more closely connected to cosmology than are the Homilies on Genesis. The vision of the cosmos emerges in the 2nd Homily on Psalm 36, in which we observe the doctrine of two heavens and two earths. The second and superior earth, called ἀντίχθων, that is ‘the opposite’ or ‘counter-earth’, a Pythagoric notion for a superior sky as attested by Aristotle and Clement of Alexandria. Origen relates this ‘counter-earth’ to Jesus’ promise to the meek in the Sermon of the Mount (Mt 5,5). According to a controversial passage of Peri archôn, preserved in a letter of Jerome, he also refers to it by another astronomical notion, by using a term not otherwise attested in Greek: ἀντιζώνη, meaning again the land of the blessed located above the sphere of the fixed stars. Moreover Origen proposes the same cosmological view in the 5th Homily on Psalm 36, preserved only in Latin. In his commentary on verse 11a (οἱ δὲ πραεῖς κληρονομήσουσι γῆν, “But the meek shall inherit the earth”) Origen goes back once more to his concept of a double ‘earth’: on the one hand, the inhabited world, which is called ‘dry’ (ξερά); on the other hand, the land under the upper sky, which is above our firmament and thus is called its ‘back’ (dorsum). It is a formu-
lation that clearly betrays the influence of Plato’s *Phaedrus* with its theme of the flight of the soul through the heavens to reach the celestial vault and get behind it.\(^{52}\) Yet Origen joins the notion of Plato with the image of the cosmos traced by the Alexandrian astronomer Claudius Ptolemy, who envisaged the whole universe as comprising eight heavenly spheres, but hypothesized an additional one actually coinciding with Origen’s ἀντίχθων or ἀντιζώνη.\(^{53}\)

The cosmological interests of the preacher come to the fore especially in the *Homilies on Psalm 76*. In the third sermon of this group Origen, asking about the ‘waters’ that ‘see God’ in verse 17b (*εἴδοσάν σε ὕδατα καὶ ἔφοβηθήσαν*, “The waters saw you, and they were afraid”), surprises us with the extemporary hypothesis that all things might be endowed with a soul (*πάντα ἐψύχωται*).\(^{54}\) This thesis never occurs so explicitly in his other writings, although Origen introduces some hints of it when he exposes the different kinds of movement.\(^{55}\) Yet here he just evokes the idea, whereas he prefers to refer the passage to the δυνάμεις, the angelic powers invested by God with the care of all the world’s elements.\(^{56}\) Nonetheless, the

---

\(^{52}\) Plato’s influence on Origen’s cosmology is analyzed by Köckert (2008). In particular, she points to Pl. *Phdr.* 247a-c.


\(^{54}\) *H76Ps* III,2 (ff. 195v-196r): Επέρχεται δὴ μοι λέγειν, ὅτι πάντα ἐψύχωται καὶ οὐδὲν ἐστιν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ κενὸν ψυχῆς· πάντα δὲ ἐψύχωσας ὁμοίως διαφόροις.

\(^{55}\) According to Scott 1991, 126: “Origen realizes that rationality can be present in different ways... soul in a lesser sense such as the growth of plants, or the movement of elements (as in fire’s upward motion, earthquakes, winds and water currents).” With regard to his doctrine of movement, see especially *Prin* III,1,1 and *Orat.* VI,1.

\(^{56}\) *H76Ps* III,2 (ff. 196v-): Ζητῶ ὅπως, εἰ δύναμις τις ἐνδέδυται τὸ σῶμα τὸ ἑορτάζεις καὶ ἄλλη δύναμις ἐνδέδυται σῶμα ποταμοῦ τοῦ Ἰορδάνου καὶ ἄλλου ποταμοῦ, φέρε ἐπί τοῦ Γένους, ἄλλη δύναμις, καὶ οὕτως ἐπὶ πάντων. Cf. Scott 1991, 128: “Along with positing a lower soul to explain elemental movements, Origen accounts for them by suggesting that they are governed by spiritual powers.” For parallel passages see *Hios* XXIII, 3; CC VIII,31.
recourse to a more traditional explanation does not prevent the preacher from again surprising his audience. Namely, he admits the partial truth of the Greeks when they speak of the Nymphs, though they are mistaken in regarding them as deities.\footnote{H76Ps III,2 (f. 196v): Καὶ τάχα τοιαῦτα φαντασθέντες καὶ οἱ παρ’ Ἑλλησι περιεργότεροι θύουσι τοῖς ποταμοῖς ὡς θεοῖς, οὐ πάντη ἀποπεπτωκότες τῆς ἀλήθειας, ἀποπεπτωκότες δὲ ἐκ μέρους. Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὡς θεοῖς θύουσιν, ἁμαρτάνουσιν· εἰ δὲ φαντάζονται εἶναι τινὰ δύναμιν περὶ ἐκείνα, οὐχ ἁμαρτάνουσιν. Εἰσὶν γὰρ δυνάμεις, ὡς καλοῦσι νύμφας.}

In the 4th\textsuperscript{th} Homily on Psalm 76 the interpretation of verse 19a (φωνὴ τῆς βροντῆς σον ἐν τῶ τροχῶ, “The sound of your thunder in the wheel”) leads Origen to reflect on the movement of the universe in the wake of ancient philosophy and astronomy. To explain the image of the “thunder in the wheel” (Ps. 76, 19a), he takes as an additional prooftext the vision of Ezekiel, since Ez 1,16 speaks of “a wheel in a wheel” (ὡς ἂν τροχὸς ἐν τροχῳ). Having especially this passage in mind, Origen states that the motion of the universe is circular; more precisely, it is a double motion: from east to west and from west to east. The universe, understood as the sphere comprising the whole cosmos (ἀπλανής), moves westward, whereas each one of the so-called seven ‘planets’ (including the sun and the moon) moves in the opposite direction.\footnote{H76Ps IV,2 (f. 207v): Ἡ οὖν φορὰ τοῦ παντὸς κυκλοειδῶς φέρεται, ὡς δήλον τοῖς τηροῦσι τὰ φαινόμενα. Ἐστὶ δὲ ἐν τῷ παντὶ διττῇ γενική κίνησις: ἢ μὲν τις ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἐπὶ δυσμᾶς, ἢ δὲ ἀπὸ δυσμῶν ἐπὶ ἀνατολὰς. Καὶ ἐστὶν ἡ μὲν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἐπὶ δυσμᾶς ἡ τοῦ παντός, ἡ δὲ ἀπὸ δυσμῶν ἐπὶ ἀνατολάς ἐνός ἐκάστου τῶν λεγομένων ἐπτά πλανητῶν ἐν οἷς εἰσὶν ἤλιος καὶ σελήνη. Καὶ κατὰ τούτο ἂν λέγοιτο ἐν τῷ Ιεζεκιήλ “τροχὸς εἶναι ἐν τῷ τροχῷ (Ez 1,16),” τῷ περιέχοντι κατὰ τὴν νοουμένην σφαίραν ἑσῳδόν, ἢ τροχὸς ὁ δεύτερος κατὰ τὴν κίνησιν τῶν πλανωμένων λεγομένων σύνπερ παρ’ Ἑλλησ σφαιρῶν.}

The image of the universe traced by Origen with its eight spheres (the ἀντίχθων not being included this time) – that is the seven spheres of the planets plus the sphere of the fixed stars encircling them – corresponds to the system of Claudius Ptolemy mentioned earlier. On the other hand, the idea of the double movement may go back to Plato’s \textit{Timaeus}, echoed among many others also by the Middle-Platonist Celsus in his \textit{True Doctrine}.\footnote{Cf. Pl. Ti. 36c; 38c; 39b; 47b.} At all events, it is a view that Origen exposes in various passages of
the *Contra Celsum*, a work that probably preceded our homilies. 60 What is new is the subsequent meteorological explanation of the ‘thunder’ presented by our sermon. In fact, Origen does not content himself with repeating the idea expressed in the 8th *Homily on Jeremiah*, according to which the thunder derives from the clouds clashing against one another. 61 In addition, he relates the meteorological phenomenon of thunder to the position of the sun in the Zodiac: when this determines a reaction of *συμπάθεια* with a star, it gives way to thunder. 62

This passage, which deserves a more thorough investigation, also evokes a complex of astronomical and atmospheric phenomena that figure several times in the Munich codex. For instance, the 1st *Homily on Psalm 80* introduces a precise definition of *νεομηνία*, “new moon,” with regard to

60 See *CC* I,23: ὡς οὖν ὑπὸ πολλῶν ψυχῶν συνέχεσθαι ὅλον τὸν οὐρανὸν κινούον· ἀρκεῖ γὰρ μιᾷ ἡ φέρουσα ὅλην τὴν ἀπλανῆ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἐπί δυσμᾶς καὶ ἐμπεριλαβοῦσα ἐνδὸν πάντα, ἄν χρείαν ἔχει ὁ κόσμος, τὰ μὴ αὐτοτελῆ. I,58 evokes the ‘spheres’ under the ἀπλανής: Τὸν ὀφθέντα ἀστέρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ καινὸν εἶναι μηδὲν τῶν συνήθως παραπλήσιον, οὔτε τῶν ἐν τῇ ἀπλανεῖ ἐμπεριλαβοῦσα, ὧν ὁ κόσμος καὶ τῆς διά της κατωτέρω σφαίρας. For further allusions to the double movement see also *CGn* = *Phil* 23,6: Νοητέον τοὺς ἀστέρας οὕτω τετάχθαι κινεῖται, ἐναντιοφοροῦντων τῶν καλυπτομένων πλανημένων τις ἀπλανεῖς; and *CC* VIII,52: Τὸν κόσμον καὶ τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ τεταγμένην οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ ἀπλανεῖ κινήσεων τοῦ κόσμου κινήσεως μεταβαίνοντες μεταβάλλειν τάξειν.


62 *H76Ps* IV,2 (f. 207r-208r): κατὰ γὰρ τὴν περιορισμὸν τοῦ παντός καὶ τὴν κίνησιν τοῦ κόσμου, ὅταν ἂν ὁ ἥλιος ἐλθῇ ἐν τούτῳ τὸν ἀστεραπόμοιον καὶ συμπάθειαν ὑπεράνω τῶν ἀστερῶν καὶ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ποιεῖ τὴν κίνησιν αἰτία τῆς ἀστραπῆς γεννώσῃ, τῆς δὲ ἀστραπῆς ἀναπαύσῃ τὸν ἤχον τοῦ συγκρουομένου τῶν νεφελῶν, τῆς δὲ ἀστραπῆς σεβασμός τὸν φῶς. See also Jerome’s translation of the 5th *Homily on Jeremiah* (PL 25, 629 B–C) and his Tr. in Ps. 96. For B. Neuschäfer (1987, 189) Origen’s use of *δωδεκατημόριον*, also in the context of astrology, see Dorival 2011, 299-300. According to Speyer (1978, 1140), “je mehr Macht die Astrologie über die Geister erhielt, desto mehr Einfluss wurde den Planeten eingeräumt. Zeus wurde mit Helios gleichgesetzt und so die Sonne als Ursache der Blitze angenommen (Joh. Lyd. ost. 46).”
verse 4 (Σαλπίσατε ἐν νεομηνίᾳ σάλπιγγι. Ἐν εὔσήμῳ ἡμέρα ἐορτῆς ἡμῶν, “Blow the trumpet at the new moon, on the high day of our feast”). Origen knew also a different translation of Ps. 80, 4b, attested by the other ‘editions’ (ἐκδόσεις) of the Greek Bible: ἐν πανσελήνῳ, “at the full moon.” In addition, one of them had also another rendering: ἐν ἡμιμηνίῳ, presumably for indicating “the day in the middle of the month,” apparently a hapax legomenon. In both cases – either the new moon or the full moon – the preacher observes the ‘conjunction’ between the moon and the sun, though with different visual effects for the inhabitants of the earth.

THE LEGACY OF THE ‘ULTIMATE’ ORIGEN: SCRIPTURE AND COSMOS

The two perspectives that I have tried to outline in the new Homilies on the Psalms contribute to a better definition of the legacy of the ‘ultimate’ Origen. On the one hand, they confirm his well-known image as interpreter of the Bible in the wake of the Philonian (and Clementine) tradition; on the other hand, they closely connect the spiritual interpretation pursued by the Alexandrian with a remarkable interest in the created world, supported even more intensively by the heritage of the Hellenic disciplines. In this sense we discern a novel juncture between Scripture and cosmos that is probably dictated by the preacher’s concerns regarding the Gnostic or Marcionite criticisms of the Old Testament. Even if the 2nd Homily on Psalm 77 retrospectively celebrates the triumph of orthodoxy over heresy in the course of his own life, Origen still has to face the challenge of Gnos-

---

63 H80Ps I,6 (f. 338v): Τῇ νεομηνίᾳ σύνοδος γίνεται σελήνης καὶ ἡλίου καὶ κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν καθέτον ἡ σελήνη γίνεται καὶ ὁ ἡλίος. For similar notions, see CMIS 134, about the presumed ‘eclipse’ of the sun in the narrative of Jesus’ passion: Τότε γὰρ γίνονται ἐκλείψεις ὅτε πλησιάσωσιν ἀλλήλοις οἱ δύο οὕτω φωτιῆς. Γίνεται γὰρ ἐκλείψεως ἡλίου, σύνοδο ύποδραμούσης αὐτὸν σελήνης, ὡς σαλισμόv ὅπε διαμετρός ἐστι τῇ σελήνη. Cf. the comment by Neuschäfer (Neuschäfer 1987, 182-83).

64 Cf. Α. Σ. ἡχήσατε ἐν πάσῃ νεομηνίᾳ κερατίνῃ, ἐν πανσελήνῳ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐορτῆς ὑμῶν (Field, 230).

65 H80Ps I,6 (f. 339v): ἑποίησε δὲ τις καὶ ἐν ἡμιμηνίῳ.

66 H80Ps I,6 (ff. 339v-340r): Καθ’ ἐκατέρας τε σύνοδος γίνεται τῆς σελήνης πρὸς τὸν ἡλίον, καὶ ὅτε λαμπρὰ ἡ σελήνη φαίνεται πεφωτισμένη ὅλη ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου, καὶ τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς πεφώτισται μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἐν συνόδῳ, ἀλλ’ οὐχ’ ὡστε γνωστὸν εἶναι τὸν φωτισμὸν αὐτῆς – ἐν δὲ τῇ πανσελήνῳ καὶ πεφώτισται καὶ γνωστὸς ἐστιν ὁ φωτισμός αὐτῆς.

67 On the heresiological aspects see the article of Le Boulluec 2014, 256-74.
ticism and Marcionism. By opposing especially the second of these heretical doctrines he was apparently led to rethink once again the problems of cosmology that he discussed earlier in the Commentary on Genesis and more recently in the Contra Celsum. Though the Scriptures remain for Origen the main way to salvation, by contemplating the world and its beauty man is assured another access to the unique God of creation and redemption. As a consequence, despite being still questioned for his allegorism by members of his audience, he now avows that in the event of an apparently untenable passage in the Scriptures he no longer escapes immediately into allegory, as he was want to do before. In a word, the ‘ultimate’ Origen is perhaps more balanced, though remaining creatively faithful to himself.

University of Bologna, Italy

BIBLIOGRAPHY


68 H77Ps II,4 (f. 233v): ἐν γὰρ τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμέρᾳ πάντα ἦνθον αἱ αἱρέσεις καὶ ἐδόκουν πολλοὶ εἰναι ἐν αὐταῖς συναγόμενοι. Ὅσοι γὰρ ἦσαν λίχνοι περί τα μαθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, μὴ εὐποροῦντες ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ διδασκάλων ἱκανῶν, διὰ λιμὸν μμούμενοι τούς ἐν ὁμοιότατοι κρέα ἀνθρώπων, ἀποτάμενοι τούς ὑγιοὺς λόγους, προσεῖχον λόγοις ὁποιοσδήποτε, καὶ ἦν συγκροτούμενα αὐτῶν τὰ διδασκαλεῖα. Ὅτε δὲ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπέλαμψε διδασκαλία πλείονα, ὁσημέραι αἱ αἱρέσεις κατελύοντο καὶ τὰ δοκοῦντα αὐτῶν ἀπόρρητα παραδειγματίζεται καὶ δείκνυται βλασφημίαι ὄντα καὶ λόγοι ἀσεβεῖς καὶ ἀθεοὶ.

69 H67Ps II,4 (f. 106v): ὅδος γὰρ ἡ γραφὴ πᾶσα ἡ φέρουσα ἐπὶ τὴν σωτηρίαν.

70 H76Ps III,2 (f. 198 v): Ἀναγινώσκων οὖν ἐζητοὺς τί βούλεται ταῦτα καὶ εὐχερῶς μὲν κατέφευγον ἐπὶ τὴν τροπολογίαν βλέποντες ἠμάντων ὁμολογίας τῆς ἀπέμφασιν τῆς λέξεως, ὃστερον δὲ ποτὲ ἐσκόπουν κατ' ἐμαυτὸν μὴ ὁμολογήσαν τοῖς οἰκονομοῦσιν αἱ οἰκονομοῦσαι δυνάμεις ὀνομάζονται.


