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Divine Descent

Rhetoric, Linguistics and Philosophical
Theology in Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.1-22

Freerk Jan H. Berghuis

Dissertation University of Groningen, Netherlands

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Divine Descent

Rhetoric, Linguistics and Philosophical Theology
in Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.1-22

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About seventeen years ago I decided for the first time to read Origen in Greek. This author had not been part of my study program when I studied Classical Languages in late 1970s. Now I wanted to know more about his biblical interpretation and found out that he had explained his approach in the fourth book of *De principiis*. My acquaintance with this text turned out to be the start of a project that resulted in the publication of a translation of this complete work. Next I was curious to know more about Origen's confrontation with pagan philosophy: I started reading his *Contra Celsum* and soon became impressed by the immense variety of subjects discussed in this work, and by the intelligent way Origen explained and defended his Christian views.

Gradually, in conversations with others, I was persuaded to accept the idea that my private investigations possibly could be converted into a PhD-project. I would like to thank my wife Rita for encouragement and support in this phase, as well as Geurt Henk van Kooten, Aza Goudriaan and Paul van Geest, who kindly were willing to fit me into their busy schedule to discuss options. Their enthusiasm and inspiring ideas helped me to make a well-considered choice.

In January 2014 I presented a research proposal at the University of Groningen, which was friendly accepted by Annette Harder, Remco Regtuit and Gerry Wakker. I thank Gerry Wakker for her commitment as my supervisor: she helped me to find my way in unknown territories, ranging from the registration at the Graduate School of Humanities to instructions for the use of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*. I keep good memories of the conversations we had about my draft chapters on linguistics and rhetoric. I appreciated her accurate and competent comments and questions, which stimulated my work significantly. It was a great pleasure to discuss the interpretation of text passages with her on a detailed level.

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Groningen,
April 2020

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I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. Preface: corpus and approach

Now, holy Ambrose, after prayer to God through Christ we are undertaking a fourth book to Celsus' next objections. ... We also need words to root out ideas contrary to the truth from every soul which has been distressed by Celsus' treatise or by opinions like his. And we also need ideas to destroy buildings of all false opinions and the arguments in Celsus' treatise. Then, since we must not stop with rooting out and destroying the things just mentioned, but in place of the things rooted out must plant a planting which is of God's husbandry, and in place of what is destroyed must construct a building of God and a temple of God's glory, we must therefore pray to the Lord who bestowed the gifts described in Jeremiah, that he may give words also to us which build up the doctrines of Christ and plant the spiritual law and the prophetic words corresponding to it. (*Contra Celsum* 4.1)¹

Reading the preface of a book is usually helpful to get an idea of the communicational situation the work is written in. Prefaces often grant insight into the context of a book and inform the readers about questions such as: what triggered the author to start writing, what goals does he want to reach, what kind of readers did he have in mind? Prefaces are also the text parts in which an author wants to attract the attention of his readers and starts to influence the reception of his book in some way.

The words quoted above are taken from the preface of the fourth book of Origen's *Contra Celsum* and form the introduction to the passage which is the central text of this thesis. Conventional introductory elements can easily be recognized in Origen's text: Celsus' treatise is presented as the reason to write the book, and 'holy Ambrose' as its primary addressee. Ambrose however appears to be not the only intended reader: the book aims to have impact at 'every soul which has been distressed by Celsus' treatise'.² Moreover, Origen points at his dependency on God's help and describes his double intention: refutation of Celsus' arguments and confirmation of the doctrines of Christ. Both elements are expressed in a creative application of biblical metaphors (from *Jeremiah*) to the writer's situation. Here we have some valuable notions in a nutshell to bear in mind when interpreting Origen's book. The picture of the communicational context can be complemented by taking into consideration also the general preface of the complete work, which precedes book 1. In my opinion paying due attention to these issues can contribute to a proper understanding of *Contra Celsum* as a whole, and to a nuanced interpretation of specific passages of the work, as I intend to demonstrate in this thesis.

My study will focus on *Contra Celsum* 4.1-22, a relatively small part of Origen's work against Celsus, which comprises in its totality no less than eight books of considerable length. The choice for the initial part of book 4 as the corpus for my commentary is determined not only by the fact that it is a rather concise passage, which makes it manageable for my present purpose, but also by the conviction that it deals with one of the major issues in the confrontation between Celsus and Origen: the Christian belief in a divine descent to the earth, a notion that is severely criticized by Celsus and passionately supported by Origen. Thanks to the content and character of these chapters my corpus can be considered to be a suitable and attractive passage for a close reading of the discourse. This will be carried out in my commentary section. The character of the commentary will be determined by a linguistic and rhetorical

¹ Translations of passages from *Contra Celsum* in this thesis are taken from Chadwick (1953), sometimes with slight alterations.

² Cf. Reemts (1998:40): 'Ambrosius ist Initiator und Empfänger der Schrift, nicht aber der eigentliche Adressat.' See also chapter II 3.2.1 below.

I. General introduction

approach: special attention will be given to the structure of the text, to the aspect of communication and to the persuasive strategies used by both opponents. Moreover, the chapters of my corpus prove to be illustrative of the conceptions of God that form the background of the positions taken both by Celsus and Origen. Therefore attention to their theological³ views is a logical complement to the linguistics and rhetoric employed in the commentary section. The theology chapter, that follows the commentary, does not only discuss conceptions of the divine that were developed by Celsus and Origen, but also examines how these conceptions are related to views of ancient philosophers on this subject, whose philosophy of course included theological issues. The culmination of these discussions is the application of the results of this investigation to the interpretation of the text of *Contra Celsum*, which will be presented in a final chapter on theology in my corpus.

The aim of this study is not just to provide a close reading of a passage from Origen's *Contra Celsum*, but also to show that the three approaches chosen can well be combined, whilst each of them provides an additional dimension to the understanding of the text. Such a multiple approach might contribute to an integrative interpretation of other texts from the patristic era as well.

2. Organization of this thesis

The rest of this general introduction will offer information which can help the reader to understand the setting of the discussion in my corpus in a proper way. Therefore I will briefly discuss relevant facts concerning the authors of the text of my corpus, Celsus and Origen, and concerning their works, *Alethes Logos* ('True Doctrine') and *Contra Celsum* ('Against Celsus'). Subsequently a short overview of the content of *Contra Celsum* will be provided, which makes it possible to position the subject matter of my corpus within the context of Origen's work. Some remarks on text editions, translations and scholarly discussions will conclude this introductory chapter.

The linguistic-rhetorical part of this study is to be found in the second section. It starts with two methodological chapters: firstly the character of the linguistic approach usually indicated as 'discourse analysis' is explained (chapter II) and subsequently an introduction on rhetoric is given (chapter III). In the approach of the discourse analysis the focus is on language as used in a communicational situation. Chapter II offers an explanation of terminology and typical elements of this approach as a preparation of their application in the commentary chapter. Next, in chapter III on rhetoric, the focus is on the persuasive character of the text of Origen's *Contra Celsum*. The chapter offers an overview of the development of rhetoric in the ancient world and a brief introduction of the basics of ancient rhetorical theories, illustrated by references to the text of Origen and Celsus. Finally a number of interesting thoughts of Origen on persuasion is presented.

The major part of the second section consists of the commentary on the text of my corpus (chapter IV). In this chapter the text of my corpus is divided into twelve subsections of coherent text units. They are discussed in a three part structure, in which attention is paid successively to the persuasive strategy used by Celsus and Origen, to the structure of the unit and to communicational and rhetorical aspects of separate sentences or clauses. This commentary section carries out a close reading of the text of *Contra Celsum* 4.1-22 with application of the issues presented in the preceding methodological chapters. In this section texts that are quoted from the Bible and other sources will be excluded: comments will only be given to the text of Celsus and Origen. The second section is closed by chapter V, in which the main elements of the previous chapters are summarized and some general observations are presented as conclusions of the linguistic-rhetorical part of my study.

³ 'Theology' is understood here as the part of philosophy which is concerned with conceptions of God or the divine. For a further explanation see chapter VI 1.

The third section of this thesis deals with theology, understood here as the part of philosophical discourse that deals with conceptions of God (god, the divine) and his relation to the world (chapter VI). The chapter starts with a discussion on the main philosophical schools in the Greco-Roman world with a focus on the position attributed to the divine and with special attention to Platonism. Next the theological conceptions of Celsus and Origen are discussed separately, with references to several passages quoted from *Contra Celsum*, and compared with thoughts of other philosophers. The theology section is concluded by chapter VII. Here the different views and observations are connected to produce a second commentary on my corpus, now from the perspective of theology.

3. The authors and their works

3.1 Celsus and his Alethes Logos

When Origen was asked to respond to the work of Celsus, he obviously did not know who Celsus was.⁴ What he did know is that Celsus was not alive anymore at that moment (*Preface* 4). In 1.8 he writes that he has heard of two Epicurean philosophers called Celsus, one living when Nero was emperor, and one in Hadrian's time and later. Origen, perhaps identifying his opponent with the latter one, for some time considers Celsus to be an Epicurean, but halfway his book seems to distance from this opinion. As will be demonstrated later on, it is more likely to link Celsus' views to Platonist philosophy, and apparently Origen is aware of this connection.⁵

The work Origen was asked to comment on was entitled Ἀληθὴς Λόγος (*Alethes Logos*, 'True Doctrine')⁶ and was written about seventy years before Origen started writing his reply. Where and when exactly *Alethes Logos* was published is hard to determine. Most scholars assume a date somewhere between 177 and 180 AD;⁷ as place of origin both Alexandria and Rome are suggested.⁸ In the title of the book the author's intention is reflected: against the doctrines of Jews and Christians he wants to present the 'true doctrine', that in his view goes back to the 'ancient doctrine' which is 'maintained by the wisest nations' (1.14), subsequently transmitted by wise men and eventually expressed in the most adequate way in the Greek philosophy.⁹ In his book Celsus severely criticized the opinions of the Jews, who in his view followed Moses in his corruption of the ancient doctrines, and the Christians, who regarded Jesus, the 'author of their sedition' (8.14.4), as the Son of God, and who by exclusively worshipping 'this man who appeared recently' (8.12.4-5) turned away from the religious and political order in the Roman Empire.¹⁰ Celsus' intentions were not just to criticize these 'false' opinions and to present his 'true' alternative, but also to persuade his addressees to change their minds. In the last part of his work the persuasive power increases and the focus shifts from doctrines to practical issues: here Celsus urges the Christians to participate in the state religion and to show loyalty to the emperor (8.24-25; 8.73; 8.75).

⁴ For more on Celsus see Chadwick (1953:XXIV-XXVI), Borret (Vol.5, 1976:122-140), Hoffmann (1987), Frede, M. (1994), Frede, M. (1997), Frede, M. (1999: 132-135), Cook (2000:17-23), Lona (2005:27-49), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:13-16), Arnold (2016:1-3), with more references.

⁵ See references to Plato and Platonizing thought in 1.19.14-15; 1.32.24; 4.83.39; 6.1.4-5; 6.8; 6.18.4-6; 6.47.14-15. For more discussion see chapter VI 4.3 (on the Epicurean issue).

⁶ On the title and the meaning of 'logos' see Borret (Vol.5, 1976:24-28), Van Winden (1997:261-264). For a general introduction on the work see Borret (Vol.5, 1976: 9-140), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:22-37).

⁷ For arguments see Chadwick (1953:XXVI-XXVIII), Frede, M. (1994:5188-5191), Cook (2000:23-24).

⁸ For a discussion see Borret (Vol.5, 1976:136-140). On date and place see also Arnold (2016:3 n.9).

⁹ See Frede, M. (1994:5193-5199) on Celsus' conception of the true doctrine and connections to philosophy. An extensive discussion of Celsus' polemic against Christianity is found in Andresen (1955).

¹⁰ Fiedrowicz argues that *logos* in the title of Celsus' book can also be regarded as a reference to the Christian conviction that Christ is the Logos in person, to whom Celsus opposes his 'true' philosophical 'logos' (Fiedrowicz & Barthold, Vol.1, 2011:28).

I. General introduction

Celsus' polemical book is only known to us thanks to the passages that are quoted or paraphrased by Origen in his *Contra Celsum*.¹¹ There is much discussion among scholars on the structure of Celsus' work.¹² On the basis of the topics discussed in the fragments and the order in which they are quoted by Origen the following three-part division roughly seems to be defensible: the first part¹³ is characterized by the introduction of 'the Jew' who speaks on behalf of Celsus and addressed his criticism to Jesus (book 1) and the Jewish Christians who believe in Jesus (book 2). From book 3 onwards Celsus speaks in his own person. This section can be divided into two main parts: in book 3-5 fragments are quoted in which Celsus criticizes both Jews and Christians, whereas in the final books (6-8) the focus is on Christians only (the Jews are 'sent away' in 5.41).¹⁴

As far as we know, Celsus has been the first pagan who decided to attack Christians in writing.¹⁵ He was not uninformed about Christianity and quoted a number of texts from the Old and the New Testament, although Cook assesses his knowledge of the Scriptures as 'very limited'.¹⁶ Celsus' book obviously aimed at educated readers, who were expected to be able to follow elaborated argumentative and philosophical discourses and to recognize literary quotes and allusions.¹⁷ For modern scholars the fragments of Celsus' book that are preserved by Origen, provide a welcome exposition of arguments and judgements that at the end of the second century AD were presented by educated pagan authors in their confrontation with Christianity.

3.2 Origen

About Origen's life and work we are relatively well informed, mainly because Eusebius dedicates quite a lot of pages to him in the sixth book of his *Historia Ecclesiastica*.¹⁸ He was born in 185 (or 186/187) in Egypt, probably in Alexandria, where he spent the first part of his life.¹⁹ His education both comprised study of the Bible and the general training in the Greek literature with attention to grammar, philology, text interpretation and an introduction in rhetoric. He was educated in philosophy as well, as a student of the well-known philosopher Ammonius Saccas, who later on was also the teacher of the Neoplatonist Plotinus.²⁰ In this period Origen gained significant knowledge of views of the contemporary philosophical schools (and Platonism in particular), and became familiar with the way philosophical issues were discussed. At a young age Origen started a career as a teacher himself, firstly in grammar and rhetoric, later on he also offered theological-philosophical education to advanced students. Moreover, Origen spent a lot of time and energy on studying the text of the Bible and commenting on

¹¹ See Borret (Vol.5, 1976:9-23), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:22-24), Arnold (2016:5-15) on issues concerning the reconstruction of the Celsus' text from these quotes.

¹² See the overview in Arnold (2016:15-32).

¹³ I leave aside here the first fragments quoted in book 1 (in 1-27): the original position these fragments had in Celsus' work is hard to determine because of Origen's change of method from 1.28 onwards, as explained in *Preface* 6. On this change see Frede, M. (1999:139-141, 149-151).

¹⁴ See Arnold (2016:15-32) for an overview of the scholarly discussion on the structure.

¹⁵ Frede, M. (1999:132-135), who moreover doubts that Celsus was a well-known author (148) or a philosopher of any significance (154).

¹⁶ Cook (2000:26). Cook offers a thematically organized representation of Celsus' criticism (2000:17-102).

¹⁷ See Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1 2011:16-19,33).

¹⁸ A detailed review of Origen's life and work is offered by Daniélou (1948:19-40), Crouzel (1985:17-88); see also Nautin (1977), Ledegang (1995:9-20), Ledegang (2010:15-33), Heine (2011), Adamson (2015:291-298), Fürst (2017:3-28).

¹⁹ On Alexandria in the early imperial age (city, economics, culture, Christian community and literature, schools etc.) see Heine (2011: 1-64).

²⁰ This information is based on a testimony of Porphyry quoted in Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.19.6-7. Without further commenting I refer to a debate among scholars about an unsolved question: did Ammonius have one or two students named Origen? See Bäbler & Nesselrath (2018) for various contributions to this debate and further references. The main lines of the debate are described in the introduction by Nesselrath (2018): on the one hand he reproduces the argument of A. Fürst, who thinks that the Christian Origen has to be distinguished from a pagan namesake, and on the other hand the opinion of Th. Böhm, who identifies the 'theologian' and the 'Neoplatonist' Origen. See also DePalma Digeser (2010). Fürst (2017:7) also distinguishes Origen's teacher Ammonius from two other men who had the same name.

several biblical books.

In 233 a conflict with the Alexandrian bishop Demetrius caused Origen to move from his homeland.²¹ He settled in Caesarea, the capital of the Roman province Syria Palestina,²² where he continued his work as teacher²³ and commentator of the Bible. Besides he preached in church services,²⁴ functioned as an authoritative advisor in theological affairs and was even invited at the imperial court for an interview with Julia Mamaea, the mother of emperor Alexander Severus.²⁵ Origen died in Tyrus (or Caesarea) shortly after 251, physically weakened by imprisonment and torturing during the persecutions organized by emperor Decius (249-251).²⁶

Between 220 and the end of his life Origen published a vast number of books,²⁷ most of which are related to the interpretation of the Scriptures. Besides these homilies and commentaries Origen wrote a number of other treatises, including *De principiis* ('On first principles'), *De oratione* ('On prayer'), *Exhortatio ad martyrium* ('Exhortation to martyrdom') and *Contra Celsum*. Origen's massive text production was facilitated by his friend and sponsor Ambrose, who financed teams of stenographers and copyists.²⁸ Unfortunately the major part of Origen's works has not been preserved; some of them are only handed down in Latin translations, produced by Jerome and Rufinus about a century and a half after Origen's death. Doubts about Origen's orthodoxy in the centuries after his death and the eventual anathema on a number of 'Origenist' thoughts in the sixth century had, as might be expected, a negative effect on the continuous transmission of Origen's works.²⁹

3.3 Contra Celsum

Among Origen's works that are known to us in Greek are the eight books of *Contra Celsum*.³⁰ The work is commonly dated in 248,³¹ when Origen was in his sixties, and is written at the request of Ambrose. He submitted to Origen a copy of Celsus' book and asked him to refute the accusations that were brought by Celsus against the Christians. The fact that the criticism dates from some seven decades before apparently did not keep Ambrose from urging Origen to respond to it: perhaps Celsus' work still was influential among pagans and perhaps also among Christians there was a need for a persuasive reply of Celsus' arguments.³² In his preface Origen describes his initial doubts to respond to Ambrose's request: in his view it would be better to remain silent when accused falsely (as Christ did in front of Pilate) or

²¹ For more details I refer to Fürst (2017:8-10).

²² On Caesarea (city, Jewish and Christian communities) see Heine (2011:145-154).

²³ See Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.30. Details about his education program in Caesarea (physics, logic, interpretation of classical authors, philosophy as preparation to the study of the Bible) can be gathered from the farewell oration that his student Gregory Thaumaturgus delivered when he returned to Cappadocia again. See the edition of Guyot & Klein (1996).

²⁴ See on Origen as preacher in Caesarea Heine (2011:171-187), who says (p.171) that Origen's preaching activity began after the period of persecution by the emperor Maximinus, probably between 239 and 244.

²⁵ See Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.21.3. The connections with the imperial court are discussed by Secord (2017). Heine (2011:166-169) discusses the changing attitude towards Christians in the years of the Severan dynasty (relatively tolerant) and Maximinus (persecution).

²⁶ See Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.39.5.

²⁷ Characterized by Fürst as the 'output of a workaholic' (2017:15). For an overview of Origen's works see Crouzel (1985:63-78), Fürst (2017:15-28), with more references.

²⁸ See Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.18; 6.23. Probably a number of Origen's books started as lectures addressed to his students, see Heine (2011:189-190).

²⁹ For more on the crises and the condemnation see Edwards (2015:100-104). The first Origenist Controversy (around 400 AD) is analyzed in Clark (1992). The text of the anathemas (Greek with German translation) can be found in the edition of *De principiis* by Görgemanns & Karpp (1992:822-831).

³⁰ For an introduction see Daniélou (1948: 109-134), Frede, M. (1999), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:9-12,38-51).

³¹ According to Eusebius (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.36.1-2) it was written during the reign of emperor Philip the Arabian (244-249). For details on the dating see Koetschau (1899:XXII-XXIII), Chadwick (1953:XIV-XV), Borret (Vol.1, 1967:15-21), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:10).

³² Frede, M. (1999:147-148) argues that there may be doubts as to whether Celsus was really a well-known and influential author. He suggests that Ambrose submitted Celsus' treatise to Origen not because he was interested in the work as such, but because he considered it to be 'a fairly complete compendium or repertory or arguments against Christianity' (*ibidem* 150).

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to refute such accusations just by showing a good way of life. Moreover, he asserts that the mere defence that lies in the facts themselves, can only be weakened by a defence in words, which Ambrose asked him to compose.³³ Nevertheless, as he continues, he yields to Ambrose's demand, because there might be some Christians who are 'shaken and disturbed by the writings of Celsus'³⁴ and could be 'restored by a reply' (*Preface* 4).

Origen's effort resulted in a substantial work that is presented as an 'apology' (ἀπολογία) from the very beginning. Already in the first chapter of his preface Origen frames Celsus' work not neutrally as criticism, but as 'accusation' (κατηγορία) and 'false testimony' (ψευδομαρτυρία). Thus he evokes the rhetorical situation of a court, a frame that is pursued in the entire work, until on the final page the reader is denoted as the judge who has to decide between Celsus' treatise and Origen's defence (8.76).³⁵ By writing *Contra Celsum* Origen hoped to achieve a double objective: on the one hand he wanted to reply all the criticism of Christianity that was voiced by Celsus,³⁶ on the other hand the work aims at a positive presentation of the Christian belief and way of life.³⁷ On the pages of *Contra Celsum* these two approaches alternate and are mixed: passages devoted to the refutation of Celsus' remarks are often interspersed by passages in which the sublimity of Christ is praised or the benefits of the Christian ethics are highlighted.

While dictating the work to his stenographers,³⁸ Origen decided to change his method, as appears from *Preface* 6. His initial plan, as it seems, entailed a short enumeration of Celsus' main points and a rearrangement of them into a logical order, which would have been followed by a consistent, well-structured response by Origen. But already at an early stage of his proceedings Origen changed his plan: he refrained from an attempt to systematize Celsus' argument. From 1.28 onwards he quoted passages of Celsus' text in the order in which they were presented in his treatise and subsequently replied to them point by point.³⁹

As his target audience Origen denotes people 'entirely without experience of faith in Christ' and 'those whom the apostle calls "weak in faith" (*Rom.* 14.1).'⁴⁰ Given the intellectual character of the work, the frequent references to classical literature and to thoughts of philosophers, the intended addressees can be more precisely denoted as well-educated people with interest in and knowledge of religious-philosophical issues. Moreover, the common use of the Bible as authoritative basis of argumentation, characterizes the work as intended primarily to a Christian group of readers. In this respect *Contra Celsum* differs from other Christian apologetic works, that were written for a pagan audience: Origen

³³ See *Preface* 1-3. This reaction is not without conventional and rhetorical aspects: an initial refuse to assume a task (before eventually assuming it) is not uncommon in classical literature (the *recusatio topoi*). Furthermore: the comparison of Celsus' arguments with the false accusation of Christ is a disqualification of these arguments: Origen's defence strategy is working from the first lines of the work.

³⁴ Cf. Origen's metaphor of wounds caused by the darts of Celsus' arguments, which have to be healed by spiritual medicine (5.1.9-13).

³⁵ See on the genre 'apology' also Frede, M. (1999:136-137), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:38-39). The genre issue will be discussed from the perspective of rhetoric in chapter III 3.2.

³⁶ Origen repeatedly expresses that he does not want to leave any of Celsus' statements unexamined (1.28.18-20; 1.41.1-2; 1.55.30-31; 4.18.2-3; 5.1.4-5; 7.1.3-5). Eusebius even said that Origen in *Contra Celsum* 'refuted in advance once and for all anything that anybody has said or will say' against Christianity (*Adversus Hieroclem* 1, translation Chr.P. Jones). Probably such praising words facilitated the preservation of Origen's *Contra Celsum*.

³⁷ Cf. the two-fold aim worded in the preface of book 4, quoted at the beginning of this chapter: 'to destroy' and 'to build up'. See also Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:40-41), Perrone (2009).

³⁸ Frede, M. (1999:140-141) shows a possible trace of the process of dictation.

³⁹ See also chapter II 3.1 below. Frede, M. (1999:148-152) suggests that lack of organization of Celsus' treatise caused Origen's method change. See also Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:41-43). Arnold (2016:64ff.) demonstrates that Origen now and then interfered in the order of Celsus' text and anticipated passages that were positioned later on in the book.

⁴⁰ See *Preface* 4 and 6; cf. 5.18.5-9 ('this is a defence addressed to one foreign to the faith, and is written because of those who are still babes and who are tossed to and fro and "carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness after the wiles of error" (*Eph.* 4.14)'). Reemts (1998:41) argues convincingly that Origen in *Preface* 6 ('those without experience' and those 'weak in faith') does not mention two groups of addressees (not-Christians and Christians), but denotes one group with different qualifications.

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writes an ‘inner-directed apology’ intended to his fellow Christians in order to provide to them arguments against pagan criticism.⁴¹

3.4 Content of *Contra Celsum*

It is not my intention to provide a reasoned overview here of the issues discussed in *Contra Celsum*. The eight books present discussions on a massive amount of subjects, which are occasionally enriched by digressions. The transitions between the different parts are not always easy to identify and the division of the text is not evident on many points. Yet, while knowing that questioning the following division and labelling is certainly possible, I want to provide some sort of list of the themes that are debated, to offer at least some impression of the context in which the passages of my corpus are located .

Here is my list of the main topics, in the order in which they are presented in the eight books, without an attempt to describe their cohesion.⁴² More detailed attention is paid to the structure of book 4, the direct context of my corpus.

1	<i>Introduction:</i> Christians: a secret, illegal society? Rationality and faith No participation of Christians in the true doctrine of ancient wisdom? Seniority and credibility of Moses <i>Celsus’ introduces a Jew who speaks to Jesus:</i> Jesus’ birth, his sojourn in Egypt, his baptism The prophetic announcements of his advent His way of life, his friends, his miracles and his bodily existence
2	<i>Celsus’ Jew speaks to Jewish Christians:</i> The relation between Christianity and the Jewish tradition Jesus’ weakness, his pains; relation between human body and divine Logos in Jesus Jesus’ miracles and his persuasiveness The uniqueness of his affairs
3	Christians as a separate group in the society Comparison between Egyptian rites and Christian religion Comparison between Jesus and deified humans in the Greek world Social status of Christians: slaves, well-educated and uneducated Preference for ‘sinners’ and unintelligent people?
4.1-22	Divine descent to the earth
4.23-30	Claim that Jews and Christians have a special position
4.31-51	The origin of the Jews Stories from <i>Genesis</i> and the legitimacy of an allegorical interpretation
4.52-99	<i>Celsus’ lessons on nature:</i> God as creator of the soul only? How about the material world? The nature of evil The existence of repeating cycles in the world history; determinism Anthropocentrism: do humans have a special position?
5	Angels and celestial bodies: divine messengers? worship? Eschatological ideas; the conflagration of the Stoics; the resurrection of the body (Religious) traditions of the Jews and other nations; relativism? Is Jesus a unique messenger? Jews and Christians worship the same God Diversity among Christians; sects

⁴¹ Cf. Reemts (1998:41-43), Frede, M. (1999:152-155), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:39-40).

⁴² For a thematically organized survey see Borret (Vol.5, 1976:199-246), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:51-109).

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6	<p>Relation between Christian belief and Greek philosophy (Plato):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knowledge of God, - target groups: only intellectuals or common people as well? - rationality and belief, ethics - the visible world versus the invisible world - ascent of the soul <p>Rituals of initiation; the Ophite diagram The opponent of God, the devil; good and evil Cosmogony; the world as ‘son of God’; creation Anthropological images of God Knowledge of God through Jesus; the divine in a human body</p>
7	<p>Jesus announced by prophets; prophecy and oracles The final destination of the soul; resurrection How to achieve knowledge of God; being versus becoming Jesus compared to Greek heroes Temples, altars and images of the gods Daemons</p>
8	<p>Worship of daemons or (pagan) gods Participation in religious feasts Punishment of bad behavior, related to the value of the body Respect for the emperor Unification of the nations; final victory of the Logos Loyalty to the emperor and the empire</p>

3.5 Text, editions, translations, discussions

The Greek text of *Contra Celsum* has been handed down both in a direct tradition of manuscripts and in an ‘indirect’ tradition.⁴³ All the manuscripts of the direct tradition are based on a 13th-century manuscript: the *Vaticanus graecus* 386 (A).⁴⁴ This manuscript contains corrections, made by the two first hands (A¹) and later correctors (A², A³, A⁴). Borret⁴⁵ thinks the text tradition along this line (A corrected by A¹) is to be regarded as reliable: probably there were only few intermediaries between manuscript A and the edition of *Contra Celsum* produced by Eusebius and Pamphilus shortly after Origen’s death. The direct tradition is supported by the discovery in 1941 of a papyrus in Tura in Egypt. This papyrus dates back to the seventh century and contains parts of book 1 and 2 of *Contra Celsum*. In addition to the direct tradition quite a number of passages of *Contra Celsum* have been preserved as parts of the *Philocalia*, a collection of ‘best pages’ from Origen’s works, published in the 4th century by Basilios the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus. The *Philocalia* (Φ) includes passages taken from the first seven books of *Contra Celsum*.⁴⁶ Neither the Tura-papyrus nor the *Philocalia* contains the first chapters of the fourth book; so for the text of my corpus we have to rely on the *Vaticanus*.

The first critical edition⁴⁷ of *Contra Celsum* is published by Paul Koetschau (1899) and is based mainly

⁴³ For an extensive discussion on the text tradition and several editions see Borret (Vol.1, 1967:22-56). Further: Koetschau (1899:LVII-LXXIV), Chadwick (1953:XXIX-XXXII), Fiedrowicz & Bartold (Vol.1, 2011:118-121), Marcovich (2001: IX-XV), Arnold (2016:3-5).

⁴⁴ Other important manuscripts are: P = Parisinus suppl.gr.616 (1339); M = Venetus Marcianus 45 (14th century); V = Venetus Marcianus 44 (15th century); Reg = Parisinus graecus 945 (14th century); Bas = Basileensis A III 9 (16th century); Iol = Parisinus suppl.gr.293 (Iolianus) (16th century).

⁴⁵ See Borret (Vol.1, 1967:43).

⁴⁶ See an overview of the content of the *Philocalia* in preface of the edition by Harl (1983:9-10). The excerpts from *Contra Celsum* are also listed in Marcovich (2001:X-XI).

⁴⁷ Previous editions: Hoeschel (Augsburg, 1605), Spencer (Cambridge, 1658), Bouhéreau (Amsterdam, 1700), Delarue (Paris, 1733). The latter version was reprinted in Migne’s *Patrologia Graeca* 11 (Paris, 1857).

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on the direct tradition. This principle gave rise to a heated debate among scholars. Some decades later Koetschau changed his own text on several points in his German translation in the ‘Bibliothek der Kirchenväter’. In 1967-1969 a new critical edition was published by Marcel Borret (Sources Chrétiennes 132, 136, 147, 150, 227). While starting with Koetschau’s text, Borret also took into account the Tura-papyrus and many emendations proposed by several scholars, including those of H. Chadwick in his English translation (1953).

In this thesis the text of Borret has been taken as the basis. With friendly permission of the editor Les Éditions du Cerf the text of my corpus in this version is completely reproduced in chapter IV; the numbers of chapters and lines are taken from this edition.

Recently M. Marcovich thought a new edition was necessary, because, as he writes, ‘neither Koetschau nor Borret was sensible enough to “old scribal errors and gaps”, i.e. those errors preceding the evidence of A, A¹, Φ and the Tura Papyrus’.⁴⁸ Marcovich wants to contribute to the restoration of the original text by proposing many emendations.⁴⁹

I compared the text of my corpus in the editions of Borret and Marcovich. In general there is much agreement, but at some points Marcovich tends to replace hard readings by easier versions by adding, deleting and transposing text elements. In order to enable the reader to get an idea of Marcovich’s approach I add the following diagram, which shows the differences in the text of my corpus as well as the notes Marcovich added in his critical apparatus. The impact of the differences for my investigation is limited. In my commentary I will only incidentally refer to Marcovich’s version.

Book 4 ⁵⁰	Borret ⁵¹	Marcovich (with his notes)
1.8	ἀπολύειν	ἀπολλύειν (ἀπολλύειν M et LXX)
1.26	καὶ πρὸς	[καὶ] πρὸς (καὶ deleui)
2.21	πιθανότητος	πιθανότητος δοκούσης (δοκούσης scripsi : δοκεῖ A : δοκεῖν A ¹ : del. Bouhéreau omnes)
3.5	ὅτι καὶ	ὅτι (καὶ deleui)
3.12	«ἐν τοῖς» ἐκάστης πράξεως οὔσης καρποῦ τῆς βασιλείας «καιροῖς».	ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς <αὐτῶν>, ἐκάστης πράξεως οὔσης καρποῦ τῆς βασιλείας. (τοῖς ἐκάστης M ^{pc} : τῆς ἐκάστοις A καιροῖς post τῆς βασιλείας in A, huc transtuli αὐτῶν addidi ex NT)
3.32	οἷόν τε	οἷόν τε <ῆν> (ῆν addidi (cf. v.13 ⁵²))
3.50	περὶ ἧς	περὶ ὧν (ὧν Koetschau ² : ῆς A) ⁵³
3.55	αὐτῶν	αὐτῶν <αὐτὰ> (αὐτὰ addidi)
4.19	ἐν μιᾷ γωνίᾳ	ἐν μιᾷ γωνίᾳ ⁵⁴
5.19	ἐκλείπειν	ἐκλείπειν <τὸν τόπον> (τὸν τόπον add. Koetschau ²)
5.30	θεοῦ καὶ	θεοῦ ἧ (ἧ scripsi, cf. vv.5 et 24 : καὶ A) ⁵⁵
6.6	Πολλὴν <δὴ>	Πολλὴν <γέ> (γέ addidi : γοῦν add. Bouhéreau : δὴ add. Gloeckner)
6.17	ἀκολουθεῖν ἡμῖν	ἀκολουθεῖν [ἡμῖν] (ἡμῖν deleui)
7.7; 8.12	ἄρα	ἄρα (ἄρα Hansen : ἄρα bis A)

⁴⁸ Marcovich (2001:XIV).

⁴⁹ In Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:121) is referred to critical reviews of Marcovich’s edition because of the plenty of conjectures and the ‘smoothing’ of the text.

⁵⁰ Line numbers are taken from the Borret edition.

⁵¹ I leave out 3.34 πέμνη (> πέμνη), 9.8 περιγραφὴν (> περιγραφὴν) and 17.3 ἐπατωμένου (> ἀπατωμένου) as apparent typos in Borret. In 1.7 Borret printed καθέστακά, which is corrected in the *Addenda et corrigenda* (Borret, Vol.5, 1976:524-525) in κατέστακά (in *app.cr.*: κατέστακά A : καθέστακά Kō). Marcovich also prints κατέστακά.

⁵² v.13 = line 43 Borret.

⁵³ Koetschau² refers to the Koetschau’s translation (BKV 52-53, 1926-1927).

⁵⁴ Printed in Bold, so interpreted by Marcovich as a quote from Celsus.

⁵⁵ vv.5 et 24 = line 5.25 and 6.13 Borret.

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8.19	ὄριον	ὄριον <ἐκάστου> (ἐκάστου addidi)
10.15	παντί	παντί <γένει> (γένει addidi, cf. v.6) ⁵⁶
11.1	ἡμᾶς παραδεῖξαι	παραδεῖξαι ἡμᾶς (ἡμᾶς παραδεῖξαι A, transposui)
12.12	ταυτότητας καὶ	ταυτότητας [καὶ] (καὶ del. Delarue)
14.4	ἀλλὰ	ἀλλὰ <τὰ> (τὰ addidi)
14.28	δεδύνηνται οὗτοι	οὗτοι δεδύνηνται (δεδύνηνται οὗτοι A, transposui)
15.17	διὰ τοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ λόγου	διὰ τὸ εἶναι λόγον (τὸ scripsi : τοῦ A εἶναι scripsi : ἐν αὐτῷ A λόγον scripsi : λογῶ A : λόγου P M)
17.9	συμφωνούσης ἐν	συμφωνούσης [ἐν] (ἐν om. M)
17.18	ἐξαίρετον	ἐξαίρετον <ψυχὴν> (ψυχὴν add. Koetschau ²)
17.18	κατάβασιν	καταβαίνουσιν (καταβαίνουσιν A : κατάβασιν M ^{pc} edd.)
18.32	ἐληλυθε, καὶ	ἐληλυθε, [καὶ] (καὶ delevi)
18.36	πεποίηκε, καὶ	πεποίηκε, [καὶ] (καὶ delevi)
20.22	πάντων	πάντων <τῶν> (τῶν M : om. A)
21.3	κατάρριψιν	κατάρριψιν <καθαρσίῳ τῆς γῆς> (καθαρσίῳ τῆς γῆς supplevi conl. vv. 11 et 11-12) ⁵⁷
21.29	νεώτεροι	νεώτεροι <ὄντες> (ὄντες addidi)
22.8	ὄλην	ὄλην <ἀπὸ> (ἀπὸ addidi, cf. v.21) ⁵⁸

Contra Celsum has been translated into a number of languages. During the course of my investigation I used the French version in the edition of Borret, the German translation by Claudia Barthold (in Fiedrowicz & Barthold: 2011-2012) and particularly the English translation of Chadwick (1953), from which the translations in this thesis have been taken (sometimes with slight modifications).⁵⁹

As Reemts⁶⁰ already noticed, in the academic discussions on Origen and his work relatively little attention has been paid to *Contra Celsum* as a work in itself. Limiting factors for the production of a study based on the text of this abundant work may be the size of the treatise and the variety of topics discussed. A commentary in which the complete text is discussed is still lacking, as far as I know, although the notes in Chadwick (1953), Borret (1967-1969, 1976) and Fiedrowicz & Barthold (2011-2012) contain numerous references to parallel texts and useful explanations of learned scholars. A good general introduction to the work is not only provided in these editions and translations, but also by M. Frede (1999). In thematically orientated studies on Origen however passages from *Contra Celsum* are regularly referred to and the work is often used as a source book to illustrate several views of its author. Considered from the perspective of Origen's treatise such an approach, though valuable in itself, runs the risk of turning into a kind of cherry-picking without regard for the integral work itself. In some of such books and papers, however, more comprehensive discussions on aspects of *Contra Celsum* can be found. Reemts (1998) for instance carefully comments on Origen's view on the relation between rationality and faith, and explores the nature of arguments used in *Contra Celsum* to substantiate the Christian faith. Although awareness of the rhetorical situation is shown, this principle is not leading in her presentation.⁶¹

⁵⁶ v.6 = line 13 Borret.

⁵⁷ vv.11-12 = line 6-7 Borret.

⁵⁸ v.21 = line 9 Borret.

⁵⁹ Some other translations are (for details see Borret, Vol.1, 1967:27-30): in Latin by Chr. Persona (translation of the *Vaticanus*, 1481); also in Latin by Gelenius in the editions of Hoeschel (1605) and Spence (1658); in Latin by Thuillier in the edition of Delarue (1733); in French by Bouhéreau (in his edition of 1700); in English by Crombie & Cairns (1869-1972); in German by Koetschau (1926-1927).

⁶⁰ Reemts (1998:12); on p.12-18 she offers a short presentation of 20th-century publications on *Contra Celsum*. In Lona (2005:57-64) the state of the Celsus research is presented.

⁶¹ Some other theme-based studies are: Chadwick (1947) on the relation with the Stoa; Crouzel (1962) and O'Leary (2011) on the relation with philosophy; May (1998) on eternal punishments; Perrone (2001) on prayer; Hensels (2002) on the knowability

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It is notable that comparatively many publications focus on Celsus and his work.⁶² A commentary on the text of the fragments of Celsus as they are quoted in *Contra Celsum* is presented in Lona (2005). To give an impression of theme-based studies on Celsus I refer to four different contributions. Firstly: Andresen (1955), a major work in which the author describes Celsus' idea of the true, ancient doctrine, attributes to him a 'philosophy of history' and argues for a connection between Celsus and Justin.⁶³ Secondly: Dörrie (1967), a paper in which the author confronts the platonic theology of Celsus with Origen's Christian theology in a detailed discussion of *Contra Celsum* 7.42ff.. Further: in Cook (2000) the objections Celsus raised against Christianity, are collected from the different parts of Celsus' (Origen's) work and are presented in a well-organized overview according to the logic of the author. Finally: Arnold (2016) analyzes the structure of Celsus' *True Doctrine* in a careful way and argues for a rhetorical conception of the work. In his opinion two parts can be distinguished in the argumentation: Celsus would start with a rather easy version of his instructions, while addressing both Jews and Christians; in the last part of his work however, in which he addresses only the 'more advanced' Christians, his expectations of his readers would be higher: topics of the first part are repeated here and discussed at a higher level.

In the present study the text of *Contra Celsum* will be the starting point: it is my aim to analyze the discourse of my corpus. This results in a commentary on its integral text using a linguistic and rhetorical approach, as is not yet available (see chapter IV). The investigation of the theology of Celsus and Origen in chapter VI shows similarities to theme-based studies. Although this investigation can have independent value, within the scope of my thesis it fulfils a serving role: its ultimate objective is to support the interpretation of the text of my corpus from a theological point of view. The focus on the linguistic phenomena and rhetorical devices used in my corpus, can help to enlarge our understanding of the way communication and persuasion work in *Contra Celsum*. The focus on the theological views of both opponents and the philosophical environment they function in, can contribute to our understanding of the setting and the content of the confrontation between Celsus and Origen.

of God; Bergjan (2002) and Boys-Stones (2016) on providence; Perrone (2009) on religious praxis; Arruzza (2012) on creation; Giulea (2016) on Christology; Villani (2018) on Plato and Platonism in *Contra Celsum*.

⁶² Also in Borret's introduction (Vol.5, 1976:9-246) the focus is especially on Celsus' book: almost 200 pages are devoted to comments on the character, the structure, the title, the philosophical background, the place and date of existence and the content of *Alethes Logos*. This comprehensive exposition is finished by a 'bibliographie critique' and a chapter about sources and influences of Celsus' work. The subsequent presentation of Origen's response is far shorter (circa 50 pages) and comprises a discussion from the perspective of four theologically inspired themes.

⁶³ See Borret (Vol.5, 1976:141-182) for a discussion of other publications, including Andresen.

II. A LINGUISTIC APPROACH

1. Introduction

In the present section I will briefly introduce the methods I used in analyzing a part of Origen's *Contra Celsum*. In my commentary section I will combine in an eclectic way methods and achievements of modern linguistics with elements from a rhetorical analysis, which focuses on the persuasive strategies used by Celsus and Origen. The linguistic methods and tools can be useful to pay attention to the communicative situation in which the text is positioned and to the way this is manifest in linguistic phenomena. In this chapter I will introduce the linguistic approach, whereas rhetoric will be the subject of chapter III. This division in two chapters seems to imply that linguistic and rhetoric are two separate domains, which is not true. As both have to do with communication they are closely linked and partly overlap. A phenomenon as *apostrophe* for example is related to investigations concerning the 'dialogicality' of a text, a common area of interest within discourse linguistics. Therefore it will be discussed in this chapter (see 3.2.3. below). But without doubt *apostrophe* is mostly used with persuasive intentions, it is discussed in ancient rhetorical handbooks and therefore a discussion in the chapter on rhetoric was also easy to defend. Additional phenomena of this overlapping area could be mentioned. The reason to separate both domains in two chapters is in fact mainly practical and helps to limit the size of my chapters. Phenomena that concern the persuasive character of the text and are part of the ancient rhetorical theories will be discussed in chapter III. The present chapter will be dedicated to aspects of the linguistic approach I will use in the commentary section (chapter IV).

The linguistic approach I use is usually indicated as 'discourse analysis' or 'discourse linguistics'. Actually these terms cover a great variety of methods,¹ which all approach linguistic phenomena from the perspective of the language *use*, not (only) as a part of a language system. The term 'discourse' refers to interactive language use in a social situation. Language in this approach is not just seen as a device to express ideas or to refer to the extra-lingual world, but as an instrument of communication. Sentences are not uttered without any (textual and non-textual) context. Sentences will always be used in a specific communicative situation in a contact between a speaker (writer) and an audience (reader). In discourse analysis research is done on the function that sentences or smaller constituents within sentences (single words or 'intonation units') have in the communication; further on the relation between (clusters of) sentences and the text as a whole, as well as between the text and the communicative situation it serves in.² Discourse analysis fits within the framework of pragmatics³, a branch in linguistics that studies language as it is used in a social context. It goes back to the theory of J.L. Austin, who criticized the word 'use' in expressions as 'to use language/a sentence' for being ambiguous, spoke of language utterances as performances of *acts* ('to say something is to do something') and distinguished between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts.⁴ Today a huge amount of academic books and articles

¹ A recent overview of the wide field of discourse studies and pragmatics is offered in Schneider & Baron (2014). See also Bonifazi & Drummen & De Kreij (2016, Vol.1, 1.4 §12-17).

² Therefore a difference is made between 'text' (a static object, the product of speech or writing, detached from its situational context) and 'discourse' (a dynamic process of speaking or writing in its situational context) (Bakker & Wakker 2009:xi n.1; cf. Kroon 1995:30 n.50).

³ Bakker with some reason criticizes the term as 'slightly infelicitous insofar as it suggests the idea of a concrete "thing" or "result" (*pragma*). What is, or should be, at stake in pragmatics, however, is that language is not a thing done, but a thing being done, a doing: a *praxis* rather than a *pragma*.' (Bakker, E.J. 2010:151).

⁴ Austin (1976:98-110). For a quick explanation of the difference I give as working definitions of the three aspects of speech acts: *locution* is what is said (the production of sounds), *illocution* is what is 'done' (e.g. by saying 'Congratulations!' the act of congratulating is performed) and *perlocution* is what happened as result (e.g. someone closes the window, when I said 'It is

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on pragmatics is published, covering a wide range of topics and approaches.

In recent decades discourse analysis has been applied to Greek and Latin texts and linguistic phenomena.⁵ The long tradition in the classical studies, that produced a vast amount of excellent grammatical studies and outstanding literal commentaries, is by now enriched by this approach. In the field of the patristic studies discourse analysis is relatively new.⁶ It seems to me that the study of the texts of the *patres* so far has been almost completely focused on theological, historical, social and philosophical issues.

In the present study I would like to show that a detailed rhetorical and linguistic analysis of Origen's work can be rewarding and useful as complementary to or even providing a basis for a more systematic theological-philosophical approach.

2. Preview of the chapter

In the next sections of this chapter linguistic phenomena will be introduced that will be involved in my rhetorical-linguistic approach of the text of *Contra Celsum*. In my commentary section I will use some of the tools that are developed in modern linguistic research. Here I will explain terms and distinctions that will be used in the commentary. It is neither my intention to discuss the whole field of discourse analysis nor to introduce all methods and approaches that are applied in pragmatic studies. I will focus on the linguistic features that are helpful to understand the communicative situation *Contra Celsum* functions in and the influence the relation between writer and addressees has on the discourse.

The first section (3 below) is dedicated to the 'dialogicality' of the text and to the participants in the discourse. After an introduction of the distinction between monological and dialogical discourse and the concept of diaphony the focus is on the use of the first, second and third person of verbs and pronouns: how can this linguistic means be used to describe the position of writer, addressee and the target reader group? One of the issues in this section is the working of *apostrophe* (a phenomenon known from the ancient rhetoric: the speaker turns from the audience to address someone else).

Next (4) the use of the tenses and their semantic values are discussed. The basic question is how the different tenses that are used in the text contribute to the interaction in the triangle writer – text – addressee. Special attention is paid to the inferential use of the future and to the way the perfect can link 'past and present'.

The next section (5) is on particles. Recent research on this theme has pointed out that particles can be analyzed on a representational, a presentational and an interactional level. The theory is illustrated in an alphabetical list of the 13 most frequent particles in my corpus.

The final section (6) offers an examination of the connection between word order and the flow of information in a discourse. Elements from the functional grammar (such as Topic, Focus, Setting) will appear to be appropriate to describe a basic word order pattern in classical Greek clauses. Discussions of passages from *Contra Celsum* will serve to examine whether this pattern still works in the Origen's Greek. Finally attention is paid to participle phrases, noun-adjective order and hyperbaton.

cold in here'). See on Austin, his predecessors and the development of discourse analysis as a discipline in language studies Edmondson (2014).

⁵ Stimulating studies are among others: Allan & Buijs (2007), Bakker, E.J. (1997), Bakker & Wakker (2009), Dik, H. (1995), Kroon (1995), Rijksbaron (1997a), Van Gils (2009), Wakker (1994). For an overview see Wakker (2013).

⁶ But not totally absent: Rose (2011).

3. Discourse situation

3.1. Dialogical monological text

A basic assumption in a pragmatic approach is the idea that each form of discourse takes place within a situation of communication: discourse is by its nature interactive. In dialogues between two (or more) speakers this principle is most obviously present. A dialogue (dialogical text) consists of the exchange of contributions of at least two discourse participants: one of the participants takes the initiative and the other(s) react(s) to it. In a monological text, which is produced by a single speaker or writer, this exchange of action and reaction may be absent, but not necessarily: in a monological text a writer can insert an utterance of a second person (a direct quote or an indirect reproduction of it). The writer can, still using his own voice, give the floor to an opponent to express his opinion and then continue by responding to it, thus inserting some sort of ‘dialogicality’ in his monological text. In studies on discourse types⁷ this latter text type is called a *dialogical monological* discourse. Even when such a formal exchange-structure is absent, a monological discourse may contain elements that point at the awareness that the text is not written in an empty field, but in a communicative setting. To indicate the presence of such elements the term *diaphony* is used by scholars.⁸ Examples of *diaphonic elements* are first- and second-person pronouns, vocatives, (rhetorical) questions, directives (‘tell me’, ‘remember that’), expressions of subjective evaluation (‘I think’, ‘I believe’) and interactional particles.

How is Origen’s *Contra Celsum* to be characterized in the light of these distinctions? In his text which is strictly spoken monological Origen quotes a large number of passages from the book of Celsus. In fact Origen’s eight books consist of a continuous repetition of the following three-part text segments: introduction – quote from Celsus – reaction of Origen. In his preface Origen makes some clarifying remarks about his writing plan and the change he considered to be appropriate: at first he planned ‘to note the main points of Celsus’ (ὑποσημειώσασθαι τὰ κεφάλαια, *Preface* 6.12) with some brief comment and then ‘give body’ to his reply (σωματοποιῆσαι τὸν λόγον, *Preface* 6.13-14). But, as we saw above,⁹ afterwards he took the decision to change his approach at the moment he arrived at the point where Celsus ‘puts the attack against Jesus into the mouth of the Jew’ (*Preface*. 6.2-3): from there (= 1.28) he follows the structure of Celsus’ text point by point, by quoting his objections and immediately replying to them.¹⁰ The result of Origen’s change of his writing plan is that the work now consists of a long series of verbal ‘actions and reactions’. In the abovementioned terminology *Contra Celsum* as a whole can therefore be described as *dialogical monological* text.¹¹

Moreover, the discourse parts that are strictly spoken monological (Origen’s introductions and reactions) contain elements which give an indication of the interaction between the writer and his addressee(s).¹² Most obviously this can be noticed in the use of the first, second (and third) person, but there are more elements to be mentioned: Origen uses (rhetorical) questions¹³ and directives (to stimulate his addressee to participate in the argumentation and to take the next step¹⁴) and inserts sometimes

⁷ See Kroon (1995:109-115), Van Gils (2009:129-131), referring to the ‘Geneva Discourse Model’. See on text types also CGCG (2019:660-662 §58.7-9).

⁸ See Kroon (1995:109-115; 1998:212-214), Van Gils (2009:131-136),

⁹ See chapter I 3.3.

¹⁰ See for a discussion on this change and its possible reasons Frede, M. (1999:148-152), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:41-44).

¹¹ Somos (2012:201) correctly highlights that ‘we cannot speak about “debate” between Celsus and Origen in its narrow meaning’.

¹² For a more detailed discussion on the addressee(s), see below 3.2.1. and 3.2.3.

¹³ Examples in my corpus: 4.3.34-36; 4.3.39-40; 4.3.42-46 (three rhetorical questions of Origen in a context of five rhetorical questions in quotes from Celsus). Further: 4.6.17-19; 4.13.22-23; 4.13.26-28; 4.15.10-11; 4.17.1-6; 4.17.6-10; 4.18.32-34; 4.19.6-8; 4.20.18-22.

¹⁴ In my corpus examples are found in 4.2.14 (ὅρα δὲ – ‘but notice ...’, where the combination of the imperative and the attitudinal particle both appeal to contact between writer and reader) and 4.6.2 (ἄκουε). Outside my corpus I found ὅρα 74x and ἄκουε 2x in *Contra Celsum*.

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evaluative phrases,¹⁵ metacommunicative remarks¹⁶ and attitudinal particles.¹⁷ Although the frequency of these elements is variable,¹⁸ these monological parts of the work could be characterized as *diaphonic* to a certain extent. This applies most for the introductory passages and text structuring utterances, where we find a concentration of evaluative remarks and of first person verbs and pronouns. In the argumentative passages Origen seems to alternate more diaphonic parts¹⁹ with passages where the presence of writer and reader (and even the ‘debate’ with Celsus) is moved to the background.²⁰

3.2. Discourse participants

Among the diaphonic elements Origen’s use of the first, second and third persons (in verbs and pronouns) is the most illustrative of the discourse situation in *Contra Celsum*. Therefore this subject will be discussed in the next sections.

3.2.1. The second person

Origen did not write *Contra Celsum* on his own initiative, but he was ordered to do it by Ambrose, his friend and sponsor.²¹ He dedicates his work to him and addresses him reverently in the prefaces of his books and in the final chapter of his work. The explicit use of these vocatives²² and the use of the second person (pronouns and verbs) makes clear that Ambrose functions as the primary addressee in Origen’s work. However, this does not mean that Ambrose is very prominently present or even referred to in the work. Only once in a while Origen uses imperative forms (ὄρα, 4.2.14; ἄκουε, 4.6.2),²³ which strictly speaking may be interpreted as directed to his friend, but in the practice of reading function as addressed to the reader. In 4.6.1 he uses the second person involving Ambrose in a rhetorical expression of his aversion against Celsus’ objection, thus reminding Ambrose of the task he gave Origen:

(1) Εἰ δὲ καὶ πρὸς τὰ καταγελαστότατα τοῦ Κέλσου
θέλεις ἡμᾶς ἀπαντᾶν [...] (4.6.1) | If you want us to meet even the most
ludicrous arguments of Celsus [...] |
|---|---|

Apart from these single elements Origen seems to keep Ambrose out of the picture when he comments on Celsus’ remarks. The reason for this may have to do with a secondary group of addressees that Origen

¹⁵ Evaluative elements are relatively frequent in the introductions to quotes from Celsus, which are hardly ever neutral. In fact most of them contain in some way Origen’s comment on these quotes, often formulated in participle(clause)s. These comments vary from making explicit (Origen’s version of) Celsus’ intentions in a more or less neutral way (βουλόμενος – ‘wanting to’, 4.11.1) to disapproving qualifications (φλυαρήσας μάτην – ‘talking futile nonsense’, 4.7.1; χλευάζων – ‘in mockery’, 4.13.1) to ironical phrases (μετὰ μεγάλης ἐπαγγελίας – ‘with great claims’, 4.14.1; ὁ γενναϊότατος Κέλσος – ‘the most estimable Celsus’, 4.5.1).

¹⁶ As for instance Δοκεῖ δὴ μοι πρὸς ταῦτα λέλεχθαι τὰ δέοντα (‘I think that I made the necessary reply to this’, 4.14.12-13), ὡς καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνωτέρω εἰρήκαμεν (‘as we also said earlier’, 4.2.30-31) and ... κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν ἡμῖν εἰρήκαμεν περὶ τούτων (‘We have discussed these questions to the best of our ability’, 4.3.54), ἵν’ οὕτως ὀνομάσω (‘so to speak’, 4.15.27).

¹⁷ Which function at the interactional level of the discourse, as is discussed in the section on particles (see below 5). Attitudinal particles are far less used in *Contra Celsum* than presentational particles, see below 5.3.

¹⁸ As can be concluded from the data presented in the previous notes.

¹⁹ A relatively large number of diaphonic elements can be found in 4.2-3: the use of the first person (διειλήφαμεν, παλλογώμεν, εἰρήκαμεν, εἵπομεν, οἶδα, ἡμεῖς εἵπομεν ἃν), an imperative (ὄρα), 3 rhetorical questions, attitudinal particles (δὴ, μὴν, καίτοι) and expressions that reflect Origen’s interpretation of Celsus’ actions (δοκεῖ, ἐμφαίνει, εἵκεν εἰδέναι, οἶται, ἐαντῷ ἀνθυποφέρει, εὐήθως λέγει).

²⁰ See e.g. the argumentative part of 4.7-9; for a discussion see the comment *ad loc.* in the commentary chapter (end of 4.9). In a similar way this can be observed in 4.13.9-37, a passage which is explicitly announced as an investigation on deeper issues. Here too first person verbs are used only in the beginning (ζητοῦμεν, φαμεν) and then gradually replaced by passive forms (λέγεται, νοηθῆσθαι, νοηθήσεται, τροπολογεῖται, λέγοιτο).

²¹ See *Preface* 3,1-2; 4-5 (ἦν ἀξιοῖς ποιήσασθαι ἡμᾶς ἀπολογίαν and τὸ ἐπιταχθὲν ὑπὸ σοῦ - ‘the defence which you ask me to compose; the task which you have set us’). On Ambrose, see Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:9), with more references.

²² ὃ φιλόθεε Ἀμβρόσιε, *Preface* 1.6; πιστότατε Ἀμβρόσιε, 3.1.3-4; ἱερὲ Ἀμβρόσιε, 4.1.2; 5.1.3-4; 6.1.2-3; 8.76.1; ἱερὲ ἀδελφε Ἀμβρόσιε, 7.1.1.

²³ Until now I found no plural imperatives in Origen own text (they do occur in quotes from Celsus and other texts).

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aims at. An indication for this group can be found in the preface, where Origen expresses his expectation that Celsus' arguments will not be able to shake the faith of any true Christian (*Preface* 3.6-8; 4.12-15). Therefore, as he declares, this is not the reader group Origen has in mind. His target group consists of people who have not yet 'had a taste of the Christian faith' or those Christians who are still 'weak in their faith' (*Preface* 6.6-8).²⁴ The fact that Ambrose of course cannot be seen as belonging to one of these groups explains Origen's reservations in his use of the second person singular referring to his friend. By writing in his preface that true Christians are not his target group, and then addressing Ambrose too obviously in his comments on Celsus' remarks Origen could have caused some embarrassment. The conclusion can be that in *Contra Celsum* there is a difference between the addressee and the target reader group.²⁵

A reference to this more extended reader group can perhaps be noticed in 5.3.3-4 where the reader of Celsus' book is addressed in σοι τῷ ἐντυγχάνοντι τοῖς Κέλσου λόγοις and the use of the second person is continued in that context. Elsewhere the diverse reader group is indicated with the third person: in 5.28.16-19.²⁶ Origen, announcing a 'more profound' part of his explanation, explicitly distinguishes a group of 'more simple people with a common intellectual attitude' from readers 'with a more critical mind' (τῶν ἐξεταστικωτέρων τινάς). The first group is expected to be satisfied with the remarks previously made, while for the latter group Origen announces that he will continue 'to the best of his ability' with a more mystical and secret treatment of the issue discussed. From these passages can be deduced that Origen intends more readers than only Ambrose²⁷ and that he deliberately differentiates in his approach.²⁸

3.2.2. The first person

Contrary to the addressee (second person) the speaker/writer (first person) is more prominently present in the text. Origen commonly does not withdraw from the argumentation, but frequently uses the first person verbal and pronominal forms to refer to himself, almost exclusively applying the plural forms ('we').²⁹ The writer's self-presentation is related to text structuring remarks³⁰ (Origen as writer) and to opinions or positions in the discourse (Origen as participant in the discussion).³¹ In the latter case it is

²⁴ Origen writes: ... οὐ πᾶν πιστοῖς γέγραπται τὸ βιβλίον τοῦτο ἀλλ' ἢ τέλεον ἀγεύστοις τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ἢ τοῖς, ὡς ὁ ἀπόστολος ὠνόμασεν, ἀσθενοῦσιν ἐν «τῇ πίστει» ('... this book is not written at all for true Christians, but either for those entirely without experience of faith in Christ, or for those whom the apostle calls "weak in faith"'). Probably with the first of these target groups Origen does not refer to non-Christians, but to people with at least sympathy for Christianity, who were looking for resolutions of the difficulties raised against it, as it is correctly pointed out by Frede, M. (1999:153). The argumentation found in *Contra Celsum* presupposes sympathetic readers, not complete outsiders. According to Reemts (1998:40-41) *Contra Celsum* is an 'inner-directed apology', meant to provide the Christian community with arguments against pagan accusations.

²⁵ In 4.13.4 Origen mentions his readers in plural (τοὺς ἀκροατάς). Moreover the way Celsus is addressed will be discussed in 3.2.3. below.

²⁶ See also 4.53.8-9.

²⁷ In some contexts it is hard to decide whether a singular second person form is used to address Ambrose or rather in an impersonal sense ('one'), e.g. εὔροις ἄν in 1.40.21; 2.76.18; 3.25.15; 3.30.13. In fact second person forms function as addressed to the reader in general.

²⁸ For more references to the readers see e.g. 4.53.9; 4.99.40; 5.1.23; 5.18.9; 5.45.5.

²⁹ The singular seems to be restricted to fixed formulas as οὐκ οἶδα δ' ὅπως/εἰ - 'I do not know how/if > for some unknown reason' (and similar variants e.g. 4.3.31; 4.5.1; 4.7.1; 4.11.13; 4.21.1 etc.), ἵν' οὕτως ὀνομάσω - 'so to speak' (38x in *Contra Celsum*, e.g. 4.15.27) and δοκεῖ μοι - 'seems to me' (more than 40x in *Contra Celsum*, e.g. 4.14.12; 4.30.1).

³⁰ Mostly *verba dicendi* as φάμεν/φήσομεν - 'we say/we will reply' (announcing Origen's comment on a quote from Celsus, frequent e.g. 4.6.7; 4.7.9; 4.11.12), εἰρήκαμεν - 'we said' (4.2.31; 4.3.54 referring to previous remarks), ἀπολογούμεθα - 'we defend' (4.10.12 announcing a next point of defence), ἀποδεδώκαμεν - 'we have interpreted' (4.13.29 referring back to a just give explanation), ὑπαγορεύομεν - 'we are undertaking' (4.1.4 referring to the start of writing his fourth book), πευσόμεθα - 'we will ask' (4.18.28 introducing a question); further: χρεῖα ἡμῖν - 'our task is' (4.1.29, the next step Origen has to take in his argumentation).

³¹ Apart from these uses a third use of the first person can be discerned: when it refers to 'mankind' in general and has a less direct relation to the communicative situation. Example: ... κἄν ὁ ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν λόγος, θεὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ὢν, ἔρχεται

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mostly impossible to discern the position of Origen from that of the Christians as a group: he speaks on behalf of his fellow-Christians identifying himself with their community and defending their common faith.³² In these situations the Christian view may be contrasted with the opinion of Celsus, but sometimes also ἄλλοι ('others') are introduced to make the Christian position even clearer by contrast with them. This contrast is often enhanced by the use of the personal pronoun (ἡμεῖς).³³

A special position is held by adhortative subjunctives that sometimes occur in Origen's text: they function as announcement of the next remark or investigation (text structuring), but also as an appeal to the addressee to participate in this action. To mark the interactive character these subjunctives are more often than not accompanied by the 2nd person imperative φέρε.³⁴

3.2.3. Celsus: third and second person (apostrophe)

As a consequence of the just described communicative situation Celsus is commonly referred to with the third person: speaking to his addressee (and his target reading group) Origen speaks *about* Celsus and his opinions. Addressing Celsus is of course physically impossible, because at the moment Origen writes his book Celsus is, as Origen formulates it, 'no longer living the common life among men, but as already been dead a long time' (*Preface* 4).

The use of the third person for Celsus can be seen in the introduction of quotes from Celsus, as in the next example, where the opposition Christians – Celsus is expressed by the use of the first and the third person:

- (2) Μετὰ ταῦθ' ὁ γενναιότατος Κέλσος οὐκ οἶδ' ὅποθεν λαβὼν ἐπαπορεῖ πρὸς ἡμᾶς [...] (4.5.1) After this the most estimable³⁵ Celsus for some unknown reason brings up the objection against us [...]

The third person is also found in Origen's directives regarding his opponent (ἀκουέτω ὁ Κέλσος – 'Celsus ... may listen', 4.10.11; μανθανέτω – 'let him learn', 4.15.21) and in his comments on Celsus' position (οὐκ οἶδε μέντοι γε ὅτι ... – 'he does not know that ...', 4.2.28-29). Remarkable is also Origen's use of the third person forms of *verba putandi* referring to thoughts of Celsus and presented as motive or explanation of Celsus' words or actions (οἶται ἀκουλουθεῖν τούτῳ ... – 'he thinks it follows from this that ...', 4.5.3.). In fact Origen, acting as if he knows what was in Celsus' mind, presents his own (first person's) interpretation of Celsus' motive as a fact in the discourse.³⁶ Doing so he directs the reception of his readers. Sometimes this way of making explicit thoughts and intentions of the opponent is used by Origen as a preparation for the response he will give subsequently: at this point he will attack Celsus and demonstrate that his implication is not correct.³⁷

πρὸς ἡμᾶς ('...even if the Word who was in the beginning with God, who was himself God, comes to us', 4.5.12-14), where πρὸς ἡμᾶς corresponds with εἰς τὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίον in the previous phrase. See also 4.6.20.

³² Identification without any doubt in ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ('our God', 4.13.28), ἡμετέρων γραμμάτων ('our Scriptures', 4.17.11), ὑφ' ἡμῶν ('by us', 4.3.1 and 17 – Christians opposed to Jews), ἡμῖν (4.17.7 – Christians opposed to the Greek). Less evident are e.g. οὐκ ὀκνήσωμεν ('we will not hesitate', 4.5.31 – Origen personally or all the Christians?) and τροπολογούμεν ('we take this in a symbolical sense', 4.12.19 – the allegorical interpretation is favorite to Origen, but also to all Christians? Origen seems to suggest it here).

³³ See 4.14.20, where Christianity (ἡμεῖς – 'we') and philosophy (Epicurus and the Stoics) are opposed. See also 4.10.10-12 and 4.19.1-5. In 4.3.36-38 the opposition ἄλλος - ἡμεῖς ('someone else' – 'we') is elaborated in an embedded dialogue, in which both positions are presented, the first in indirect speech, the latter in direct speech.

³⁴ see e.g. ἴδωμεν (33x), φέρε καὶ ... διαλάβωμεν (4.54.8), εἴπωμεν (3.22.18 with φέρε; 7.23.19), ἐξελέγχωμεν (1.28.5 with φέρε), ἐξετάσωμεν (4.26.4 with φέρε), θεωρήσωμεν (5.44.2 with φέρε), παραθῶμεν (8.47.10), παραστήσωμεν (2.56.9; 5.8.3; 5.20.9; 5.28.23; 5.51.3 all with φέρε).

³⁵ On the ironical meaning of this qualification (and others) see in my commentary chapter IV *ad loc.*

³⁶ To some extent this use is comparable to what in narratology is called the perspective of the omniscient narrator: the narrator of the story has an overarching point of view and knows the intentions and thought of the characters in the story.

³⁷ In a similar way Celsus' motives or intentions are presented by participles as βουλόμενος ('wanting', e.g. 4.11.1) and χλευάζων ('in mockery', 4.13.1). Cf. βουλόμενος (4.6.20) and θέλων (4.6.11 and 23) with regard to the will of God.

II. A linguistic approach

This communicative situation in *Contra Celsum* is not unlike the situation in ancient courts: the accused (or his advocate) spoke normally to the jury and not to the accusing party. An important difference with the court situation is that in Origen's work the accusing party is not present in person, but represented by a text. Even in courtrooms there are situations in which the defendant and the accuser address each other. Van Gils (2009:137) correctly points out that this is more than a simple extra dialogue: 'what the defendant and the accuser say to each other in a court room is usually not without a message for the jury'. In the ancient rhetoric theory this phenomenon is called *apostrophe*: the speaker turns away from his 'normal' public and addresses someone else, in court situations often the opponent, but also people that are not present can be addressed or inanimate things, cities, abstract phenomena (freedom, the laws) etc. As is remarked by Lausberg *apostrophe* often has a pathetic effect.³⁸

This effect seems to be intended in a similar way by Origen in *Contra Celsum*: two times in my corpus he uses *apostrophe* to add power and pathos to his defence. Here is the first example:

- (3) ἄρα, ὃ οὗτος, οἶδεν ὁ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεὸς τὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἢ οὐκ οἶδεν; Ἀλλ' εἴπερ τίθης εἶναι θεὸν καὶ πρόνοιαν, ὥς ἐμφαίνει σου τὸ σύγγραμμα, ἀναγκαῖον αὐτὸν εἶδέναι. Εἰ δ' οἶδεν, διὰ τί οὐκ ἐπανορθοῖ; Ἡ ἡμῖν μὲν ἀναγκαῖον ἀπολογεῖσθαι, διὰ τί εἰδὼς οὐκ ἐπανορθοῖ σοὶ δέ, μὴ πάνυ ἐμφαίνοντι διὰ τοῦ συγγράμματος τὸν Ἐπικούρειον ἀλλὰ προσποιουμένῳ πρόνοιαν εἶδέναι, οὐκ ἐπ' ἴσης λελέξεται, διὰ τί εἰδὼς τὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις πάντα ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐπανορθοῖ οὐδὲ θεία δυνάμει ἀπαλλάσσει πάντας τῆς κακίας; (4.4.2-11)
- My good man, does the supreme God know what is going on amongst men, or does He not? If you think God and providence exist, as your treatise suggests, then He must know. But if He does know, why does He not correct men? Or have we to explain why He knows but does not correct, while you (as you do not appear from your treatise to be an Epicurean at all, but pretend to believe in providence) may not fairly be asked why the God who knows all that goes on among men does not correct them and also deliver all men from evil by divine power?

This passage is preceded by an offensive move of Origen: he turns the tables saying that the objection Celsus has brought in against Christians and Jews (quoted in 4.3) may be addressed to him also. In this introduction Celsus is still referred to in the third person, but subsequently Origen starts the *apostrophe* section he announced. Now he addresses Celsus with the vocative ὃ οὗτος³⁹ and uses the second person (τίθης, σου, σοί): Celsus is confronted with an 'interrogation' in which two options are presented. Origen continues by appealing to Celsus' own opinion about providence and draws the conclusion that one of the two options cannot be acceptable for Celsus. But this brings Celsus in trouble, as Origen makes clear: the remaining option is exactly the position he blamed the Christians for and therefore Celsus has to account equally (ἐπ' ἴσης) for the questions he posed himself. The implication of this *tu-quoque* argument⁴⁰ is that Celsus is not fair in his accusation. This is the message Origen wants to pass on to his intended readers. As an adequate means to convey this kind of argumentation Origen used *apostrophe*. The pathetic effect of this passage is enhanced by the antithesis ἡμῖν – σοί and the rhetorical questions. The other example of *apostrophe* in my corpus is found in 4.19; it will be discussed in the commentary section.⁴¹

³⁸ Lausberg (1973:377-379). For a discourse analysis approach of *apostrophe* in forensic speeches of Cicero see Van Gils (2009:137-140). The use of *apostrophe* to catch the attention of the reader is discussed in Longinus, *On the Sublime* 26, with examples from narrative texts.

³⁹ For the negative connotation of this vocative (and more details of this passage see my commentary chapter IV *ad loc.*

⁴⁰ See on this type of argument chapter III 3.4.3.

⁴¹ See for more examples of *apostrophe* in *Contra Celsum* (addressing Celsus): 1.17.6; 1.18.2; 2.34.33; 2.76.55; 3.19.7; 3.27.10; 3.74.2; 3.58.6; 3.80.4; 5.40.4; 8.9.10. On the use of *apostrophe* by Celsus, see commentary on 4.5.27.

4. Tense

4.1. Introduction

In this section I concentrate on the use of the verbal forms in the text of *Contra Celsum* to make some remarks on the use of the tenses in relation with the communicative situation the text functions in. It is not my intention to cover the whole field of verb connected issues.⁴² I will restrict myself to some basic observations that will be used in my commentary section.

As is commonly accepted the verbal tense stems in classical Greek have distinct semantic values (often referred to with the term aspect). What they indicate about the State of Affairs (SoA) concerned differs in the following way:⁴³

- present stem: SoA is presented as *not completed*: things are being carried out or there is no relevant final point;
- aorist stem: SoA is presented as *completed*;
- perfect stem: SoA is presented as completed and as a result a *state* exists;
- future stem: SoA is presented as located *after* a point in time given in the context or situation (without indicating whether or not the SoA is completed).

A further basic distinction concerns the expression of ‘time’ (past, present, future), which depends on where the SoA is located relative to the moment of utterance. This distinction applies only to the indicative forms (and all the future forms):⁴⁴

- present & perfect ‘present’: SoA is located *at* the moment of utterance;
- imperfect, aorist and pluperfect ‘past’: SoA is located *before* the moment of utterance;
- future ‘future’: SoA is located *after* the moment of utterance.

I will follow up these basic distinctions by a separate treatment of the tenses, giving more details and some illustrations from my corpus. I will confine myself chiefly to the verbs that form the ‘backbone’ of the discourse: the main verbs in the independent (‘main’) sentences.⁴⁵

To understand the use of the different tenses it seems useful to make a preliminary remark about a certain form of stratification in the text of *Contra Celsum*. Three layers can be discerned: (1) The core of the discourse is made up by the argumentative passages, which consist of arguments, reasoning, statements, testimonies from the Bible (with an interpretation), analogies etc. (2) Around this core functions a layer with utterances of a meta-communicational character, as announcements, closing words, comments and marks of appreciation or disapproval. These words surround the argumentative core as a discourse-organizing and evaluative shell.⁴⁶ (3) This total of core and shell is itself embedded in the outer shell

⁴² A concise treatment of the essential aspects of the verb in classical Greek can be found in Rijksbaron *et al.* (2000); Rijksbaron (2002); CGCG (2019:404-437 §33.1-66). As far as the general grammatical observations concerns my remarks depend strongly upon these works.

⁴³ See Rijksbaron (2002:1); Rijksbaron *et al.* (2000:66); CGCG (2019:405-411 §33.4-12).

⁴⁴ See Rijksbaron (2002:4); Rijksbaron *et al.* (2000:61); CGCG (2019:404-405, 409-410 §33.1-3, 33.11).

⁴⁵ It might be noted that these observations apply to some dependent clauses as well: dependent clauses that function as obligatory constituents, often as object with verbs as ‘say’ and ‘see’. In these clauses the same tenses and moods are used that would have been used if the facts described would have been expressed in an independent clause. Examples are indirect questions (see, e.g. 4.18.28) and clauses introduced by the conjunctions ὅτι and ὥς (‘that’) depending from verbs of perception (like ὁρᾶν, οἶδαν, μανθάνω, see e.g. 4.2.14; 4.2.28-29; 4.15.21) and saying (like λέγω, φημι, see e.g. 4.4.11; 4.3.18). (Rijksbaron 2002:49-58).

⁴⁶ See Runge (2010:101-124) on ‘metacomments’, applied to the New Testament.

II. A linguistic approach

which regards the communicative setting in which the complete text of *Contra Celsum* functions in: Origen's situation of writing. (1) and (2) contain Origen's discussion with Celsus, which is located within Origen's communication with Ambrose and other readers of his text (3).

The use of the tenses in these layers varies as will be discussed in the next sections. A short overview is offered in advance in the following diagram:

layer	most used tenses
(1) argumentation	present, imperfect, aorist, perfect, future
(2) discourse organization	present, perfect, future
(3) situation of writing	present

4.2. Present

The present indicative⁴⁷ is used by Origen to indicate actions and situations that are existing (and are not completed) at the moment he is writing:

- (4) [...] τέταρτον πρὸς τὰ ἐξῆς εὐξάμενοι διὰ [...] after a prayer to God through Christ **we are undertaking** a fourth book in reply to his next objections.
Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ **ὑπαγορεύομεν**. (4.1.3-4)

- (5) Καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς νῦν **χρηζόμεν** λόγων [...] (4.1.9) For now we also **need** words [...]

Using the present forms ὑπαγορεύομεν and χρῆζομεν Origen refers to his own actual writing situation and his needs at the moment of communication (indicated by the temporal marker νῦν).

Next, the present is used by Origen discourse organizational remarks, like the announcement of quotes, the start and ending of a discussion.⁴⁸ He introduces his own contributions to the 'dialogue' with Celsus often with φαμεν⁴⁹ and similar present phrases, like:

- (6) ἡμεῖς δὲ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων **ἀπολογούμεθα**, But we **defend** our teaching by saying [...] λέγοντες [...] (4.10.11-12)

In the same way, but somewhat more remarkable, the present is used by Origen to introduce the words of Celsus.⁵⁰ Although these words are (strictly spoken) written several decades before the situation of writing, they are available at that moment in the text Origen has (so to say) on his desk: the author 'speaks' through his text, even years after he died.

Present forms are not only found in these quote introductions, but also in verbs that present Origen's interpretation or evaluation of 'actions' of his opponent:

- (7) [...] **ἐπαπορεῖ** πρὸς ἡμᾶς [...] καὶ **οἶται** [...] (Celsus) **brings up** the objection against us [...] and he **thinks** it follows from this [...] ἀκολουθεῖν τούτῳ [...]. Οὐ γὰρ **οἶδε** δύναμιν θεοῦ [...]. οὐδὲ συνιέναι **δύναται** [...]. Οὐδὲ **βλέπει** ὅτι [...] (4.5.2-8)⁵¹ he **does not understand** [...]. Nor **is he able** to understand [...] Nor **does he see** that [...]

⁴⁷ See CGCG (2019:412-414 §33.14-21).

⁴⁸ In case of first person verbs there is only a thin line between discourse organizational remarks and references to the situation of writing.

⁴⁹ See 4.6.7; 4.13.11; in an alternative formula the future is used: φήσομεν, 4.7.9; 4.11.12 (see below in the future section).

⁵⁰ The most common introduction is with φησί(ν), e.g. 4.1.36; 4.3.4; 4.10.3; 4.11.5; 4.14.2; 4.18.4. Moreover, the present is in a similar way used as introduction of quotes from the Bible, see 4.13.14 and 23 (λέγεται and φησι).

⁵¹ Note that the present perfect οἶδε is used in alternation with the 'real' present forms (also in 4.2.28)

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The use of present forms in this presentation of the communicative situation as a not completed, ongoing dialogue does not sound unnatural in itself, but it is not unlikely that the choice for the present was made deliberately by Origen also for rhetorical reasons: the use of present forms can help to reduce the distance between reader and the text and to increase the idea of relevance of his text. It is suggested to the reader that the criticism of Celsus is not just an issue of far away and long ago: Celsus' voice can be heard in their own times and calls for a serious analysis and reply. As a consequence Origen's exposition of the Christian faith in defence to these objections is presented as urgent and vital for the readers.

Finally, the present can also serve to denote states of affairs that are not bound to a specific time (universal or timeless present). In *Contra Celsus* this generic present is found mainly in the argumentative passages in conclusions (8), general statements (9) and descriptions of typical actions of God and Christ (10):

(8) Οὐδεμίαν οὖν θνητὴν φιλοτιμίαν ὁ Χριστιανῶν λόγος καταμαρτυρεῖ τοῦ θεοῦ. (4.6.25-26)	So the Christian doctrine attributes no mortal ambition to God.
(9) Καίτοι γε ὁ ἰατρὸς ὄρων τὰ δεινὰ καὶ θιγγάνων τῶν ἀηδῶν οὐ πάντως ἐκφεύγει τὸ τοῖς αὐτοῖς δύνασθαι περιπεσεῖν. (4.15.14-16)	[...] although the physician who sees the terrible things and touches the unpleasant wounds does not wholly avoid the possibility that he may fall into the same plight.
(10) Ἀεὶ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ [...] ἐπανορθοῖ τοὺς ἀκούοντας τῶν λεγομένων. (4.3.24-27)	For by His Logos God is always correcting those who listen to what He says.

In conclusion it can be stated that in main clauses the present is the most frequently used tense in *Contra Celsus*. As can be seen in the discussion the present functions on all of the three levels: in the argumentative core, in the discourse organizing and evaluative layer (with an effect of presenting Origen's work as more relevant for the addressees) and in the surrounding text that refers to the situation of writing.

4.3. Aorist and imperfect

As compared to the present the aorist stem is far less used. Origen uses the aorist to denote and to evaluate actions of Celsus which in his interpretation can be deduced from his text and are presented as completed actions preceding the writing process or accomplished by the finished text itself.⁵² Aorist forms are found in argumentative sections when historical facts are denoted as mere events. Often these facts are taken from biblical histories or the life of Jesus, facts that are by their nature completed. Here is an example:

- (11) «Σωτὴρ» γὰρ **ἦλθε** «πάντων ἀνθρώπων». For he **came** as 'saviour of all men'.
(4.4.20-21)

⁵² See e.g. 2.26.8.; 2.28.18; 2.76.1; 3.33.1; 3.43.32; 4.11.14; 4.29.1; 4.46.13; 4.70.1; 6.1.5; 6.33.10; 6.36.25. In these situations sometimes also perfect and imperfect forms are used to denote a resulting state (6.28.18; 7.18.19) or a longer lasting SoA (2.1.64; 3.34.2; 7.57.9). Note that, as was said above, in the announcement of quotes from Celsus usually the present is used (φησί, λέγει), just as in actions that Celsus does 'through' his text (ψεύδεται, ἐγκαλεῖ, διασύρει, ὁμοιοῖ, actions that are not completed as long as his text exists and will be read).

Origen quotes 1 *Tim.*4.10 (ὅς ἐστιν σωτὴρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων), but changes the verb, thus changing Paul's general statement into a description of a completed historical fact, a presentation that is relevant in Origen's discourse in the chapter concerned.⁵³

Neither is the imperfect frequently used in my corpus. Sometimes it occurs in combination with the aorist to describe situations that lasted for some time in the past (as opposed to completed, clear defined facts). An example is offered in the next section where Origen refers to the story of the transfiguration on the 'high mountain':

- (12) [...] **μετεμορφώθη** ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ εἰς τὸ ὑψηλὸν ὄρος ἀναβὰς ἄλλην **ἔδειξε** τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μορφήν καὶ πολλῷ κρείττονα ἥς οἱ κάτω μένοντες καὶ μὴ δυνάμενοι αὐτῷ εἰς ὕψος ἀκολουθεῖν **ἐθεώρουν**. Οὐ γὰρ **εἶχον** οἱ κάτω ὀφθαλμοὺς δυναμένους βλέπειν τὴν τοῦ λόγου ἐπὶ τὸ ἐνδοξον καὶ θεϊότερον μεταμόρφωσιν· ἀλλὰ μόγις αὐτὸν **ἐδύναντο** χωρῆσαι τοιοῦτον [...] (4.16.7-12)
- [...] our God **was transformed** and when he went up a high mountain he **showed** his other form, which was far superior to that which the people down below **saw**, who were unable to follow him to the high place. For the people down below **did not have** eyes capable of seeing the transfiguration of the Logos into something wonderful and more divine. They **were** hardly **able** to receive him as he was [...]

The transformation of Christ and the presentation of his 'other form' are expressed by aorist forms (*μετεμορφώθη* and *ἔδειξε*) as past events that are completed. The position of the people down below (οἱ κάτω) on the other hand is described with imperfect forms: their inability to see the transformed Christ is characterized as a lasting situation that is not completed within the framework of the reported story.

4.4. Perfect

A stimulating contribution to the definition of the semantic value of the perfect is Orriens (2009). He proposes to extend the abovementioned description of that value ('the perfect signifies that a SoA is presented as completed and that as a result a state exists; the perfect locates the state at the moment of utterance') with a pragmatic dimension. According to him the perfect serves as a cohesion device for the marking of an extratextual relationship between a past SoA and the communicative situation the text functions in. Speaking about the primary perfect indicative in classical Greek he writes:

'I think that its aspect, when combined with primary tense, is concerned with marking a *reciprocal* (or: *bilateral*) *relationship* between a completed past SoA and the moment of speech. By this I mean that a speaker, when using a perfect in discourse, simultaneously both refers to a completed past SoA and explicitly links this SoA to the moment of speech. By doing this he directly involves the SoA in the present communicative situation. At this point the perfect differs from the closely related aorist, whose aspect is concerned with a mere *unidirectional* (or: *unilateral*) relationship between the moment of speech and the completed past SoA: it only refers to this SoA without explicitly linking it to the moment of speech.'⁵⁴

By the use of the perfect the speaker marks that he considers the past SoA as somehow involved in his present communicative situation, not as something of 'there and then', but as a fact that has relevance

⁵³ See also 4.9.1, where the use of the aorist supports the idea of reality of Christ's coming down to earth contra Celsus' denial of it (καὶν μὴ βούλεται Κέλσος – 'even if Celsus will not admit it').

⁵⁴ Orriens (2009:225).

and validity in the ‘here and now’ of the speaker.⁵⁵

The notion of ‘actuality’ is further elaborated by Nijk (2013) in his paper about the rhetorical function of the perfect. He demonstrates that the perfect is used in forensic oratory to mark facts that are immediately important to the courtroom situation: e.g. testimonies of witnesses, precedents, laws, crucial facts and acts that characterize parties are (un)trustworthy.⁵⁶

In *Contra Celsum* the perfect occurs both in discourse organizing sentences and in the argumentative sections. I think the observations just described can be helpful in interpreting the use of these forms. How this can be done will be demonstrated in the next examples.

<p>(13) Ἦδη μὲν οὖν καὶ ἐν τοῖς προτέροις περὶ τοῦ
 πεπροφητεῦσθαι τὸν Χριστὸν κατὰ δύναμιν
 διειλήφμεν (4.2.11-13)</p> | <p>Well, above we have already discussed
 as well as we could the fact that the
 prophecies referred to Jesus.</p> |
|---|---|

This is to be characterized as a discourse organizing remark: Origen explains why he refuses to repeat what he has written before about the prophecies. By the use of the perfect διειλήφμεν this earlier discussion is indicated as a completed treatment of the subject which applies to the current argumentation as well: what has been said is still valid and crucial in the discourse situation.⁵⁷

Note that a similar interpretation can be given to the perfect infinitive πεπροφητεῦσθαι: the words of the prophets about Christ are spoken in a remote past as completed utterances, but the books of the prophets can still be read, their words sound in the present of Origen and have, according to Origen, significance for the people of his time. The perfect serves as a bridge between the past of the prophets and the present of readers of *Contra Celsum*.⁵⁸

In the next example, drawn from an argumentative section about μεταβολή (change), three tenses are used alternatively. Origen responds to Celsus’ objections with regards to the issue of God’s descent to the earth: if God comes down to men, Celsus asserts, ‘He must undergo change, a change from good to bad, from beautiful to shameful, from happiness to misfortune, and from what is best to what is most wicked’ (4.14.6-9). Origen denies that these things apply to Christ’s descent to men:

<p>(14) Οὐ δὴ που δ’ ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ εἰς κακὸν γέγονεν αὐτῷ
 μεταβολή, «ἀμαρτίαν» γὰρ «οὐκ ἐποίησεν», οὐδ’
 ἐκ καλοῦ εἰς αἰσχρόν, οὐ γὰρ ἔγνων «ἀμαρτίαν»,
 οὐδὲ ἐξ εὐδαιμονίας ἦλθεν εἰς κακοδαιμονίαν,
 ἀλλ’ «ἐαυτὸν» μὲν «ἐταπείνωσεν» οὐδὲν δ’ ἦττον
 μακάριος ἦν, καὶ ὅτε συμφερόντως τῷ γένει ἡμῶν
 ἐαυτὸν ἐταπείνου. (4.15.3-9)</p> | <p>But he surely underwent no change from
 good to bad, for ‘he did no sin’; nor from
 beautiful to shameful, for ‘he knew non
 sin’. Nor did he pass from happiness to
 misfortune; although ‘he humbled
 himself’, nevertheless he was happy,
 even when he humbled himself in a way
 expedient for our race.</p> |
|---|--|

⁵⁵ See also Allan (2016:92-97), who discusses the historical development of the Greek perfect in three stages (resultative-stative; current relevance; past perfective). Writing on the second stage he introduces the term ‘subjectification’: ‘The emergence of the current relevance meaning of the perfect can be described as a form of *subjectification*: the *objective* (event-oriented) mental or physical property of the subject has bleached away and is replaced by the *subjective* (speaker-oriented) feature of current relevance’ (86).

⁵⁶ Nijk illustrates his general observations by an analysis of Demosthenes, *De Corona* 57-60, 79-121 (2013:248-259).

⁵⁷ A similar reference to earlier spoken and still applicable words in εἰρήκαμεν (4.2.31; 4.3.54), ἀποδεδώκαμεν (4.13.29), λέλεχθαι (4.14.13), προείρηται (4.19.22). In 4.16.19 the perfect λελέχθω is used in the conclusion of a long argumentative passage. Its meaning might be paraphrased as: ‘this has to be my reply, that does not lose its force and remains a solid refutation in the situation of the addressees’.

⁵⁸ Note that some lines further on in the same passage a *present* participle is used by Origen to denote these prophecies : τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ προφητευόμενα (4.2.25). The present and perfect function side by side to signify how meaningful the prophecies still are in the present situation. Whereas the perfect refers to the written documents, now available in the Scriptures and still relevant, the present may refer to the actualization of the prophetic words: whenever they are read (aloud), they can be heard in the present. The perfect of γράφω is in a similar way often used by Origen to refer to the text of the Bible (e.g. τὰ ἐν τῷ Ἱερεμῷ γεγραμμένα, 4.1.26; γέγραπται 4.1.5).

It is not easy to account for the diverse use of tenses in these lines, but I will try to express the differences in meaning that might be discerned due to the change of tenses. In the first sentence the perfect γέγονεν seems to point at the state that still exists, even in the situation of writing, according to Origen: Christ did not undergo any change and still is good as he ever was. The aorist forms are partly drawn from the biblical texts (ἐποίησεν and ἐταπείνωσεν are literally quoted and ἔγνω is based on the aorist participle γνόντα used in the source letter of Paul) and partly chosen by Origen himself (ἦλθεν). With these aorists Origen presents these facts concerning the life of Christ on earth as completed SoAs: he humbled himself and did not sin. Remarkably enough the aorist ἐταπείνωσεν is echoed in the end of this passage by the imperfect ἐταπείνου. With this imperfect (and the preceding ἦν) Origen refers more to situations that were not completed in the historical past of Christ's lifetime: he was happy during his life, although his life was a continuous period of 'humbling himself'.

In this passage two issues are at stake: (a) Christ did not undergo any change and (b) Christ was sinless and humbled himself. The conclusion that might be drawn from the interpretation of use of the tenses is that Origen gives these two issues a different treatment: Christ's humble and sinless life is more presented as a remote historical fact and situation, not as a part of the discourse situation, whereas the notion that Christ remains unchanged by the use of the perfect is brought within the world of the reader as a still meaningful state.

From this discussion it can be clear that the perfect serves as a marking device both in argumentative and in discourse organizing text parts. The situation of writing and a completed past SoA are linked together: the state this SoA resulted in is highlighted as relevant in the present communicative situation.

4.5. Future

Future forms refer to the future, to SoAs that are located after the moment of speech. They are used by Origen particularly in discourse organizational sentences with the intention to communicate an announcement or promise to his addressees. A clear example is (15):

<p>(15) Ἐπεὶ δὲ χλευάζων ὁ Κέλσος φησὶν ἡμᾶς λέγειν
τὸν θεὸν δίκην βασανιστοῦ πῦρ φέροντα
καταβαίνειν καὶ ἀναγκάζει ἡμᾶς οὐ κατὰ καιρὸν
βαθυτέρους ἐξετάζειν λόγους, ὀλίγα εἰπόντες, [...] ἐπὶ τὰ ἐξῆς τραπησόμεθα. (4.13.1-5)</p> | <p>As Celsus says in mockery that we say
God comes down bringing fire like a
torturer and compels us to examine
profound problems at an inappropriate
time, we will make a few observations
[...] and then turn to what follows.</p> |
|---|--|

Here Origen announces that he will proceed the normal course of his discourse after an examination of 'profound problems' that he feels forced to insert first.⁵⁹

Sometimes Origen uses the future to introduce his reaction to a just quoted objection of Celsus: καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο δὲ φήσομεν ὅτι ... ('We will reply to this that ...' e.g. 4.7.8-9). Curiously this reply starts immediately after the announcement. The formula seems to be nothing more than a variation of similar formulas with the present φαμέν. Does this future form really refer to the future?

Maybe this use of the future can be interpreted as an 'inferential future', which can be used in discussions when the speaker infers his utterance from e.g. earlier experiences, traditional habits, logical reasoning or general knowledge.⁶⁰ The speaker indicates with this future form that *considering* the experiences, habits etc. the following utterance is a natural continuation that can be expected (*Peter will be at home, considering the fact that I hear music coming from his house*). These experiences, habits

⁵⁹ A similar use of the future to organize the discourse is found in 4.8.18 (δεήσει): Origen describes two steps that will be necessary in the explanation of a mysterious theme, the first is introduced by δεῖ, the second by δεήσει. See also 4.9.10 and 13.

⁶⁰ See Bakker, S.J. (2002) for more examples from dialogues of Plato; CGCG (2019:426 §33.45).

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etc. will often remain implicit in the text.⁶¹ If the just mentioned φήσομεν is to be explained as an inferential future, as I tend to suppose, the implicit line of thought might be explained as follows: ‘the reader already knows the habit of the author to comment on every quote from Celsus; therefore, as the author infers, it *will* be no surprise that I will reply to this quote as well.’

The inferential future often occurs in hypothetical sections of the discourse. In a hypothetical situation that is constructed within a discussion the next step can be inferred and presented as a natural consequence. In text (16) Origen replies to Celsus’ suggestion that God could correct men in a direct way, by divine power, without sending someone down to the earth. Origen infers from these words that correction by divine power would be a more acceptable option for Celsus. He decides to adopt this alternative for a moment and examines the implication of this alternative in a rhetorical question: ‘Did he want that people are corrected when they get visions from God who has taken away evil altogether and implants virtue?’ Origen continues exploring the (hypothetical) frame: his next move is to reflect on the alternative by presenting two possible reactions that logically are evoked by the statement implied in the rhetorical question:

- (16) Ἄλλος μὲν οὖν ζητήσει, εἰ ἀκόλουθον ἢ εἰ δυνατόν ἐστι τῇ φύσει τὸ τοιοῦτον· ἡμεῖς δὲ εἵπομεν ἂν ὅτι ἔστω, καὶ δυνατόν αὐτὸ εἶναι· ποῦ οὖν τὸ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν [...]; (4.3.36-39)
- Well, someone **will ask** whether this is consistent with nature and intrinsically possible. But we would say: let it be granted that this is possible; but what about free will [...]?

Here the future ζητήσει does not refer to a ‘real’ future investigation, but has to be interpreted as inferential. Origen creates an embedded discourse situation by introducing one more partner in the discussion (Ἄλλος), which gives him the opportunity to formulate two reactions, one inferable from logical reasoning (ζητήσει) and his own, at first presented in a cautious, modest way as a possible question by potential optative εἵπομεν ἂν, but in the next lines developed as a serious refutation of Celsus’ idea.⁶²

It can be concluded that future forms, though not very frequently used, mainly occur in discourse organizing sentences and sometimes can be interpreted as inferential future.

A final remark on the future perfect λελέξεται, which is used several times by Origen. The future perfect combines the semantic values of perfect and future.⁶³ In (17) it occurs to introduce an *apostrophe* passage:

- (17) Λελέξεται οὖν ὅπερ ἡμῖν καὶ Ἰουδαίοις προσάγει ὁ Κέλσος καὶ πρὸς αὐτόν· ὅτι ἄρα, ὦ οὗτος, [...]
- (4.4.1-2)
- Moreover, the objection which Celsus brings against us and the Jews **may be addressed** to him also: My good man, does [...]

The ‘future part’ of λελέξεται can here be interpreted as an inferential future: the next step in the discourse is inferred from what proceeds and presented as a logical follow-up. The perfect value seems to indicate that the words that Celsus spoke before are presented as a now existing argument (‘state’) that is still available and can be used by Origen as well.⁶⁴

⁶¹ See 3.70.1-2 (in a quote from Celsus) – inference from assumed general knowledge.

⁶² Some lines below in this passage a second inferential future occurs (ζητήσει, 4.3.42). Another example of an inferential future is νοηθήσεται (4.13.20).

⁶³ Rijksbaron (2002:1): ‘the future perfect stem signifies that a state of affairs is completed and that as a result a *state* exists *after* a point in time given in context or situation.’; See also CGCG (2019:427 §33.46-47).

⁶⁴ Some lines below λελέξεται occurs again within the *apostrophe* passage (4.4.9), at the point where the turning of the tables takes place. In 2.76.55 λελέξεται is also used to introduce an *apostrophe*. In 4.67.19 the ‘perfect part’ of λελέξεται seems to

5. Particles

5.1. Introduction

Particles⁶⁵ have never been the most favorite words for translators of Greek texts: these little words seem to escape from every attempt to control them and to translate them in an adequate way. However, it is advisable, before looking for a good translation, to make some preliminary efforts: first of all to examine what the function of a specific particle is in general and then to establish the interpretation within the text and the communicative situation in which it is used. These steps are intrinsic elements of the pragmatic approach of particles as developed mainly by Dutch scholars in recent decades.⁶⁶ I will sketch the theoretical framework of this approach as described by Wakker.⁶⁷

She starts with the statement that particles do not refer to anything in the extra-lingual reality (they have no referential meaning), but are words with a pragmatic function: they can situate a state of affairs⁶⁸ or a proposition in the communicative (textual and non-textual) context. Particles are linguistic means that are useful for both producers and recipients of utterances. For the reader (audience) they can serve as a means to get or keep a right perception of the text structure and to find out what the purposes or expectations of the author (speaker) are. The author (speaker) himself/herself can make the structure of his/her text more explicit by means of particles and contribute to more interaction in the communication by anticipating or responding to questions, expectations, presuppositions or knowledge (supposed or real) of the addressee.

For a classification of particles Wakker refers to three levels at which discourses can be analyzed: the representational, the presentational and the interactional level. Particles can be described and classified on the basis of the discourse level they function at.

The representational level accounts for relations between states of affairs in the (real or imaginary) world represented in the text. Particles as *ἀλλά* and *καί* often function at this level, signifying replacement and addition. Scope particles (defining the scope of an utterance) as *γε* and the main uses of subordinating conjunctions as *εἰ* and *ἵνα* can be put in this category as well.

The presentational or text structuring level is concerned with the relations between discourse units. Particles functioning at this level can indicate conclusions, digressions, discourse topic shifts etc. A good example is *οὖν*, which marks a ‘new step’ in a narrative or argumentation. More often than not these particles are also used to indicate the hierarchical structure of a discourse: a discourse unit can be embedded in a surrounding unit. The starting point of an embedded unit (called PUSH: the discourse is continued at a lower level) is often indicated by *γάρ*. The return to the level of the embedding unit (called POP: upwards again) is typically marked by *οὖν*.⁶⁹

The interactional level has to do with the interaction between the interlocutors in a communicative situation. Interactional particles (also called modal or attitudinal particles) indicate the involvement or commitment of the discourse participants: an author (speaker) can clarify his/her attitude with regard to the proposition or draw attention of the addressee or anticipate an expected reaction. Particles that

refer to the fact that Origen is going to reuse an already existing argument. Perhaps a similar explanation can be given for its occurrence in 2.78.2 and 4.61.2, where it is used in an announcement of Origen’s reply to a quote from Celsus.

⁶⁵ See CGCG (2019:663-701 §59.1-76).

⁶⁶ See Wakker (1994:303-364), Rijksbaron (1997a), Rijksbaron *et al.* (2000), Bakker & Wakker (2009) with many further references to earlier publications. An overview of studies on particles and discourse markers in ancient Greek and Latin is provided in Bonifazi & Drummen & De Kreij (2016, Vol.1, 3.5 §58-74).

⁶⁷ Wakker (1997b:210-213). See also Kroon (1995; 1998), Bonifazi & Drummen & De Kreij (2016, Vol.1, 1.5 §18-22).

⁶⁸ A technical term defined as ‘a cover term for that which is expressed by the predication (= roughly: a verb form and its arguments, e.g. Agent and Patient)’ (Rijksbaron 2002:3 n.4).

⁶⁹ See Slings (1997a).

function at this level are e.g. δή (drawing attention and/or presenting something as evident for both the speaker and the addressee) and που (signaling a supposition).

5.2. Alphabetical list of particles

I will now present a list⁷⁰ of the particles that are the most frequent in my corpus, with an explanation of the pragmatic functions and translation possibilities. Some illustrative examples are given,⁷¹ followed by a brief indication of the discourse function of the particle in the quoted context; a more elaborate discussion will be given in the commentary section *ad locum*.

The list is first offered in an alphabetical order to make searching for a specific participle easier. Further on the particles are presented in a more systematical way, with some remarks about the frequency in the text of *Contra Celsum*.

ἀλλά⁷²

a. Eliminating, replacing particle, often after a negation: not A, *but* B. The element B increases in power by the explicit rejection of A.

- (18) Καὶ δοκεῖ γε ἀκριβῶς περὶ μὲν Ἰουδαίων οὐ
τινῶν **ἀλλὰ** πάντων λέγειν [...] (4.2.4-5) He seems to speak accurately about the
Jews, not some, **but** all of them [...]

b. Presentational: indicates discontinuity; often at the beginning of a main clause: the preceding section is interrupted (eliminated) and the speaker moves on to a new section.

In (19) Origen breaks off his preceding remarks on the gods of Epicurus, and moves on to the next philosophical school.

- (19) Οἱ δὲ τοῦ Ἐπικούρου θεοί [...]. **Ἀλλὰ** καὶ ὁ τῶν But the gods of Epicurus [...].
Στωϊκῶν θεός [...] (4.14.25) **Furthermore**, the god of the Stoics [...]

In the latter sense ἀλλά occasionally is followed by γάρ. This combination ἀλλά (...) γάρ⁷³ is text structuring. It indicates that the speaker interrupts himself/herself and gives the reason for that interruption.

An example is (20): at the end of a long reply to a quote from Celsus Origen breaks off his argumentation: enough has been said about this subject.

- (20) **Ἀλλὰ γάρ** ἀρκεῖ ταῦτα πρὸς [...] (4.13.35-36) **So far on this subject, for** this is a
sufficient replay to [...]

γάρ⁷⁴

Presentational particle, indicates a shift in discourse level and the start of an embedded section, a digression, giving an explanation, motivation, elaboration or other information that does not belong to

⁷⁰ The list is not complete: less frequent particles will be discussed in the commentary section *ad locum*. For a more extensive list see CGCG (2019:664-701 §59.7-76), where the particles are subdivided into four categories: connective ('text-structuring'), attitudinal, scope-particles, particle combinations.

⁷¹ Cf. Rijksbaron *et al.* (2000:158-166); Chadwick's translations (1953) will sometimes be modified in the translation of the particles.

⁷² See Drummen (2009:139-142), with further references.

⁷³ See Slings (1997a: 112-114).

⁷⁴ See Runge (2010:51-54). On γάρ in narrative texts (Homer, Pindar) see Bonifazi & Drummen & De Kreij (2016, Vol.2, 3.2.2 §20-29; Vol.2 4.2.1-3 §15-28; see also Vol.4, 3.11 §108-110 on the use in Herodotus and Thucydides).

the main discourse level. (PUSH⁷⁵).

In (21) Origen characterizes Celsus' words as 'foolish'. With γάρ he starts a section in which he accounts for this judgement.

(21) Καὶ ταῦτα δὲ πάντα εὐήθως λέγει. Αἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ, [...] ἐπανορθοῖ τοὺς ἀκούοντας τῶν λεγομένων. (4.3.24-27)	All these questions are foolish. For by His Logos God is always correcting those who listen to what He says.

γε⁷⁶

In classical Greek mostly used as a scope particle with a limiting function: the utterance is *at least* applicable to the constituent preceding γε. Often γε points to something unexpected or paradoxical or to an implicit contrast. In the text of Origen the limitative function often seems to be less obvious: γε is used simply to draw full attention to the preceding element.⁷⁷ Possible translations: 'at least', 'indeed', 'would you believe!' or by emphasizing the modified word.

Text (22) offers an illustration of the limitative function:

(22) [...] ὁ ἐπικούρειος Κέλσος, εἴ γε οὗτός ἐστι καὶ ὁ κατὰ Χριστιανῶν ἄλλα δύο βιβλία συντάξας [...] (4.36.36)	[...] Celsus the Epicurean, if, at least, he is the one who also composed two other books against the Christians [...]

In (23) γε is used to emphasize that it is Celsus' opinion (and a remarkable and inappropriate as Origen implies).⁷⁸

(23) καὶ οἶεταί γε ἐπὶ θάμβει τῶν ἰδιωτῶν ταῦθ' ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν [...] (4.10.5)	And he actually thinks that we do this to arouse the amazement of uneducated people [...]

δέ⁷⁹

Text structuring particle, indicates the start of a new discourse unit; connects (or contrasts) the new (part of a) sentence to the preceding element; often an indication of a topic shift.⁸⁰ Translation: 'and', 'but' or often: omit translation.

Example (24) is taken from the beginning of a new chapter, where Origen introduces the next quote from Celsus' work.

⁷⁵ See Slings (1997a:101-104).

⁷⁶ See Sicking (1986:134-135), Wakker (1994:308-315) and Dik, H. (1995:43-45).

⁷⁷ Denniston (1954:115) draws a distinction between the limitative and the determinative/intensive use (grouped together as 'emphatic') and remarks that the latter use of γε 'plays a bigger part than some scholars allow: hence they ... force it down upon the Procrustian bed of limitation'. As far as *Contra Celsum* is concerned his remark seems to make sense.

⁷⁸ The combination οἶεταί γε is used in the same way in 2.31.2.

⁷⁹ Runge (2010:23-51), focusing on the Greek of the New Testament (but in my opinion his approach makes sense for Origen's text as well), formulates the distinction between καί, οὖν and δέ using the concepts of (dis)continuity and development (new steps or stages). In his vision 'Καί does not mark a distinction of semantic continuity or discontinuity; it connects two items of equal status, constraining them to be closely related to one other'(24). Δέ, on the other hand, is also a connecting conjunction, 'but it includes the added constraint of signaling a new development'(31), whereas καί is unmarked for development. Οὖν marks both continuity and development (47). See also CGCG (2019:674 §59.21) on the difference between δέ and καί: '... these particles function on different levels: whereas δέ serves to indicate shifts from one text segment/topic to another, καί connects several things said about a topic, linking several elements *within* a larger text segment.'

⁸⁰ On δέ as marking the beginning of a new discourse act in historiography (Herodotus, Thucydides) see Bonifazi & Drummen & De Kreij (2016, Vol.4, 2.2 §14-46).

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- (24) Εἰ δὲ καὶ πρὸς τὰ καταγελαστότατα τοῦ Κέλσου θέλεις ἡμᾶς ἀπαντᾶν, ἄκουε αὐτοῦ λέγοντος· (4.6.1-2) If you want us to meet even the most ludicrous arguments of Celsus, listen to him when he says:

δὴ⁸¹

Interactional particle, which originally ‘demands the addressee’s special attention for the (interesting and important) proposition presented by the speaker’.⁸² There may be various reasons why the attention is requested. Often δὴ is used when the speaker refers to facts that are immediately observable or understandable: the speaker presents his/her point as undeniable, evident, based on knowledge that is common to speaker and addressee. This common ground may really exist or be simulated by the speaker. Suggestions for translation: ‘look’, ‘how interesting’, ‘obviously’, ‘as you can see’ etc.

In (25) δὴ is used in the introduction of Origen’s main argument in this section. The combination with the imperative ὄρα reinforces the appeal to the reader.

- (25) Ὅρα δὴ ὅτι εἴπερ [...] ἐχρῆν αὐτὸν αὐτὰς ἐκθέσθαι τὰς προφητείας (4.2.14) Now I ask your special attention for the following point: if [...] he ought to have quoted the prophecies

Text (26) is taken from a passage in which Origen discusses the theme ‘God and fire’ . Origen starts with the statement that – as an undeniable fact – the Scriptures speak about this theme:

- (26) Φησὶ δὴ ὁ θεῖος λόγος τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν εἶναι «πῦρ καταναλίσκον» (4.13.6-7) The divine Scripture does **indeed** say that ‘our God is a consuming fire’

ἢ, ἥτοι ... ἢ

Connective particle, indicating the next element as an alternative option. The presentation of two mutually exclusive options can be marked by ἥτοι ... ἢ; by the modal element τοι the first option is presented with an extra claim of attention (‘I tell you’). Translation: ‘or’, ‘either ... or’.

In (27) a series of alternative options are presented:

- (27) [...] ἀνάλογον τῇ ἔξει τοῦ εἰσαγομένου ἢ ἐπ’ ὀλίγον προκόπτοντος ἢ ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἢ καὶ ἐγγυὲς ἤδη γινομένου τῆς ἀρετῆς ἢ καὶ ἐν ἀρετῇ γεγενημένου. (4.16.3-5) [...] corresponding to the state of an individual, **whether** he is a beginner, **or** has made a little progress, **or** is considerably advanced, **or** has nearly attained to virtue already, **or** has in fact attained it.

In (28) Celsus presents two mutually exclusive options:

- (28) ἥτοι ὡς ἀληθῶς μεταβάλλει ὁ θεός, [...] ἢ αὐτὸς μὲν οὐ μεταβάλλει (4.18.4-6) **Either** God really does change [...] **or** He does not change

⁸¹ See Wakker (1994:351-357 and 1997a:238-247). On δὴ in Homer as a marker of narrative steps and intensifier of single words or discourse acts see Bonifazi & Drummen & De Kreijl (2016, Vol.3, 3.3.1-3 §53-64; and also Vol.3 2.2.8 §73-79; Vol.4, 4.5-6 §85-127 on δὴ as marking information perceptible or evident in Greek tragedy, Herodotus and Thucydides).

⁸² Wakker (1997b:216).

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καί⁸³

a. Connective particle, making a connection between elements (nouns, adjectives, verbs) within a sentence or between clauses and sentences. In the latter case καί functions on the presentational level. Sometimes Origen starts a new section with an initial καί, thus marking the following unit as the next element or argument in a series (in this case it can be omitted in the translation).

Example (29) is taken from a section that deals with changes concerning the ‘nature of the Logos’. By καί ... καί Origen marks and connects two points: (a) this change is different for each individual; (b) this change has nothing to do with falsehood or telling lies:

- (29) **Καὶ** τινὶ μὲν, ὡς ὠνόμασεν ἡ γραφή, «λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα» γίνεται, τινὶ δὲ [...]. **Καὶ** οὐ δὴ πού ψεύδεται τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν ὁ λόγος, ἐκάστῳ τροφίμος γινόμενος [...] (4.18.21-25)
- To one he becomes ‘the rational milk which is without guile’, as the Bible calls it; to another [...] Surely, I suppose, the Logos is not false to his own nature when he becomes nourishments for each man [...]

Example (30) contains a typical introduction formula by which Origen after a quote from Celsus marks the beginning of his reaction; thus placing this reaction in the series of his preceding (and following) reactions.⁸⁴

- (30) **Καὶ** πρὸς ταῦτα δὲ φήσομεν ὅτι [...] (4.11.12; We will reply to this that [...]
cf. 3.59.16; 4.7.8)

b. Scope particle, indicating that the utterance *also* or *even* is pertinent to the following constituent (which will almost certainly be the Focus element in the clause).

In (31) καί is used two times: the first καί connects two words within the sentence, the second extends the applicability of the utterance.

- (31) Λελέξεται οὖν ὅπερ ἡμῖν **καὶ** Ἰουδαίοις **καὶ** πρὸς αὐτόν· (4.4.1-2)
- Moreover, the objection which Celsus brings against us **and** the Jews may be addressed to him **also**:

In (32) Origen marks the modified constituent as extreme:

- (32) Εἰ δὲ **καὶ** πρὸς τὰ καταγελαστότατα τοῦ Κέλσου θέλεις ἡμᾶς ἀπαντᾶν, ἄκουε αὐτοῦ λέγοντος· (4.6.1-2)
- If you want us to meet **even** the most ludicrous arguments of Celsus, listen to him when he says:

καίτοι

Connecting particle with an interactional extra meaning: special attention is asked for the following utterance. Often it is used as an introduction of an objection or corrective comment the author himself/herself brings forward on the preceding statement: an expectation that possibly is risen from the

⁸³ See Sicking (1996:130, 135-136); Wakker (1994:329-330). On καί in historiography (Herodotus, Thucydides) see Bonifazi & Drummen & De Kreij (2016, Vol.4, 2.4 §93-137).

⁸⁴ Similar formulas are e.g.: Καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο λέγοιτ' ἄν (4.18.12); Καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο δὲ λεκτέον (1.21.3); Καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο δ' ἐροῦμεν (3.58.5-6). In some of these formulae the combination of καί and δέ is used. Rijksbaron (1997b) examined the question which of the two components of this combination makes the connection. He describes καί as connective and thinks that the adverbial δέ has a pragmatic function (marking the next item as really different from the preceding one).

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preceding statement is denied or in some way corrected.⁸⁵ When γε is added⁸⁶ this particle draws extra attention to the corrective intervention.

Example (33) is part of a reply of Origen to Celsus' statement that God must undergo a change from good to bad, if he comes down to the earth (an idea that is has to be rejected). In the discussion Origen points at a comparable situation: a physician, who comes to heal patients and touches 'unpleasant wounds', does not pass from good to bad. At that moment Origen interrupts the discourse and slightly corrects himself his preceding argument:

- (33) **Καίτοι** γε ὁ ἰατρὸς [...] οὐ πάντως ἐκφεύγει τὸ [...] **although** the physician [...] does not
τοῖς αὐτοῖς δύνασθαι περιπεσεῖν· (4.15.14-16) wholly avoid the possibility that he may
fall into the same plight.

In (34) the **καίτοι** clause functions almost as a parenthesis between the clauses with μέν and δέ. Here the meaning gets close to a concessive clause: Celsus does not quote a single prophetic passage, although he had plenty of choice.⁸⁷

- (34) [...] οὐδεμίαν μὲν λέξιν τίθησι προφητικὴν, [...] he quotes not a single passage from the
καίτοι γε μυρίαί ὅσαι εἰσὶ περὶ Χριστοῦ, prophets, **even though** there are thousands
κατηγορεῖν δὲ οἶεται τῶν προφητικῶν [...] about Christ; yet he thinks he can criticize
(4.2.25-27) the prophecies [...]

μέν (... δέ)⁸⁸

Presentational, text structuring particle combination in a two-part utterance: μέν is used in the first part and serves as a forward-pointing particle indicating that the utterance is not yet finished; the audience is told that a continuation has to be expected, which is usually introduced by δέ. The two parts can be simply additional to each other (translate δέ by 'and'), but also contrastive or oppositional ('but').

In (35) Origen announces an argumentation that will consist of two successive parts; in (36) Celsus opposes two statements:

- (35) Καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο λέγεται ἂν πῇ μὲν περὶ τῆς τοῦ My reply to this would argue partly from
θεοῦ λόγου φύσεως, ὅντος θεοῦ, πῇ δὲ περὶ τῆς the nature of the divine Logos, who is God,
Ἰησοῦ ψυχῆς· (4.18.12-14) and partly from the soul of Jesus.
- (36) [...] ἢ αὐτὸς μὲν οὐ μεταβάλλει, ποιεῖ δὲ τοὺς Or he does not change himself, **but** makes
ὁρῶντας δοκεῖν καὶ πλανᾶ καὶ ψεύδεται. (4.18- those who see him think He does so, and
6-7) leads the astray and tells lies.

μήν

Attitudinal particle, indicating the positive commitment of the author to the truth of the proposition: 'really' ('subjective emphasizer'). The author anticipates possible negative reactions or lack of commitment on the part of the reader. He presents his statement with so much certainty that protest from

⁸⁵ See Slings (1997:122-125); Jacquinod (1997:136); CGCG (2019:675 §59.23).

⁸⁶ **καίτοι** occurs 47x in *Contra Celsum*, 36x in the combination **καίτοι γε**, as in my examples.

⁸⁷ The concessive character appears even more when **καίτοι** is combined with a participle (as an equivalent of **καίπερ**). Some examples in *Contra Celsum* are 3.70.4; 4.32.19; 4.38.9; 5.19.16 (where it is followed by ὅμως). Cf. Slings (1997:122 n.49), referring to Denniston (1954:558-559), who explains this use as a development of the use of **καίτοι** in parentheses.

⁸⁸ See Dik, H. (1995:47-51), Runge (2010:54-55).

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the side of the addressee is discouraged. Origen uses it often in a context of antithesis (sometimes with an asyndeton) and combined with a negation.⁸⁹

In (37) Origen opposes two groups and underlines that Celsus certainly cannot persuade the second group of intelligent people.⁹⁰

- (37) Ταῦτα δ' ιδιώτας μὲν καὶ ἀσυνέτους δύνανται
συναρπάσαι, οὐ μὴν καὶ τὸν ἐνορθῶντα τῇ φύσει
τῶν πραγμάτων· (4.3.46-48)
- These arguments may carry away uneducated and unintelligent folk, **but certainly** not the man who analyses the nature of the problem.

οὖν

Presentational particle, indicates a new step in the argumentation,⁹¹ which may be a conclusion, a next item or argument, a return to the main line of the argumentation after a digression (POP).⁹²

In (38) Origen starts a new argument by turning the tables:

- (38) Λελέξεται οὖν ὅπερ ἡμῖν καὶ Ἰουδαίοις προσάγει
ὁ Κέλσος καὶ πρὸς αὐτόν· (4.4.1-2)
- Moreover**, the objection which Celsus brings against us and the Jews may be addressed to him too.

In (39) the discussion of the chapter is closed by a conclusion:

- (39) Οὐδεμίαν οὖν θνητὴν φιλοτιμίαν ὁ Χριστιανῶν
λόγος καταμαρτυρεῖ τοῦ θεοῦ. (4.6.25-26)
- So** the Christian doctrine attributes no mortal ambition to God.

In (40) οὖν is used after a digression, introduced by γάρ, and marks the return to the embedding discourse level:

- (40) Ἐμφαίνει γάρ [...]. Ἦδη μὲν⁹³ οὖν καὶ ἐν τοῖς
προτέροις περὶ τοῦ πεπροφητεῦσθαι τὸν
Χριστὸν κατὰ δύναμιν διειλήφαμεν, διὸ τὰ
πολλὰ τῶν δυναμένων λέγεσθαι εἰς τὸν τόπον
οὐκ ἐπαναλαμβάνομεν, ἵνα μὴ παλιλλογῶμεν.
(4.2.7-14)
- For he shows that [...]. **Well**, above we have already discussed as well as we could the fact that the prophecies referred to Jesus; and for this reason we do not want to repeat the numerous arguments which could be adduced on the subject to avoid any repetition.

που⁹⁴

Interactional particle, indicates that the author brings his/her subjectivity into play, presenting the proposition as *his/her* opinion, with which the addressee may disagree: 'I think', 'as it seems to me'. In *Contra Celsum* it is often used in the combination (οὐ) δὴ που, by which the author appeals to the

⁸⁹ See Wakker (1997b: 213-214); with negation and asyndeton also in 1.10.28; 1.33.3; 4.33.28; 4.52.5; 4.61.15; 4.98.5; 7.11.13; 8.19.13.

⁹⁰ See Denniston (1954:334-335) for the adversative sense of μήν and combination of μὲν .. (οὐ) μήν. Cf. CGCG (2019:690 §59.49).

⁹¹ 'a transition to more crucial or relevant information', according to CGCG (2019:681 §59.34).

⁹² See Slings (1997a:101-104), Wakker (2009:66-67). Bakker, S.J. (2009:61), discussing the 'curious' combination γάρ and οὖν, doubts with good reasons whether the 'new step' marked by οὖν is always one that is *more to the point* than what preceded (as was asserted in other studies; see e.g. CGCG 2016:681 §59.34). For οὖν in the homilies of Origen see Nautin (1976:126-128), who points at the use of this particle to indicate transitions in the text and denotes the method of text structuring as a part of 'une procédé pédagogique'.

⁹³ Interestingly this μὲν is not followed by a corresponding δέ. Another example of this rare phenomenon can be found in 4.14.10 (the first μὲν).

⁹⁴ See also Koier (2013), mainly chapters 8-10.

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addressee to agree with the utterance which is ‘so evidently’ true: ‘I (do not) suppose that...’ meaning actually ‘absolutely (not)’. In fact this *που* is used ironically here: the expression of some sort of uncertainty is a polite way of making clear that the speaker is quite sure of his assertion, as is clear in (41): Origen appears to offer the possibility to disagree, but hereby in fact presents his point as so evident that denial is almost impossible.

- (41) Καὶ οὐ δὴ **που** ψεύδεται τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν ὁ λόγος, [...] (4.18.24-25) Surely, **I suppose**, the Logos is not false to his own nature [...]

τοῖνυν

Particle with a presentational and an interactional function: it indicates the transition to a next discourse unit (text structuring, sometimes with POP function) and marks this new point as highly important (attitudinal): the author appeals to the addressee to give full attention to this point that is possibly unexpected by him/her.⁹⁵

With *τοῖνυν* Origen marks in (42) the transition to a major argument and asks full attention for it. This sentence follows a passage, introduced by *γάρ*, in which Origen had given his first reaction to Celsus’ remark:

- (42) Κἂν ὁ θεὸς **τοῖνυν** τῶν ὅλων τῇ ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμει συγκαταβαίνει τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίον, κἂν ὁ «ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν» λόγος, «θεὸς» καὶ αὐτὸς ὢν, ἔρχηται πρὸς ἡμᾶς, οὐκ ἔξεδρος γίνεται. (4.5.11-14) Even if, **mind you**, the God of the universe descends with Jesus into human life by His power and even if the Logos who was in the beginning with God, who was himself God, comes to us, He does not go away from where He was.

5.3. Systematical overview and frequency

In the alphabetical list 13 of the particles that are most frequent in my corpus are described. Most of them function at one of the aforementioned levels at which discourses can be analyzed (representational, presentational, interactive), whereas some function at two levels. The presentational particles are in a majority, as can be seen in the following table, which presents an overview of the categorization as described in the alphabetical list:

	representational	presentational	interactive
ἀλλά	x	x	
γάρ		x	
γε	x		
δέ		x	
δή			x
ἦ		x	
καί	x	x	
καίτοι		x	x
μέν		x	
μήν			x
οὖν		x	

⁹⁵ See Wakker (2009: 72-79).

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που			x
τοίνυν		x	x

The presentational category is not only the largest group; these particles are by far the most frequently used ones as well. Using the TLG I examined the (relative) frequency of the 13 particles in the complete text of *Contra Celsum* (CC), in book 4 (CC 4) and in the first 20 capita of book 4 (CC 4,1-20). For each particle I collected the total number of times it is used; these totals are added together, thus generating the total amount of times these 13 particles are used (= 100 %). In the next table the results are presented, in absolute numbers and percentages:

	CC	Percentage CC	CC 4	Percentage CC 4	CC 4,1-20	Percentage CC 4,1-20
ἀλλά	1121	5,7 %	190	5,7 %	38	6,2 %
γάρ	1109	5,7 %	195	5,9 %	36	5,9 %
γε	319	1,6 %	57	1,7 %	9	1,5 %
δέ	3340	17,1 %	562	17,0 %	106	17,3 %
δή	194	1,0 %	36	1,1 %	9	1,5 %
ἤ	1235	6,3 %	201	6,1 %	50	8,2 %
καί	10169	52,1 %	1738	52,6 %	271	44,4 %
καίτοι	47	0,2 %	12	0,4 %	3	0,5 %
μέν	1307	6,7 %	202	6,1 %	49	8,0 %
μήν	43	0,2 %	5	0,2 %	1	0,2 %
οὖν	518	2,7 %	85	2,6 %	34	5,6 %
που	56	0,3 %	17	0,5 %	4	0,7 %
τοίνυν	58	0,3 %	6	0,2 %	1	0,2 %
total	19516	100 %	3306	100 %	611	100 %

The most frequently used particles are καί (more than 50 % in CC and CC 4), δέ and μέν. The percentage score of 9 presentational particles together (including the ‘doubles’ ἀλλά, καίτοι and τοίνυν) is even 96,1 % of the total score of the group of 13. Interactional particles are relatively infrequent. Within this category δή is the most frequently used.

The clear majority for presentational particles seems to be illustrative for the character of the text. Origen uses particles mainly to guide the reader through his text, to give information about its structure and to make clear the development of the argumentation. He tends to show little personal involvement in the text; once in a while he draws special attention to an argument, but most of the time the author remains in the background. This corresponds with the images that will rise from the analysis of the rhetoric in *Contra Celsum*: as will be demonstrated in chapter III 3.3, persuasion in this work is dominated by *logos*: Origen presents his addressees a detailed analysis of Celsus’ criticism, which he replies by rational arguments. In Origen’s opinion proof has to be based on the Scriptures and on logical grounds.⁹⁶ The relatively frequent use of particles that provide a clear presentation of the logical structure of the discourse and the modest use of particles that clarify the author’s commitment seem to match Origen’s convictions and rhetorical strategy.

⁹⁶ Cf. 3.16.5-6; 4.9.10-13.

6. Word order

6.1. Introduction

Writers (or speakers) who want to communicate a message have to face several major tasks, one of which is defining the most effective order to present what they intend to tell. This provides them with an instrument to guide their addressees through the text and to influence the reading of it. By putting a certain element before other elements they can help the readers to process the information or to understand the point they want to make. Defining what might be the best order of the constituents is important on various levels of text writing: it is about the text as a whole, about dividing the issues to the various paragraphs, about the structure of a paragraph and about ordering the words and word groups in a sentence. The macro level of structuring the total text and putting its parts and arguments in the most effective order has been studied by ancient rhetoricians, for whom the *dispositio* (τάξις) was one of the tasks of the speaker (*officia oratoris*). As for the micro level of word order in sentences I refer to the influential and valuable contribution made by Helma Dik, who has done research on some aspects of word order variation in the *Histories* of Herodotus (Dik, H. 1995) and in Greek tragic dialogues (Dik, H. 2007). I think the results of her analysis can be useful for the interpretation of the way Origen communicates in *Contra Celsum* as well. Therefore I will explain some of the main points of her work and illustrate them with examples from *Contra Celsum*. In the commentary part of my book I will adopt her terminology.⁹⁷

6.2. Pragmatics

Her starting point is that word order in ancient Greek should not be discussed in terms of euphony, syntax or semantics, but on the basis of pragmatics, in which language is studied from the perspective of its use.⁹⁸ Anyone who uses language to tell a story or to make a statement needs to realize the complexity and mutual dependency of the elements of his story or argumentation. Who wants to describe a situation or to report about things that occur simultaneously, needs to split up the coexisting elements into different bits and pieces and put them in his narrative into a linear order. That is how communication using language inevitably works. Speakers gradually build up a network of information which they share with the addressees and have to manage the flow of information in such a way that the listeners are able to understand the place and the character of each of the pieces offered to them. To achieve this speakers will build up their paragraphs and sentences by mixing given and new information, expected and unexpected elements.⁹⁹ According to Dik (following Chafe 1994), there are two important principles at work in this building process: ‘(1) Speakers typically use a starting point for an intonation unit; (2) New or salient information is typically restricted to one item per information unit’.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ A recent book on word order in the Koine Greek of the New Testament is Kirk (2012). She examines the correspondence between word order and information structure. Her approach is mainly syntactic-generative, although in her discussion on the information structure she incorporates notions (Topic and Focus) from the pragmatic school. Her focus is on the order in which the subject (S), object (O) and verb (V) occur in declarative clauses, questions and relative clauses. According to her the basic pattern in the New Testament Greek is best described as VSO with an SVO alternative.

⁹⁸ Dik, H. (1995:4-9).

⁹⁹ Dik, H. (1995:23-24 and 2007:27). See also Runge (2010:185-204), who offers a comparable description of the structure of the flow of information in a discourse and applies this approach especially to New Testament texts. He describes clauses in a discourse as a combination of established and non-established information: established information is what may be derived from the preceding context or from generally accessible knowledge about the world; this established information provides the basis and framework for the presentation of the new, ‘non-established’ information provided in the discourse. ‘The newly asserted information is called the *focus* because it is what the writer or speaker wants you to know as a result of the utterance. Communicating the focal information is the *raison d’être* for the utterance’ (189).

¹⁰⁰ Dik, H. (2007:27). ‘Intonation unit’ is used in the analysis of spoken discourse as term for the elementary discourse unit. Scheppers (2011) prefers the notion of ‘colon’ as more appropriate for the study of Greek (written) texts. See Scheppers (2011:

6.3. *Topic – Focus*

At this point Dik moves from the area of communication and cognitive theory to the domain of linguistics. As name for the two just mentioned elements (starting point and salient information unit) she adopts the pragmatic functions Topic and Focus from the theory of Functional Grammar of Simon Dik.¹⁰¹ Topic¹⁰² is defined as follows: ‘*Topic function* is assigned to an element which the speaker regards as an appropriate foundation for constructing a message which is relevant to the subject matter of the discourse’.¹⁰³ The definition of Focus is: ‘*Focus function* is assigned to an element expressing the information that the speaker considers the most urgent part of the message (s)he wants to convey to the addressee’.¹⁰⁴ Deciding which part of a clause has Topic and Focus function is a matter of interpretation based on an analysis of the context. Every clause must have (at least) one Focus element. There is a maximum of one Topic per clause and a Topic is – as is quite probable – mostly a new (‘New-Topic’) or a contrastive element (if a Topic is expressed at all; often it is absent, e.g. when there is no Topic change).¹⁰⁵

In the most simple form both Topic and Focus are present in one of the few short sentences of Origen:¹⁰⁶

- (43) Καὶ ταῦτα δὲ πάντα **εὐήθως** λέγει. (4.3.24) *All these questions are **foolish**.*

Topic (italicized) is ταῦτα πάντα, which refers to Celsus’ questions just quoted. Origen places this constituent in front position because he wants the reader to know that this is the (given) item he is about to comment on. Focus (bold) is the adverb εὐήθως, a short but powerful judgement, which Origen wants to present to his readers before he justifies it with arguments in the next sentences.

The next sentences are more complex and illustrate that Topic may be omitted and that each clause has its own Focus:

- (44) Ἀεὶ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τῷ **ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ**, κατὰ γενεὰς εἰς **ψυχὰς ὁσίας** μεταβαίνοντι καὶ φίλους θεοῦ καὶ **προφήτας** κατασκευάζοντι, ἐπανορθοῖ τοὺς ἀκούοντας τῶν λεγομένων· καὶ ἐν τῇ **Χριστοῦ δ’ ἐπιδημίᾳ** ἐπανορθοῖ τῷ κατὰ χριστιανισμὸν λόγῳ οὐχὶ τοὺς μὴ βουλομένους ἀλλὰ τοὺς τὸν **For *by his Logos* God is always correcting those who listen to what He says. In each generation His Logos descends **into holy souls** and makes them **friends of God and prophets**. And **by the advent of Christ** he corrects through the Christian gospel not the**

38-42) for a discussion about the ‘colon’ versus ‘intonation unit’. The intonation unit is also the starting point of Recht (2015:39-43) in his analysis of one aspect of word order (verb-initial clauses).

¹⁰¹ Dik, S.C. (1978 and 1997).

¹⁰² Topic is short for ‘an element fulfilling Topic function’.

¹⁰³ Dik, H. (2007:31). This is somewhat shorter than the definition in Dik, H. (1995:24). An earlier definition (Dik, S.C. 1978:130) is: ‘A constituent with Topic function presents the element ‘about’ which the predication predicates something in the given setting’. See also CGCG (2019:709-711 §60.20-22).

¹⁰⁴ Dik, H. (2007:32). Almost a repetition of the definition in Dik, H. (1995:25). It is based on an earlier definition (Dik, S.C. 1978:130) ‘A constituent with Focus function presents the relatively most important or salient information with respect to the pragmatic information of the Speaker and the Addressee’. See also Runge, who refers to focus elements as ‘emphasis’ (2010:190 and 269-285). Recht (2015:16) criticizes the definition of Helma Dik as ‘obviously rather vague’. His own approach to the word order discussion is based on the Question Under Discussion (QUD) framework, a model that intends to deal with the hierarchical structure of information in discourse. In this model discourse is taken as an enterprise in which the interlocutors attempt to find answers to a set of questions. For an analysis of the text it can be helpful to establish what question is (usually implicit) under discussion in each passage and what the mutual dependency of the subsequent questions might be (2015:6-9). Recht defines topic as ‘the set of referents that form the basis for a new QUD’ and focus as ‘the set of referents that represent the answer being proffered to the current QUD’ (2015:125).

¹⁰⁵ See Smith (2003: 186-212) for a elaborated discussion about the notions of topic and focus in linguistic theories. In that chapter the oppositions topic-comment and focus-background are used as instruments for a description of the surface structure of sentences and the way texts present their information.

¹⁰⁶ To determine the functions I use the basic word order formula that will be discussed below in 6.5.

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κρείττονα βίον καὶ ἀρέσκοντα τῷ θεῷ ἐλομένους. willing but those who choose the higher
(4.3.24-30) life which is pleasing to God.

After his short judgement on Celsus' questions in (43) Origen moves on to his arguments. He presents ὁ θεός as Topic, as the starting point and foundation for his remarks, because he wants to show how *God* acts. Origen formulates his opinion in two sentences without changing the Topic or the grammatical subject. Therefore expressing the Topic in the second sentence is unnecessary. The most salient information in the main clauses is expressed in τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ and ἐν τῇ Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίᾳ; these Focus elements contrast with the phrase θεία δυνάμει (also dative) Celsus had used before. The question at stake is not *who* is corrected by God, but *how* he corrects people. The structure of the first sentence is complicated by the insertion of two participle phrases, that give some more bits of information about the working of God's Logos. It seems that also in these substructures elements with Focus function can be indicated, viz. εἰς ψυχὰς ὁσίας and φίλους θεοῦ καὶ προφήτας.

Topic and Focus can both be contrastive, which often occurs in parallel statements, as is shown in the following example:

- (45) Καὶ μὲν δὴ τῷ θνητῷ μὲν **ἀλλάττεσθαι καὶ μεταπλάττεσθαι** φύσις, τῷ δ' ἀθανάτῳ **κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν**. (4.14.9-11, in a quote from Celsus) It is the nature only *of a mortal being to undergo change and remoulding*, whereas it is the nature *of an immortal being to remain the same without alteration*.

Here Celsus makes a statement about 'a mortal being' and 'an immortal being': these two items are as Topics placed in the first part of the two clauses. Having formulated this starting point Celsus presents the point he wants to make in this sentence (Focus): change (as nature of mortals) versus remaining the same (as nature of immortals). This statement is the introduction of his second (καί) argument in this passage, in which he makes clear again why in his opinion the idea of a God coming down to the earth is absurd. Here his argumentation is based on the notion of coming down to men implies change (μεταβολή). The first argument had been: God does not *want* such a change from good to bad. The second argument is now: such a change is *not possible* for an immortal being. The contrastive Focus elements are an essential part of the argumentation, so they are the quintessence of what Celsus has to say. The Topic elements are relatively new for the reader (although not totally unexpected in the context which was about God); so an introduction of these elements was welcome.

6.4. Setting

Besides Topic and Focus one more term needs a short introduction: Setting. Setting constituents are adverbial phrases at the opening of clauses. They provide background information, particularly of a temporal, spatial or causal character.¹⁰⁷ In (44) the adverb αἰεὶ serves as Setting and μετὰ ταῦθ' in (46) is another example:

- (46) Μετὰ ταῦθ' ὁ γενναιότατος Κέλσος οὐκ οἶδ' ὁπόθεν λαβὼν **ἐπαπορεῖ** πρὸς ἡμᾶς [...] (4.5.1-2) After this *the most estimable Celsus* for some unknown reason **brings up the objection** against us [...]

¹⁰⁷ See Dik, H. (2007:36-37); CGCG (2019: 717-718 §60.32). Runge (without using exactly the same terminology) classifies Topic and Setting as belonging to the same category of what he calls 'frames of reference', elements that create 'an explicit mental grounding point for the clause that follows' (2010:190). Dik's Topic corresponds to Runge's 'topical frames', which are used 'to highlight the introduction of a new participant or topic, or to draw attention to a change in topics' (2010:210). Other framing devices of the same category are formed by adverbs or adverbial clauses (temporal, spatial, conditional, reason/result, causal) and are discussed in his chapters 10-11 (2010: 207-242).

Sometimes participle phrases or dependent clauses, which contain verbal elements and can be regarded as separate constituents with their own Topic and Focus element, serve as Setting in the main clause.¹⁰⁸ Here is a simple example:

- (47) Ταῦτα δ' ἐπιστάμενος ὁ θεῖος λόγος **πολλὰ** In reference to this *the divine Logos*
πολλαχοῦ λέγει τῶν γραφῶν. (4.18.37-38) **frequently** speaks **in several passages** of
the Bible.

This sentence functions as a conclusion of a passage about Jesus' soul and changes that this soul might undergo when it came down to earth on behalf of mankind and was mixed with the body. To end his argument Origen claims that his position is in accordance with the Scriptures: ὁ θεῖος λόγος (Topic) speaks about it frequently in several passages (πολλὰ πολλαχοῦ is Focus). The initial constituent Ταῦτα ... ἐπιστάμενος (lit. 'knowing these things') is causal and provides an extra orientation for the reader.

6.5. Word order formula

Dik¹⁰⁹ uses these pragmatic functions in a formula, which she presents as a description of the basic clause pattern in classical Greek:

(Setting) – Topic – Focus – Verb – Remainder¹¹⁰

The key position in this formula is the Verb, mostly semantically the central part of a clause.¹¹¹ The Verb functions as a dividing line between the pragmatically marked elements and the rest of the clause (Remainder). Setting will not be expressed in many clauses. Topic and Focus contain the most important information the writer wants to present to the reader: (if necessary) giving an orientation to the reader ('I am going to say something about ...') and presenting the salient piece of information. Presenting these elements is the prominent task in communication and for that reason these elements are placed in the first part of a clause. It can easily be understood that it is natural to place Topic before Focus. If the Verb serves as Focus (as is often the case), then these two positions in the formula are combined. If the Verb serves as Topic (which is not quite usual¹¹²), it will be placed in the Topic position; in that case the Focus will follow the Verb.

Concerning the Setting element the following modification of Dik's pattern has been proposed by S.R. Slings: a Setting constituent may be placed between Topic and Focus.¹¹³

A further fine-tuning of Dik's formula regarding the Focus element has been given by D. Matić: he distinguishes between 'Narrow Focus', comprising just one constituent and occupying the preverbal position, and 'Broad Focus', which consists of the verb and one or more other constituents. In the latter case the verb opens the focal constituent and the other elements follow it. Another modification proposed by Matić concerns the Topic element: sometimes a Topic is 'continuous' and refers to an entity that was

¹⁰⁸ Runge describes participle clauses that precede the main verb as 'circumstantial frames'; setting the stage to the main action that follows they play a supporting role (2010:249-262).

¹⁰⁹ Dik, H. (2007:38 and 42).

¹¹⁰ This formula describes only the position of the so-called Mobiles. Concerning Greek word order a distinction has to be made between Mobiles, prepositives and postpositives. Mobiles are words that can be placed in any position in a clause; prepositives and postpositives are words that are strongly connected to the words they respectively precede and follow: they form so-to-say a whole. Prepositives, which include the definitive article, relative pronouns and prepositions, do not occur at the end of a clause. Postpositives, including unemphatic personal pronouns and particles, are (normally) placed in the second position of a clause (according to the 'Law of Wackernagel') (Dik, H. 1995:31-38).

¹¹¹ For critical questions about the central place of the verb in this formula, see Recht (2015:133).

¹¹² In Dik, H. (1995:207-235) a chapter is dedicated to predicates that are Topic.

¹¹³ Slings (1997b:173 n.14); see also Rijksbaron *et al.* (2000:147).

already mentioned in the discourse ('given' Topic). If this element is expressed, it appears directly *after* the verb. Such a 'continuous Topic' can be positioned between the verbal and the non-verbal part of the Broad-Focus constituent, thus causing a discontinuous focal phrase. This post-verbal Topic must be distinguished from the 'new' and 'contrastive' Topics which are placed *before* the verb.¹¹⁴

In (47) all the elements are in the default position according to Dik's formula. Example (48) shows that the formula can help the reader to detect the main point expressed here. It is the first sentence of the introduction of book IV.

(48) Ἐν τρισὶ τοῖς πρὸ τούτων διεξεληθόντες βιβλίοις τὰ πρὸς τὸ Κέλσου σύγγραμμα νοηθέντα ἡμῖν, ἱερὲ Ἀμβρόσιε, <i>τέταρτον πρὸς τὰ ἐξῆς εὐξάμενοι διὰ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ</i> ὑπαγορεύομεν. (4.1.1-4)	In the three preceding books we have set out in detail the arguments that occurred to us in reply to Celsus' treatise; and now, holy Ambrose, after prayer to God through Christ we are undertaking a <i>fourth book in reply to his next objections</i>.

Origen starts with a long constituent that sketches the situation of the moment: the long word group Ἐν τρισὶ τοῖς πρὸς τὸ Κέλσου σύγγραμμα νοηθέντα ἡμῖν can be interpreted as Setting.¹¹⁵ After that¹¹⁶ τέταρτον (πρὸς τὰ ἐξῆς) serves as a Topic that is not unexpected for the reader who has just been informed of the finishing of the preceding three books. More surprising is the element in the preverbal position: εὐξάμενοι διὰ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ has Focus. Here the word order formula can be useful for the interpreter to determine what is the point Origen really wants to make: not that he starts working on a next book, but that he did not start *without praying to God*.

This crucial element of prayer is elaborated in the next sentences, cited in (49). I omit some of the intermediate parts to prevent the example being too long and in my comment I will confine myself to the text of Origen, leaving the quote from Jeremiah.

(49) Δοθεῖεν δ' ἡμῖν λόγοι, περὶ ὧν ἐν τῷ Ἱερεμίᾳ γέγραπται, ὥς τοῦ κυρίου πρὸς τὸν προφήτην εἰπόντος: «Ἴδοὺ δέδωκα τοὺς λόγους μου εἰς τὸ στόμα σου πῦρ. Ἴδοὺ κατέστακά σε σήμερον ἐπὶ ἔθνη καὶ βασιλείας, ἐκριζοῦν καὶ κατασκάπτειν καὶ ἀπολύειν καὶ κατασπᾶν καὶ ἀνοικοδομεῖν καὶ καταφυτεύειν.» Καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς νῦν χρῆζομεν λόγων ἐκριζούντων [...] Δεόμεθα δὲ καὶ νοημάτων κατασκαπτόντων [...] ἀλλὰ καὶ χρήζομεν σοφίας κατασπώσης [...] (4.1.4-17)	May words be given to us, like those which are described in Jeremiah, where the Lord said to the prophet: 'Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth as fire. Behold, I have this day set thee over nations and kingdoms, to root out and to destroy, to abolish and to pull down, to build up and to plant.' For now we also need words to root out [...] And we also need ideas to destroy [...] Furthermore, we also need wisdom to pull down [...]

In this passage Origen recalls the notion of prayer, which is already presented to the reader in the foregoing εὐξάμενος διὰ Χριστόν τῷ θεῷ (48). The optative Δοθεῖεν marks the start of this prayer. The phrase Δοθεῖεν ... λόγοι serves as a broad Focus constituent in which ἡμῖν is inserted as given Topic (the first person was already mentioned in the previous sentence). In the passage following the quote from

¹¹⁴ See Matić (2003:582-600); Bertrand (2013); CGCG (2019:711-717 §60.22-30).

¹¹⁵ The length of the participle phrases and the density of information suggests the translation into a separate sentence, as is done in the translation by Chadwick. Remarkable in this phrase is the insertion of the participle διεξεληθόντες in the word group Ἐν τρισὶ τοῖς πρὸς τούτων ... βιβλίοις, an instance of hyperbaton (on hyperbaton see below 6.8).

¹¹⁶ I refrain from a discussion on the position of the vocative ἱερὲ Ἀμβρόσιε. Origen uses vocatives in most of the first chapters of his books to address Ambrose and in apostrophe passages. In the latter passages the vocative tends to be placed in the second position of the sentence, but the position of Ἀμβρόσιε in the prefaces is variable (e.g. here it is placed after the Setting; in 7.1. in the middle of the Setting; in 5.1. at the end of the first clause, after the verb).

II. A linguistic approach

Jeremiah the notion of prayer is expressed again in the verbs δέομεθα and χρῆζομεν (2x). Here the prayer is motivated (γάρ) by applying the words from Jeremiah to Origen's situation. In the clause Καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς νῦν χρῆζομεν λόγων the words καὶ ... ἡμεῖς serve as contrastive Topic, which makes clear to the reader that his attention is asked for a new point: after the quote from Jeremiah Origen is now going to say something similar about ἡμεῖς (this pronoun picks up ἡμῖν). The following νῦν is placed before the verb and can be appointed as narrow Focus. The author draws attention to the contrastive Topic and Focus: it is *in his own present situation* that *also Origen* needs the right words. The preverbal position of καὶ ... ἡμεῖς νῦν marks an implicit comparison between the situation of Jeremiah and the νῦν of Origen. In the next sentences the structure changes: the verbs Δεόμεθα χρῆζομεν are Topic now and the Focus is on νοημάτων and σοφίας: Origen does not only need 'words', but also 'ideas' and 'wisdom'. The comparison between Origen and Jeremiah is further elaborated by the addition the participles ἐκριζούντων, κατασκαπτόντων and κατασπώσης, all derived from the text of Jeremiah and making clear that Origen presents his task as analogous to the mandate given to the prophet.

6.6. Participial phrases

The syntax of most of the sentences of *Contra Celsum* is rather complex: main clauses are combined with one or more subordinate clauses, participial phrases, (accusative plus) infinitive phrases etc. Usually all these units, organized around a verbal element and containing their own bit of information, contribute in their own way to the message presented in the sentence as a whole.¹¹⁷ What has been said above about Topic, Focus and Setting applies for these subordinate segments as well. More often than not an analysis at two levels seems to be profitable: at the level of the complete sentence a participial phrase as a whole can function as Setting, whereas at the level of the participial phrase constituents within this word group can be described as having Setting or Focus function.

An illustration can be seen in the next passage, which is taken from a discussion on the issue whether or not God can undergo change. Origen maintains that, in the Christian conception, God is not subject to change and contrasts his view with the Epicurean concept:

- (50) οἱ δὲ τοῦ Ἐπικούρου θεοί, σύνθετοι ἐξ ἀτόμων
τυγχάνοντες καὶ τὸ ὅσον ἐπὶ τῇ συστάσει
ἀναλυτοί, **πραγματεύονται** τὰς φθοροποιούς
ἀτόμους ἀποσεῖσθαι. (4.14.22-24)
- But the gods of Epicurus, who are compounded of atoms and, in so far as they are compounded, are liable to dissolution, **are at pains** to throw off the atoms which may cause their destruction.*

At the upper level the constituent οἱ δὲ τοῦ Ἐπικούρου θεοί serves as the introduction of a subject that is previously not mentioned in the context and contrast with ἡμεῖς μὲν (20, referring to the Christians): contrastive-Topic (μὲν ... δέ). Next Origen inserts a participle phrase consisting of two parts, both depending on τυγχάνοντες and functioning as Setting, here placed between Topic and Focus. The Focus element follows in **πραγματεύονται**, indicating the continuous struggle of the gods of Epicurus, who are totally different, as Origen wants to point out here, to the never changing God of the Scriptures. Next, the analysis can go down to the level of the participial phrases: within the Setting constituent the element σύνθετοι ἐξ ἀτόμων is given Focus by its preverbal position: it is just because of *their atomic nature* that the gods are always busy and taking trouble.

A distinction has to be made between preposed and postposed participles. Preverbal participial phrases (placed *before* the finite verb of a main or subordinate clause) usually belong to the domain of the clause as a whole: mostly they function as Setting, presenting background information

¹¹⁷ Scheppers, defending the Colon Hypothesis as fundamental in the study of word order and discourse analysis of Ancient Greek texts, holds that the colon is the elementary discourse unit: 'discourse *essentially* comes in cola' (Scheppers 2011:18 and 177).

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(circumstances, reason, motive etc.) at the clause level, an example of which has just been quoted in (50).

Origen also uses phrases with *participia coniuncta* that *follow* the verb or the noun they agree with. The domain of these participial phrases is more limited: at the level of the whole clause they belong to the pragmatically unmarked constituents (Remainder). In the phrases the participle tends to be placed immediately behind the noun it agrees with; in that case it has Focus within the participle phrase. Sometimes it is not the participle that has Focus, but a different element in the phrase: that element will be placed before the participle.

Two uses of participial phrases can be seen in (51), a sentence in which Origen introduces a quote from Celsus:

- (51) Ἄμα γὰρ πρὸς ἀμφοτέρους ιστάμενος ὁ Κέλσος, *For Celsus opposes both groups at once:*
Ἰουδαίους μὲν ἀρνούμενους γεγονέναι τὴν *the Jews who deny that Christ has come,*
Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίαν ἐλπίζοντας δ' αὐτὴν *but hope that he will do so; and the*
ἔσεσθαι, Χριστιανούς δὲ ὁμολογοῦντας τὸν *Christians who affirm that Jesus was the*
Ἰησοῦν εἶναι τὸν προφητευθέντα Χριστόν, *prophesied Christ. This is what he says:*
φησὶν· (4.1.32-36)

The phrase Ἄμα γὰρ πρὸς ἀμφοτέρους ιστάμενος is placed in the first position and can be interpreted as Setting of the main clause, in which ὁ Κέλσος is Topic and the verb φησὶν Focus. So far nothing new. More interesting is the subordinate level: as an elaboration of ἀμφοτέρους Origen inserts a clause, consisting of two parts and structured by μὲν ... δέ, in which Ἰουδαίους and Χριστιανούς function as contrastive Topic. Both are accompanied by a participial phrase in which their different position is explained: ἀρνούμενους and ἐλπίζοντας (Jews) versus ὁμολογοῦντας (Christians). Within these phrases the participles are in the front position: they have contrastive Focus, offering in the description of the different views the most salient information.

In the next example the postposed participle is preceded by an element that has Focus.

- (52) Καὶ οὐ δὴ που ψεύδεται τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν ὁ *Surely, I suppose, the Logos is not false to*
λόγος, ἐκάστῳ τρόφιμος γινόμενος, [...] *his own nature when he becomes*
(4.18.24-25) *nourishment for each man [...]*

Here ἐκάστῳ τρόφιμος is placed before the not very significant participle γινόμενος. In a context about the nourishment that the Logos can provide to each person the element ἐκάστῳ τρόφιμος as Focus is perfectly understandable.

Sometimes a rather long sentence is created by connecting a second (and a third) participial phrases to the first, as is shown in (53).

- (53) Οὐκοῦν ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν «πῦρ καταναλίσκον» ἐστίν, *Therefore, 'our God is a consuming fire'*
ὡς ἀποδεδώκαμεν, καὶ οὕτως «εἰσπορεύεται ὡς *in the sense in which we have interpreted*
πῦρ χωνευτηρίου», **χωνεύσων** τὴν λογικὴν φύσιν, *this. So also He enters 'like the fire of a*
πεπληρωμένην τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας μολύβδου καὶ *smelting-furnace' to mould the rational*
τῶν ἄλλων ἀκαθάρτων ὑλῶν, τὴν τοῦ χρυσοῦ, ἵν' *nature which has been filled by the lead*
οὕτως ὀνομάσω, φύσιν τῆς ψυχῆς ἢ τὴν ἀργύρου **which adulterate** the soul's golden or
δολωσάντων. (4.13.28-33) *silver nature, so to speak.*

In 4.13 Origen explains how three biblical phrases about God operating with fire can be understood. Before he writes the quoted words Origen had devoted a substantial exegesis of the first of these passages, to which he refers by ὡς ἀποδεδώκαμεν. Now he states that the next passage (ὁ θεὸς ...

είσπορεύεται ὡς πῦρ χωνευτηρίου) has to be interpreted in the same way: this is the most salient point of the main clause (οὕτως has Focus). The remaining part of the sentence can be considered as an elaboration of his previous explanation: the content offers nothing new, but is now expressed in terms of the metal smelting. This Remainder is formulated in three participial phrases which have a ‘descending dependency’. The first participle (χωνεύσων) depends on an element in the main clause (ὁ θεός), the second (πεπληρωμένην) on an element in the first participial phrase (τὴν λογικὴν φύσιν); these two participles are placed in the first position of their phrases and present the most important element of it. The third (δολωσάντων) agrees with a constituent in the second phrase (τῶν ... ὑλῶν), but is not given the first position: the preceding τὴν τοῦ χρυσοῦ ... φύσιν τῆς ψυχῆς ἢ τὴν ἀργύρου has Focus, apparently because of the contrast between the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ metals.

6.7. Noun – Adjective

In a separate paper Helma Dik studied the internal structure of noun phrases (adjective-noun combinations) in Herodotus. Having noted that in this combinations both word orders (AN = adjective-noun and NA = noun-adjective) appear in the text she recommends (again) a pragmatical (and not a semantical) approach of the issue. She proposes the following theory: the default ordering is that attributive adjectives follow their nouns; when the adjective is contrastive or otherwise the most salient element of the noun phrase, it will be preposed; postposed adjective are supposed to be pragmatically unmarked.¹¹⁸

Or, formulated not from the perspective of the composition of a text, but from the point of view of the audience/reader, the expectation while reading or listening to a text should be that preposed modifiers should be interpreted as marked.¹¹⁹ Dik maintains this reading strategy even in the case of adjectives for which the preposed position is the most frequent one. Salience of an adjective is often a matter of contrast: the AN order can be seen as an invitation to become aware of the contrast that is present in the context. Sometimes the salience of an adjective is relative: it may be the most salient part of the noun phrase when the noun is relatively semantically ‘light’.¹²⁰

How is the situation in the text of *Contra Celsum*? Dik’s observations are based on texts from the classical period. Are they still applicable to the Greek of Origen, who wrote some 700 years later? My impression after a quick provisional research is that the AN order is absolutely favorite in Origen. Can we conclude, following Dik, that all these preposed adjectives represent the most salient element of the phrase or is this too easy?

To check the hypothesis I looked for an adjective-noun combination that is, in the same context, used both in the AN and in the NA order. In this combination I examined whether the salience of the two preposed elements is plausible in the context. I found one suitable combination (so the check is not very well based): ‘divine power’.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ See Dik, H. (1997:61 and 76); CGCG (2019: 707 §60.15). For a different view, see Devine & Stephens (2000), who enlarge the research field bringing in the texts of Attic writers and of other genre’s beside the historical narrative of Herodotus. According to them the situation appears to be complex: preference for the AN or the NA order varies when dialect (Ionic-Attic), genre (historians, philosophers, orators), time, definiteness and adjective type are taken into account. From a lot of statistic evidence Devine & Stephens (2000:27) conclude that there is a tendency for AN order to increase from the Ionic to the Attic dialect, and from historical narrative to oratory to philosophical or technical prose. They recommend an explanation in which not only pragmatical, but also syntactic and semantic factors play a role: ‘It is fairly clear that a single parameter account is not adequate’ (2000:27). In a reaction Helma Dik (2007:85-88) shows that she is not convinced and still defends her pragmatical approach.

¹¹⁹ Dik, H. (2007:122).

¹²⁰ Dik, H. (2007:93-99)

¹²¹ The attributive use of the adjective θεῖος in noun phrases in *Contra Celsum* is 258x in total, the vast majority of them in the AN order (238x = 92,2 %; of which 20x = 7,8 % in hyperbaton) and 20x (7,8 %) in the NA order. The combination θεῖος with δόξαμις (including the comparative and superlative forms, in all cases) is found 33x in *Contra Celsum*, 23x (69,7 %) in AN order, 10x (30,3 %) in NA.

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In 4.3-4 we come across this combination as *θεία δυνάμει* (3x) and *δυνάμει θεία* (2x). In (54a-e) I will discuss the five passages which are taken from a discussion about God's descending to earth. In 4.3 Origen quotes a series of rhetorical questions of Celsus and afterwards comments on them. After the first three questions (What is the purpose of such a descent? Was it in order to learn what was going on among men? Does he not know everything?) Origen introduces the fourth question as follows:

- (54a) Εἴτα ὥς ἀποκρινουμένων ὅτι οἶδε, πάλιν ἐπαπορεῖ λέγων ὅτι ἄρα οἶδε μὲν, οὐκ ἐπανορθοῖ δέ, οὐδ' οἶόν τε αὐτῷ **θεία δυνάμει** ἐπανορθοῦν; (4.3.21-24) Then, as if we answer that he does know, he again raises a fresh objection, saying: does he, while knowing, not correct, and is he unable to correct by **divine power**?

The element *θεία δυνάμει* is placed before the verb, having Focus here: the divine power is highlighted as the instrument that makes correction possible. The AN order suggests the element 'divine' as the most salient element, which is understandable in the context: Celsus suggests that God as being God and having power as a God is supposed to be able to correct men: not only power, but *divine* power should grant him the possibility.

Some lines below Origen quotes the next question of Celsus:

- (54b) Ἄρ' οὐχ οἶόν τε αὐτῷ **δυνάμει θεία** ἐπανορθοῦν, ἐὰν μὴ φύσει τινὰ ἐπὶ τοῦτο πέμψη; (4.3.32-34) It is possible for Him to correct merely **by divine power**, without really¹²² sending someone for this purpose, isn't it?

Here again the constituent *δυνάμει θεία* is in the Focus position, but now the contrast is different: divine power is opposed to φύσει. It seems to me that the contrast here is: 'just by *power*, immediately, without any intervention' versus 'by physical intervention of someone' or 'in fact/really/literally. The opposition of the two nouns (both dative) makes the order NA (*δυνάμει θεία*) reasonable: Celsus asks about a correction by *power*, without the necessity of a divine descent to earth.

After some remarks about the free will issue Origen counters the attacks of Celsus by asking a comparative question himself:

- (54c) Ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰ ἅπαξ δοθείη καὶ δυνατὸν τοῦτο καὶ πρεπόντως γινόμενον, διὰ τί οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ζητήσῃ τις τὴν ἀρχὴν, ἀνάλογόν τι φάσκων τῷ Κέλσῳ, ὅτι οὐχ οἶόν τε ἦν τῷ θεῷ **θεία δυνάμει** μὴδ' ἐπανορθώσεως δεομένους ποιῆσαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀλλ' αὐτόθεν σπουδαίους καὶ τελείους, οὐδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑποστάσης τῆς κακίας; (4.3.41-46) Furthermore, if we allow for the moment that this is not only possible but also appropriate, would one not be even more justified in asking a similar question to Celsus? Viz.: Was it impossible for God **by divine power** even to make men needing no¹²³ correction, good and perfect there and then so that evil should not exist at all?

Here again, like in (54a), the element *θεία* is important and we are back to the AN order: creating perfect men is only possible by *divine* power. The juxtaposition of *θεῷ* and *θεία* stresses this point: why should this be impossible for *God* with his *divine* power?

The fourth example is the most puzzling one. Origen stops the discussion about the free will and introduces 'the Greeks', who said much about it, but in a different way:

¹²² On this translation see my commentary chapter *ad loc.*

¹²³ I inserted 'no', which for unknown reason misses in Chadwick's text.

- (54d) [...] οἱ μὴ εἰπόντες ἂν ἅπερ ὁ Κέλσος ἐξέθετο λέγων· Οἶδε μὲν, οὐκ ἐπανορθοῖ δέ, οὐδ' οἶόν τε αὐτῷ **δυνάμει θεία** ἐπανορθοῦν. (4.3.51-53) They would never say what Celsus has asserted when he asks: 'Does he, while knowing, not correct and is he not able to correct **by divine power**?'

In (54d) Origen seems to quote the same words he quotes earlier in (54a), but precise inspection shows two little differences: the question marker ἄρα misses at the beginning (and so the rhetorical question changes into a statement) and the order of the combination 'divine power' is now δυνάμει θεία (NA). Is Origen really quoting here? How precise is quoting for Origen? Of course we do not exactly know what Celsus' text was, but it seems not very probable that he wrote this sentence twice in the same context (one time as a question and then as a statement) and also modified the word order in 'divine power'. So I take the words as a (not very precise) quote. After these words Origen breaks off the discussion and perhaps this is the reason for him to use the unmarked order δυνάμει θεία (NA): enough has been said on this subject and there is reason here to indicate any contrast or stress some element.

The last example is from 4.4, where Origen uses the series of questions he quoted in 4.3 again and returns them to Celsus himself (who does not appear from his writings to be an Epicurean, but pretends to believe in providence). So this question may fairly be asked to him:

- (54e) [...] διὰ τί εἰδὼς τὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις πάντα ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐπανορθοῖ οὐδὲ **θεία δυνάμει** ἀπαλλάσσει πάντα τῆς κακίας; (4.4.9-11) [...] why the God who knows all that goes on among men does not correct them and deliver all men from evil **by divine power**?

It seems that Origen here quotes the question of (54a) again, with the AN order θεία δυνάμει, that is significant here for the same reasons as in the former context.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this discussion, though dealing with only one adjective-noun combination, is that we can be tentatively positive about the validity of the Dik hypothesis: a preposed adjective presents the most salient information of the noun phrase.¹²⁴ In my commentary this will be the starting point for further discussions.

6.8. Hyperbaton

In Greek it is possible to split the two (or more) elements of a noun phrase by an intervening word (X). Such a discontinuous structure is called hyperbaton.¹²⁵ As is pointed out by Devine & Stephens (2000: 35-40) hyperbaton is a focus construction: the Focus element moves from its 'normal' position in the noun phrase to the left and lands on the other side of X. According to their opinion Y₁ hyperbaton (modifier moved to the left) is the most powerful form: it is contrastive and exclusive ('this one, and only this'). Y₂ hyperbaton (modifier to the right) presents the salient information without the claim that it is complete ('weak focus'). Hyperbaton is a tool to present an element of the clause as the most salient. Therefore it can be considered as an instrument in the communication for both the sender and the recipient of the message. Paying attention to this phenomenon should be an element of a careful

¹²⁴ In 1.62 the same combination 'divine power' occurs several times, in a different discussion. Four times the less frequent NA order is used (1.62.23, 47, 65 and 72), in a context where indeed δύναμις is the most important word. Origen points to the power of the preachers of the gospel, quoting some biblical phrases in which this power is mentioned (δυνάμει πολλῇ 1.62.55; see also line 60-61). In 2.38.18 (δυνάμεως θειοτέρας) and 2.58.21 (δυνάμει θεία) the unusual NA order is understandable in the context (about miracles and power; and about the powerful resurrection of Jesus).

¹²⁵ See also CGCG (2019: 709 §60.18-19). In Devine & Stephens (2000:9) hyperbaton is explained based on the phrase πολλὰ κατέλιπε χρήματα ('he left a lot of money'). The noun phrase πολλὰ χρήματα is referred to as YP, the first (leftmost) element (namely πολλὰ) as Y₁ and the second (most right) element as Y₂. YP is syntactically governed by its head X (κατέλιπε). When Y₁ is separated from Y₂ by X, we have an hyperbaton [Y₁ – X – Y₂]. If the modifier is Y₁, it is called Y₁ hyperbaton (πολλὰ κατέλιπε χρήματα); if the modifier is Y₂ the result is called Y₂ hyperbaton (χρήματα κατέλιπε πολλὰ).

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interpretation of a text.

It seems to me that in *Contra Celsum* likewise hyperbaton, though it occurs not very frequently,¹²⁶ functions as a Focus pointer: the Y₁ element is given as marked position which is rather strong as compared to the ‘simple’ preposed position of the adjective.

Here are the some examples:

In (55) Origen uses hyperbaton twice to stress his protest against the defective method of Celsus: he criticizes the prophecies without quoting any of these texts:

- (55) [...] ἐχρῆν αὐτὸν **αὐτὰς** ἐκθέσθαι **τὰς** [...] he ought to have quoted the
προφητείας [...] **οὐδεμίαν μὲν λέξιν** τίθησι prophecies **themselves** [...] he quotes **not**
προφητικὴν (4.2.17-18 and 25-26) **a single passage** from the prophets

In (56) the hyperbaton makes clear the contrast between the Christian Scriptures and the doctrine of the ‘Greek and barbarians’:

- (56) [...] **ταῖς ἡμετέραις** πεπιστευκέναι περὶ αὐτῶν [...] that we have believed the accounts of
γραφαῖς (4.11.4-5) them in **our** Scriptures’

In (57) the spotlights are turned to the element περὶ ψυχῆς. Origen speaks about some elements of the Dionysus myth, which are rather embarrassing for the Greek unless they get permission to allegorize the story as referring *to the soul*:

- (57) Ἡ Ἑλλησι μὲν ἔξεστι τὰ τοιαῦτα εἰς **τὸν περὶ** Or are the Greeks allowed to explain and
ψυχῆς ἀνάγειν **λόγον** καὶ τροπολογεῖν [...] allegorize this story as referring **to the**
(4.17.6-7) **soul** [...]

¹²⁶ But maybe for that reason more significant.

III. RHETORIC

1. Introduction and preview of the chapter

The previous chapter dealt with aspects of discourse analysis, starting from the conviction that language is always used in a communicative setting. Discourse analysis helps to make us aware of this basic assumption and to discern the linguistic phenomena that can be used to describe how the exchange between the discourse participants takes place. The present section is about rhetoric, starting from the conviction that communication is (mostly) not a neutral exchange of information, but (usually) somehow has to do with persuasion. It is not easy to draw a strict difference between discourse linguistics and an analysis that pays attention to the rhetorical side of a text or a conversation. The focus on the situation in which communication takes place is characteristic of both approaches. Linguistic analysis has a greater concentration on linguistic phenomena that function in the communicative setting: what linguistic means are used by a speaker to guide his discourse participant in the flow of information, to stimulate him to participate in the process, to show his own commitment, etc.¹ Within this context attention can be given to the intentions of a speaker and the goals he wants to reach. In this respect there is an overlap with the rhetorical analysis, that aims specifically at the (not only linguistic) means that are used to persuade. Rhetoric can basically be defined as ‘the art of persuasion’:¹ a discourse participant tries to influence his partner in words, to make him think something he previously was not thinking, to make him do what he otherwise would not have done. A rhetorical analysis tries to describe how this is done: attention is given to offensive and defensive strategies, to argument types, to an effective and appropriate use of style and language etc. Originally rhetoric dealt with speeches in formal situations as courtrooms and assemblies, but in a wider sense rhetoric has to do with everyday communication: throughout their lives human beings use language not without a purpose, but with the intention to praise and to blame, to advise and to seduce, to defend and to refute or, in one word, to convince. Perhaps these intentions can be explained from the human nature with its desires, fears and the need to control situations and other people.² Persuasion can be found everywhere in our society: in daily private conversations, in advertisements in the newspapers, in presentations of new products, in propaganda films on the internet and in a more organized way in speeches as they are given in courtrooms, in parliament, in election meetings or for the occasion of a wedding, a jubilee or a memorial.

The rhetorical approach also corresponds to the rhetorical character of the text of *Contra Celsum*: Origen responds to severe criticism of Celsus and frames his book from the beginning as a ‘defence’ of Christianity against the ‘accusations’ of Celsus. By his wording he evokes the sphere of a court, a setting which is not unfamiliar to the ancient rhetoricians.³ So the framework of the rhetorical theory seems to be an appropriate tool for the analysis of Origen’s work.

¹ Persuasion is the central word in Aristotle’s well-known definition of rhetoric: ‘the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever’ (Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1355b25-26). This is not the place to dwell on definitions of rhetoric; see for more about the definition issue Lausberg (1973:40-41), Pernot (2005:ix-xii), Schiappa & Hamm (2007:4-6).

² Kennedy (1994:3) connects the ‘general concept of power of words and their potential to affect a situation in which they are used or received’ with ‘the natural instinct to survive and to control our environment and influence the actions of others in what seems the best interest of ourselves, our families, our social and political groups, and our descendants.

³ Cf. Frede, M. (1999:135-138) who discusses the juridical setting *Contra Celsum* is placed in. In this setting not officials of the Roman state, but the reader should act as the judge, see 8.76, the final chapter of the work, where Origen writes that it is for the reader of the Celsus’ book and Origen’s reply to it, ‘to judge which of the two breathes more of the spirit of the true God and of the temper of devotion towards Him and of the truth attainable by men, that is, of sound doctrine, which lead men to live the best life’. In this remark Origen not only offers the reader the honourable position of judge, but also presents him the criteria he wants to be judged by. Implicitly this passage gives insight in Origen’s own motivation.

III. Rhetoric

In this chapter I will depart from the ancient rhetorical theories. These were originally set up in a context of spoken texts: rhetoricians provided advice to speakers and taught them how to make a good speech and how to deliver it in an effective way. I will use it for a different kind of text and with a different purpose: *Contra Celsum* is a written text with a persuasive intention and I use the ancient rhetoric as an analysis instrument. This means a perspective change: the perspective of the speaker who has to be advised is replaced by the perspective of the reader, who uses the rhetorical notions to analyze the persuasive aspect of the text. In this chapter I will discuss various rhetorical concepts developed by ancient rhetoricians and examine how they can serve the analysis of the text of my corpus.

I start with a short introduction of the development of rhetoric in the Greek and Roman world. Attention will be given to the important contributors, to the movement of the ‘Second Sophistic’ and to the role rhetoric played in education. (2)

Then I proceed with a more comprehensive (but still limited) description of the content of ancient rhetorical theories. The description includes traditional issues as the different situations in which speeches are delivered, the means of persuasion and the tasks a speaker has to perform in order to give a speech. For written texts our focus can be mainly on the tasks that are related to the content, the strategy, the structuring and wording of the speech. The outlines of the ancient theories on all these issues are presented and their applicability on Origen’s work is discussed. The section about argument types will be extended with a discussion on fallacies, in which is referred to the modern pragma-dialectical argumentation theory. (3)

In the next section it will be examined whether Origen was familiar with rhetoric. Information we have about his education and his teaching activities can help to answer that question. (4) Then attention will be given to thoughts Origen presented himself on the issue of rhetoric and persuasion. It turns out that he is critical of some manifestations of rhetoric. With quotes from *Contra Celsum* I hope to clarify what the reasons are for this judgement. In the final part of the section I discuss Origen’s remarks on the relation between proof and faith and on the nature of persuasion. (5)

2. Rhetoric in the ancient world

The concept of rhetoric as a τέχνη, a practical and teachable skill, emerges in the Greek world in the fifth century BC, when sophists as Gorgias and Protagoras presented themselves as traveling teachers, who gave lectures and claimed they could make people perform better in public discourse. Despite severe criticism of Socrates and Plato on the philosophical background of the teachings of the sophists, rhetorical education became popular in Athens. Numerous schools presented their active training programs and students from all over the Greek world came to Athens for a comprehensive education (παιδεία), that comprised both practical oratorical training and intellectual and moral education. In this climate the first theoretical works on rhetoric appeared: Aristotle’s *Rhetorica* (between 360 and 330 BC) and the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (author and date unknown; probably between 340 and 300 BC)⁴. In the Hellenistic Age rhetoric teaching and theory was further developed and spread to Rhodos, the Greek cities in the East and Rome. From this period an influential handbook dates, written in Greek by Hermagoras of Temnos. The work is now lost, but can be reconstructed to some extent on basis of sources in Latin: the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Cicero’s *De inventione* (both written in the 80s BC). Among the works that describe the theory and practice of rhetoric in the Roman world the later works of Cicero (*Orator* 55 BC, *Brutus*, *De oratore*, 46 BC) must be mentioned, as well as the *Institutio*

⁴ Both works are extensively discussed by Braet (2007). About the date of Aristotle’s book, see Braet (2007:98). The *Rhetoric to Alexander* was long attributed to Aristotle; nowadays the work is believed to be written by the rhetor Anaximenes of Lampsacus, but the arguments for this attribution are doubted by Braet (2007:25-26).

Oratoria by Quintilian (93-95 AD).⁵

During the Roman Empire rhetoric remained flourishing, despite some complaints about the reduction of the freedom of speech in a political system of central imperial government. In the Greek-speaking part of the Empire the emergence of ‘Atticism’ created a ‘language of culture’ in speaking and writing, inspired by the ‘great’ models of the past, the Attic (Athenian) authors and orators from the fifth and fourth centuries BC. In this context I briefly refer to the cultural ‘movement’ that occurred from ca.50-250 AD and has become known as the ‘Second Sophistic’ (the term implying that the teachers of rhetoric of the fifth century BC as Gorgias and Protagoras were the first sophists).⁶ The emergence of this phenomenon, which is far too divergent to be called a real ‘movement’, reflects the important role that Greek culture had during the Roman Empire, both in education and in social life. Typical expressions of it were the performances of rhetorical virtuosos, who in theaters or music halls gave demonstrations of their eloquence. They were real entertaining stars and performed a show by improvising a political or juridical speech for an imaginary court or political assembly on a fictitious subject. In addition they were teachers in rhetoric, occupied governmental functions in their cities, acted as spokesman for individual citizens and led embassies to governors and emperors.⁷ The popularity of these sophists can give an impression of the presence of rhetoric in the society during the Empire and of the role it played in the urban culture, at least in the life of the richer, well-educated citizens.

The importance that was attached to ‘classical’ literature and rhetoric was reflected in the education system in the Imperial Age: pupils started in the primary school with principles of reading and writing, before they went to the *grammaticus*, whose task was the teaching of the language, the explanation of the ancient poets such as Homer and Virgil, and the starting with some rhetorical exercises. The climax followed (but only for the happy few) in the third stage, led by the *rhetor*, thus expressing the idea that rhetoric was the crown of all education. These lessons gave access to the upper cultural class and were absolutely necessary for a career in the area of justice, in politics and administration. This stage consisted of two parts: the preparatory exercises (dealing with the composition of narratives and other texts, the structuring of various forms of argumentations, style exercises etc.) and the *declamationes*, fictitious speeches in the juridical or political genre.⁸

3. Basics of rhetorical theories

3.1. Introduction

In my commentary section much attention will be given to rhetoric in the text of *Contra Celsum*. It is my intention to analyze the persuasive character of Origen’s text and to examine how Origen has made a choice of the available means of persuasion. The tools for this analysis are derived from the ancient rhetorical theories as they are described in the Greek and Latin rhetorical handbooks. In this section I will introduce some basic observations, techniques, terms and distinctions from these handbooks. The nature of this introduction will be brief and synthetic: I will put together elements from various sources, written in different times and situations, without referring on every occasion to the author who ‘invented’ a certain term or distinction. Moreover, the survey will be limited to the main lines without going into details that are less useful for my purpose. Together all the elements of the ancient rhetoric can offer a

⁵ See on Cicero and Quintilian Pernot (2005:105-125 and 159-163).

⁶ Within this movement the old classical language of Attica was used; speakers and writer cultivated the Attic of their admired predecessors. This language was in many respects different from the Koine Greek that was used since the Hellenistic period. See Horrocks (2010:133-141).

⁷ I leave aside the debate among scholars on the Second Sophistic, see Flinterman (1996), Pernot (2005:186-196), Goldhill (2009).

⁸ See on rhetoric in education Pernot (2005:145-157).

rich toolbox for the analysis of the persuasive aspects of Origen's text.⁹ My survey will consist of a brief introduction of the most relevant items and an application of them to the text of *Contra Celsum* (especially the first part of book 4). I will discuss the three genres of oratory, the means of persuasion and the tasks of the speaker who is about to deliver a speech.

3.2. Three branches of oratory

The ancient rhetoricians showed awareness of the different situations in which speeches are made. They distinguished between forensic and political situations and what may be called 'occasions of celebration and memorial'. Analogous to these situations three genres of speeches were distinguished: *genus iudiciale* (τὸ δικανικὸν γένος), *genus deliberativum* (τὸ συμβουλευτικὸν γένος) and *genus demonstrativum* (τὸ ἐπιδεικτικὸν γένος). The first genre, the one most discussed in handbooks, is used to accuse or to defend. Its natural habitat is the courtroom, where three persons (or groups of persons) play their own clear and different role: the prosecutor, the defendant and the judge. This genre deals with questions about justice or injustice and with past events. In political assemblies and conciliation meetings the situation is different: a speech in the *genus deliberativum* has to do with plans in the future and aims at exhorting or dissuading; the issue is whether or not something is good and beneficial; the speaker may be the only person who makes a proposal and often participates in the group of the decision makers. Epideictic situations are ceremonial and do not entail a formal judgement or decision: the speaker wants to praise (or blame) and mostly has to express what everyone in the audience himself feels.¹⁰

Contra Celsum evidently is not a speech and the communicative situation is not the courtroom in a strict sense, but Origen seems to be eager to present his discourse within a judicial setting. Right from the start of his Preface he compares his own discourse situation with the position of Jesus accused by the Jews and dragged into the court of Pilate, a passage abundantly filled with juridical terminology, as 'accusation' (κατηγορία), 'false witness (ψευδομαρτυρία)', 'to defend' (ἀπολογέομαι) and 'refutation' (ἔλεγχος) (all in *Preface* 1). The evocation of this setting is continued in other places.¹¹ Strictly spoken a defendant in court needs to do no more than subvert the words of the prosecutor and make it clear for the judge that the charge is baseless. Usually Origen starts his reaction to the quoted words of Celsus with this approach by refuting the criticism of Celsus, but on several occasions he goes far beyond a simple refutation. Defensive parts in his discourse are often followed by more constructive passages in which Origen explains elements of the Christian faith in a more positive way. The question is no longer: 'is Celsus' accusation justified?', but: 'what is the Christian view on this point?' or 'what do these biblical words mean?' or even: 'what is true?' or 'what is good and beneficial for mankind?' In these

⁹ My analysis will have a descriptive character and will in this respect be different from approaches of modern argumentation theories, such as the pragma-dialectical argumentation theory developed in Amsterdam by F.H. van Eemeren, R. Grootendorst and others. In this theory a descriptive analysis is combined with a normative dimension by the introduction of a conception of reasonableness. Its objective is to provide instruments for analyzing, evaluating and producing argumentative discourse. Argumentation is defined as 'a communicative and interactional act complex aimed at resolving a difference of opinion with the addressee by putting forward a constellation of propositions the arguer can be held accountable for to make the standpoint at issue acceptable to a rational judge who judges reasonably' (Van Eemeren 2014:7; see also 5-13, 520ff.). The scope of this approach is wide, but seems not to be totally compatible to the communicative situation *Contra Celsum* functions in: 'resolving a difference of opinion with the addressee' is not Origen's aim. My own attention in my commentary on the selected part of *Contra Celsum* will be focused not only on argumentation, but I will take into account other (less rational) elements in the persuasive processes as well. In the section on incorrect arguments (fallacies) some elements from to pragma-dialectical theory will be discussed (below 3.4.3).

¹⁰ On the three *genera* see Lausberg (1973:52-56); Lanham (1991:164-165); Braet (2007:109-112).

¹¹ Quotes from the book of Celsus are introduced and characterized as 'accusations' (κατηγορία, κατηγορεῖν, ἐγκλημα in e.g. 1.6.16; 1.69.2; 2.31.7; 3.54.29; 3.61.16; 4.19.5; 5.58.1; 6.38.21; 6.42.68; 7.41.21 (to mention only ten examples from different books). Origen marks his own reactions with the verb 'to defend' (ἀπολογεῖσθαι), almost *passim*, e.g. in 2.1.5; 2.11.58; 3.13.2; 4.10.12; 4.19.5.

passages the judicial setting is more in the background and the text tends toward the deliberative genre. Even epideictic elements can be identified when Origen explains the great love of God, the perspective and blessings offered by the Christian faith and the salutary effect of the Christian morality. The traditional division of the three speech genres seems to be not applicable to Origen's text in a simple way. This may be due to the fact that *Contra Celsum* strictly speaking is not written as a speech and to the usual difference between theory and practice: the actual situation for which a text is produced is often complex and speakers or writers can pursue different goals at the same time. Divisions and definitions that seem clear in ideal handbook situations often need creative adaptation to the demands of the moment.¹² Origen's emphatic use of judicial terminology can be considered as part of his persuasive strategy: framing his debate with Celsus as a courtroom conflict gave Origen the opportunity both to portray Celsus as an offensive or even malicious opponent¹³ and to provide a sense of urgency to the confrontation: this is not a casual exchange of views, but there is really something important at stake.

3.3. Three means of persuasion

In Aristotle's rhetorical theory three means of persuasion are distinguished: the first is based on the character of the speaker (*ethos*), the second aims at putting the audience into an appropriate mood (*pathos*) and the third depends on arguments that prove (or seems to prove) the case (*logos*).¹⁴ Remarkable in this division is that attention is given to three elements that play a role in communication: the speaker, the audience and the subject. One of the three means of persuasion, *logos*, has a rational character and appeals to the intellect, whereas the other two, *ethos* and *pathos*, are focused on the heart and want to exert psychological influence.¹⁵ *Ethos*, called by Aristotle 'maybe the most effective means of persuasion',¹⁶ concerns the image of a speaker's character that is invoked in his speech: the audience should see him as a trustworthy and credible person, which will be achieved if he presents himself as competent, virtuous and benevolent (again a three part division).¹⁷ This creating of a positive image of the speaker and his party can have its counterpart in the painting of a negative picture of the opponent, who can be characterized as a vicious and mean person with less (or no) knowledge of the issues at stake. *Pathos* can influence the audience in a very effective way: a speaker can achieve substantial changes in the opinions of the audience by the evocation of emotions as anger, indignity, fear, hate, pity, sympathy, respect. *Logos* concerns with logical proof which can have a deductive (starting from premises) or an inductive (starting for examples) character.¹⁸

In *Contra Celsum* persuasion is dominated by *logos*, by a rational approach. Origen tirelessly fills his pages with argumentation, with reasoning and logical defensive strategies. He analyzes Celsus' criticism point by point, discusses definitions, looks at the implications of his statements and pinpoints in a rational way weaknesses, errors and inconsistencies. Alongside this refutation Origen is committed to

¹² Hesk (2009) discusses theory and practice of the three genres by comparing Aristotle's classifications with Greek and Roman speeches.

¹³ Cf. 4.47.7-8, where Origen complains that Celsus' book contains no positive doctrines (which could be discussed in an ordinary debate), but only accusations (see Reemts 1998:46).

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1356a1-3; a basic division of the means of persuasion is: (1) πίστεις ἐν τεχνῶν: proof that is part of the profession of the speaker and is to be found by him; to this category belong *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*; (2) πίστεις ἔκ τεχνῶν, material that is present at the trial without the intervention of the speaker, such as testimonies of witnesses, laws and contracts.

¹⁵ In Lausberg (1973: 141-143 and 1976:35), with reference to Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.8, *ethos* is called a gentle emotional level, whereas *pathos* is the more violent emotional level, aiming at an emotional shock in the audience.

¹⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1356a13

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1378a8-9

¹⁸ On the three means of persuasion see Pernot (2005:42-43); Braet (2007:103-108); Hesk (2009:151). The Aristotelian triad *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos* can be compared with the Latin enumeration of the duties of a speaker: *docere*, *conciliare* (or *delectare*), *movere*, but mind the remark of Pernot 'the two triads do not overlap exactly' (2005:219).

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make more positive contributions:¹⁹ he is eager to argue for the plausibility of the Christian faith and to demonstrate its deeper reasons and biblical basis. In this way he wants to give a justification of his belief²⁰ with proofs taken from both the Bible and rational arguments. This approach is recognizable in Origen's formulation of what he considers as necessary for the substantiation of the Christian faith, a task to be performed by a 'philosopher':

(1) [...] δεήσει μὲν τὸν φιλοσοφοῦντα τὰ τοῦ λόγου κατασκευάζειν μετὰ παντοδαπῶν ἀποδείξεων, τῶν τε ἀπὸ τῶν θείων γραμμάτων καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἀκολουθίας ... (4.9.10-13)	[...] then anyone who constructs a Christian philosophy will need to argue the truth of his doctrines with proofs of all kinds, taken both from the divine Scriptures and from rational arguments.

Although Origen does not comment on the identity of his 'philosopher', it seems highly probable that this passage reflects the program of his own books against Celsus, in which the presentation of the Christian belief is based on biblical and rational arguments.

The prominence of *logos* in Origen's discourse does not mean that the emotional elements are absent in the persuasion process. Aspects of self-presentation (*ethos*) can be discerned in several prefaces to the books of *Contra Celsum* and elsewhere as well. In the prefaces Origen shows his benevolence by paying respect to his sponsor Ambrose and declaring sympathy for his audience: their faith might be questioned and even damaged by Celsus' criticism; Origen communicates his concerns about this and expresses his willingness to counter the 'destructive' words.²¹ On several occasions Origen presents himself as a modest author who shows full commitment,²² but realizes that his abilities are limited²³ and that he needs God's help.²⁴ Origen seems to be not the right person to boast about his own virtues (or thinks this does not fit in his self-presentation), but sometimes he works on his image in an indirect way: by contrasting his approach to what 'others' might say or to Celsus' mocking or 'unfair' remarks.²⁵ Here we arrive at another aspect of *ethos*: the negative presentation of the opponent. In this aspect Origen does not remain silent. To give just some examples of negative qualifications: Celsus and his opinions are denoted as 'naïve', 'futile nonsense', 'ludicrous' and 'utterly silly';²⁶ Celsus is said to operate in a vulgar and unphilosophical manner, to lack understanding, to be not well-informed about Christian views and to ridicule his opponents.²⁷ Really strong emotional passages (*pathos*) are rare in *Contra Celsum*. In a description of the possible destructive effects of Celsus' book Origen uses some amplifying techniques which aim at feelings of fear.²⁸ Sometimes the lack of fair debating of Celsus arouses signs of indignity, which he shares with his readers. But even then the emotions are quickly hidden and Origen continues his response in his usual rational way (*logos*).²⁹

3.4. Tasks of the speaker

According to rhetorical handbooks the speaker has to perform five tasks when he has to prepare and eventually deliver a speech. These tasks are usually indicated with the following Latin terms:

¹⁹ See *Preface* 5.23-24 and Book 8.1.3-6 where both sides are formulated in one sentence.

²⁰ On rational justification and plausibility see Reemts (1998:71-121).

²¹ See e.g. 4.1.4-28; 5.1.4-21.

²² He stresses that he does not want to leave any point unexamined and untested, see e.g. 1.28.19; 4.18.2-3; 5.1.4-5; 7.1.4.

²³ See the rather frequent use of formulas as κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν (ἡμῖν) and κατὰ δύναμιν (36x resp. 12x in *Contra Celsum*).

²⁴ See 2.79.39-40; 4.1.4-28.

²⁵ See e.g. 4.3.36-40 and 4.13.1-5.

²⁶ See 2.44.1; 4.3.24; 4.6.1; 4.7.1; 4.64.1-2; 5.39.8. On such polemics against the person of Celsus see also Reemts (1998:56-62), Fiedrowcz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:44-47).

²⁷ See e.g. 1.40.22-26; 1.71.14-15; 3.73.1; 4.17.10-12; 4.18.1; 4.30.1,32-33; 6.74.21-22.

²⁸ See 4.1.4-28.

²⁹ See e.g. 4.6.1-2 and the reactions on Celsus' image of Christians and Jews as bats, ants or frogs in 4.23-30.

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1. *inventio*: the speaker has to ‘invent’ the content of his speech; he has to establish his position, choose his strategy and define his arguments;
2. *dispositio*: the material he has found has to be ordered in the most effective way;
3. *elocutio*: the well-ordered material has to be formulated in an adequate style;
4. *memoria*: the speaker has to memorize his speech;
5. *actio*: the speech has to be delivered with an effective use of voice, gestures etc.

In case of a written text as *Contra Celsum* we can ignore *memoria* and *actio* without further discussion, but the handbook advices concerning the first three items can provide tools that are useful for the analysis of Origen’s text. In the next sections I will comment on matters relating to content, strategy and argumentation (*inventio*), arrangement (*dispositio*) and wording and style (*elocutio*).

3.4.1. Inventio – stasis

As for the *inventio* it is important to define the role which the speaker will have in the process or the discussion: it makes a difference whether he is involved as the first speaker, who takes the initiative by formulating an accusation or making a proposal, or as the second speaker, who has to react, to defend or to comment on the proposal. As in *Contra Celsum* Origen’s role is responsive, attention will be given here only to this position and to the possibilities offered in rhetorical theories to defenders.

These are described in pages on στάσις (*status*) in the works of Cicero (especially *De inventione*), who for this item strongly depends on the lost work of Hermagoras of Temnos.³⁰ The stasis-theory is mainly developed within the frame of the *genus iudiciale*³¹ and is related to judicial cases concerning specific persons in a specific time (*quaestiones finitae*).³² The first thing that has to be established in these cases is the στάσις, the issue in debate, the point of contention in the courtroom. There are four possible status that can be chosen by the defendant. They are enumerated in the following list with the technical terms and typical questions:

1. *status coniecturalis* (στοχασμός); question: *an fecerit?* (‘whether he did it’)
2. *status definitivus* (ὄρος); question: *quid fecerit?* (‘what he did’)
3. *status qualitatis* (ποιότης); question: *an iure fecerit?* (‘whether he was justified doing it’)
4. *status translationis* (μετάληψις); question: *an induci in iudicium debeat?* (‘whether he must be brought to court’).

These four *status* correspond with four positions that can be chosen by the defendant:

1. He can deny that he perpetrated the alleged crime (*coniectura*).
2. He can admit that he did it, but that the fact should be otherwise (less seriously) defined (*definitio*).
3. He can justify the admitted fact (*qualitas*).³³
4. He can invoke a procedural mistake (the wrong court or an unauthorized judge) (*translatio*).

These four defensive possibilities are enumerated in a decreasing order of power. Denial (1) is the best position, but when this is not feasible, one of the next strategies has to be chosen. It goes without saying that all strategies can lead to acquittal.

³⁰ For more details and references see Lausberg (1973:64-85), Lanham (1991:93-94), Pernot (2005:63-65), Braet (2007:199-218), Van Gils (2009: 68-71), Van Eemeren (2014: 123-126).

³¹ For application with adaptations to the *genus deliberativum* and *genus demonstrativum* see Lausberg (1973: 123-138).

³² These are distinguished from *quaestiones infinitae*, which concern general questions independently of a specific person, e.g. ‘Should a thief always be punished?’

³³ As possible justifications the following circumstances are mentioned: (1) *comparatio*: ‘it was the lesser of the evils’; (2) *relatio criminis*: ‘I was provoked by another crime’; (3) *remotio criminis*: ‘another person is responsible’; (4) *concessio*: ‘sorry, it was an error or committed in ignorance’. (Lausberg 1973:96-106); Braet (2007:210, 222-233).

In *Contra Celsum* Origen presents Celsus' book as a long indictment consisting of several 'points of accusation' which are quoted by Origen, often one by one, sometimes in a longer cluster of interrelated issues. In each case it was Origen's task to establish what was the core of the position of his opponent and then to decide what was the most adequate defence strategy. In this sense Origen faced a situation comparable to the situation of a defendant in a criminal trial and comparable to the situation of anyone who has to react on serious criticism of his behaviour or (deep) convictions. Also outside formal law-courts everyone can end up in such situations, which require thinking about one's position and the best way to defend it if challenged. It appears that the four defence lines of the *stasis*-theory reflect in essence the different positions that can be chosen (and in reality *are* chosen) in these situations and therefore this distinction can be considered as a useful tool for the analysis of Origen's reaction in *Contra Celsum*.³⁴

In fact all four defence lines of the theory can be discerned in Origen's reactions. The first one, denial, is often used, e.g. in 4.5, where Celsus suggests that the Christian idea of a descending God implicates that he 'leaves his throne' when he comes down. Origen's reaction contains four negatives:

(2) Κἄν ὁ θεὸς τοίνυν τῶν ὅλων τῇ ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμει συγκαταβαίνει τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίον, [...] οὐκ ἔξεδρος γίνεται οὐδὲ καταλείπει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἔδραν [...] Ἐπιδημεῖ δὲ δύναμις καὶ θειότης θεοῦ δι' οὗ βούλεται καὶ ἐν ᾧ εὐρίσκει χώραν, οὐκ ἀμείβοντος τόπον οὐδ' ἐκλείποντος χώραν αὐτοῦ κενὴν καὶ ἄλλην πληροῦντος. (4.5.14-19)	Even if, mind you, the God of the universe descends with Jesus into human life [...] He does not go away from where he was, nor does he leave his throne [...] The power and the divinity of God come to dwell among men through the man whom God wants to choose and in whom He finds room without any changing from one place to another or leaving His former place empty and filling another.

Origen opts for the *status coniecturalis*: he denies that God leaves his throne. For Origen this is an essential point, because Celsus' suggestions depart from a material conception of God with spatial limitations, a concept that is vigorously rejected by Origen.³⁵

In the same chapter he continues with a reaction in which he chooses a new position: he (seemingly) makes a concession at the issue he just denied. In the previous lines he had rejected the idea that God 'leaves a place and fills another'. Here he concedes that the words 'leave' and 'fill' can be used, but in a different meaning, which is typical of the *definitio*-defence line:

(3) Ὅτινα γὰρ καὶ ἐκλείπειν αὐτὸν φῶμεν καὶ ἄλλον τινὰ πληροῦν, οὐ περὶ τόπου τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀποφανούμεθα· ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν τοῦ φαύλου καὶ κεχυμένου ἐν τῇ κακίᾳ ψυχὴν φήσομεν καταλείπεσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, τὴν δὲ τοῦ βουλομένου ζῆν κατ' ἀρετὴν ἢ καὶ προκόπτοντος ἢ καὶ ἥδη ζῶντος κατ' αὐτὴν ἀποφανούμεθα πληροῦσθαι ἢ μετέχειν θεοῦ πνεύματος. (4.5.19-24)	Even supposing that we do say that He leaves one place and fills another, we would not mean this in a spatial sense. No, we would say that the soul of the bad man who is deluged with evil is deserted by God, and would maintain that the soul of the man who desires to live virtuously, or has even made some progress, or is even already living virtuously, is filled by or shares in a divine spirit.

³⁴ Of course the *stasis*-theory applies not only to Origen's defensive position, but also to Celsus' offensive role. In the commentary section I will also pay attention to the strategic choices made by Origen's opponent (as far as these can be distracted from the quotes from his work).

³⁵ Similar examples of *conjectura* in my corpus can be found in e.g. 4.6.8-9 and 19-21; 4.7.9-11; 4.14.15-19; 4.18.24-26. On the material, anthropomorphic conception of God see further chapter VI 5.4.

Origen redefines the significance of the verbs ἐκλείπειν and πληροῦν when used in sentences in which God is the Agent:³⁶ they cannot have a spatial sense (as Celsus implies), but can only be used in a metaphorical sense and in a moral context: an evil soul is deserted by God and a good soul is ‘filled’ by a divine spirit. A similar redefinition of the verb μεταβάλλειν is given by Origen some lines below in the same chapter.³⁷ Remarkably, these two cases of *definitio*-approach are strictly spoken unnecessary in Origen’s argumentation. He had already made his point by his previous denial of the implication of Celsus’ remark. Yet he adds a second (weaker) defence line and I think he had a good reason for doing this: by picking up words from Celsus’ text, providing them with a new meaning and placing them in his own frame, Origen creates for himself an opportunity to formulate an essential element of the Christian view in a positive way: God’s descending to mankind aims at and leads to moral improvement. Thus the refutation of Celsus is combined in a clever way with the confirmation of Origen’s own position, or, more precisely, Origen reuses expressions of his opponent for the construction and explanation of his own position.

An example of the third defence position (*qualitas*) can be found in Origen’s reaction of the rhetorical question of Celsus quoted in 4.3. In this passage Celsus asks whether God was unable to correct men merely by divine power (without sending someone), suggesting that it is incongruous to state that God was unable to correct men directly, by a show of his divine power, but only by sending someone to earth. Origen does not opt for denial, but answers with a question and continues with follow-up questions:

(4) Ἄρα γὰρ ἤθελε φαντασιούμενοις τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑπὸ θεοῦ, ἀπειληφότος μὲν ἀθρόως τὴν κακίαν ἐμφύοντος δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν, τὴν ἐπανόρθωσιν γενέσθαι; Ἄλλος μὲν οὖν ζητήσει, εἰ ἀκόλουθον ἢ εἰ δυνατόν ἐστι τῇ φύσει τὸ τοιοῦτον· ἡμεῖς δὲ εἵπομεν ἂν ὅτι ἔστω, καὶ δυνατόν αὐτὸ εἶναι· ποῦ οὖν τὸ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν, καὶ ποῦ ἐπαινετὴ συγκατάθεσις πρὸς τὸ ἀληθὲς ἢ ἀποδεκτὴ ἀνάνευσις ἀπὸ τοῦ ψεύδους; (4.3.34-40)	Did he want God to appear to men in visions and to use this means of correction in order to take away evil altogether and to implant virtue? Well, someone else might ask whether this is consistent with nature and intrinsically possible. But we would say: let it be granted that this is possible; but what about free will? And how can acceptance of the truth be praiseworthy or refusal of what is false be laudable?

Remarkably Origen accepts the possibility of a direct intervention of divine power (the introduction of a third party, ἄλλος, marks this acceptance even more), but justifies that the correction takes place in a different way, viz. in a way that leaves room for free will and respects the human responsibility in moral issues. The free will concept is an essential part of Origen’s theology,³⁸ which serves as a framework condition in his presentation of God’s providence and actions to correct mankind.³⁹

Finally, the *translatio*-defence position works in the strict sense only in a formal setting, in which derogation from the rules or a formal error can block the process and lead to acquittal of the accused. Although Origen’s discussion of Celsus’ remarks did not take place in such a legal framework, sometimes his reaction seems to be comparable to this kind of formal objection. I mean the cases where Origen argues that Celsus fails to give any proof for his allegations⁴⁰ or that he unfairly discriminates between Christians and pagans by criticizing Christians on things he considers acceptable when done

³⁶ With ‘Agent’ is meant the semantic function as circumscribed in Rijksbaron (2002:135).

³⁷ The end of 4.12 is also dedicated to a definition issue: Origen defines the (allegorical) significance he attributes to the expression ‘God is coming down’.

³⁸ This issue is elaborated in Origen’s *De principiis*. 3.1.

³⁹ For similar examples of the *qualitas*-position in my corpus see 4.19.6-11; 4.20.11-14.

⁴⁰ E.g. in 4.2.14-28.

by pagans (or by himself), or by demanding explanation from Christians, while not answering himself on these points.⁴¹ With these arguments Origen challenges the legitimacy of Celsus' accusations and argues to consider them not admissible.

3.4.2. Inventio – types of arguments

Having established the *status* and the defence strategy the speaker has to 'find' the content of his argumentation, the logical arguments he wants to base his position on. The rhetorical handbooks offer comprehensive lists of argument types that can be used, arguments that are employable in all situations or useful in specific defence positions (*status*). These argument types are called *loci*, τόποι (= 'places where arguments can be found'), in fact a kind of rubrics which suggests arguments to a speaker. This subject is extensively elaborated by the rhetoricians in antiquity. I have to confine myself to the enumeration of some headlines, without discussion on all the divisions and subdivisions and the historical developments of this theme.⁴² I just want to offer a general impression, while bearing in mind the relevance of the types for the analysis of Origen's text.

Well-known examples of general argument types concern the circumstances of the situation involved (often marked with interrogatives as who? what? when? where? how? why?). Another rubric of arguments (mainly useful in the *genus deliberativum*) is about the evaluation of actions (you can ask whether an action is fair, useful, legal, morally right, possible, nice, necessary etc.). Arguments can also be related to definitions and divisions.

In argumentation two types of reasoning can be discerned: deductive and inductive. The first type starts with one or more general statements and leads in a logical way to a more specific conclusion. The ideal form of this argument is the syllogism (consisting of three parts: a general premise, *maior*, a specific statement, *minor*, and the conclusion); in common communication often the abbreviated version is used, the enthymeme: one of the parts of the syllogism (often the *maior*) is not mentioned or left implicit, sometimes because it is generally known or accepted, sometimes for persuasive reasons.⁴³ Reasoning by induction functions the other way round: it starts from available examples and then leads to a conclusion by generalization.

Analogical reasoning looks like induction, but is different from it, for it is based on similarity of cases and not on generalization. Analogies are often used to justify a statement by comparing one situation to another: if something applies to a comparative case, then it applies in this case as well. A special form of analogy is the *argumentum a fortiori*: reasoning from a 'stronger' proposition (easily recognizable by the use of expressions as 'even more so', 'even greater'): what applies to a 'strong' situation, applies to a 'weaker' situation even more so.

To mention a last example: arguments can be based on authority. The claim is that something is right when it is said by an authoritative person, organization or book.

In Origen's *Contra Celsum* many of these argument types can be identified.⁴⁴ In the next lines I will discuss briefly some examples of different types as an illustration of the theoretical presentation above. For other examples and more details and discussion I refer to my commentary section.

To start with the just mentioned authority type: as for Christians the Bible functions as the ultimate authority, it is not surprising that Origen often refers to biblical passages, both by quoting them and by

⁴¹ Examples can be found in e.g. 4.4.6-11 and 4.17.6-10.

⁴² For more information see Lausberg (1973:197-220; 227-235), Lanham (1991: 166-169); Braet (2007:237-243;259-267), Van Emmeren (2014:68-72).

⁴³ Aristotle considered deductive argumentation based on enthymemes as the most valuable one. For a discussion on his reflections on enthymemes, see Braet (2007:145-156).

⁴⁴ See Somos (2012) on argumentation in *Contra Celsum*.

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summarizing their content.⁴⁵ Strictly speaking this argument type appeals only to people who recognize the source as authority. For this reason biblical references are addressed to Christian readers (and less to Celsus), but also in the confrontation with his pagan opponent Origen uses biblical passages, for instance to demonstrate why he thinks that Celsus' presentation of a biblical element is false. Moreover, not only biblical texts function as authority: sometimes Origen also refers to sources that can be considered as authoritative for Celsus as well (Greek philosophers, Egyptian historians, Flavius Josephus).⁴⁶

For an example of an enthymeme I quote a passage from Celsus' words:

(5) Ὁ θεὸς ἀγαθὸς ἐστὶ καὶ καλὸς καὶ εὐδαίμων καὶ ἐν τῷ καλλίστῳ καὶ ἀρίστῳ· εἰ δὴ ἐς ἀνθρώπους κάτεισι, μεταβολῆς αὐτῷ δεῖ, μεταβολῆς δὲ ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ εἰς κακὸν [...] (4.14.4-7)	God is good and beautiful and happy, and exists in the most beautiful state. If then He comes down to men, He must undergo change, a change from good to bad [...]

Celsus argues that it is highly improbable that God would choose to come down to earth, for this would imply change and regression. His reasoning can be analyzed as a syllogism, with the following three parts: (1) Change means regression for everyone who is good and happy (*maior*); (2) God is good and happy (*minor*); (3) For God change means regression (conclusion).⁴⁷ In Celsus' words the *maior* is omitted, so we have an enthymeme.⁴⁸

Next an example of analogical argumentation: in 4.12 Origen uses it to make clear his allegorical interpretation of the expression 'God comes down':

(6) Καὶ ὥσπερ ἡ συνήθεια συγκαταβαίνειν φησὶ τοῖς νηπίοις τοὺς διδασκάλους καὶ τοῖς ἄρτι προτραπεῖσιν ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν νέοις τοὺς σοφοὺς ἢ τοὺς προκόπτοντας οὐ τῷ σωματικῶς αὐτοὺς καταβαίνειν οὕτως εἴ που λέγεται ἐν ταῖς θείαις γραφαῖς καταβαίνειν ὁ θεός, ἀνάλογον νοεῖται τῇ οὕτωςι χρωμένῃ τῷ ὀνόματι συνηθείᾳ. (4.12.21-26)	Just as people commonly say that teachers come down to the level of children, and wise men or advanced students to those only recently led to study philosophy, without meaning that they make a physical descent; so, if anywhere in the divine Scriptures God is said to 'come down', it is to be understood in a similar sense to that of the common usage.

Here Origen explains that in his view this 'coming down' means no physical descent, but is to be interpreted in an metaphorical sense. This interpretation is made more convincing by an appeal to 'common usage' of the expression 'to come down', viz. the use of this expression in educational situations. Origen compares two situations ('God comes down' and 'teachers come down') to explain that the verb is to be understood in a similar way in both situations. The analogical character is made explicit in the text by the words ὥσπερ ... οὕτως and ἀνάλογον. Here it is not only the analogy that works persuasive, but also the total image that is conveyed. The comparison with common language and the image of a benevolent teacher can have a comforting effect and can help to win over the audience to adopt Origen's view.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Examples can be found in 4.3.5-13; 4.5.4-10; 4.7.14-16; 4.13.6-35 etc.

⁴⁶ See e.g. 4.3.50-52; 4.11.15-22.

⁴⁷ Some lines below Celsus presents the conclusion of his reasoning in the rhetorical question 'So who would choose a change like this?' (4.14.9). Here he replaces 'God' by the more general 'who', an example of generalization (induction).

⁴⁸ See 4.2.14ff. for another example of an enthymeme; the passage will be discussed in the commentary section.

⁴⁹ For more examples of analogy see 4.15 (Christ is compared with a physician) and 4.18 (a complex comparison with regard to food). Celsus compares Christians with followers of Bacchus (4.10).

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Further: an argumentation drawing on the circumstances of an action can be found in 4.3, where Origen, invited by Celsus' remarks, discusses some 'standard details' of God's descent: the purpose, the means and a possibly alternative approach.

An argumentation that deals with definition and division is used by Origen in his discussion on 'change', in response to Celsus' remarks on the impossibility of God to change. Origen starts his reaction by making a division:

(7) Καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο λέγοιτ' ἂν πῇ μὲν περὶ τῆς τοῦ
θείου λόγου φύσεως, ὄντος θεοῦ, πῇ δὲ περὶ τῆς
Ἰησοῦ ψυχῆς· (4.18.12-14) | My reply to this would be partly from the
nature of the divine Logos, who is God, and
partly from the soul of Jesus. |
|--|--|

Having made this division Origen proceeds with a discussion on both points. The division itself is made to support the argumentation: Origen uses it to illustrate that the issue is more complex than Celsus had suggested. Origen uses this strategy of complicating the issue to make clear the lack of nuance in Celsus' approach and the unacceptability of his opinion. In the second part of the discussion Origen inserts a passage on the definition of 'change' (μεταβολή), which again formulates a nuanced answer to Celsus' words.

3.4.3. Incorrect arguments

In the introduction chapter of his *Rhetoric* Aristotle indicates his strong preference for rational means of persuasion (*logos*): the enthymemes should be the substance of the persuasion; blaming the opponents, arousing prejudice and emotions as pity or anger (*pathos*) have nothing to do with the essential facts (*Rhetorica* 1354a). About *ethos* his judgement is not so explicit, but it is not unlikely that it would also have been rejected by him as irrational. Yet *pathos* and *ethos* are discussed in his work because of their effectiveness in the persuasion process.⁵⁰ Further on in his *Rhetoric* Aristotle discusses 'enthymemes that look genuine but are not' (*Rhetorica* 1401a1), thus marking that also *logos*-argumentation does not guarantee true reasonableness. He presents a list of ten of these 'apparent' enthymemes.⁵¹ Comparable lists of incorrect argumentation types are found in Cicero's *De inventione* and in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. They are presented there with a clear objective: to enable the speaker to detect and attack these incorrect points in the discourse of the opponent (and avoid making them himself, as is added in the latter book).⁵²

This attention ancient rhetoricians paid to misleading and incorrect argumentation can be regarded as a first step in the direction of more systematic thinking about fallacies. Following the classical tradition this theme was further developed from the Middle Ages onward: fallacies were identified, defined and denoted with names as: *argumentum ad hominem* (insulting the character of the opponent with the intention to undermine his credibility; special form: *tu quoque* - 'you do it yourself!'), *argumentum ad baculum* ('of the stick': threatening with violence), *argumentum ad verecundiam* (appeal to an (inappropriate) authority), *argumentum ad populum* (appeal to the majority: 'most people believe this'), *petitio principii* (a circular reasoning, 'begging the question'), *ignoratio elenchi* (presenting irrelevant arguments) and, to mention a last one, *post hoc ergo propter hoc* ('after this,

⁵⁰ See Braet (2007:174-179). Aristotle's preference for rational means shows some correspondence with the normative approach of the modern pragma-dialectical argumentation theory with its promotion of a reasonable exchange of argumentative moves (Van Eemeren 2014:5-7,526-527).

⁵¹ Enumerated and discussed by Braet (2007: 179-188); See also Van Eemeren (2004:158=159); Van Eemeren (2014:120-122). For a similar, but at some points different list taken from Aristotle's dialectical works (*Topica* and *De sophisticis elenchis*) see Van Eemeren (2014:76-85).

⁵² Discussed by Braet (2007: 270-285).

therefore because of this'; manipulation with order and cause).⁵³

In the 1970s renewed attention for this theme resulted in more detailed studies on fallacies, some of which function within a framework of a normative approach of argumentation. An example of such an approach is the recently developed pragma-dialectical argumentation theory of Van Eemeren and Grootendorst. These scholars define fallacies as wrong moves in the communication process of argumentative discourse. They designed an ideal model consisting of four stages which this discourse must pass through in order to resolve a difference of opinion. The discussion should take place in a reasonable way and therefore a set of rules is formulated that must be followed in each of the stages.⁵⁴ Within this context a fallacy is defined as a violation of one of these rules and as obstacles that impede the resolution of the difference of opinion.⁵⁵ Some 'traditional' fallacies got a place within this framework: e.g. the *argumentum ad hominem* and – *ad baculum* are seen as a violation of the Freedom Rule (1). The *argumentum ad verecundiam* can function as a violation of Rule 2. The Relevance Rule (4) can be violated by the *argumentum ad populum*. Some new terms are introduced to denote other fallacies, as the fallacy of the *straw man* (an incorrect representation of the standpoint or an argument), which is a violation of Standpoint Rule (3). To conclude this incomplete survey: Rule 8, the Argument Scheme Rule can be violated by an *argumentum ad populum*, - *ad verecundiam*, by a hasty generalization, by an *argumentum ad consequentiam* (appeal to consequences), by the fallacy of a false analogy and by the slippery slope fallacy.⁵⁶

Can this theory of fallacies be helpful to analyze (and evaluate) the discussion in *Contra Celsum*? For an answer to this question it is important to realize that the discourse situation in this book is quite different from the ideal four stage confrontation described in the pragma-dialectical theory. In *Contra Celsum* Origen is not debating with Celsus, who was already dead when the book was written, nor is it his aim to resolve a difference of opinion. Origen's addressees are Ambrose and other Christians, who may be impressed by argumentation as is presented by Celsus, and who may have interest in a refutation of these arguments and a sound presentation of the Christian view on the debated issues.

Yet also in this discourse situation the presented argumentation has to be correct and relevant, which applies both to Celsus' arguments and to Origen's defence and explanation. The fallacy theory can help to analyze the quality and reasonableness of the argumentation. Next I will mention some examples of arguments of Celsus and of Origen where the rules of a fair discussion are at stake.

To begin with Celsus: as Origen often complains, his image of the Christian views he attacks is not always correct, which could be indicated as the fallacy of the straw man. As example of this approach I point to the passage quoted in 4.6, where Celsus (deliberately or not) misrepresents the Christian image

⁵³ See Van Eemeren & Grootendorst (2004: 159-162).

⁵⁴ The theoretical model provides a list of 15 Rules. In an abbreviated version for practical purposes these are condensed to a set of 10 rules, commonly called the 'Ten commandments for reasonable discussants'. I quote some of these rules, that are relevant for my discussion (from: Van Eemeren & Grootendorst (2004:190-196), where the complete list can be found and is explained):

1. *Freedom rule*: Discussants may not prevent each other from advancing standpoints or from calling standpoints into question.
2. *Obligation-to-defend rule*: Discussants who advance a standpoint may not refuse to defend this standpoint when requested to do so.
3. *Standpoint rule*: Attacks on standpoints may not bear on a standpoint that has not actually been put forward by the other party.
4. *Relevance rule*: Standpoints may not be defended by non-argumentation or argumentation that is not relevant to the standpoint.
8. *Argument scheme rule*: Standpoints may not be regarded as conclusively defended by argumentation that is not presented as based on formally conclusive reasoning if the defence does not take place by means of appropriate argument schemes that are applied correctly.

⁵⁵ See Van Eemeren (2014:38-39,527ff.).

⁵⁶ See Van Eemeren & Grootendorst (2004:164-184); Van Eemeren (2014:544-551).

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of God as a God who would want to show off.⁵⁷ Moreover, Celsus' argument quoted in 4.3 seems to violate the Argument Scheme Rule (in a way comparable with an *argumentum ad consequentiam*): he suggests that the reality of God's descending to the earth has to be denied because there is no good purpose for it, which cannot be considered as logically consistent reasoning.⁵⁸ In a similar way Celsus' argument quoted in 4.7 can be indicated as an irrelevant contribution to the discussion: the suggestive question 'Why did God wait so long with his correction?' cannot function as a logical proof against the reality of God's descent to correct mankind.

Then Origen: in his defence he indicates sometimes incorrect discussion moves of his opponent, though without using the terminology of the fallacy theory of course. An example of this are his just mentioned complaints about Celsus' use of the straw man fallacy. Further: in his reaction to Celsus' remarks quoted in 4.2, Origen criticizes the lack of proof: Celsus makes a statement without quoting relevant passages from the prophets to base his statement on, thus evading the burden of proof. As far as his own argumentation is concerned: in 4.3 he counters the idea of a direct intervention of God with an *argumentum ad consequentiam*: such an intervention would eliminate free will. His ironic introduction of Celsus as 'most estimable' (4.5.1) sounds as an *argumentum ad hominem*.⁵⁹ I conclude this section with a question regarding Origen's frequent appeal to biblical passages as proof for his arguments: is this appeal to be appointed as an *argumentum ad verecundiam*? The answer depends on the way the discussion in *Contra Celsum* is characterized and what is defined as its playground. For Origen himself and his Christian addressees biblical data function as the ultimate proof and quoting biblical passages is neither irrelevant nor unreasonable: for Origen rationality and the Bible are not contradictory and he is eager to demonstrate that by his interpretation of the quotes from the Bible. For Celsus and other not-Christians with different views on reasonableness however an appeal to the Bible may not be acceptable as a good move in the discussion.

3.4.4. Dispositio

The second task of the speaker is to arrange the material he had 'invented' in the most effective way. Rhetorical handbooks provide him with a standard structure of an oration, for which the court situation (*genus iudiciale*) again serves as model. The number of the parts of a speech described in the handbooks varies from author to author and depends in practice on the circumstances of presentation: different subjects and discourse situations call for different arrangements. As basic arrangement I reproduce the standard five part division that applies to speeches in the *genus iudiciale*, adding some traditional terms and a brief characterization:⁶⁰

1. <i>exordium</i> (προοίμιον)	introduction to catch the benevolence of the audience
(<i>captatio benevolentiae</i>)
2. <i>narratio</i> (πρόθεσις)	exposition of the facts involved
3. <i>partitio</i>	enumeration of the issues that will be discussed
4. <i>argumentatio</i> (πίστις)	presentation of the proof, divided in:
a. <i>confirmatio</i>	the arguments that support the position of the speaker
b. <i>refutatio</i>	the refutation of the arguments of the opponent

⁵⁷ Misrepresentation of Christian standpoints by Celsus is also indicated by Origen in 4.3.18; 4.10.1-3; 4.17.10-12 (made explicit in τὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκδόχην); 4.19.19-22; 4.21.1-8.

⁵⁸ Celsus' argument quoted in 4.5.28-29 can also traced back to an *argumentum ad consequentiam*. I refer to the commentary section.

⁵⁹ A similar ironic remark is made in 4.11.13.

⁶⁰ For more details see Lausberg (1973: 139-240). Lanham (1991: 171-174); Braet (2007:114-116;235-236), Van Eemeren (2014:126-127).

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5. *peroratio* (ἐπίλογος) conclusive part in which the main arguments are summarized and an appeal is made to the audience.

Parallel to this division based on content rhetoricians often advise a division of the persuasive means: *ethos* is linked to the *exordium*, which has to set the mood of the audience, as is indicated in the Latin expression *iudicem benevolum, docilem, attentum parare* ('to catch the goodwill and the attention of the judge and make him ready to listen to your speech').⁶¹ To achieve this obstacles between audience and speaker should be removed, the importance of the case can be clarified and some praising words addressing the audience are advisable. The speaker can promise to speak briefly, allude to his own competence and start with some disqualifying remarks regarding his opponent.

The next parts, *narratio*, *partitio* and *argumentatio*, should be dominated by *logos*-persuasion: the impression has to be made that the presentation of facts and arguments is objective and rational. Emotional elements (*pathos*) are considered to be appropriate for the final section (*peroratio*), in which an emotional appeal has to win the audience over for the speaker's position. So the rhetorical theory provides the speaker with an advice to alternate his means of persuasion: he should switch between lighter emotions and rational proof and finally conclude with a more heavy emotional appeal. As a matter of fact the theory offers an idealized image: in the rhetorical practice the advised division of parts and means of persuasion is seldom applied in a strict sense. *Narrationes* are not free of subjective choices and presentations: in human communication facts never occur without a personal involvement, emotions and interests of the moment. Although Aristotle (*Rhetorica* 1354a) argues for a separation of proper (rational) argument and emotional appeals, in practice even in *argumentationes* emotional elements are never absent. According to Cicero (*De oratore* 2.310) *ethos* and *pathos* elements should flow in each part of the oration, as blood in the body.

The theory of the parts of oration reflects an overall structure that can be observed in many forms of human communication. Not only in formal speeches, but in other species of written or spoken language as well the elements of the structure are recognizable: catching attention, making a claim, telling the course of events, providing arguments and refutations, summarizing and making an emotional appeal. Even without knowing the theoretical background people use these forms as obviously natural building blocks for their communication.

It is no surprise that elements of this structure are discernable in Origen's *Contra Celsum* and that the rhetorical theory here again provides us with useful equipment to describe the persuasive structure of the text.

Firstly I make some brief remarks on the work as a whole and will concentrate on the starting and closing sections. As for the starting sections: elements of the *captatio benevolentiae* are most prominently present in the prefaces of each of the eight books, albeit that besides the preface at the beginning of the work only book 4 and 5 have an introduction of a considerable length. In these chapters Ambrose, Origen's sponsor, is respectfully addressed and other typical *exordium* elements can be detected, as is explained above in the section on the 'three means of persuasion' (section 3.3). I refer to that explanation and will not repeat it here.

As for the closing of the total work or the separate books: Origen refrained from *peroratio*-like closing sections of a significant length. In the final chapter of the work (8.76) Origen marks the end of his eight books by addressing once more Ambrose and referring to the task he had set him. He asks the reader to decide whether Celsus' book or his own reply breathes 'more of the spirit of true God'. Even

⁶¹ An echo of this advice can be found in Origen's text of *Contra Celsum*. In 7.39.7-9 he reproaches Celsus who did not following this advice: 'He ought to have shown his goodwill (δέον εὐνοίαν ἑαυτοῦ δεῖξαι) towards his hearers at the beginning of his arguments.'

in the final chapter he quotes Celsus (viz. his announcement of a second treatise) and promises that he is ready to write a reply to this book as well, if it exists and Ambrose will send it to him. The atmosphere of this closing chapter is rather objective and distant. There is no summary of the discussion, no amplification of any important issue, no emotional appeal to the audience.⁶² This objective character of the final chapter corresponds with the remarks at the end of the separate books. Origen confines himself to short statements as ‘This is the end of my present book. If God grants it, I will continue my reply in the next book’. Any *pathos* is far away, as it is on almost every page of *Contra Celsum*. In this respect Origen does not follow the rhetorical advices and it seems that he does so deliberately: he wants to focus on rational argumentation rather than on emotional persuasion.⁶³

Next I concentrate on the argumentative sections. Origen’s work has a repetitive structure: it consists of a long series of similar sections that are structured in three parts: (a) introduction; (b) quote from Celsus and (c) reaction of Origen. For my analysis I consider each of these sections as separate argumentative unities within the total work, unities in which Origen had to make decisions about the best arrangement of his material. At this level the theory of the traditional parts of the oration can help to describe the structure of these sections. To start with the introductions (a): they function as *exordium* as far as they ask the attention of the reader for the next quote from Celsus’ book. This announcement may have a rather objective character, but mostly it is accompanied by the author’s evaluative remarks, which help to present a negative image of the opponent (*ethos*-argumentation) and to control the audience reception.⁶⁴ Even the more objective seeming introductions can in fact have steering effect. By summarizing the quote or by highlighting a special issue Origen frames the discussion in advance: the reader’s attention is directed to the elements that will be the core of Origen’s comment and Celsus’ words are placed in the framework that is appropriate for Origen’s defence. So mostly the argumentation already starts in the introductory sentences. After this introduction Origen quotes the announced words of Celsus (b), mostly verbatim, but sometimes presenting them as parts of his own sentence, with a slight adaptation of their grammatical form. Then Origen responds to these words (c), a longer section in which he uses the several argument types that have been mentioned above. A *partitio* with a brief survey of the point of discussion is mostly omitted⁶⁵ and Origen starts his *argumentatio* immediately after the quote. Commonly he begins with a *refutatio* by attacking words or ideas of Celsus. This section is often followed by a *confirmatio* in which Origen explains the Christian view on the issue at stake.⁶⁶ More often than not refutation and confirmation are not strictly divided but appear in a mixed form in the text. The end of these argumentation sections is not always explicitly marked, but sometimes Origen draws a short conclusion⁶⁷ or he uses a neutral closing formula.⁶⁸

3.4.5. Elocutio – wording and style

Having found the material of the speech and having ordered it in an effective way the next task of the speaker is the wording: thoughts are to be ‘materialized’ in words, sentences and sounds. The speaker has to define *how* he wants to put into words *what* he intends to say: he has to choose the right words and place them together in effective sentences and paragraphs. In the rhetorical handbooks the sections

⁶² In fact the last sentence has an *ethos*-character: Origen expresses in his final remark that he will treat Celsus fairly: if he is right a some point he will recognize this ‘without seeking occasion for disagreement’ (8.76).

⁶³ See 4.9 where Origen seems to express the character of his own approach by stressing the importance of teaching, rational argumentation and proof.

⁶⁴ See e.g. 4.6.1 (‘the most ludicrous argument of Celsus’), 4.7.1 (‘futile nonsense’), 4.10.2 (‘no argument, no proof’).

⁶⁵ But in 4.18.12-14 we find a *partitio*.

⁶⁶ As example of this order I refer to 4.11-13, where Origen speaks about ‘floods and conflagrations’. In c.11-12a he refutes Celsus’ criticism whereas the next passage (c.12b-13) contains an exposition of Origen’s own interpretations on these subjects.

⁶⁷ See 4.6.25-26.

⁶⁸ See 4.13.35-37 (Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἀρκεῖ ταῦτα – ‘So far, for this is sufficient reply’); 4.16.16-19 (Καὶ ταῦτα δὲ πρὸς ... – ‘Well, let this be our reply to ...’).

on *elocutio* are the most extensively elaborated ones. Commonly four qualities of the formulation are distinguished: linguistic correctness (the use of correct Greek or Latin words and sentences, *puritas*), clarity (*perspicuitas*), decoration (*ornatus*) and appropriateness (*πρέπον*, *aptum*). Decoration of the language in a speech is never an end in itself, but always has to be functional and appropriate to the speaker, the subject, the circumstances and the audience. The *aptum*-concept is elaborated in the distinction of three style levels: low, middle and high, although a clear division line cannot be drawn. Generally spoken the style level increases when more emotional utterances, figures of speech and artificial sentence structures are used. Within a speech the speaker can change from one level to another: traditionally in the *narratio* and *argumentatio* a lower style level was expected than in the *exordium* (middle) and *peroratio* (high).

Within the *elocutio*-section in handbooks most of the pages are dedicated to the decoration of the language (*ornatus*).⁶⁹ This has resulted in long lists of figures of speech, far too long to be repeated here. Part of the figures are related to one word, the so called *tropi* (τρόποι), which have to do with the changing of words: word A is replaced by word B in such a way that B denotes A and conveys some additional significance. To this group belong e.g. metaphor, metonymy, litotes, irony. Other figures are related to more words and have to do with adding or omitting elements, with repetition or with changing the order of elements. Some examples of this very diverse category are anaphora, polysyndeton, asyndeton, hyperbaton, apostrophe, interrogatio (rhetorical question), antithesis, chiasmus, parallelism and tricolon. The function of figures is not just decorative, but they also influence the presentation and perception of the message: they can serve to highlight contrastive or other elements in a clause, to give weight to an enumeration or a statement and to add emotional power to the discourse by means of imagination, suggestion and amplification.

In *Contra Celsum* Origen seems to be focused more on the *perspicuitas* (clarity) of his argumentation than on *ornatus*. The style level of most of the pages can be characterized as low, as is advised by the rhetorical theory for informative and argumentative texts. His intention to invest above all in rational persuasion corresponds with a relatively limited use of figures of speech. However, these figures are not completely absent in the text. In the introductory chapter of book 4 Origen uses metaphors, parallelism and chiasmus to make his text more attractive and effective. In argumentative passages sometimes antitheses are marked by stylistic means and rhetorical questions are used to appeal to the audience and to increase the persuasive and suggestive effect. I refer to the commentary section for a discussion on these matters.

4. Origen and rhetoric

Was Origen familiar with rhetoric? We can get an idea of Origen's education from the report of his life that is given by Eusebius in the sixth book of his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Some details of the portrait are regarded with some suspicion by scholars because of Eusebius' tendency to create opportunities to defend Origen. In his biography Eusebius seems to be driven by the intention to produce evidence of the orthodoxy of his admired predecessor in Caesarea. The passages about Origen's youth seem to contain some idealizing and anecdotic details. Yet one thing is just mentioned by Eusebius in passing as an unnecessary detail in his account, which reduces the need of suspicion. He wants to make clear that Origen from early childhood was trained in the divine Scriptures, because his father insisted to pay attention to these '*in addition to the usual education*' (πρὸς τῇ τῶν ἐγκυκλίων παιδείᾳ, Eusebius,

⁶⁹ In Lausberg (1973) the comprehensive *elocutio* part consists of 277 pages (248-525), 228 of which are about *ornatus*.

Historia Ecclesiastica 6.2.7). Obviously receiving this ‘usual education’ is default for boys as Origen living in Alexandria in that period. The word ἐγκυκλίων in Eusebius’ text seems to be short for ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα or (προ)παιδεύματα, the basic learning that was considered as a preparation for the advanced studies. This basic education consisted of seven parts: grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and music.⁷⁰ To get a good picture of Origen’s youth we should bear in mind that he was educated in the city that was for years the center of cultural and scientific life in the eastern part of the Roman world. Philosophers, scholars, poets and rhetoricians dominated the cultural scene in the city and without doubt the quality of the education in the Alexandrian schools was high. According to Eusebius, the young Origen made good progress in these ‘Greek studies’ and after his father’s death (when Origen was only seventeen years old) he made a lot of money out of his knowledge of τὰ γράμματα.⁷¹

Further on in Eusebius’ biography some information is given about Origen’s practice as teacher: many people, obviously not only Christians, came to him and listened to his lessons on (not only theology but also) philosophy, ‘geometry, arithmetic and the other preparatory subjects’; also less gifted people got an introduction in ‘the usual books’ (τὰ ἐγκύκλια γράμματα). In his view these subjects were a good preparation for the study of the holy Scripture, and therefore he ‘thought it most important that he himself should be skilled in secular and philosophic studies’.⁷² This attitude of Origen and the program of his education is confirmed by the testimony of Gregorius Thaumaturgus: in his panegyric he expressed his thanks to his teacher Origen for the education he received in Caesarea and gives an overview of all the subjects Origen taught. This list matches the programs of the contemporary grammar schools and philosophical education.⁷³ Part of the training program was the careful reading of the books of Greek philosophers and poets, except the works of the ‘atheists’, who would have a bad influence on the students.⁷⁴ An open mind⁷⁵ towards the pagan classical culture is explicitly mentioned by Gregory as characteristic for the lessons of Origen: ‘we could speak about all subjects, none was hidden or forbidden; we were allowed to learn every doctrine, both ‘barbarian and Greek, religious and political, both divine and human’.⁷⁶ Gregory, moreover, gives the impression that Origen was mainly interested in the content, the thoughts and moral benefit of these books. Pagan philosophy is appreciated by him as preparation for the Christian faith.⁷⁷ We are not explicitly informed by Gregory about the way each of the parts of the standard program was carried out and what for instance the role of rhetoric exactly was in the curriculum.

In his speech Gregory also says a few words about the personal persuasive power his admired teacher had used to convince his students to choose for the things that are really important in life. Gregory was,

⁷⁰ Compare the enumeration of these parts by Origen himself in his letter to Gregory (only arithmetic is missing): *Epistula 1 = Epistula ad Gregorium Thaumaturgum*, 1,12-18. See Neuschäfer (1987:156-158, and especially notes 133-134) on the text and the interpretation of this passage. See Pereira (2011) on the letter as a whole (with many references).

⁷¹ See Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.2.15. See on Origen’s youth and education in Alexandria Mason (1969:46-54). According to O’Cleirigh (1995:280) Origen had studied in his youth (up to his seventeenth year) ‘at least the elements of rhetorical composition’ and ‘taught at least these same elements during his time as a teacher of literature’.

⁷² Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.18.4.

⁷³ See the overview in Gregorius Thaumaturgus, *Panegyricus in Origenem* 7-15. See Löhr (2010:160-180) for more on Gregory, Origen’s school and Christian philosophical schools in general.

⁷⁴ Gregorius Thaumaturgus, *Panegyricus in Origenem* 13.151-153.

⁷⁵ Mason (1969:73-74) suggests that Origen, who had previously given up his classical books, got a more open-mind towards non-Christian literature after his visit to Rome in about 212 AD, where he heard Hippolytus preach. Hippolytus, by which he was impressed, ‘appears to have helped Origen to feel liberty to use non-Christian authors’.

⁷⁶ Gregorius Thaumaturgus, *Panegyricus in Origenem* 15.182. On Origen’s teaching activities in Alexandria and Caesarea see Klein (1996:110-116), who states that Origen functioned as a ‘free teacher and not within an ecclesiastical education system’.

⁷⁷ Cf. Origen’s letter to Gregorius for this positive attitude towards pagan philosophy and its simultaneous subordination to the Christian doctrine. To explain this position Origen refers to the ‘despoiling of the Egyptians’: just as the Israelites, when leaving Egypt, took with them the gold and silver of the Egyptians (*Exodus* 12.35-36) and used it for the worship of God, so Christians can use the best elements of pagan philosophy (and culture) for a good interpretation of the Bible and the development of Christian doctrine and practice (Origenes, *Epistula* 1, 1-2). See Pereira (2011:238-240). Compare *Contra Celsum* 5.62.18-20, where Origen says that he had studied the opinions of philosophers ‘with love for the truth’ (φιλαλήθως, cf.4.30.59-60).

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as he says, hit as ‘with an arrow’ by ‘a mixture of charm, persuasiveness and some sort of pressure’; he feels ‘enchanted’ by Origen’s words and attributes them ‘a sort of divine power’.⁷⁸ In these words of Gregory we can hear an echo of expressions from Plato’s *Symposium* 219b and *Meno* 80a. Gregory’s text is a piece of high level epideictic rhetoric itself, sometimes a bit over the top, in the opinion of some scholars.⁷⁹ An additional indication of Origen’s personal eloquence can be found in one of the letters of Jerome (dating from the time Jerome still admired Origen): according to Jerome Origen was not condemned by bishop Demetrius of Alexandria for dogmatic reasons, but out of envy because of his eloquence and learning.⁸⁰

That Origen was interested in and had profound knowledge of rhetorical theories and terminology can be deduced from the way he interpreted biblical texts. As Neuschäfer (1987:218-240) demonstrates, Origen discusses in his exegetic works not only grammatical, but also rhetorical issues⁸¹ and uses the pagan grammar and rhetoric as tools in his analysis of the Bible.⁸² Also in *Contra Celsum* Origen shows that he is familiar with rhetoric and types of argumentation.⁸³

It can be concluded that Origen as a boy received a basic education in rhetoric as a part of the normal ‘grammar school’ education. As a (young) adult he functioned himself as a teacher of these preparatory subjects and had to deal with basic rhetoric lessons. There are no explicit indications that Origen was ever taught by a *rhetor*: his father’s death compelled him to interrupt his study and to make money as a teacher to support his family.⁸⁴

We are not informed of any speeches that Origen would have made in public, apart from his preaching activity. As a priest in Caesarea Origen preached twice in a week and he held sermons on several other occasions. His homilies are dominated by exegesis of the Biblical text which is analyzed at several levels and applied to the practical life of the audience.⁸⁵ The style he used never shows the verbose character of the Second Sophistic movement, but is deliberately adapted to his audience. He wanted to use plain language, because he realized that only then he could reach his audience and win their hearts, only then he could convince them to accept the truth of the Gospel and persuade them to arrange their lives in conformity with the Christian faith. This approach with the key role of the message and the audience is an implicit sign of Origen’s rhetorical way of thinking.

⁷⁸ Gregorius Thaumaturgus, *Panegyricus in Origenem* 6,78-80. Löhr (2010:162), referring to *Panegyricus in Origenem* 6.73-75, argues that Origen’s invitation to philosophy was attuned to the situation his student was in (a fact which is in line with the communicative and rhetorical abilities of the master).

⁷⁹ See the discussion on language and style of the panegyric in Klein (1996:63-72).

⁸⁰ Jerome, *Epistula* 33.5: [...] non propter dogmatum novitatem, non propter heresim, [...] sed quia gloriam eloquentiae eius et scientiae ferre non poterant et illo dicente omnes muti putabantur. ([...] ‘not for the novelty of his dogmas, not for heresy, [...] but because they could not bear the glory of his eloquence and learning and because all were considered as speechless when he spoke’).

⁸¹ See also Neuschäfer (1987:242-246) on the use of rhetoric in Origen’s interpretation of the style of John, Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews; and (1987:269-270) on Origen’s knowledge of the *prosopopoiia* and his criticism on the way Celsus uses it.

⁸² See also Nautin (1976:132-136). A remarkable particularity is Origen’s restraint to denote metaphor and allegory in his analysis of the style of biblical books. According to Neuschäfer (1987:233-235,290-291) this is due to Origen’s view on the text of the Bible: typical for this text is that it can be interpreted on two levels: the literary and ‘deeper’ level. Therefore metaphor and allegory do not function in the frame of rhetoric and style, but are characteristics of the biblical language. Cf. *De principiis* 4.2.; Nautin (1976:141-151).

⁸³ See e.g. 2.13; 2.20; 3.39; 7.15.

⁸⁴ Cf. Nautin (1976:189): noticing that in Origen’s homilies only ‘spontaneous eloquence’ can be found and that traditional expressions of literacy and rhetoric are missing, Nautin asserts that Origen never practiced rhetoric, because the circumstances obliged him to stop with his studies too early (with a reference to Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.2.15). In this respect Origen differs from Augustin.

⁸⁵ On Origen’s homilies and rhetoric see Torjesen (1995) and Kennedy (1999:157-160). Hong (2003) analyses one of Origen’s homilies according to rules of ‘philosophical rhetoric’.

5. Reflections on rhetoric and persuasion in *Contra Celsum*

On several occasions in *Contra Celsum* the question of persuasion is brought into discussion. In the following section I made grateful use of the collection of passages Duncan (2013) has offered in his article to explain a new ‘Christian rhetoric’ which Origen would have presented. As elements of this new rhetoric he mentions criticism of the verbose style, of sophistry and of the deceptive character of rhetoric, audience-centeredness, Scripture and faith as fundamental for persuasion and the allegorical interpretation of the Bible. In my view the material Duncan offers is too diverse and too much scattered over the pages of Origen’s work to call it a ‘rhetoric’. Moreover, several elements of it, as the criticism of (a certain form of) rhetoric, seem to be not exclusive Christian. In the traditional rhetorical theories the idea of accommodation to the audience, the subject and the discourse situation fall under the category of *aptum*, one of the qualities of the *elocutio*.⁸⁶ The term ‘Christian rhetoric’ seems to indicate something more coherent and more comprehensive, a promise that is not fulfilled. I prefer the more modest expression that is used in Duncan’s abstract: ‘Origen’s thoughts on rhetoric’ (Duncan 2013:88).

Anyway, it is rewarding to take a closer look at these thoughts. Origen explains in several passages what he considers the best means to convey the Christian message and what kind of proof can give persuasive power to it. In one of the first chapters of *Contra Celsum* he stresses the contrast between the Greek and the Christian doctrines. First of all Origen dedicates some words to the fact that the Christians put into practice what they preach, thus establishing the truth of Christianity. Then he makes the following remark about the different character of proof that applies to the Greek and the Christian doctrines:

(8) Λεκτέον δ’ ἔτι πρὸς τοῦτο ὅτι ἔστι τις οἰκεία ἀπόδειξις τοῦ λόγου, θειότερα παρὰ τὴν ἀπὸ διαλεκτικῆς ἐλληνικῆν. Ταύτην δὲ τὴν θειότεραν ὁ ἀπόστολος ὀνομάζει ἀπόδειξιν «πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως», «πνεύματος» μὲν διὰ τὰς προφητείας ἱκανὰς πιστοποιῆσαι τὸν ἐντυγχάνοντα μάλιστα εἰς τὰ περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, «δυνάμεως» δὲ διὰ τὰς τεραστίους δυνάμεις, [...] (1.2.13-19)	Moreover, we have to say this, that the gospel has a proof which is peculiar to itself, and which is more divine than a Greek proof based on dialectical argument. This more divine demonstration the apostle calls a ‘demonstration of the Spirit and of power’- of spirit because of the prophecies and especially those which refer to Christ, which are capable of convincing everyone who reads them; of power because of the prodigious miracles [...]

Origen makes a clear distinction between Greek and Christian proof: Greek proof (ἀπόδειξις) is based on dialectical argument, whereas the truth of Christianity is proved in a ‘more divine’ way by ‘a demonstration of the Spirit and of power’, as he calls it with an expression of Paul (1 *Cor.*2.4), interpreted by Origen as the Scriptures (the prophecies inspired by the Spirit) and the miracles.⁸⁷

Further on in book 1 Origen speaks about the Christian way of sharing the message: the way Jesus, the prophets, the apostles and the authors of the gospels spoke and wrote is presented as example of the Christian approach. Origen characterizes their preaching by a strong contrast with the standards of the culture of the educated Greeks. Speaking about Jesus he presents him as a man who was brought up in poverty and received no education (cf. *John* 7.15):

(9) [...] ἐν εὐτελείᾳ καὶ πενίᾳ ἀνατεθραμμένος καὶ μηδεμίαν ἐγκύκλιον παιδείαν παιδευθεὶς μηδὲ	[...] brought up in meanness and poverty, who had no general education and had learnt no argument and doctrines by which he

⁸⁶ See Lausberg (1973:507-511).

⁸⁷ See also 1.45.15-27; 3.68.17; 6.2.23.

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μαθὼν λόγους καὶ δόγματα, ἀφ' ὧν κἂν πιθανὸς γενέσθαι ἐδύνατο ὁμιλεῖν ὄχλοις καὶ δημαγωγεῖν καὶ ἐπάγεσθαι ἀκροατὰς πλείονας [...] (1.29.15-18). could have become a persuasive speaker to crowds and a popular leader and have won over many hearers [...]

Origen marks that Jesus' persuasive power was not based on the usual Greek education (ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία) nor on dialectical or rhetorical training.

The same applies to the apostles, as is formulated in the next passage:

- (10) Οὐ γὰρ ἡ εἰς τὸ λέγειν δύναμις καὶ τάξις ἀπαγγελίας κατὰ τὰς Ἑλλήνων διαλεκτικὰς ἢ ῥητορικὰς τέχνας ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς ὑπαγομένη τοῦς ἀκούοντα. (1.62.25-27). For in them there was no power of speaking or of giving an ordered narrative by the standards of Greek dialectical or rhetorical arts, which convinced their hearers.

Here again Origen says that the Christian message was not convincing because of the dialectical or rhetorical arts that showed its power of speaking in the Greek world and ordered its speeches in an effective way. Some lines below the divine character of the teaching of the apostles is distinguished from a preaching 'in persuasive words of wisdom that consist in literary style and composition' (ἐν πειθοῖς τῆς ἐν φράσει καὶ συνθέσει τῶν λέξεων σοφίας, 1.62.34-35).⁸⁸

In the previous quotes Origen described the distance between the Greek and Christian communication methods in a rather objective way. He shows his own judgement more explicitly in the next passage, where the honesty of the authors of the gospels is sharply contrasted with the deceit of rhetoric. In the context the debate is on faith (πίστις). Celsus had said that Christians accept the stories about Jesus because of the faith that has prejudiced their souls. Origen does not deny this, but points out that there is nothing wrong with πίστις if the 'object' is trustworthy: 'faith' involves 'confidence' and 'we entrust ourselves to the supreme God' (πιστεύομεν ἑαυτοὺς τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ). Then he adds a second base for the Christian faith in the next passage, which I quote in full length:

- (11) πιστεύομεν δὲ καὶ ταῖς προαιρέσεσι τῶν γραψάντων τὰ εὐαγγέλια, καταστοχαζόμενοι τῆς εὐλαβείας αὐτῶν καὶ τοῦ συνειδότος, ἐμφαινομένων τοῖς γράμμασιν, οὐδὲν νόθον καὶ κυβευτικὸν καὶ πεπλασμένον καὶ πανοῦργον ἐχόντων. Καὶ γὰρ παρίσταται ἡμῖν ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ψυχαί, μὴ μαθοῦσαι τὰ τοιαῦτα, ὅποια διδάσκει ἡ παρ' Ἑλλήσι πανοῦργος σοφιστεία, πολλὴν ἔχουσα τὴν πιθανότητα καὶ τὴν ὀξύτητα, καὶ ἡ ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις καλινδουμένη ῥητορική, οὕτως πλάσαι οἷοί τ' ἦσαν πράγματα, δυνάμενα ἀφ' αὐτῶν ἔχειν τὸ πρὸς πίστιν καὶ τὸν ἀνάλογον τῇ πίστει βίον ἀγωγόν. Οἶμαι δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν διὰ τοῦτο βεβουλησθαι διδασκάλοις τοῦ δόγματος χρῆσθαι τοιούτοις, ἵνα μηδεμίαν μὲν ἔχῃ χώραν ὑπόνοια πιθανῶν σοφισμάτων, λαμπρῶς δὲ τοῖς συνιέναι δυναμένοις ἐμφαίνεται ὅτι τὸ ἄδολον τῆς προαιρέσεως τῶν γραψάντων, We also have confidence in the honest purpose of the authors of the gospels, inferring this from their piety and the good conscience which they indicate in their writings. For they have nothing in them that is spurious, cheating, invented, and wicked. We are convinced that men who had not learnt the technique taught by the pernicious sophistry of the Greeks, which has great plausibility and cleverness, and who knew nothing of the rhetoric prevalent in law-courts, could not have invented stories in such a way that their writings were capable in themselves of bringing a man to believe and to live a life in conformity with his faith. I think it was for this reason that Jesus chose to employ such men to teach his doctrine, that there might be no possible suspicion of plausible sophisms; and that it might be manifest to those able to understand, that these authors – innocent and, so to say, rather simple people – were considered

⁸⁸ See also Pernot (2005: 204-205).

ἐχούσης πολὺν τό, ἵν' οὕτως ὀνομάσω, ἀφελές, ἡξιώθη θειοτέρας δυνάμεως, πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἀνυούσης ἢπερ ἀνύειν δύνασθαι δοκεῖ περιβολὴ λόγων καὶ λέξεων σύνθεσις καὶ μετὰ διαιρέσεων καὶ τεχνολογίας ἐλληνικῆς ἀκολουθία. (3.39.8-26). worthy to be endowed by divine power. This power accomplished far more than seems to be achieved by involved verbosity and stylish constructions, and by a logical argument divided into distinct sections and worked out with Greek technical skill.

The central issue of the passage is recognizable in the beginning of the first sentences: Origen speaks about the Christian confidence and conviction (πιστεύομεν and παρίσταται ἡμῖν). He makes clear why the gospels are trustworthy: the authors were honest, pious, innocent and even 'simple' men who were not educated and therefore were not able to invent their stories. To highlight their credibility he uses the contrast formula: against their simplicity he sets the inventive skills, the verbosity and sophistication of rhetoric, suggesting that precisely the rhetorical techniques cause suspicion and are cheating.

There is something paradoxical in this eloquent criticism which seems to imply that the well described rhetorical and literal activities were non totally unknown to Origen.⁸⁹ A critical approach of the deceitful character of rhetoric is as old as Plato (*Gorgias*) and can easily become a *topos* in itself. Origen seems to amplify this theme here to make his point in the debate he is involved in.

Origen presents two reasons why Christian preachers have to stay away from Greek rhetoric. The first reason has to do with serious reservations that were already presented by Plato: rhetoric will (mis)guide souls and leads people away from the truth with its well-composed words and sophistries.⁹⁰ For Origen it is important to exclude the suspicion that the Christian faith has anything to do with this kind of influence and is brought about without God's power by 'plausible sophisms'. As he sees it, stories told by people without rhetorical skills are more trustworthy (3.39). If Jesus had chosen eloquent apostles, his method would seem to be little different from that of the philosophers: faith would have been based on 'the wisdom of men' and not on 'the power of God'. 'The truth of the claim that his teaching is divine would no longer have been self-evident' (1.62.27-38).⁹¹ This reason has to do with Origen's view on the character of faith as coming from God and based on the truth of the Scripture and not on the plausibility of rhetoric.⁹²

The second reason to use plain language is the wish to maximize the target group and to be beneficial for them. Both aspects are presented in (12). Speaking about the task of Christian teachers, writes:

- (12) Φαμὲν οὖν ὅτι, εἴπερ τὸ προκείμενόν ἐστι τοῖς πρεσβεύουσιν τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας πλείους ὅση δύναμις ὠφελεῖν καὶ προσάγειν, ὡς οἷόν τε ἐστίν, αὐτῇ διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν πάνθ' ὄντιν' οὖν οὐ μόνον ἐντρεχῇ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνόητον, [...] Δῆλόν ἐστιν ὅτι καὶ χαρακτηρὸς ἐν τῷ λέγειν 'We say that it is the task of those who teach the true doctrines to help as many people as they can, and as far as it is in their power to win everyone over to the truth by their love to mankind – not only the intelligent, but also the stupid, [...] Obviously, therefore, when such teachers

⁸⁹ See for a similar example 7.59-60, where Origen speaks about the 'beauty of the Greek style' and the 'poorer style and simpler language used by Jews and Christians'. To demonstrate that the former is not better he uses a rather elaborate and literary styled comparison between two ways of food preparation (one for rich people and one for simple folk); the superiority of the 'beauty of style' is questioned in an eloquent form that shows more 'beauty of style' than simple language. See also Neuschäfer (1987:257-258) who indicates that in his exegetic works Origen is far from antirhetorical: without any trouble he highlights rhetorical qualities in biblical texts.

⁹⁰ See Plato, *Phaedrus* 261a; 271c where rhetoric is indicated as ψυχαγωγία; *Gorgias* 454e-455a.

⁹¹ The background of this discussion is formed by the passage of Paul: 'And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.' (1 *Cor.* 2.4-5, English Standard Version), which is explained by Origen in the following way: 'The divine Scripture says that the spoken word, even if it is true in itself and very persuasive, is not sufficient to affect a human soul unless some power is also given by God to the speaker and grace is added to what is said.' (6.2.25-28, cf. 1.62; 3.68).

⁹² See 5.1.6-15 where Origen is sceptical about the effectiveness of his own arguments (although these remarks in the preface of book 5 can also be seen as an expression of the *topos* of modesty).

III. Rhetoric

φροντιστέον αὐτῷ κοινωφελοῦς καὶ δυναμένου πᾶσαν ἐπαγαγέσθαι ἀκοήν. (6.1.8-16)	... speak they have to take pains to use a type of vocabulary that will help everybody and can command a hearing to anyone.'
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Here Origen states that the intention to be beneficial (ὠφελεῖν) not only for educated people, but for a wide public⁹³ has consequences for the vocabulary of the teacher. This is also clear in another passage, where Origen speaks about the plain language Jesus used, which is characterized as ἀγροικότερον ('rather boorish, vulgar'). Origen defends the ἡ τῶν λέξεων εὐτελεία (litt. 'cheap language')⁹⁴ and compares Jesus with Plato (7.61.4-9): Jesus presented his doctrine 'in a way more beneficial to mankind than the form in which Plato said it in the *Crito*. Uneducated people (ἰδιῶται) are not even able to understand Plato; and it is only with difficulty that he is understood by those who have had a general education (οἱ τὰ ἐγκύκλια ... μεμαθηκότεες)'.⁹⁵

Origen shows awareness of the mixed character of the audience of the Christian message. An aspect of this focus on the wide public is the strategy of accommodation to the audience: the gospel is presented to everyone 'in a form suited to his character and condition' (6.10.28).⁹⁶ An individual approach of the audience is continued after the conversion and the introduction in the Christian community. Sometimes the presentation is confined to an exhortation to believe, while other people are confronted with rational arguments or introduced in 'the hidden truth in the words which seem to have a mean style' (6.2.7-9).⁹⁷

To conclude these reflections on Origen's thoughts about rhetoric: I think Duncan is right when he speaks of a 'surface condemnation of Greek rhetoric' and explains it as 'a side effect of the apologetic genre which Origen is writing and of the rhetorical strategy that he has chosen' (2013:94). Origen presents severe criticism on an artificial literary composition, on a verbose, pompous style and on rhetoric as a box of persuasive tricks, a criticism that itself seems to be not totally free from a rhetorical approach. Perhaps Origen's strong words mean essentially no more than to argue for a plain style, in order to make the message accessible for a wide audience and to prevent suspicion of unfairness. Accommodation to an audience of both educated and uneducated people is considered as necessary and characteristic of the communication of the Christian message.

How can Origen's own writing be characterized in the perspective of these considerations? The level of his style is rather low and in his discourse he avoids emotional approaches (*pathos*) that are typical in orations. In this respect his way of writing seems to be in accordance with his rejection of rhetoric. But there is more to be said: maybe his style is no hindrance of a wider public, but the length of his book, his way of reasoning and the references to pagan literature and to philosophical debates suggest that his work is intended to a well-educated audience.⁹⁸ Moreover, rhetoric also concerns the argumentation, the structure of the discourse, *logos*, *ethos* and the choice of defence strategies: aspects of rhetoric that are freely used by Origen. Rejection of rhetoric can be considered to be a rhetorically

⁹³ See also 1.29.27-31; 3.54.1-15. On Origen's recognition of education see 3.44-49, where Origen reacts on Celsus' assertion that only uneducated people are welcome in the Christian community.

⁹⁴ Neuschäfer (1987:254-256) points out that Origen never denies pagan objections regarding to low stylistic level of the Bible, but rather agrees. He answers with a negative evaluation on esthetic, which makes the pagan objections not untrue, but irrelevant. See also Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:79).

⁹⁵ See also 6.2.14-18 where Plato ('in the hands of men who seem to be learned') is not only compared to biblical authors, but also to Epictetus, who is 'admired even by common folk, who have an inclination to receive benefit'.

⁹⁶ In 2.64 a different aspect of the accommodation of Jesus is discussed. Origen speaks about the several forms or aspects (ἐπίνοιαι) of Jesus' appearances, according to the individual capacities of the people he revealed himself to: 'to those who saw him he did not appear alike to all' (2.64.1-2). The final consequences of this is that Jesus does not show himself always to everyone. He avoids showing his divine power to people who are not able to see it. This is the context of the quotes from 2.67, 2.76 and 4.18 that are wrongly used by Duncan (2013:92-93) to illustrate an 'audience-centered rhetoric' of Jesus. These passages are not about an adapted wording of the message, but about what could be called an 'individually determined revelation' (see also 6.17.31-44; 6.68.10; 7.41.19-32). This sort of accommodation can be seen in the Scripture as well, as Origen explains in 4.71 on account of anthropomorphic expressions about God in the Bible.

⁹⁷ Origen refers to an allegorical interpretation of the biblical texts. For the differentiation see also 3.51.1-14; 6.10.26-39.

⁹⁸ Cf. Frede, M. (1999:154).

motivated strategy.

I close this section with a short discussion on two relevant points that are not present in Duncan's article: in the first place a passage about proof and faith and next some remarks of Origen about the nature of persuasion.

In 1.9-11 Origen deals with a question relating to rhetoric, dialectic and philosophy, viz. what is or should be the basis of one's convictions? What kind of proof is acceptable or accepted? For Celsus it is clear that only reason (λόγος) should be accepted: believing without rational proof will end up in being deceived. He strongly criticizes Christians 'who do not want to give or receive a reason for what they believe' and use expressions as 'Do not ask questions; just believe' and 'Thy faith will save thee' (1.9.1-13). Origen's first reaction has two sides: yes indeed, nothing wrong with philosophy, but not everyone has the occasion or the ability to devote his life to it (and fortunately a simple faith without rational arguments is beneficial for these people and improves their lives). And: no, Christians are not against reasoning; it has its place in a profound study of the Scripture (1.9.13-38). Thereafter Origen dwells on the role of faith (πίστις) in philosophy and daily life. Who makes a choice to follow a certain philosophical school or a teacher, does not (only) act rationally, as Origen asserts:

(13) Τίς γὰρ προτραπείς ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν καὶ ἀποκληρωτικῶς ἐπὶ τινὰ αἵρεσιν ἑαυτὸν φιλοσόφων ρίψας ἢ τῷ εὐπορηκέναι τοιοῦδε διδασκάλου ἄλλως ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἔρχεται ἢ τῷ πιστεύειν τὴν αἵρεσιν ἐκείνην κρείττονα εἶναι; Οὐ γὰρ περιμείνας ἀκοῦσαι τοὺς πάντων φιλοσόφων λόγους καὶ τῶν διαφόρων αἱρέσεων καὶ τὴν ἀνατροπὴν μὲν τῶνδε κατασκευὴν δὲ ἐτέρων, οὕτως αἰρεῖται ἥτοι Στωϊκὸς ἢ Πλατωνικὸς ἢ Περιπατητικὸς ἢ Ἐπικουρείος εἶναι ἢ ὅποιασδήποτε φιλοσόφων αἱρέσεως· ἀλλ' ἀλόγῳ τινί, κἂν μὴ βούλωνται τοῦτο ὁμολογεῖν, φορᾷ ἔρχονται ἐπὶ τὸ ἀσκῆσαι, φέρ' εἰπεῖν, τὸν στωϊκὸν λόγον, καταλιπόντες τοὺς λοιπούς, ἢ τὸν πλατωνικόν [...] (1.10.9-17)	What man who is urged to study philosophy and throws himself into a school of philosophers at random or because he has met a philosopher of that school, comes to do this for any other reason except that he has faith that this school is better? He does not wait to hear the arguments of all the philosophers and of the different schools, and the refutation of one and the proof of another, when in this way he chooses to be a Stoic, or a Platonist, or a Peripatetic, or an Epicurean, or a follower of some such philosophical school. Even though they do not want to admit it, it is by an unreasoning impulse that people come to the practice of, say, Stoicism and abandon the rest; or Platonism [...]

Striking (and not without some rhetorical power⁹⁹) in this passage is the way Origen describes how someone ends up in a school: by chance or because of a previous meeting of a philosopher of that school. Easily recognizable is also the lack of patience to listen to all the arguments and refutations before making a choice. Essential in this passage is the role Origen attributes to 'faith' (τῷ πιστεύειν) and to 'an unreasoning impulse' (ἀλόγῳ τινί ... φορᾷ, with an hyperbaton marking ἀλόγῳ). Origen continues with a focus on daily life: when we go on voyage, marry, beget children or sow seed, faith is a decisive factor: we hope and trust that even uncertain things will turn out good (1.11). In one sentence Origen as a real virtuoso combines λόγος and πιστεύειν: 'If, as my argument (λόγος) has shown, belief (πιστεύειν) is inevitable ...', showing that he is not against argumentation and is pleased to use it to defend the rights of πίστις next to λόγος. This passage demonstrates that Origen is not opposed to the persuasive power

⁹⁹ Evoked by (a basic form of) *enargeia* (*evidentia*), the sketching of a scene or event with details in such a way that the audience 'sees' it with his mental eyes, see Lausberg (1973:399-407).

of reasoning and the search for rational proof. On the other hand he wants to convince his readers that the reality often falls short of the ideal: in real life ‘unreasoning impulses’ influence or form the base of our decisions and convictions, even if people want to act rationally.

I continue with the passage about the nature and the conditions of persuasion. The occasion for these remarks is Celsus’ suggestion that God is incapable of persuading. Origen points to the fact that πείθεσθαι is a middle voice verb, implying, as he says, reciprocity. I quote a longer part of this passage:

- (14) Ἐπειδὴ τὸ πείθεσθαι ὡσπερὶ τῶν καλουμένων ἀντιπεπονθότων ἐστίν, ἀνάλογον τῷ κείρεσθαι ἄνθρωπον, ἐνεργοῦντα τὸ παρέχειν ἑαυτὸν τῷ κείροντι· διὰ τοῦτο οὐ μόνης δεῖται τῆς τοῦ πείθοντος ἐνεργείας ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς, ἵν’ οὕτως ὀνομάσω, ὑποπτώσεως πρὸς τὸν πείθοντα ἢ παραδοχῆς τῶν λεγομένων ὑπὸ τοῦ πείθοντος. Διὰ τοῦτο οὐ παρὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι τὸν θεὸν πείθειν λεκτέον τοὺς μὴ πειθομένους μὴ πείθεσθαι, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὸ ἐκείνους μὴ δέχεσθαι τοὺς πειστικoὺς λόγους τοῦ θεοῦ. Τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπων λέγων τις, ὀνομαζομένων πειθοῦς δημιουργῶν, οὐκ ἂν ἀμάρτοι· δυνατόν γὰρ καὶ τὸν ἄκρως κατελιφῶτα τὰ τῆς ῥητορικῆς θεωρήματα καὶ δεόντως αὐτοῖς χρώμενον πάντα μὲν ποιεῖν πρὸς τὸ πείθειν, μὴ τυγχάνοντα δὲ τῆς προαιρέσεως τοῦ ὀφείλοντος πείθεσθαι δοκεῖν μὴ πείθειν. (6.57.12-27)
- The persuasion of a man is similar to the relationships which are called ‘reciprocal’, like a man who has his hair cut who is active in that he offers himself to the barber. Because of this there is need not only for the action of the one who persuades but also for submission, so to speak, to the one who persuades or for acceptance of what he says. That is why we may not say that people who are unconvinced fail to be persuaded because God is incapable of convincing them. The reason is rather that they do not accept God’s persuasive words. If anyone applies this to men, who are called ‘creators of persuasion’, he would not be wrong. For it is possible even for a man who has grasped in the highest degree the principles of rhetoric, and who uses them in the right way, to do all in his power to persuade men, and yet, because he fails to gain the will of the man who ought to be persuaded, he seems to be unconvincing.

Origen makes clear that it takes two to persuade: the action on one side is to persuade and the action on the other side is submission or acceptance. Essential for persuasion is the προαίρεσις and ἐπινευσίς (will and assent) of the audience, as is repeated some lines below: [...] τῆς προαιρέσεως τοῦ ἀκούοντος δεῖ καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὰ λεγόμενα ἐπινεύσεως (‘[...] it is necessary to have the will of the hearer and his assent to what is said’). The background of this observation can be found in Origen’s view on free will, which he considers as essential for rational beings.¹⁰⁰ In the quoted passage the much praised power of rhetoric is put into perspective: for ‘masters of speech’¹⁰¹ the success of persuasion is not guaranteed; even when God speaks, the human will to listen and to accept his words is not excluded.¹⁰²

The conclusion of this final section can be that Origen accepts reason and rational proof as useful means in the persuasive process, but puts rationality into perspective and defends faith as an acceptable basis for convictions. Finally he warns for too much confidence in the effectivity of persuasive power: the will of the person that has to be persuaded is a decisive factor that should be taken into account.

¹⁰⁰ In *Contra Celsum* this subject (τὸ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν) is not extensively discussed, but is used sometimes in argumentation as a given that needs no explanation (see e.g. 2.20.24; 4.3.39; 4.67.6; 5.21.15-17). More attention to it is given in *De principiis* (e.g. 1.5.3; 2.3.3-4; 3.1.1-24; 3.3.5; 3.6.7). See also Kobusch (2018:74-78) on the difference between force and persuasion in Origen’s view on God’s treatment of man: the human free will is taken into account in God’s governance.

¹⁰¹ Again Origen shows his familiarity with the classical works on rhetoric: the words πειθοῦς δημιουργῶν are derived from Plato, *Gorgias* 453a.

¹⁰² Note however 1.46.18, where Origen asserts that sometimes people have come to Christianity ‘as it were in spite of themselves’ (ὡσπερὶ ἄκοντες), when ‘some spirit’ turned their mind.

IV. COMMENTARY ON *CONTRA CELSUM* 4,1-22

1. Section 1: *Contra Celsus* 4.1^a

1.1 Strategy

Origen starts book 4 with a relatively long *prooimion* ('preface', 4.1.1-28). Apart from the preface that precedes book 1 and functions as an introduction to the work as a whole, only book 5 has a *prooimion* that is longer than this introduction to book 4. Other books begin with factual and objective remarks, sometimes combined with a short quote from the Bible and wishes regarding the new book (books 7 and 8), and then Origen proceeds rather quickly with the announcement of the next quotation from Celsus' book. In book 4 and 5 he takes a bit more time to reflect on his own position and intentions.

From a pragmatical and rhetorical point of view the *prooimion* can be characterized as an important move in the communication between writer and readers: the emphasis is on establishing a good relationship with the readers, which is a basic condition for successful persuasion. Origen's aim in 4.1 is to increase understanding and benevolence of Ambrose and his other readers. For this reason he respectfully mentions his sponsor by name and presents right from the start information about the character of his book to make clear to all readers in what framework the text has to be interpreted. In accordance with the advices of rhetorical theory for an exordium Origen works on *ethos*: he wants to create a positive image of himself, whereas he writes negatively about his opponent. His choice not only to say *that* he prayed to God, but also to reproduce the content of his prayer and to comment on it can be interpreted in this perspective. Pointing to the need of prayer will in itself have a confidence inspiring effect on his Christian readers and positively influence Origen's *ethos*. In this way Origen demonstrates that he as a writer is dependent on God for the finding of his words (10)¹, ideas (12) and wisdom (17), that is, in rhetorical terminology, for the *inventio*. Advices of rhetorical handbooks alone will be not enough, as Origen implies. In this modest sense of dependency Origen differs from his opponent who is characterized as arrogant. The negative image that is drawn up concerns not only Celsus' person, but also his actions: Celsus is said to attack the truth and to distress people; his arguments are false and as rebellious against God as were the words of the people who built the tower of Babel. Thus Origen creates a negative *ethos* of Celsus as proud, malevolent and dangerous, justifying in this way his own opposition against him (10-20). As a contrast Origen presents a positive image of his own effort: he is determined to defeat the menace and his actions are connected with the work of authoritative men as Jeremiah and Paul. Origen makes clear that his book, just as the prophecies of Jeremiah, has not only destructive intentions, but that he also wants to contribute in a positive way to the development of Christianity (20-28).

This dwelling on the *ethos*-theme and the creating of a sense of urgency are typical *exordium*-elements, meant to prepare for the text a good acceptance by the readers.² More than in most of the other chapters Origen seems to have paid attention to the style here, especially in 9-28. The balanced structure of the sentences (in particular the final one, 20-28), the use of metaphors, parallelism, chiasmus and tricolon can help to make the text more attractive for the readers and to underline its content.

¹ The line numbers are taken from the edition of Borret (Vol.2, 1968).

² In the traditional formula of the purpose of the *exordium*: '*benevolum, docilem, attentum parare*', see Lausberg (1973:151-160); see above chapter III 3.3 and 3.4.4.

1.2 Structure of the text

In the *prooimion* three parts can be distinguished. Origen uses presentational particles to clarify the structure: δέ (4 and 12) for the introduction of the next point, ἀλλά (17) to interrupt himself and introduce a new point, μέν ...δέ (22-23) to mark a twofold structure, γάρ (9) to indicate the beginning of a digression, meant to explain and motivate his prayer.³ Also the adverb εἴτα (20) functions as a text structuring element: after words about ‘destroying’ Origen *next* continues with a passage on ‘building’. Καί is used both as connective particle and as scope particle (9, 12, 17, 25, 26).

The structure of the passage is rendered in the next diagram:

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
Introduction	1.1-4	Retrospective and preview; addressing Ambrose	
Prayer	1.4-9	‘Give me words as Jeremiah got them.’	δ’
Motivation of the prayer	1.9-28	Double purpose: - to destroy (9-20): resistance to the arguments of Celsus - to build (21-28): to promote Christianity	γάρ δέ ἀλλά καί εἴτ’

1.3 Commentary

Preliminary: the use of the present

Origen refers in this *prooimion* to the present situation he is writing in: νῦν (9). To indicate that situation he uses the present tense, which is dominant here in the main clauses: he is dictating ‘at this moment’ (ὕπαγορεύομεν, 4), he needs things while dictating (χρηζόμεν, 9 and 17, δεόμεθα, 12) and has to pray now (εὐκτέον ἐστι, 25). This present tense functions at the upper layer of the text, which forms the shell in which the debate with Celsus and the expressions of metacommunication concerning this debate are embedded.⁴ Before Origen starts with the next book filled with his reactions on quotations from Celsus, he gives attention to the situation in which the text is produced, to the assistance he prays for, and to the intentions of the text he is dictating.

4.1.1-4⁵

Ἐν τρισὶ τοῖς πρὸ τούτων διεξελθόντες βιβλίοις τὰ πρὸς τὸ Κέλσου σύγγραμμα νοηθέντα ἡμῖν, ἱερὲ Ἀμβρόσιε, τέταρτον πρὸς τὰ ἐξῆς εὐξάμενοι διὰ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ
4 ὑπαγορεύομεν.

In the three preceding books we have set out in detail the arguments that occurred to us in reply to Celsus’ treatise; and now, holy Ambrose, after prayer to God through Christ we are undertaking a fourth book in reply to his next objections.

The first sentence contains some elements that are usually present in Origen’s introductory sentences: numerals (τρὶς ... τέταρτον⁶) to indicate the order number of the book he is dictating, the name of

³ I take καί (9) not in combination with γάρ, but as a scope particle, to be connected with ἡμῖν: ‘we also’ (just like Jeremiah).

⁴ See chapter II 4.1.

⁵ The Greek texts in this chapter are quoted from Borret (Vol.2, 1968), with corresponding layout and line numbers. The translation is taken from Chadwick (1953), with some modifications.

⁶ τέταρτον, placed after the vocative as the first word in the main clause, has the Topic position and can more specifically be characterized as a New Topic constituent (which refers to a new discourse element): it is about this *fourth* book that Origen will make a remark.

Ambrose,⁷ the reference to Celsus' work (τὸ Κέλσου σύγγραμμα, 2) he is responding to and an indication of his own comment in the previous books (διεξεληθέντες and τὰ νοηθέντα ἡμῖν⁸, 1-2) and of the work he is now starting (τέταρτον ... ὑπαγορεύομεν (3-4), with a brief indication of the content: πρὸς τὰ ἐξῆς, 3). The initial participle phrase functions as Setting in the main clause and describes the situation in which Origen starts with the fourth book.

I deduce from the word order in this sentence that Origen's main point here is the notion of prayer: the preverbal constituent εὐξάμενοι διὰ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ (3) is in the Focus position. Between the many information elements of this sentence the most salient element is that Origen *prayed to God before*⁹ he started dictating his fourth book.¹⁰ Drawing attention to this element of prayer can be seen as a conventional element in a Christian context, but allows also a rhetorical interpretation: presenting himself as a modest man who is aware of his dependency on God, the author works on his *ethos*, as is explained above in the section on strategy.

4.1.4-9

Δοθεῖεν δ' ἡμῖν λόγοι, περὶ ὧν ἐν τῷ Ἱερεμιά
 5 γέγραπται, ὡς τοῦ κυρίου πρὸς τὸν προφήτην εἰπόντος·
 «Ἴδου δέδωκα τοὺς λόγους μου εἰς τὸ στόμα σου πῦρ.
 Ἴδου κατέστακά σε σήμερον ἐπὶ ἔθνη καὶ βασιλείας, ἐκριζοῦν
 καὶ κατασκάπτειν καὶ ἀπολύειν καὶ κατασπᾶν καὶ ἀνοικο-
 δομεῖν καὶ καταφυτεύειν.»

May words be given to us, like those which are described in Jeremiah, where the Lord said to the prophet: 'Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth as fire. Behold, I have this day set thee over nations and kingdoms, to root out and to destroy, to abolish and to pull down, to build up and to plant.'

Origen uses the optative to formulate the content of his just mentioned prayer. The use of the aorist tense in Δοθεῖεν (4) can be understood from the perspective of the communicative situation. In cupitive optatives the use of the aorist tense is normal when the wish is directed to gods and to persons who belong to a higher class or grade than the speaker: using the aorist a supplicant himself only presents his wish as possible without saying anything about its realization and the moment of realization and leaves this to the higher addressee. In the choice of the tense psychological and social considerations can play an important role.¹¹

The explicit report of the content of the prayer is not without significance. His prayer concerns the words (λόγοι, 4) he is about to write and can be interpreted as a comment of the author on his own text: it is his wish and intention that his text will have the twofold effect of devastating Celsus' criticism and promoting the Christian faith, as he explains in his subsequent application of the quotation from

⁷ Ambrose is honored with the adjective *ιερέ*, as is done in 5.1.3, 6.1.2 and 8.76.1 (and 10x in the *Commentarii in Ioannem*). Alternatives in *Contra Celsum* are: *φιλόθεε* (Preface 1.6) and *πιστότατε* (7.1.1). When used in combination with persons *ιερός* is found in Origen's texts referring to angels, patriarchs, prophets and apostles. When Origen adds the name of Ambrose to this excellent group, it can be interpreted as a signal of great respect.

⁸ The first person plural in this chapter refers to Origen himself, except καθ' ἡμῶν (19), which is related to the Christians as a group. See on the use of the first person chapter II 3.2.2.

⁹ The *aorist* participle expresses an 'action' that is *anterior* to the 'action' of the main verb, see Rijksbaron (2002:117); CGCG (2019:607-608 §52.4).

¹⁰ For a more detailed interpretation of the word order of this sentence I refer to chapter II 6.5 (comment on text (48) there).

¹¹ See Ruijgh (1985), an inspiring study on the 'inceptive' use of the present tense (which is complementary to the iterative and continuative use), with special attention to the inceptive use of non-indicative forms (imperative, subjunctive and optative and dynamic infinitive). Ruijgh contrasts the use of present and aorist tenses in these non-factive verbal forms and demonstrates the following difference: using the present tense a speaker indicates that he wishes or orders an immediate start of the action concerned, whereas the use of the aorist is neutral in this respect. In prayers the speaker is not in the position to ask for such an immediate start. Therefore the (inceptive) present is not appropriate to express desires in prayers (for the use in prayers see especially p.35-40 and 48-49). Mark that at the end of this passage Origen uses the aorist again in this sense in a final clause (δῶ, 26).

Jeremiah.

Origen makes a connection between his own work and a passage written in *Jeremiah* (ἐν τῷ Ἱερεμίᾳ γέγραπται, 4-5), which can contribute to his credibility (*ethos*). The perfect is often used by Origen to refer to Biblical texts and words of prophets, which indicates that text as the result of the writing activity is still available and has the effect of involving Origen's situation with the situation of the prophet.¹² Before quoting the words from *Jeremiah* Origen makes clear in what communicative situation they have to be understood¹³: it is the Lord who speaks (τοῦ κυρίου πρὸς τὸν προφήτην εἰπόντος, 5).¹⁴

4.1.9

Καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς νῦν χρῆζομεν ...

For now we also need ...

With γάρ the start of an embedded section is indicated, a digression, in which Origen explains the necessity of his prayer (Δοθεῖν ..., 4) and applies words from the *Jeremiah* quote to his own present situation. This moment of writing is referred to by νῦν (9, in the Focus position) and the present χρῆζομεν (9). The words καὶ ἡμεῖς (9) function as a continuation of ἡμῖν (4) and also mark the contrast to *Jeremiah*.

4.1.9-20 wording and framing

Here Origen formulates his wants and needs in three successive sentences with a similar structure: firstly the verb expressing the need (in the first person plural present, indicating that Origen's needs still exist (are not completed) at the moment of writing), accompanied by a substantive in the genitive; then as a modifier of this substantive an attributive participle, followed by a substantial object phrase;

Here is a diagram of the main constituents:

Verb	Substantive	Present participle
χρῆζομεν, 9	λόγων, 10	ἐκριζούντων, 10
δεόμεθα, 12	νοήματων, 12	κατασκαπτόντων, 13
χρῆζομεν, 17	σοφίας, 17	κατασπώσης, 17

By the parallel structure of these sentences Origen underlines the importance of his prayer for means to tackle Celsus' criticism. The position of the participles is the same in these three sentences: they are placed immediately after 'their' substantive and at the head of the participle phrases. So in the main clauses they function as the pragmatically unmarked Remainder,¹⁵ whereas within the participle clauses they have Focus function: the most salient aspect of the things Origen needs is their destructive character. The three participles are derived from the first series of infinitives from the *Jeremiah* quote (ἐκριζοῦν, κατασκάπτειν and κατασπᾶν; only ἀπολύειν (7-8) is left out, perhaps to achieve a more balanced tricolon). The participles offer three variations on the theme 'to destroy' and their present tense indicates the repetitive and continuous nature of this effect; their object can be summarized as 'reprehensible work as Celsus' book'. Thus the basic pattern of these clauses is: '(1) I need (2) a gift (3) to destroy the bad work (of Celsus)'.

¹² Cf. Orriens (2009); see chapter II 4.4.

¹³ Torjesen (1986:27-29), writing about the exegetical procedure in Origen's homilies and commentaries, denotes such an identification of the communicative situation as an integral part of Origen's approach. The description of the 'speaker' in the biblical texts and his situation is a crucial step to arrive at the application of this text to the audience of Origen's own text.

¹⁴ Usually ὥς + participle indicates a subjective reason ('thinking that' or 'as if'; cf. CGCG 2019:653 §57.2), which does not make sense in this context. Therefore it is probably better to interpret ὥς here as an adverbial relative, meaning '(such) as' and to assume that a corresponding οὕτως or τοιοῦτοι (λόγοι) has to be added: 'May words be given to us, which describes in *Jeremiah*, such (words) as when the Lord said to the prophet ...', or 'May words be given to us, like those which ...' as Chadwick translates. (see also Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.3, 2011:661: 'solche Worte ... wie...'). Cf. 8.48.18 (genitive absolute with a preceding οὕτως).

¹⁵ See chapter II 6.5 (text (49) with comment) for a pragmatical interpretation of the word order of the main clauses.

The elaborated object phrases can be seen as examples of Origen's framing techniques: through metaphors and rhetorical means as amplification and pathos the reader is given an image of the evil nature of Celsus' work. Three bad qualities are mentioned: his criticism is deceitful (κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, ψευδοδοξίας, 10-11), harmful (βεβλαμμένης, 11) and arrogant (τῆς ἀλαζονείας, 19). It is associated with opposition against God (τὰ ἐπαιρόμενα ... ὑψώματα, 18) and the threefold repetition of a form of πᾶς suggests a atmosphere of comprehensive menace.

4.1.9-12

<p>Καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς νῦν χρῆζομεν 10 λόγων ἐκριζούντων τὰ κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπὸ πάσης ψυχῆς, βεβλαμμένης ἀπὸ τοῦ συγγράμματος Κέλσου ἢ τῶν παραπλησίων αὐτῷ νοημάτων.</p>	<p>For now we also need words to root out ideas contrary to the truth from every soul which has been distressed by Celsus' treatise or by opinions like his.</p>
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The first image Origen uses to characterize his opponents is evoked by the participle ἐκριζούντων (10) and is derived from the area of agriculture: their work is like weed that it is hostile to the truth (τὰ κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, 10) and detrimental for souls (βεβλαμμένης¹⁶ (11) – the perfect indicates that there is a state of damage in the present situation; this underlines the relevance of Origen's book: Celsus' book has to be refuted).¹⁷ Praying for words to root out this weed (λόγων ἐκριζούντων, 10) Origen presents himself as a radical fighter against opinions that are contrary to the truth. The agricultural metaphor is continued in 22-23 (φυτεῖαν, γεωργίου).

4.1.12-17

<p>12 δεόμεθα δὲ καὶ νοημάτων, κατασκαπτόντων πάσης ψευδοδοξίας οἰκοδομὰς καὶ <τὰ> τῆς Κέλσου ἐν τῷ συγγράμματι αὐτοῦ οἰκοδομῆς παραπλήσια 15 τῇ οἰκοδομῇ τῶν εἰπόντων· «Δεῦτε οἰκοδομήσωμεν ἑαυτοῖς πόλιν καὶ πύργον, οὗ ἡ κεφαλὴ ἔσται ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ»·</p>	<p>And we also need ideas to destroy buildings of all false opinions and the arguments in Celsus' treatise which are like the building of those who said: 'Come let us build ourselves a city and a tower, of which the top shall reach to heaven.'</p>
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The particle δέ (12) indicates that Origen starts with his next point: he needs not only 'words' (λόγων, 10), but 'also ideas' (καὶ νοημάτων, 12); νοημάτων is presented as the most salient information (Focus), whereas Δεόμεθα (12) is Topic. The participle κατασκαπτόντων (13) is derived again from the quoted *Jeremiah* passage and seems to have suggested to Origen another metaphor, this time derived from to area of architecture.¹⁸ The criticism of his opponents is presented as 'buildings of false opinions' (πάσης ψευδοδοξίας οἰκοδομὰς, 13; <τὰ> τῆς Κέλσου ἐν τῷ συγγράμματι αὐτοῦ οἰκοδομῆς, 14) and is put alongside (παραπλήσια, 14) the construction of the city and tower of Babel. Origen explicitly quotes from *Genesis* the purpose of the builders to reach for heaven (οὗ ἡ κεφαλὴ ἔσται ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, 16-17) and with that he presents this building activity as an archetypal work of *hybris* and resistance to

¹⁶ The participle is given Focus function by its position at the head of its clause.

¹⁷ Cf. Nijk (2013:245.260): in forensic oratory crimes of the opponent, which are crucial in the actual situation of the defending party, are typically referred to by perfect forms.

¹⁸ LSJ s.v. κατασκάπτω ('destroy utterly, raze to the ground') lists mainly cities and buildings as object. In a positive sense the building metaphor is used in 3.28.8 (the apostles as the foundations of the building of Christianity).

God. The association of the opponents (and especially¹⁹ Celsus) with the people of Babel serves a clear rhetorical purpose: Origen works on a negative *ethos* of Celsus and emphasises the importance of his own defence and his prayer for good ideas to eliminate the ‘false opinions’ (νοημάτων κατασκαπτόντων πάσης ψευδοδοξίας οικοδομάς, 12-14).

4.1.17-20

17 ἀλλὰ καὶ χρήζομεν σοφίας κατασπώσης πάντα τὰ ἐπαιρόμενα «κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ» ὑψώματα καὶ τὸ Κέλσου «ἐπαιρόμενον» καθ’ ἡμῶν τῆς ἀλαζονείας «ὑψωμα».

Furthermore, we also need wisdom to pull down every proud thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and especially Celsus’ proud boasting which exalts itself against us.

With ἀλλά (17) Origen breaks off his second point (‘enough about that’) and continues indicating the third gift he also (καί, 17) needs. The gift, σοφία, is in the Focus position again. In his series of participles derived from the *Jeremiah* passage Origen now chooses κατασπώσης (17), which gets an object that is associated again with resistance to God and is based on another verse from the Bible (2 *Cor.* 10.5²⁰). The contrast ‘down – up’ is marked in the prefixes (κατασπώσης - ἐπαιρόμενα, 17-18) and the element ‘high’ in ὑψωμα (18). Just as in the preceding passage (12-17) Origen starts with the universal ‘proud thoughts against the knowledge of God’ (πάντα is preposed and therefore marked; like πάσης in 13²¹) and then he zooms in on Celsus’ ‘boasting’ against Christians. The connection between this general opposition and the special case of Celsus is illustrated in the parallel word order:

πάντα τὰ ἐπαιρόμενα, 17-18	κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, 18	ὑψώματα, 18
τὸ Κέλσου ἐπαιρόμενον, 19	καθ’ ἡμῶν, 19	τῆς ἀλαζονείας ὑψωμα, 19-20

In his action against Christians (καθ’ ἡμῶν) Celsus is negatively associated with the people who already were tackled by Paul. Indirectly Origen makes a link between his own defence and the work of the authoritative apostle, which influences his *ethos* in a positive way. Origen concludes this section with a personal attack on Celsus (*ad hominem*). Adding to ὑψωμα the genitive *qualitatis* τῆς ἀλαζονείας (19-20) he blames Celsus for being arrogant, as he had done before.²²

4.1.20-28

20 Εἴτ’ ἐπεὶ μὴ χρή καταλήγειν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τὸ «ἐκρίζοῦν καὶ κατασκάπτειν» τὰ προειρημένα ἀλλ’ εἰς μὲν τὴν χώραν τῶν ἐκριζωθέντων «καταφυτεύειν» φυτείας τοῦ κατὰ θεὸν γεωργίου, εἰς δὲ τὸν τόπον τῶν κατασκαφέντων οἰκοδομεῖν θεοῦ οἰκοδομὴν καὶ ναὸν δόξης θεοῦ, διὰ
25 τοῦτο καὶ ἡμῖν εὐκτέον ἐστὶ τῷ δεδοκότι κυρίῳ τὰ ἐν τῷ

Then, since we must not stop with rooting out and destroying the things just mentioned, but in place of the things rooted out must plant a planting which is of God’s husbandry, and in place of what is destroyed must construct a building of God and a temple of God’s glory, we also must therefore pray to the

¹⁹ After the general indication πάσης ... οικοδομάς Origen uses καί (13 and also 19) to zoom in on the opponent he especially aims at; cf. LSJ s.v. καί A I 2.

²⁰ This verse is quoted again in a similar context of Celsus and his arrogance in 5.1.29; 5.64.29 and in the context of the construction of the Tower of Babel in 5.30.18.

²¹ See chapter II 6.7.

²² Starting in 1.12.7-8, where he characterizes Celsus’ words πάντα γὰρ οἶδα (‘for I know them all’) as ἀλαζονικώτατα. Next he repeatedly indicates Celsus ironically as ὁ πάντ’ ἐπαγγελλόμενος εἰδέναι Κέλσος (‘Celsus who professes to know everything’), e.g. 1.26.2; 1.34.4; 1.40.14; 1.54.1; 2.1.12; 2.32.8 (with ἀλαζών); 5.64.20; 6.8.30. In 1.40.24 and 6.50.12 Celsus is blamed for ἀλαζονεία because of the title of his book (Ἀληθῆς λόγος).

Ἱερεμία γεγραμμένα, ἵνα καὶ ἡμῖν δῶ λόγους καὶ πρὸς τὸ οἰκοδομεῖν τὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ «καταφυτεύειν» τὸν πνευματικὸν νόμον καὶ τοὺς ἀνάλογον αὐτῷ προφητικὸς λόγους.

Lord who bestowed the gifts described in Jeremiah, that He may give words also to us which build up the doctrines of Christ and plant the spiritual law and the prophetic words corresponding to it.

With εἴτ' (20) Origen introduces a new section.²³ The adverb marks the transition to a new point in his preface: he moves from the negative (destructive) to positive (constructive) purposes of his work. The application of the *Jeremiah* quote to his own situation²⁴ brings him almost automatically to this positive purpose: in the last two infinitives of Jeremiah's text (ἀνοικοδομεῖν and καταφυτεύειν, 8-9) the transition to constructive work is made. Because Origen started identifying himself with Jeremiah, the discussion ought to be continued until the end of the series of infinitives: stopping with the destruction is not permitted for Origen,²⁵ because of the fact that Jeremiah got an assignment which ended in constructive actions. So this aspect has to be part of Origen's prayer as well: may God grant him also (Focus: καὶ ἡμῖν, 25²⁶ and 26) the right words to 'build' and to 'plant' (πρὸς τὸ οἰκοδομεῖν ... καὶ καταφυτεύειν, 26-27).

To underline this positive approach Origen raises the style level of this passage. In this concluding part of the *exordium* of book 4 Origen formulates his thoughts in one long, well-structured sentence, which consists of three parts:

(1) a subordinate clause (20-24), starting with ἐπεὶ with a negative part (μὴ χρὴ καταλήγειν, 20) and a positive part, introduced by ἀλλ' (21)²⁷; the positive part has two sections, marked by μέν ... δέ, which are structured in parallel for the most part:

1.	2.	3.	4.
εἰς μέν τὴν χώραν	τῶν ἐκριζωθέντων	καταφυτεύειν	φυτεῖαν τοῦ κατὰ θεὸν γεωργίου
εἰς δὲ τὸν τόπον	τῶν κατασκαφέντων	οἰκοδομεῖν	θεοῦ οἰκοδομὴν καὶ ναὸν δόξης θεοῦ,

The columns 1-2 of the diagram contain the Setting constituents, followed in the third column by the Focus of this section; in column 4 the parallelism is interrupted: the single constituent φυτεῖαν ... γεωργίου is balanced with the double constituent θεοῦ οἰκοδομὴν καὶ ναὸν δόξης θεοῦ, which is constructed chiasmically. Besides there is an antithesis of the infinitives of column 3 and the participles of column 2.

(2) the main clause (24-26), containing the notion of prayer; remarkable here are the two perfect participles (δεδωκότι, γεγραμμένα), indicating that God's gift to the prophet and Jeremiah's book as a

²³ The adverb εἴτα denotes a next step in a series of (temporary) successive items, without suggesting necessarily a connection with the preceding item. The asyndeton (no δέ is used) underlines that a 'new start' is made. Origen often uses εἴτα at the beginning of a new chapter in which a next quote from Celsus will be discussed (e.g. 1.7.1; 1.10.1; 1.12.1; in this situation it seems to be synonymous with μετὰ ταῦτα, which is used in e.g. 1.3.1; 1.6.1; 1.9.1).

²⁴ Origen places himself in a position similar to that of Jeremiah, which is comparable with his approach of the exegesis of biblical passages in his homilies. In his homilies Origen wants to bring his hearer to the text by identifying their position with the situation of the persons in the Old Testament: both are addressed by the teachings of the Logos, see Torjesen (1986: 27-29 and 131-138).

²⁵ The use of μὴ as negative with χρὴ is remarkable. Elsewhere in *Contra Celsum* the standard combination οὐ χρὴ is used: 'there is no need' (e.g. 5.18.3; 7.27.11; 7.68.2) or 'ought not' (e.g. 5.11.1; 7.69.12). Perhaps μὴ can be explained as connected to the infinitive καταλήγειν. Besides 4.45.24 (where μὴ χρὴ is used in a conditional clause) I found only one more example of μὴ χρὴ: in the phrase ἃ μὴ χρὴ (1.25.2), where an infinitive has been omitted (also in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 342; Plato, *Leges* 649a5; Origen, *Homiliae in Psalmos* 14.2.19; 24.4.3).

²⁶ καὶ ἡμῖν εὐκτέον ἐστιν (25): with καί Origen puts himself on the par with Jeremiah, but in this detail he seems to extend the comparison: in Jeremiah's text (1.4-10) only protest of the prophet is mentioned, no prayer.

²⁷ The verb is missing here, but χρὴ ἡμᾶς can be easily inferred from the preceding part of the sentence.

result of this writing work are still available and relevant in Origen's time. The perfect marks the reciprocal contact between the world of Jeremiah and the world of Origen and his readers, the contact that is basic for Origen's prayers in this chapter.²⁸

(3) a subordinate clause (26-28), introduced by ἵνα, containing the content of Origen's prayer. In the infinitives οἰκοδομεῖν and καταφυτεύειν are repeated from (1), but in the reversed order (chiasmus). In this concluding clause as well as in (1) the agricultural and architectural metaphors of the previous sentences are elaborated, now with an allusion to 1 Cor.3.6-17, where Paul in one passage uses both images to illustrate his work in Corinth: the elements καταφυτεύειν, θεοῦ γεωργίον, οἰκοδομεῖν, θεοῦ οἰκοδομή, ναὸς θεοῦ (22-24) in Origen's text are derived from this source. In Paul's text the metaphors denote actions concerning the development of the church in Corinth: the preaching and applying of the Christian message and the edification of the faith of the Corinthians. In Origen's text the metaphors have a similar significance, as is indicated in the words νόμον καὶ ... προφητικούς λόγους (28-29): Origen aims at 'planting' the law and the prophecies, a common designation of the 'Old Testament', a basic source of the Christian message. The adjective πνευματικόν added to νόμον (28) is essential in Origen's interpretation of the 'law': it indicates that the law has to be read in a spiritual way and not literally. According to Origen this spiritual interpretation is connected with Christ. With ἀνάλογον αὐτῷ (28) Origen modifies the 'prophetic words' also in this sense: corresponding to the spiritual (interpretation of the) law also the prophetic words will be explained by Origen in relation with Christ (see 30-31).²⁹ With this in mind the meaning of 'building the (house) of Christ and planting the law and the prophetic words' can be defined: it is Origen's purpose to clarify by allegorical interpretations the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures and by doing so to contribute to the development of the church. The stylistic level of this section and the allusions to biblical passages testify that Origen had high expectations of his readers: they should have the skills to read a well-elaborated text with a great variety of metaphors. Moreover for the understanding of Origen's text they should be sufficiently familiar to the Bible to recognize references and to deploy knowledge of the original context of the passages hinted to.

²⁸ See chapter II 4.4.

²⁹ Rom.7.14 is a central verse in Origen's spiritual (πνευματικός) interpretation of the law. See also 5.33 (the law came from Israel and reached the Christians in a spiritual form, μετέστη ἐφ' ἡμῖν πνευματικός, 24) ; 6.68 (on the mountain of the Transfiguration Moses, appearing 'in glory', represented the spiritual law and Elijah the prophecy 'which did not even die' after Christ's incarnation), and especially 7.20 (the literal and the spiritual interpretation explained based on passages from Paul). Origen denotes his own allegorical interpretation of the Bible, which looks for a deeper meaning as intended by the Spirit, as πνευματικὴ δῆγησις (*De principiis* 4.2.5-6).

2. Section 2: *Contra Celsum* 4.1^b-2

2.1 *Strategy*

This section contains the first passage of Celsus quoted in book 4 and the comment on this quote by Origen. On the strategic aims of both discourse participants the following can be said.

Celsus

Celsus starts in the quoted fragment with his next point of criticism: the concept of the descent of a divine being to earth. This theme is elaborated in the fragments quoted by Origen in the next chapters.¹ The passage quoted here functions as an introduction of this theme. Two parts can be discerned: (1) the presentation of the concept and (2) Celsus' short and strong condemnation of it. The presentation starts with an analytic approach (*logos*): Celsus explicitly pays attention to the fact that this concept is subscribed by both Jews and Christians, but in a different way: as a future, respectively a completed event. The indefinite indication 'some God or son of a God' and the general description of the purpose of the descent ('as a corrector/judge of the people (things?) here') seem to be part of the strategy: Celsus suggests that it is not worthwhile to focus on details of a concept which should be despised. The short condemnation ('*most shameful*') and the final remark ('*no lengthy argument is requested to refute it*') combine *pathos* and *ethos*: the announcement of a *short* refutation is pleasant for the readers and can persuade them to give positive attention to the text. Without any proof but not without emotion, Celsus presents in these words a disqualification of the opinions of his opponents: they are not only shameful, but also so obviously wrong that this can be demonstrated in a few words.

Origen

Origen's defence strategy, in which *logos*-argumentation dominates, contains two elements. In his introduction he starts with framing the issue: Celsus' words about a descending God are placed within Origen's own Jewish-Christian framework of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah (Celsus does not really speak about this). Next Origen focuses on raising doubts about Celsus' competence (*ethos*-argumentation): the seemingly precise distinction of Celsus covers, as Origen tries to demonstrate, his lack of accurate knowledge, which appears in the fact that he did not quote the relevant prophetic words and did not use the right terminology. By this strategy Origen wants to deprive Celsus' words of all plausibility and credibility.

Remarkably Origen does not explicitly comment on what seems to be the central point of Celsus' objection: the 'shamefulness' of the idea that a God comes down to the earth. Origen does not deny this point of Celsus nor does he propose a different definition or a justification (although Origen of course cannot agree with the qualification 'shameful'). His defence strategy resembles most the *translatio* (procedural) defence position: relevant proof is lacking.²

2.2 *Structure of the text*

The text of this section can be divided into three parts: after an introduction the next fragment from Celsus is quoted, which is followed by the reaction of Origen, as is presented in the next diagram:

¹ Celsus goes into the following points: purpose and motives of a divine descent (4.3 and 4.6), physical problems (4.5), delay of corrective measures (4.7), misunderstanding of flood and conflagration stories (4.11), problems with the idea of change when God is concerned (4.14 and 4.18), punishment and purification (4-20-22).

² See chapter III 3.4.1.

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
Introduction	1.30-36	Statement: Celsus' criticism concerns the prophecy about the Messiah.	καί, γάρ μέν ... δέ
Quote from Celsus	2.1-4	Judgement: the concept of some God or son of God descending to the earth is shameful.	δέ μέν ... δέ
Reaction a. Impression of accuracy	2.4-7	Judgement: the division between Jews and Christians <i>seems</i> to be accurate.	καί ... γε μέν ... δέ
	2.7-11	Explanation: Celsus' implicit division within the group of Christians concerns the application of the prophecies to Jesus.	γάρ
	2.11-14	Parenthesis: I wrote about this previously and will not repeat it.	μέν οὖν
b. Lack of logic	2.14-19	Statement: logic requires the quotation of relevant prophetic fragments.	ὅρα δὴ
	2.19-23	Explanation: this would have given an impression of plausibility.	γάρ
c. Lack of knowledge	2.23-28	Statement: Celsus quotes no prophecies because he cannot reply to them or does not know them.	νυνὶ δέ ἦτοι ... ἦ μέν ... δέ
	2.28-31	Statement: Celsus does not know the right terminology that is used by the Jews.	μέντοι γε

2.3 Commentary

Use of the verbal tenses

In his comment in chapter 4.2 Origen uses the present and perfect forms to indicate the 'actions' which he attributes to Celsus. Present: δοκεῖ (4), ἐμφαίνει (7), τίθησι (26), οἶεται (27); perfect (both with a present meaning): ἔοικεν (9), οἶδε (28). These actions, which Origen postulates based on his exegesis of Celsus' text, are presented as taking place 'at the moment of speech', although Celsus' text was written in the past. The present denotes that *through his text* Celsus still 'seems', 'shows', 'quotes' etc. at the moment Origen writes and his readers read his text.³

This moment of speech is contrasted by Origen with a counterfactual situation, expressed by the modal imperfect ἐχρῆν (17) and ἄν + indicative (ἄν ἔδοξε, 20). With νυνὶ δέ (23) Origen goes back to the 'factual' present.

4.1.30-32

30 Καὶ μάλιστα χρεια ἡμῖν πρὸς τὰ νῦν ἐξῆς τοῖς προειρη-
μένοις τῷ Κέλσῳ λεγόμενα κατασκευάσαι ὅτι καλῶς τὰ
περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πεπροφήτεται.

Our special task now is to reply to what Celsus says next immediately after the remarks we have quoted, to show that the prophecies about Christ were true.

³ See chapter II 4.1-2.

With καὶ μάλιστα Origen denotes a next step in the discussion, which entails an action of concentration: after the general part of his introduction (the prayer for effective words) he now zooms in on the special issue at stake in this part of his book. Using the word *χρεία* he makes a connection with the preceding *χρῆζομεν* (9) and *χρή* (20). The constituent *πρὸς τὰ νῦν ἐξῆς τοῖς προειρημένοις τῷ Κέλσῳ λεγόμενα* (30-31) recalls the words from the beginning (*πρὸς τὰ ἐξῆς*, 3) and makes clear that Origen still follows the order of Celsus' text. The element *νῦν* marks Origen's moment of writing: he will treat the fragment that is 'now' next in Celsus' text.⁴

The final dependent clause, introduced by the conjunction *ὅτι*, functions as object of *κατασκευάσαι* (31). In this clause *καλῶς* can be interpreted as Setting and the preverbal element *τὰ περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ* (31-32) has Focus function. This makes sense when a connection is made with the previous sentence, where Origen in general wrote about his intention to deal with prophetic words (*προφητικούς λόγους*, 28-29). Here he focuses on the available and still relevant⁵ prophecies *about Christ*. These are essential here for Origen for they have to do with the difference between Christians and Jews mentioned by Celsus. Moreover they are decisive for Origen in the current discussion with Celsus. With this introduction the discussion is framed by Origen right from the start.

4.1.32-36

32

Ἄμα γὰρ πρὸς ἀμφοτέρους
ιστάμενος ὁ Κέλσος, Ἰουδαίους μὲν ἀρνούμενους γεγονέναι
τὴν Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίαν ἐλπίζοντας δ' αὐτὴν ἔσεσθαι, Χριστιανούς
δὲ ὁμολογοῦντας τὸν Ἰησοῦν εἶναι τὸν προφητευθέντα

For Celsus opposes both groups at once: the Jews who deny that Christ has come, but hope that he will do so; and the Christians who affirm that Jesus was the prophesied Christ. This is what he says.

36 Χριστόν, φησίν·

This sentence looks backwards and forwards: it functions as the introduction of the next fragment from Celsus and is connected as explanation (*γάρ*, 32) with the previous sentence. Here Celsus clarifies the content of *τὰ ... λεγόμενα* (30-31). In the main clause the constituent *Ἄμα γὰρ πρὸς ἀμφοτέρους* (32-33) functions as Setting and within this phrase *πρὸς ἀμφοτέρους* is in the Focus position. The reader is left uncertain for a little moment about the identity of these two groups, but immediately after the Topic *ὁ Κέλσος* he explains who are meant: *Ἰουδαίους* (33) ... *Χριστιανούς* (34-35). These constituents are placed in the front position of two participle clauses, in which they function as contrastive Topic. The most salient information in these two clauses, structured by *μὲν ... δέ*, is expressed in the participles *ἀρνούμενους*, *ἐλπίζοντας* and *ὁμολογοῦντας* (33-35, Focus): the present tense indicates that these opinions are not limited in time. The content of the opinions is expressed in three accusative plus infinitive constructions, in which a particular word order can be observed: in the first two the chiasmus illustrates the antithesis between *γεγονέναι* and *ἔσεσθαι* (33-34), in the last one the preverbal constituent *τὸν Ἰησοῦν* (35) has Focus: the central point of the Christian view is that it is *Jesus* who is the prophesied Messiah.

In this passage Origen continues framing the discussion and influencing the reader's reception. He wants to achieve that the fragment of Celsus is read from the perspective of the coming of the Messiah. Origen ignores Celsus' words *τινα θεὸν ἢ υἱὸν θεοῦ* and *τῶν τῇδε δικαιοσύνην* (4.2.3), adds the element

⁴ The present tense of the participle *λεγόμενα* has the same function as the present of the indicative in chapter 4.2 described above in the introductory section on the 'use of verbal tenses'.

⁵ The permanent significance of these prophecies up to Origen's own time is indicated in Origen's use of the perfect in *πεπροφήτεται*. Cf. on the perfect above in the commentary on 1.4-9 and in chapter II 4.4.

of prophecy (προφητευθέντα, 35) and uses the term ἐπιδημία (34), which seems to be his own favourite to denote the coming of Christ on earth.⁶

4.2.1-4 Celsus:

Ὅτι δὲ καὶ Χριστιανῶν τινες καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, οἱ μὲν καταβεβηκέναι <λέγουσιν,> οἱ δὲ καταβήσεσθαι εἰς τὴν γῆν τινα θεὸν ἢ θεοῦ υἱὸν τῶν τῆδε δικαιοτήν, τοῦτ' αἰσχιστον, 4 καὶ οὐδὲ δεῖται μακροῦ λόγου ὁ ἔλεγχος.

The assertion made both by some of the Christians and by the Jews, the former saying that some God or son of God has come down to the earth as corrector of mankind, the latter saying that he will come, is most shameful, and no lengthy argument is required to refute it.

In this fragment Celsus criticizes the descent of a (son of) God to the earth.⁷ The proposed subordinate clause, introduced by Ὅτι, reproduces the content of the statement, which is severely censured by Celsus in the main clause. The particle δέ denotes that this fragment is the next item in a long series of critical remarks, which are quoted by Origen from the beginning of book 1.⁸ Celsus attributes the criticized opinion with some emphasis (καί ... καί, 1) to two groups: Jews and Christians, which division is continued in οἱ μὲν ... οἱ δέ (1-2).⁹ In fact Χριστιανῶν τινες (1) implies another division within the group of the Christians. The constituents Χριστιανῶν τινες καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι and οἱ μὲν ... οἱ δέ are in the front position and function as Topic: on these groups Celsus will make a statement, the content of which concerns the descent of 'a God or son of a God' to earth as corrector¹⁰ of people on earth. Focus in this clause are the infinitives καταβεβηκέναι and καταβήσεσθαι (2). The difference in tense makes clear that this contrast is the salient point of information. The perfect infinitive indicates that the descent already is completed and resulted in a stay on the earth which has a lasting effect in the present (according to 'some of the Christians'), whereas the future denotes the descent as a future event (ascribed to the Jews).

In the main clause Celsus summarizes the content of the subordinate clause in τοῦτ' and then immediately moves on to a short judgement: αἰσχιστον (3). In this superlative Celsus expresses a strong moral condemnation, which is more emotional than rational loaded: shame on the counterpart! In the next sentence he states that a lengthy refutation will not be necessary, thereby suggesting that the opinion of his opponents is insignificant. In the next quoted fragments Celsus continues with a more precise justification, but right from the start his approach is intimidating and full of pathos.

⁶ In *Contra Celsum* ἐπιδημία is used ca.30x and ἐπιδημέω over 50x to indicate Christ's coming down to the human life in the incarnation. The verb Celsus uses, καταβαίνω (just like the noun κατάβασις) is used rarely (<10x) by Origen in this sense (and when used it seems to be caused by Celsus' preceding use of it). In ἐπιδημία and ἐπιδημέω the focus is not only on 'coming', but also on 'dwelling' on the earth (see Lampe, s.v. ἐπιδημία 'of Christ, of Inc[arnation], either of coming or as dwelling'; cf. ἐπιδημέω C2).

⁷ The issue is announced already by Celsus in the fragment quoted in 3.1, a passage which is denoted as *partitio* by Arnold (2016:388-394, including a discussion on the relation with 4.2).

⁸ Origen frequently indicates that he quotes Celsus' remarks in the order in which they are made in the book of his opponent, cf. πρὸς τὰ ἐξῆς (4.1.3) and τὰ νῦν ἐξῆς (4.1.29). See Arnold (2016:141-145) on a thematic relation between this fragment (4.2) and the preceding fragments of Celsus (quoted in 3.44-78).

⁹ The reference to both Christians and Jews is characteristic for the first part of Celsus' *argumentatio*, as presented by Arnold (2016: 431ff.), who argues that Celsus firstly addressed Jews and Christians (book 3-5) and in the second (more demanding) part (6-8) is focused only on 'the more advanced' Christians.

¹⁰ It is difficult to determine the exact meaning of δικαιοτής in this context: what is indicated by Celsus here as the (Jewish-Christian view on) intention of the descending God? It seems that in the following fragments of Celsus two aspects are developed: it has to do with correction (see the parallels ἐπανορθοῦν (4.3.23-24) and σωτηρία/σῶζω (4.7.3-6) and with punishment (see 4.11.12 δίκην βασανιστοῦ πῦρ φέρων). In both the focus seems to be less on a judgement (as in Chadwick's translation) or a verdict that is passed, but more on the correction that the δικαιοτής aims to accomplish. Cf. Lampe s.v. δικαίωσ A.

4.2.4-7

<p>Καὶ δοκεῖ γε 5 ἀκριβῶς περὶ μὲν Ἰουδαίων οὐ τινῶν ἀλλὰ πάντων λέγειν ὅτι οἴονται τινα καταβήσεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, περὶ δὲ Χριστιανῶν ὅτι τινὲς αὐτῶν καταβεβηκέναι λέγουσιν.</p>	<p>He seems to speak accurately when he says of the Jews that it is not merely some but all of them who think that some person will come down to the earth; whereas of the Christians he says that only some of them say that he has come down.</p>
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Origen starts his reaction without any introductory formula¹¹ by fighting back: the words δοκεῖ γε ἀκριβῶς (4-5) are meant to cast suspicion on Celsus. With γε full attention is asked for δοκεῖ and the limited value of Celsus' words: they only *seem* to be accurate, but (as is implied) they *are* not.¹² Origen warns his readers to be cautious: appearances can be deceiving. Thus the first step is taken to undermine Celsus' credibility.

The representation of Celsus' words is well directed by Origen: he selects some elements and colours them with subtle comment. He plays Celsus' game of distinctions and structures his own sentences with μὲν ... δέ (5-6) as well. With a straight face he highlights Celsus' (seeming) accuracy by explicitly mentioning that he makes no distinction between Jewish groups (οὐ τινῶν ἀλλὰ¹³ πάντων, 5) as he does between Christian groups. In his paraphrase he inserts the word οἴονται (6),¹⁴ takes over the elements καταβήσεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν and καταβεβηκέναι (2) from Celsus' words, keeps the identity of the descending subject indefinite (just τινα (6), omitting Celsus' θεὸν ἢ θεοῦ υἱόν, 3) and omits what Celsus wrote about the purpose of the descent.

4.2.7-11

<p>Ἐμφαίνει γὰρ τοὺς ἀπὸ ἰουδαϊκῶν γραφῶν κατασκευάζοντας τὴν Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίαν ὡς ἤδη γεγεννημένην, καὶ ἔοικεν εἰδέναι 10 ὅτι εἰσὶ τινες αἱρέσεις ἀρνούμεναι Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν εἶναι τὸν πεπροφητευμένον.</p>	<p>He shows that he is aware of those who argue from the Jewish scriptures that the advent of Christ has already taken place, and seems to know that there are certain sects which deny that Christ Jesus is the person prophesied.</p>
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With γὰρ Origen indicates the beginning of a digression in which an explanation is given concerning the distinction Celsus made within the group of Christians. The passage starts with a Broad-Focus constituent (Ἐμφαίνει ... γεγεννημένην, 7-9). Here Origen does not repeat Celsus' Χριστιανῶν τινες (1) nor refers to them with a (more neutral) anaphoric pronoun, but chooses as his own indication a phrase with an argumentative force. Using this phrase Origen makes clear that the source of the view of these Christians is the Old Testament, here deliberately indicated as 'Jewish scriptures'.¹⁵ The explicit addition of the adjective (ἰουδαϊκῶν (8), marked by its position before its noun) functions as an implicit argument

¹¹ In other chapters formulas as Καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο δὲ φήσομεν (e.g. 4.7.8-9; 4.11.12) or Καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο λέγοιτ' ἂν (e.g. 4.18.12-13) are not unusual. In 4.3. and 4.10 such introductory phrases are also omitted. Καί functions here in 4.2.4 as connective particle, indicating the beginning of a next element in the discourse (cf. similar uses as introduction of a just quoted fragment from Celsus e.g. 2.28.10; 2.31.6; 4.3.24; 4.74.5). On καί at the start of a new section, see the list of particles in chapter II 5.2.

¹² Similar criticism on Celsus' lack of accuracy in 1.7.20; 4.36.18 (in an ironical context); 4.62.11 (concerning the understanding of Plato).

¹³ On the eliminating function of ἀλλὰ see chapter II 5.2.

¹⁴ A chiasmus marks the contrast: οἴονται – infinitive; infinitive – λέγουσιν.

¹⁵ Usually the Old (and New) Testament is indicated as ἡ γραφή/αἱ γραφαί. In *Contra Celsum* only here and in 4.42.17 and 4.52.24 the adjective ἰουδαϊκός is added, all in the context of a confrontation between Jews and Christ(ians) and all in the AN order, with a salient (argumentative) role of the adjective (cf. chapter II 6.7). The related expression αἱ Ἰουδαίων γραφαί is only found in 5.54.15; 6.25.4.

to justify this Christian belief: it is based on the same authoritative books as are used by the Jews. What is remarkable, moreover, is Origen's choice for the phrase τὴν Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίαν (9), which gets full attention through the position before ὡς ἤδη γεγεννημένην (*prolepsis*).¹⁶ Origen replaces Celsus' καταβεβηκέναι (2) by his own favourite phrase in which 'Christ' is mentioned (instead of Celsus' less explicit τινὰ θεὸν ἢ υἱὸν θεοῦ, 3). All this rephrasing can be interpreted as a part of Origen's policy to frame the discussion, as he already started in the introduction where he referred to the old prophecies about Christ (1.30-36). In this way he achieves a formulation of the Christian conviction he and his readers can identify with.

This frame of 'Christ and the prophecy' is continued in the next sentence where Origen specifies the alternative Celsus had in mind (in Origen's view, at least). Here the positive wording is replaced by suggestive and vague phrases: ἔοικεν εἰδέναι (9) and τινες αἱρέσεις (10),¹⁷ used to distance himself and raise doubts about Celsus' competence.

4.2.11-14

11 Ἦδη μὲν οὖν καὶ ἐν τοῖς προτέροις περὶ τοῦ πεπροφητεῦσθαι τὸν Χριστὸν κατὰ δύναμιν διειλήφαμεν, διὸ τὰ πολλὰ τῶν δυναμένων λέγεσθαι εἰς τὸν τόπον οὐκ ἐπαναλαμβάνομεν, ἵνα μὴ παλιλλογῶμεν.

Well, above we have already discussed as well as we could the fact that the prophecies referred to Christ; and for this reason we do not repeat the numerous arguments which could be adduced on the subject to avoid any repetition.

With μὲν οὖν (11) Origen signifies a new step in his discourse: after the previous digression (marked by γάρ, 8) the 'normal' discourse level is resumed.¹⁸ After the third person verbs (δοκεῖ, 4; ἐμφαίνει, 7) Origen switches to the first person (διειλήφαμεν, ἐπαναλαμβάνομεν, παλιλλογῶμεν, 12-14), indicating that here his own reaction is concerned. I propose to consider the verbs διειλήφαμεν and ἐπαναλαμβάνομεν as Focus in these sentences: Origen's point here is that his previous discussion¹⁹ on this matter is available and applicable (perfect διειλήφαμεν, 12-13²⁰) and therefore he does not repeat his words here and now (present ἐπαναλαμβάνομεν, 14).

The passage shows awareness of the communicative situation and aims at rhetorical effect. The explicit statement that Origen wants to avoid repetition can be interpreted as *ethos*-enhancing: readers will appreciate it when they will be spared unnecessary repetitions. Also the addition of the phrases κατὰ δύναμιν (12) and τὰ πολλὰ τῶν δυναμένων λέγεσθαι εἰς τὸν τόπον (13) can benefit the *ethos* of the author: Origen shows modesty concerning his previous words and at the same time makes clear that lack of arguments is not the reason for him to refrain now from a discussion: the reader should not think Origen is at a loss when it comes to this issue. In the previous passage some doubts were raised about Celsus' expertise; here it must appear that Origen himself is competent enough.

¹⁶ The prefect presents the SoA as completed (and as a state) and as relevant for the 'world' of Origen and his readers, see chapter II 4.4.

¹⁷ Origen refers probably to Marcion, who denied that Jesus Christ is the Messiah announced in the Old Testament (see 1.49 and Chadwick 1953:185 n.1). The word αἵρεσις is used by Origen in a rather neutral way 'a system of thought, a school' (especially philosophical school: e.g. 1.10; 1.62.32), but also in a more negative way 'heresy, false teaching' (e.g. 2.16.15 (Docetism); 3.12.2). Cf. Lampe, s.v. αἵρεσις 2 and 3. In 3.12-13 the existence of sects within Christianity is accepted by Origen as an inevitable fact and compared by Origen with the existence of different Greek philosophical and medical schools. In most other contexts Origen is less neutral and distances himself and the church of the αἱρέσεις, e.g. 5.61 (Gnostics and Ebionites), 6.24 (Ophites), 6.53 and 8.15 (where the name of the groups is not mentioned).

¹⁸ Cf. chapter II 5.2. Moreover: it is remarkable that μέν is not followed by a δέ-section (μέν *solitarium*, see CGCG 2016: 676 §59.24).

¹⁹ With ἐν τοῖς προτέροις Origen refers to 1.49-57 and 2.28-30.

²⁰ For a discussion on the two perfect forms in this section see chapter II 4.4.

4.2.14-31: general preview

In the final section of this chapter Origen criticizes Celsus for lack of proof,²¹ credibility and knowledge. Origen's reasoning can be reduced to a syllogism, the conclusion of which is left implicit. The parts of the syllogism are:

- (1) Credible criticism should be illustrated by adequate quotes. (14-23, *maior*)
- (2) Celsus does not offer any quote. (23-28, *minor*)
- (3) Celsus' criticism is not credible.

Origen presents the *minor* part not only as a fact, but adds two possible reasons for the absence of relevant quotes. Both reasons are related with Celsus' incompetence and ignorance: Origen suggests that Celsus would not be able to reply to the prophecies about Christ or even would not know them. In the final lines the issue of the incompetence is further developed in Origen's criticism of the terminology of his opponent. The conclusion is not expressed by Origen: he leaves it to the reader to complete the reasoning.²²

4.2.14-19

14

εἴπερ μετὰ τινος κἂν δοκούσης ἀκολουθίας ἐβούλετο ἀνατρέ-
πειν τὴν περὶ τῶν προφητειῶν ἢ περὶ τοῦ ἐπιδημήσειν ἢ
ἐπιδημηκέναι τὸν Χριστὸν πίστιν, ἐχρῆν αὐτὸν αὐτὰς
ἐκθέσθαι τὰς προφητείας, αἷς ἐν τῷ διαλέγεσθαι πρὸς
ἀλλήλους χρώμεθα Χριστιανοὶ καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι·

Ὅρα δὴ ὅτι,

Now I ask your special attention for the following point: if he wanted with any show of logical argument to refute the belief in the prophecies, whether the coming of Christ is regarded as in the future or in the past, he ought to have quoted the prophecies themselves, which are used by Christians and Jews in disputing with one another.

With Ὅρα δὴ (14), a diaphonic element combined with an interactional particle,²³ Origen demands, perhaps not without some indignation,²⁴ the reader's special attention for Celsus' reprehensible way of operating: he points at the total absence of logic and proof on the part of his opponent. Origen demonstrates this by explaining what, in his opinion, would have been a requirement a 'logical argument' (ἀκολουθία; the phrase μετὰ τινος ... ἀκολουθίας (15) has Focus) would have to comply with: he ought to have quoted the prophecies (ἐχρῆν²⁵ ... αὐτὰς ἐκθέσθαι τὰς προφητείας, 17-18).²⁶ In this passage Origen dwells for some time on the counterfactual mode: he works out a hypothetical scenario in order to weaken the position of his opponent.

Some details of Origen's wording deserve attention. The addition of τινος and κἂν δοκούσης (15) enhances the power of Origen's rhetoric: Origen suggests that even 'some' sort of logic (τινος), 'even if

²¹ See Somos (2012:210-211), who refers to other passages in which Origen charges Celsus for not substantiating his propositions.

²² Cf. chapter III 3.4.2.

²³ See chapter II 3.1 and 5.2.

²⁴ In *Contra Celsum* the combination Ὅρα δὴ occurs 12x, 4x in the introduction of a quote from Celsus (3.52.1; 3.56.1; 5.3.1; 5.15.1), 6x immediately following a quote as introduction of Origen's reaction (2.49.34; 3.50.8; 6.78.10; 7.68.15; 8.35.7; 8.53.11). In 8 of these cases Origen indicates that Celsus' discourse move is incorrect and inappropriate. In Origen's words Celsus 'wickedly misrepresents' the Christian faith (2.49.34), 'ridicules' (3.56.1; 5.15.1), 'falsely accuses' Christians (3.50.8), is 'pouring abuse' on them (3.52.1) or shows 'irreverence' (6.78.10). In other cases Origen criticizes Celsus' reasoning: 'he jumps to conclusions' (7.68.15) and is inconsistent (8.53.11). With a modern term, which is not used by Origen, these moves could be classified as fallacies (see chapter III 3.4.3). Given these contexts it seems to be justified to hear an undertone of indignation in Ὅρα δὴ.

²⁵ With the imperfect Origen denotes a counterfactual situation, cf. LSJ s.v. γρή 'The imperf. freq. expresses something that ought to have been, but is not'. See on the imperfect of modal verbs also Rijksbaron (2002:25-26); CGCG (2016:443 §34.17).

²⁶ Mind the hyperbaton αὐτὰς ... τὰς προφητείας which highlights the Focus αὐτὰς even more. See chapter II 6.8. A similar objection is worded in 2.28.

it were only seemingly logical' (κἄν δοκούσης)²⁷ would have been more acceptable: Celsus fails to meet even this minimal condition. With ἀνατρέπειν (15-16, 'overturn', 'ruin') Origen chooses a rather powerful and negative word to denote Celsus' intention. His motive seems to be rhetorical: amplification of the evil intentions enhances the bad *ethos* of his opponent (who had expressed himself less malevolently in ἔλεγχος, 4). In τὴν περὶ τῶν προφητειῶν (16) Origen repeats his own frame (see above 2.7-14) and in ἐπιδημήσειν and ἐπιδεδημηκέναι calls back the difference between Jews and Christians, but he replaces Celsus' καταβαίνειν by his own favorite ἐπιδημεῖν. In the relative clause αἷς ... Ἰουδαῖοι (18-19) Origen provides an outline of ongoing (present tense in διαλέγεσθαι and χρώμεθα, 18-19) talks between Christians and Jews, suggesting that in case of a disagreement conversation is better than Celsus' charging and blaming. The use of the first person in χρώμεθα (19) and the position this word is given may be deliberate: 'we' refers at least to the Χριστιανοὶ (19), following immediately the verb, but the Ἰουδαῖοι seem also to be included; both Christians and Jews use the same prophecies and are despite their differences on the same side in the confrontation with Celsus. In the sketch of the frontlines the opponent is left in isolation.

4.2.19-23

<p>20 ἂν κἄν ἔδοξε τοὺς περισπωμένους ὑπὸ τῆς, ὥς οἶεται, πιθανότητος ἀνατρέπειν ἀπὸ τῆς πρὸς τὰ προφητικά συγκαταθέσεως καὶ τῆς διὰ τὰ προφητικά εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὥς ὄντα Χριστὸν πίστεως;</p>	<p>οὕτως γὰρ For in this way he would at least have seemed to dissuade those who are led astray by the – as he thinks – plausible argument from accepting the prophecies and from believing on this ground that Jesus was really the Christ.</p>
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In this passage Origen explains (γάρ, 19) what would have been the effect if Celsus had not omitted what he should have done (which is summarized in οὕτως). In the words ἂν κἄν ἔδοξε ... ἀνατρέπειν (20-21) Origen continues his rhetorical strategy: ἂν ... ἔδοξε denotes that he persists in the counterfactual mode and κἄν ('at least') modifies ἔδοξε. The combination of both elements is used to deprive Celsus' efforts of all power: Origen implicitly suggests that persuading people is hard for Celsus anyway, but certainly when he fails to provide proof; and even if he had provided proof, he could have only given the *impression* of persuading people (ἔδοξε has Focus); and now Celsus even fails to give this impression. The validity of his argument is called into question with the subtle addition of ὥς οἶεται in the heart of the phrase ὑπὸ τῆς ... πιθανότητος (20-21): only Celsus himself thinks that his argument is plausible.²⁸

In the final part Origen presents in a two-part phrase what is the character of the opinions Celsus wants to 'ruin'.²⁹ agreement with the prophecies (τῆς ... συγκαταθέσεως, 21-22) and belief that Jesus is the Messiah (τῆς ... πίστεως, 22-23). The first part is not explicitly attributed to a group (without any doubt the Christians are meant, but also the Jews?), the second part is clearly Christian. So here the

²⁷ For this κἄν as modifier of an attributive, noun or verb indicating a minimal condition/situation ('even if only', 'at least'), see e.g. 1.24.37; 4.67.2 (also with δοκούσης); 4.70.19; 6.46.5; 6.78.20; 7.26.1; Bauer (1963 s.v. κἄν) has some examples from the New Testament. See on κἄν also the comment on 4.5.11 below.

²⁸ I cannot agree with the translation of Borret (Vol.2, 1968:191), who interprets τῆς ... πιθανότητος as indicating the plausibility of the prophecies and translates: '... ceux qui sont attirés, à l'en croire, par leur caractère spécieux, de l'adhésion aux prophéties ...'. Then the phrase would have been written from the perspective of Celsus. The interposed phrase ὥς οἶεται makes this interpretation problematic: because of the position between article and noun this phrase modifies the constituent τῆς ... πιθανότητος and the subject of the third person singular οἶεται can be only Celsus. I think τῆς ... πιθανότητος can better be considered as referring to the plausibility of Celsus' arguments, a plausibility which is reduced by ὥς οἶεται: this is just what Celsus thinks. (So Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.3, 2011:663) 'von seiner – wie er glaubt – überzeugenden Darlegung').

²⁹ Origen denotes Celsus' persuasion again with the verbal forms that can be associated with violence: ἀνατρέπειν (repeated from 2.15) and τοὺς περισπωμένους ('people who get dragged away').

Christian position is given positive attention: the authority of the base of their faith, the prophetic message (τὰ προφητικά, 21), is unquestionable for Origen and his readers. It is from that faith, as Origen implies in these sentences, that Celsus is not able to draw Christians away; he did not even give the impression of doing this.

4.2.23-28

νυνὶ δὲ ἤτοι μὴ δυνάμενος ἀπαντῆσαι
πρὸς τὰς περὶ Χριστοῦ προφητείας ἢ μὴδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν
25 εἰδώς, τίνα ἐστὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ προφητευόμενα, οὐδεμίαν
μὲν λέξιν τίθησι προφητικὴν, καίτοι γε μυρία ὅσαι εἰσὶ περὶ
Χριστοῦ, κατηγορεῖν δὲ οἶεται τῶν προφητικῶν, μὴδ' ἦν
εἴποι ἂν ἐκεῖνος πιθανότητα αὐτῶν ἐκθέμενος.

But in fact, whether because he is unable to reply to the prophecies about Christ, or because he does not even know at all what the prophecies about him are, he quotes not a single passage from the prophets, even though there are thousands about Christ; yet he thinks he can criticize the prophecies without giving any example of what he would call their plausible argument.

The *minor* of the above mentioned reasoning is introduced by νυνί (23), which indicates that the counterfactual passage has ended. The issue here is not what Celsus should have done, but what he in fact omits, as is worded in the main clause: he does not quote a single prophetic passage. Preceding the main clause Origen formulates two possible reasons for Celsus' omission in two participle clause introduced by ἤτοι ... ἢ (23-24).³⁰ In both reasons the negatives figure prominently³¹ and Celsus' *ethos* is here harmed by the suggestion of his incompetency: he is, as Origen presumes, not able to reply to the prophecies or he does not even know them.³²

The main clause is marked by the strong initial position of οὐδεμίαν and by the hyperbaton (οὐδεμίαν ... λέξιν τίθησι προφητικὴν, 25-26). The subordinate clause καίτοι γε μυρία ὅσαι εἰσὶ περὶ Χριστοῦ makes Celsus' omission even more dramatic: καίτοι γε (26)³³ draws explicit attention to the objection and the hyperbolic phrase μυρία ὅσαι (26) creates a strong contrast to οὐδεμίαν (25): not a single quote, even though he had a wide choice!

Origen continues his critical comment in the second main clause (which was already announced by μέν): κατηγορεῖν δὲ ... προφητικῶν (27). Here κατηγορεῖν is in the Focus position: *charging* (or thinking so) without providing any proof – that is the core of Origen's argument here. In the final phrase μὴδ' ἦν εἴποι ἂν ἐκεῖνος πιθανότητα αὐτῶν ἐκθέμενος (27-28) attention is drawn to the element of plausibility (πιθανότητα αὐτῶν has Focus as it is placed before the verbal constituent ἐκθέμενος). By adding ἦν

³⁰ LSJ s.v. ἤ A2 'In Classical Gr. the alternative introduced by ἤτοι is emphasized, later no distinction is implied.' Here the second alternative is given more weight by μὴδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν ('not even ... at all'). Cf. chapter II 5.2.

³¹ The negative used in these clauses in μὴ/μὴδὲ. In classical Greek a participle is negated normally by οὐ and only by μὴ if the participle has a conditional value; further a participle with an article used as noun is negated by μὴ if it has a generalizing value and by οὐ if it refers to a particular person or entity (Rijksbaron 2002:124 and 132 n.1; CGCG (2016:651 §56.16). In later Greek the use of μὴ becomes more normal with all not-indicative forms. McKay (1994:60 and 71) notices that in the New Testament μὴ is mostly used as negative with participles, though οὐ also occurs (see also Blass & Debrunner (1949 §426-430); Bauer s.v. μὴ A II 2d with NT examples). This use seems to apply in *Contra Celsum* as well: the use of μὴ is not confined to situations where a condition is indicated; but still also οὐ is used with participles. A striking example is 4.30.18-20, where οὐ and μὴ are used in parallel phrases without a clear difference in meaning: τάχα μὲν οὐκ ἀκούσας ... τάχα δὲ μὴ ἐπιστάμενος... ('perhaps because he did not hear ..., perhaps because he did not know...') (cf. 1.58.9). To get an idea of the frequency I counted the use of both negatives combined with a participle in book 4: 30x οὐ and 45x μὴ (24 of these participles were used as nouns). To substantiate the possible significance or tendency in this narrow sample further research is necessary, which would exceed the limits of the present investigation.

³² The same objection is made in 1.49.5-7.

³³ On καίτοι see chapter II 5.2.

εἴποι ἂν ἐκεῖνος Origen suggests that he uses a term his opponent could have used (potential optative).³⁴ Suggesting that plausibility is an issue that is important for Celsus himself, Origen uses this issue *against* Celsus. This is part of an *ethos*-argumentation: Celsus is represented as a bad prosecutor who does not even meet his own requirements.

4.2.28-31

28

μέντοι γε ὅτι οὐ πάνυ τι Ἰουδαῖοι λέγουσι θεὸν ὄντα τὸν
Χριστὸν καταβήσεσθαι ἢ θεοῦ υἱόν, ὡς καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνωτέρω
εἰρήκαμεν.

Οὐκ οἶδε

In any event, he does not know that
the Jews certainly do not say that the
Christ who will come down is God or
Son of God, as we also said earlier.

The particle combination μέντοι γε (29) can be used at the end of a longer passage to introduce a short digression, which can contain a short side note.³⁵ Here once more Origen draws attention to Celsus' lack of knowledge: οὐκ οἶδε (28). Celsus ascribes a term to the Jews which they would not use themselves: *they* (Ἰουδαῖοι has Focus) would certainly not speak about the Messiah (τὸν Χριστόν, 29-30) as being (a) 'God' or 'son of God': Origen changes Celsus' own word order which results in a Focus shift: not the 'coming down' (καταβήσεσθαι, 2), but θεὸν (ὄντα, 29) has Focus. The final clause contains a short metacommunicational remark: Origen explicitly refers to his previous discussion of this issue (ἐν τοῖς ἀνωτέρω, 30),³⁶ the availability and relevance of which is indicated in the perfect εἰρήκαμεν (31).³⁷

³⁴ Is ἐκεῖνος typically used to refer to Celsus? A quick search shows that Origen commonly refers to Celsus using αὐτοῦ/ᾧ/όν (e.g. 3.16.16; 3.17.14; 3.27.10; 3.34.13; 4.30.26). Sometimes also οὗτος (5.38.3; the vocative ὦ οὗτος in 3.58.6; 3.80.4; 4.4.2; 5.40.4; 8.9.10) and ἐκεῖνος (2.57.3; 4.61.16) are found. Often ἐκεῖνος is used to refer to what has gone immediately before in the text (see LSJ and Bauer s.v. ἐκεῖνος): e.g. 3.23.3; 3.28.45; 3.41.10; 3.46.14; 3.64.22; 4.3.8; 4.20.19; 4.26.16; 4.29.2. As it seems, the classical rule 'ἐκεῖνος refers to something which had not been mentioned for a while' (see CGCG 2019:353 §29.31) does not always apply in *Contra Celsum*.

³⁵ More examples (sometimes without γε) can be found in 1.6.10; 2.14.9; 3.49.17; 4.58.8; 4.60.16; 8.65.15. See Slings (1997a:114-122), who characterizes this use as the PUSH-function of μέντοι: the particle marks the beginning of an embedded discourse constituent. As a second function he discusses μέντοι as marker of the return to the embedding constituent (POP-function) and indicating a 'denial of expectation' (as in 5.63.15; 6.12.10; 6.77.32). For the latter function see also CGCG (2016:677-678 §59.27).

³⁶ See 1.49.25-33. Also on other occasions Origen reproaches Celsus for lack of knowledge of the Jewish position: he attributes 'his Jew' (in book 1 and 2) words which a Jew would not speak, see e.g. 1.43; 1.48.92-98; 2.28.14-23; 2.29.32-34; 2.76.1-4.

³⁷ Cf. chapter II 3.1, 3.2.2 and 4.4.

3. Section 3: *Contra Celsum* 4.3-4

3.1 Strategy

Celsus

Spread across chapter 3 five short fragments of Celsus' text are quoted. These fragments contain a cluster of coherent questions meant to criticize the notion of a divine descent to the earth. Celsus had given his short judgement on this concept ('most shameful') and had claimed that a refutation required no lengthy argument (4.2.3-4). The questions quoted in this chapter can be interpreted as the first part of this refutation. The arguments are presented in the offensive form of a series of rhetorical questions, in which Celsus more suggests than states that the notion he considers as shameful is related to a reprehensible concept of God: a conception of a God who is (1) not omniscient and (2) not in full control. These issues determine Celsus' argumentative strategy and are elaborated in the five questions as is represented in the following diagram:

Quality of God	Question of Celsus
1. not omniscient	(a) What is the purpose of such a descent? (b) Or was it in order to learn what was going on among men? (c) Does not God know everything?
2. powerless	(d) Is God unable to correct men directly, with his divine power? (e) Was it necessary to send someone physically in order to correct men?

Origen

In chapter 3-4 Origen defends the Christian position against these offensive moves by splitting up the cluster of questions. This seems to be part of Origen's strategy: it offers him the opportunity to demonstrate that every detail of Celsus' criticism can be refuted. In this *refutatio* Origen deals with the content of Celsus' critical questions, but also attacks the position and the methods of his opponent. To these combination of defensive and offensive elements some more constructive passages are added, in which Origen in response to Celsus' criticism explains his readers what in his opinion could be the Christian view on these points (*confirmatio*). A variety of defence positions is used by Origen: at some of the allegations he opts for denial (*status coniecturalis*), at other points for justification and explanation (*status qualitatis*), whereas also the questions of Celsus are criticized (*status translationis*) and even bounced back to the opponent.

In the following diagram Origen's strategic choices are made transparent; with *ad a* (etc.) is indicated to which of Celsus' questions is responded.

Type	Approach	Content
1. <i>Refutatio</i> Related to content	Defence (<i>ad a</i>)	The purpose is: conversion of the Jews and transmission of the kingdom of God to Christians.
	Denial (<i>ad b-c</i>)	This is a figment of Celsus: no Jew or Christian says this.
	Defence (<i>ad d</i>)	God does always correct people by his Logos.
	Counter question (<i>ad e</i>)	Do you want a direct fight against evil (by divine visions)?

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	Refutation of the alternative (<i>ad e</i>)	1. Then no place is left for free will and morality. 2. Why did God not make at once a world of perfect men and without evil?
2. <i>Refutatio</i> strategic/ methodical	Criticism of the form of questioning	Celsus creates his own reality and is interviewing himself.
	Isolating the opponent	Even Greek philosophers would not agree with Celsus.
	Turning the tables	Celsus himself has to answer the questions he puts to the Christians.
3. <i>Confirmatio</i>	Establishing the position of the Christians	Christians were given the former position of the Jews.
	Importance of the free will notion	Without free will no responsibility and morality. God corrects people who choose the better life.
	Explanation of the method of God's corrective work	God works through human 'correctors', (as Moses, the prophets) and through Jesus.

3.2 Text structure

In chapter 3 the text structure is concentrated around the five fragments from Celsus, which are discussed in the standard three part pattern: introduction – quote – reaction. Only after the third quote a response of Origen is missing.

In chapter 4 two parts can be discerned: a passage where Celsus is addressed (*apostrophe*) and is asked for explanation about the issues he raised himself. Then a passage in which Origen formulates what Christians believe concerning God's method of bringing correction and moral reformation.

In a diagram the structure of chapter 3-4 can be represented as follows:

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
1. Introduction	3.1-4	Paraphrase of the fragment cited above (4.2)	καί
Quote (a)	3.4-5	Question: 'What is the purpose of such a descent?'	< γάρ >
Reaction	3.5-13	Statement: Celsus does not understand the double purpose.	μέν ... δέ
2. Introduction	3.14-17	Celsus invents his own answer; this notion is not held by Jews nor by Christians.	οὖν μέν ... δέ
Quote (b)	3.17-18	Question: 'Or was it in order to learn what was going on among men?'	ἢ
Reaction	3.18-19	Statement: none of us says this.	γάρ
3. Introduction	3.19-21	Celsus has a conversation with himself.	εἴτα
Quote (c)	3.21	Question: 'Does not God know everything?'	γάρ
4. Introduction	3.21-22	Celsus continues as if he had got an answer.	εἴτα
Quote (d)	3.22-24	Question: 'Is God unable to correct by divine power?'	ἄρα μέν ... δέ

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Reaction	3.24-30	Judgement: foolish question. Explanation: God always corrects by his Logos and by the advent of Christ.	καί, δέ γάρ δ'
5. Introduction	3.31-32	Question: What sort of correction does Celsus want?	δέ
Quote (e)	3.32-34	Question: 'Why not correct without sending someone?'	ἄρ'
Reaction	3.34-55	Asking for the alternative: vision? Response to this alternative: - counter question: how about free will? - counter question: why did God make men not perfect at once? Conclusion: not persuasive, needs further discussion; no agreement of Greek writers.	ἄρα γὰρ οὖν, μέν .. δέ οὖν ἀλλὰ καί δ', μέν .. δέ μήν, μέν .. δέ καί, δέ
6. Counter question	4.1-2	Introduction: Celsus' objection may be addressed to himself also.	οὖν
	4.2-11	<i>Apostrophe</i> : - on providence, God's knowledge and correction - accountability for both parties.	ἄρα ἀλλ', δ' μέν .. δέ
7. Christian confession	4.11-21	Statement: God continually sends 'correctors'. Explanation: God works through his servants. Statement: these servants are different, but no one is greater than Jesus.	ἀλλ' ... μέν γάρ δέ δέ, ἀλλά, γάρ

3.3 Commentary

4.3.1-4

Καὶ εἰπὼν αὐτὸν ὑφ' ἡμῶν μὲν λέγεσθαι καταβεβηκέναι ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων δὲ καταβήσεσθαι δικαιοτὴν, κατηγορεῖν αὐτόθεν οἶεται τοῦ λεγομένου ὡς αἰσχίστου καὶ οὐδὲ μακροῦ
4 ἐλέγχου δεομένου καὶ φησι·

After saying that according to us Christ has come down, but that according to the Jews his coming as corrector is still in the future, he thinks he can attack this opinion as being most shameful and as requiring no lengthy refutation. He goes on to say:

As an introduction¹ to the next quotes from Celsus Origen repeats again Celsus' starting point, by paraphrasing the fragment cited in 4.2. There are some remarkable little changes in Origen's wording. He omits the difference within the Christian community that was denoted by Celsus (Χριστιανῶν τινες, 4.2.1) and challenged by himself: Christians are presented as one group and as the group Origen identifies with: the use of the first person (ὑφ' ἡμῶν, 1) indicates the involvement of the author (and his readers).² Moreover Celsus' undetermined phrase *τινα θεὸν ἢ θεοῦ υἰόν* (4.2.3) is replaced by αὐτόν

¹ The initial καὶ indicates the beginning of a new section and marks it as the next item in a longer series; see chapter II 5.2.

² The first person is frequently used in the same way in 4.3: καθ' ἡμᾶς (5), ἡμεῖς (14, 38, 53), ὑφ' ἡμῶν (17), ἡμῶν (18).

(Topic) which refers to τὸν Χριστόν (2.29-30): Origen repeats his (Jewish-)Christian frame. As personal comment he adds the words κατηγορεῖν αὐτόθεν οἶεται, a repetition from 2.27 with an extra element αὐτόθεν. This αὐτόθεν (3, ‘immediately’, ‘without adding anything’) has Focus in the main clause: Celsus thinks he can attack even *without providing any proof*. Origen had discussed this objection previously in 4.2.

4.3.4-5 Celsus:

4 *Τίς <γὰρ> ὁ νοῦς τῆς* *What is the purpose of such a descent on*
τοιᾷσδε καθόδου τῷ θεῷ; *the part of God?*

In this fragment a rhetorical question of Celsus is quoted, by which is suggested that there can be no purpose for God to descend to the earth.³ The implicit argument is: when there is no purpose, it did not happen. The possible addition of the particle γάρ (4, as proposed by Bader: 1940) can serve to mark more clearly the introduction of an embedded section explaining the previous statement, in which the notion of a divine descent was denoted by Celsus as blameworthy (αἰσχιστον καὶ οὐδὲ δεῖται μακροῦ λόγου ὁ ἔλεγχος, 4.2.3-4).

This rhetorical question is the first one in a series of five questions quoted in this chapter. They can be characterized as diaphonic elements in the monological text:⁴ Celsus evokes a communicative situation. He presents his argument in the form of a dialogue with an implied addressee. The reader however is given access to only one side of the conversation, the questions of Celsus. In the comment of Origen some of the implied answers are made explicit.

4.3.5-13

5 οὐχ ὁρῶν ὅτι καὶ καθ’ ἡμᾶς
ἐστὶ τῆς καθόδου ὁ νοῦς, προηγουμένως μὲν <τὸ> τὰ λεγόμενα
ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ «ἀπολωλότα πρόβατα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ»
ἐπιστρέψαι, δευτέρως δὲ τὸ διὰ τὴν ἐκείνων ἀπείθειαν ἄραι
ἀπ’ αὐτῶν τὴν ὀνομασθεῖσαν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ δοῦναι
«ἄλλοις γεωργοῖς» παρὰ τοὺς πάλαι Ἰουδαίους Χριστιανοῖς,
11 «τοὺς καρποὺς» τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ βασιλείας «ἀποδώσουσι»
τῷ θεῷ «ἐν τοῖς» ἐκάστης πράξεως οὔσης καρποῦ τῆς
βασιλείας «καιροῖς».

Origen begins his comment with the participle ὁρῶν (5) which is dependent on φησι (4). Right from the start Origen highlights again Celsus' lack of insight: he fails to see (οὐγ ὁρῶν, 5)⁵ what⁶ is the purpose

³ Borret (Vol.2, 1968:192-193 n.1) compares Celsus' approach with critical questions of Epicureans concerning Platonic and Stoic views on the creation of the world. These questions were about the purpose, the time and the way in which it was done, just like those of Celsus here and in 4.6 (purpose), in 4.5 (way) and in 4.7 (time), cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.9; Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 5.146 ff.

⁴ See chapter II 3.1.

⁵ Similar use of οὐχ ὁρῶν immediately following a quote from Celsus and depending on a previous verb of ‘saying’ or ‘thinking’ in 3.6.6; 4.76.3; 5.5.21; 6.15.10; 6.36.32; 8.17.4 (all in order to blame Celsus for lack of insight).

⁶ What can be the function of *καὶ* after *οἱτι*? The obvious solution seems to be to take it as a scope particle modifying *καθ' ἡμᾶς*, but that is not convincing in my view. The phrase 'according to us *also*' would call for another opinion expressed in the context.

(ὁ νοῦς⁷) of God's descent according to Christians (καθ' ἡμᾶς⁸ is in the Focus position). Origen even formulates a double purpose, in a long sentence which is clearly structured by προηγουμένως μὲν (6) ... δευτέρως δέ (8). The wording of both purposes in biblical terms and quotes can create maximal credibility among the Christian readers (argumentation based on authority). Some short added words of Origen serve to explain the elements of the biblical metaphors. The limited explanation indicates the expectation Origen has of his addressees: they are familiar enough with story of the parables he hints to; Origen just needs to explain his interpretation of them. I note that Origen's choice of biblical phrases and his interpretation of them fits in with the theme he discussed already in 4.2: the theme of 'Jews and Christians' (see 2.7-10, 18-19). Both groups are given a central role here: the Jews in the first part, the Christians in the second.

Both purposes are indicated by articular infinitives, <τὸ> ... ἐπιστρέψαι (7-9) and τὸ ... ἄραι ... καὶ δοῦναι (9-10). The first-mentioned purpose of God's descent is the conversion of the Jews, who are denoted here metaphorically as 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (ἀπολωλότα πρόβατα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ, 7), a phrase explicitly derived from the gospel (τὰ λεγόμενα ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, 6-7: words of Jesus about his own mission in *Matt.*15.24 and about the mission of the apostles in *Matt.*10.6). The second purpose is explained in quotes from the Parable of the Tenants (*Matt.*21.41,43). Origen mixes words from the gospel with his own explaining phrases, as is represented in the following diagram:

	Words from the gospel	Words of Origen
Action	τὸ ... ἄραι ... τὴν ... βασιλείαν θεοῦ καὶ δοῦναι (8-9, <i>Matt.</i> 21.43)	
Groups: a. Jews		τοὺς πάλαι Ἰουδαίους (10)
b. Christians	ἄλλοις γεωργοῖς (10, <i>Matt.</i> 21.41)	Χριστιανοῖς (10)
Reason: a. Jews		διὰ τὴν ἐκείνων ἀπειθείαν (8)
b. Christians	τοὺς καρπούς ... ἀποδώσουσι ἐν τοῖς ... καιροῖς (11-3, <i>Matt.</i> 21.41)	ἐκάστης πράξεως οὔσης καρποῦ τῆς βασιλείας (12-13)

As is shown in the diagram Origen leaves some elements blank and expects his readers will complete the image. The elements he expresses himself in his own words contain the most salient points of his discourse: the opposition Jews – Christians and especially the moral difference between these two groups: unbelief – good actions. The constituent διὰ τὴν ἐκείνων ἀπειθείαν (8) has Focus (as placed before the infinitive ἄραι): Origen draws full attention to the unbelief of the Jews. The implication is that the transmission (τὸ ἄραι καὶ δοῦναι⁹) of 'the kingdom of God' is caused by the Jews themselves: the purpose of God's descent (τῆς καθόδου ὁ νοῦς, 6) was to convert (τὸ ἐπιστρέψαι) them, but their unbelief brought about the loss of the kingdom and the transmission of it to the Christians. Their 'fruit

which is absent (the dative τῷ θεῷ seems to be not an acceptable parallel, for it cannot mean here 'according to God'). As possible solution I propose to connect καὶ with ὅτι, which can be interpreted as interrogation here ('what'); καὶ can be used with interrogations to make a question more precise or urgent: 'what exactly', 'what actually', cf. 1.41.6 τί ποτε καὶ λέγει; see LSJ s.v. καὶ B6 in interrogations. Marcovich (2001) avoids problems by deleting καὶ in his edition.

⁷ This final significance ('purpose') of νοῦς is confirmed in the next quote where νοῦς is elaborated in ἵνα.

⁸ Origen uses this combination καθ' ἡμᾶς rather often to denote 'our (= the Christian) opinion', e.g. 2.9.24; 2.20.92; 3.28.17; 3.66.14; 6.2.4; 6.40.7; 6.69.13.

⁹ Mark the aorist tense of the infinitives: the actions of the 'transmission' ('take away' and 'give') are presented as completed. Origen took over these verbs from the text of *Matthew*, but changed the tense. In *Matthew* the future tense is used in both verbs: the 'transmission' is presented as an action which, seen from the moment of Jesus' speech, will take place in the future.

of the kingdom' they will render to God,¹⁰ is interpreted by Origen as the (good) actions of the Christians (ἐκάστης πράξεως, 12) and contrasted with the unbelief of the Jews.¹¹

4.3.14-17

Ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν ἀπὸ πλειόνων ὀλίγα εἵπομεν πρὸς τὴν
15 Κέλσου πεῦσιν εἰπόντος· Τίς γὰρ ὁ νοῦς τῆς τοιαύτης
καθόδου τῷ θεῷ; Κέλσος δὲ τὰ μήτε ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων μήτε
ὑφ' ἡμῶν λεχθέντα ἅν' ἑαυτῷ ἀποφαίνεται λέγων·

We have selected a few points out of much that we could say in reply to Celsus' question when he asks: What is the purpose of such a descent on the part of God? But Celsus invents for himself notions that would have been held neither by Jews nor by us when he says:

The particle οὖν (14) indicates the beginning of the next section of Origen's discourse, the second part of this chapter. This passage serves as an introduction of the next fragment of Celsus.

Origen marks a clear difference between himself and Celsus: Ἡμεῖς μὲν (14) ... Κέλσος δέ (16),¹² saying: my responses to the question are relevant, whereas Celsus' words have nothing to do with the reality.¹³ This idea is underlined by the words ἑαυτῷ ἀποφαίνεται λέγων (17):¹⁴ Origen presents his opponent as speaking to himself and living outside of the real world. Origen's salient point is marked by the hyperbaton ἑαυτῷ ... λέγων (17) and the preverbal focal position of the ἑαυτῷ.

In the second sentence the words ἀπὸ πλειόνων ὀλίγα (14) are given the Focus position: Origen wants to make clear that his reaction is only one of the possible responses. From the rhetorical point of view such a remark functions as a suggestive contribution to the undermining of the position of the opponent: without formulating the other possible arguments explicitly the suggestion is made that Celsus' point is untenable for many reasons.

4.3.17-18 Celsus:

17

μάθη τὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις;

Ἥ ἴνα Was it in order to learn what was going on among men?

In the previous question (4-5) Celsus had suggested that there could not be a purpose for a divine descent. Here he starts a section to underline this standpoint by suggesting an alternative,¹⁵ which however will turn out to be not acceptable in the end. The examination of this alternative and the conclusion that it is untenable, is used by Celsus as a means to reinforce his initial statement. Demonstrating that the

¹⁰ The phrase τοὺς καρποὺς ... βασιλείας is presented as salient information (Focus position before the participle). Remarkably Origen did not change the tense of ἀποδώσουσι. This form is literally quoted, but in a creative way adapted by Origen to the own sentence; in *Matthew* it is a third person plural indicative, whereas Origen uses the same form as dative plural of the participle, connected with Χριστιανοῖς. The future in Origen's text can be interpreted from the moment of the completion of the 'transmission': this is the start of the Christian movement and the 'rendering of fruit in due season' will take place *after* this starting point.

¹¹ For a similar explanation of these verses see 4.22.23ff. For a discussion on a possible anti-Semitic character of these and similar passages, see Borret *ad loc.* (Vol.2, 1968:236-7 n.1).

¹² These words function as contrastive Topic.

¹³ τὰ ... λεχθέντα ἅν': here ἅν' + participle (cf. CGCG 2019:610 §52.7) can be interpreted as having counterfactual value: 'what would have been said neither by the Jews nor by us'. See for a similar use of the participle 1.18.19; 1.40.11; 4.3.20; 4.3.51; 5.4.1.

¹⁴ On the use of the present in the presentation of Celsus' actions, see chapter II 4.2.

¹⁵ The initial particle ἢ is used by Celsus and Origen to introduce an alternative reason or argument, often in the form of a rhetorical question. The first alternative may be left implicit. The reader is invited to consider if the second alternative might be more convincing, often with the suggestion that it is not; see also my commentary on 4.15.17 and 4.17.6. More examples: 1.14.14; 2.7.5; 2.13.6; 2.8.39 (where it is also followed by ἴνα), 4.59.11; 7.18.15 and 16.

alternative appears to be a dead end, can make the first solution more credible.

The alternative is: maybe there *was* a purpose. Celsus formulates it as a rhetorical question: ‘Or was it in order to learn what was going on among men?’

4.3.18-19

18	Οὐδείς γὰρ ἡμῶν φησιν ὅτι, ἵνα μάθῃ τὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις, Χριστὸς ἐπιδημεῖ τῷ βίῳ.	None of us says that Christ comes to this life in order to learn what is going on among men.
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Origen’s response is short: no Christian says that. Celsus’ alternative is denied and rejected by Christians (*status conjecturalis* as defence position). The phrase οὐδείς ... ἡμῶν (18) has Focus and the first person ἡμῶν refers to the involvement of both the author and the readers. In terms of the modern argumentation theory Origen’s reaction can be interpreted as a protest against Celsus’ suggestive use of the straw man fallacy.¹⁶

With γάρ (18) the remark is presented as an explanation of the previous objection that Celsus does not speak to his opponents, but only to himself (ἐαυτῷ ἀποφαίνεται λέγων, 17). In οὐδείς ... ἡμῶν φησιν the previous τὰ μήτε ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων μήτε ὑφ’ ἡμῶν λεχθέντα (16-17) is recalled. With Χριστὸς ἐπιδημεῖ τῷ βίῳ (19) Celsus’ words (‘the descent of God’) are incorporated in Origen’s frame of Christ’s life on earth. Origen makes clear that Christians do believe that Christ descended to the earth, but that they do not agree with the reason for it that is suggested by Celsus.

4.3.19-21

19	Εἴτα ὥς εἰπόντων ἅν τινων τὸ ἵνα μάθῃ τὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις, ἐαυτῷ ἀνθυποφέρει πρὸς τοῦτο τὸ οὐ γὰρ οἶδε πάντα;	Then, as if some people would have said that this was the reason, he makes the rejoinder to his own question: <i>What? Does not he know everything?</i>
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With εἴτα (19) Origen indicates the structure of his discourse: this next step will be the third part of this chapter, which only consists of an introduction and a quote. Origen’s comment on this quote is included in the introduction. The comment starts with the Setting constituent ὥς ... ἀνθρώποις (19-20). In ὥς εἰπόντων ἅν τινων (19-20; ὥς + ἅν + participle/ genitive absolute¹⁷) Origen leaves the responsibility of this statement to Celsus and indicates the counterfactual value: ‘as if some people would have said ...’. Origen picks up the dialogical setting suggested by Celsus’ questions, but points at the hypothetical character of the conversation Celsus seems to be involved in: he responds to answers that are not really given; so his reply is directed to himself (ἐαυτῷ ἀνθυποφέρει, 20-21); Focus is again on ἐαυτῷ as in 17) and not effective in a debate with Jews or Christians.¹⁸

The fragment quoted from Celsus’ text is a short clause, preceded by the article τό which converts the utterance as a whole into a noun:¹⁹ τὸ ‘οὐ γὰρ οἶδε πάντα;’ (21). For the explanation of γάρ I recall the previous remarks about the rhetorical questions as diaphonic elements (see comment on 3.4-5 above). In dialogues γάρ is frequently used in answers: in response to a question or statement a speaker can support his not expressed reaction by a γάρ-clause which gives the reason for the implied assent or dissent (‘Yes, for...’; ‘No, for ...’). The answer is sometimes given in the form of a question with the

¹⁶ Formulating the answer of the opponent and replying to this never given answer is denoted as a wrong move in the pragma-dialectical argumentation theory (straw man fallacy), see chapter III 3.4.3.

¹⁷ See Rijksbaron (2002: 119 n.4 and 123); CGCG (2019:610 §52.7 and 627 §52.39).

¹⁸ Cf. a similar objection in 2.24.1-2 ; 6.72.19-20; 6.62.26; 6.63.20; 8.71.2.

¹⁹ Cf. also in the preceding line τὸ ἵνα μάθῃ τὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις (20). Substantivisation (CGCG 2019 §28.23-25) of a longer utterance or quote is not unusual in *Contra Celsum*, see e.g. 1.6.13; 1.9.5; 1.21.23; 1.35.8; 2.16.38,48,49; 2.24.40; 6.54.13; 7.28.34.

undertone of rejection and indignation. In the γάρ-clause the ground for this (ironical) indignation is given.²⁰ This applies to the communicative setting which is evoked here by Celsus. When the interrogative form is converted into a declarative form the complete line of thought could be rendered as follows: [*tacitly*: God descended in order to learn what is going on among men] – ‘What! No, this is not possible, *for* God knows everything’. Celsus uses the more suggestive form of a rhetorical question (‘What? Does he not know everything?’) to underline how preposterous it would be to think of a divine descent driven by curiosity; that would entail the unacceptable consequence that God would not be omniscient.²¹

Here the option proposed by Celsus (ἢ ἵνα ...17-18) appears to be an unacceptable alternative. This step should convince the audience to accept Celsus’ initial statement: the divine descent has no purpose and therefore it did not happen nor will it happen.

4.3.21-22

21 Εἴτα ὥς Then, as if we answer that he does know,
ἀποκρινουμένων ὅτι οἶδε, πάλιν ἐπαπορεῖ λέγων ὅτι he again raises a fresh objection, saying:

With εἴτα (21) Origen indicates the beginning of the fourth part of this chapter. He introduces the next quote from Celsus with a brief comment to control the reception of his readers. With the constituent ὥς ἀποκρινουμένων ὅτι οἶδε (21-22), which functions as Setting, Origen indicates the – in his opinion – unrealistic situation which brings Celsus to his next objection (again with a ὥς + participle clause, as in 3.19-20). By placing the element πάλιν (22) in the Focus position Origen seems to express some aversion: ‘another objection again!’, a subtle indication of the author’s attitude.

4.3.22-24 Celsus:

22 ἄρα Does he, while knowing, not correct, and
οἶδε μὲν, οὐκ ἐπανορθοῖ δέ, οὐδ’ οἶόν τε αὐτῷ θεία δύναμις is he unable to correct by divine power?
ἐπανορθοῦν;

Celsus’ next step raises a new issue: the divine power to correct. The theme of God’s knowledge is not further developed, but quickly conceded for the sake of argument. Celsus’ strategy seems to be to hit the opponents with a barrage of rhetorical questions and to evoke the image that he has plenty of arguments, rather than to elaborate all the arguments.

The question is introduced as a *yes-no*-question by the neutral interrogation article ἄρα (22). The structure of the sentence is indicated here by μὲν .. δέ (23): ‘Does God know (everything), but does he not correct and is it not possible to correct by divine power?’ The argument is based on an unexpressed assumption: who (or: when God) has knowledge (of the human situation), (he) is expected to correct (this situation).

The constituents οἶδε, ἐπανορθοῖ and οἶόν τε (23) function as Focus here, whereas in the end θεία δύναμις (23) is highlighted by the position *before* the infinitive ἐπανορθοῦν. Within this constituent θεία is the most salient element: Celsus suggests that God as having *divine* power is supposed to be able to achieve correction.²² Celsus’ intention becomes more clear when this passage is connected to the next fragment quoted in 32-34 (see below). Here Celsus reproached Christians for limiting God’s power by

²⁰ See for the use of γάρ in answers Denniston (1954:73 and 76-77); Bonifazi & Drummen & De Kreij (2016, Vol.3, 3.3.1.5 §95-98).

²¹ See for Celsus’ conception of divine qualities chapter VI 3.4.

²² See on the adjective-noun order chapter II 6.7 with special attention for this passage.

their belief in a divine descent to the earth.

The notion of correction was touched upon in δικαιοτήης (4.2.3).²³ By the way, Celsus does not speak out clearly on the nature of the correction. What has to be corrected? Is the indefinite τὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις (19) the intended object (cf. τῶν τῇδε, 4.2.3)? And what is exactly wrong with it?²⁴ For Celsus these issues can remain implicit to highlight his real objection here: Christians limit God's divine power.

4.3.24-30

24 Καὶ ταῦτα δὲ πάντα εὐήθως λέγει. Αἰεὶ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ, κατὰ γενεὰς εἰς ψυχὰς ὁσίας μεταβαίνοντι καὶ φίλους θεοῦ καὶ προφῆτας κατασκευάζοντι, ἐπανορθοῖ τοὺς ἀκούοντας τῶν λεγομένων· καὶ ἐν τῇ Χριστοῦ δ' ἐπιδημίᾳ ἐπανορθοῖ τῷ κατὰ χριστιανισμὸν λόγῳ οὐχὶ τοὺς μὴ βουλομένους ἀλλὰ τοὺς τὸν κρεῖττονα βίον καὶ **30** ἀρέσκοντα τῷ θεῷ ἐλομένους.

All these questions are foolish. For by His Logos God is always correcting those who listen to what He says. In each generation His Logos descends into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets. And by the advent of Christ he corrects through the Christian gospel not the unwilling but those who choose the higher life which is pleasing to God.

Origen's first response is simple and clear: 'These words are all naively spoken.' With καί (24) this response is connected to the preceding comments, whereas δέ (24) marks this comment as contrasting with the preceding part of the series: his previous remarks were out of touch with reality, this one is naïve.²⁵ The adverbial εὐήθως (24) has Focus here: Origen not only blames Celsus for lack of knowledge (as he does frequently), but expresses doubts about the level of the argument, thus arousing a negative image of his opponent (*ethos* argumentation). Probably this strong judgement is motivated by the fact that Celsus raised in his question doubts about an issue that is crucial for Origen: God's constant resistance against evil and his commitment to correct mankind (cf. 4.13 below).

This idea is given full attention in the next sentences in which Origen's judgement is explained, as is indicated by γὰρ (24).²⁶ This explanation consists of two clauses, connected by καὶ (27), which have a comparable content: in both clauses is expressed how God corrects mankind. In the first clause ὁ θεός (25) functions as the Topic constituent²⁷ and the verb ἐπανορθοῖ (27)²⁸ is the central element in both clauses. Before these verbs the most salient points of information are placed: the instrumental phrases τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ (25) and ἐν τῇ Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίᾳ (27-28). These Focus constituents contrast with dative θεῖα δυνάμει (23) which had been used by Celsus. Here the point of difference with Celsus is expressed: God does not act without means by mere power, but works through his own λόγος, which is specified in the second clause as 'through the advent of Christ'.²⁹ Both clauses end with the object constituents

²³ See for more explanation the commentary on 4.7.8-11, where δικαιοῶ and ἐπανορθόω are used in parallel.

²⁴ From Celsus' words quoted in 4.69 we can infer that in his view God does not correct the world; the amount of evil will always be the same (4.62). See chapter VI 3.5.

²⁵ See for καί ... δέ Rijksbaron (1997b), who argues that in this combination καὶ serves as connector and the adverbial δέ marks an item as (pragmatically) distinct from the preceding item ('on the other hand', 'for that matter'). See also CGCG (2019:697 §59.67). Here the distinction could be between unrealistic and naïve: after the preceding remarks which suggest things Christians do not say, Celsus' next remark shows, according to Origen, a simple, foolish way of thinking. For a similar use of καί ... δέ see e.g. 1.7.17; 1.10.20; 1.57.27; 2.1.47; 2.20.47; 2.24.42.

²⁶ An example of the PUSH-function of γὰρ; see chapter II 5.2.

²⁷ Origen takes over the subject from Celsus' sentence, so it is not unexpected for the reader, but needs to be explicated because of the fact that 'Celsus' was the subject of the preceding λέγει.

²⁸ The present tense denotes the typical, continuous, not completed character of God's correcting activity, which is reinforced by the adverb αἰεὶ.

²⁹ I prefer an instrumental interpretation of ἐν (LSJ s.v. III). Borret (Vol.2, 1968:193) takes ἐν ... ἐπιδημίᾳ as a temporal phrase and translates 'au temps de la venue du Christ'. In that case this phrase would function as Setting, parallel with αἰεὶ. That would change the Focus in the second clause: τῷ ... λόγῳ would be the Focus after the topical verb. I see two problems in this interpretation: I doubt whether a temporal interpretation of ἐν ... ἐπιδημίᾳ is really possible. I found no convincing parallels in

which function as the unmarked Remainder: the issue is not *who* is corrected, but *how* this is done.³⁰

In the first clause, moreover, Origen refers to a fragment from the Bible (*Wisdom* 7.27, quoted with an adaptation of the case of the participles). His Christian readers are expected to recognize the quote and to take it as an endorsement of Origen's position. The passage of *Wisdom* in which is spoken about qualities of ἡ σοφία, is here, as on other places, interpreted by Origen as referring to the Logos of God.³¹ In the fragment quoted some elements are significant for Origen's argumentation: in κατὰ γενεάς ('in each generation') the permanent character of God's correcting activity is referred to; in φίλους θεοῦ καὶ προφήτας κατασκευάζοντι (26) the effect of God's intervention is denoted: people become friends of God and prophets; finally, in εἰς ψυχὰς ὁσίας μεταβαίνουντι (25-26) this activity is connected to the descent of the Logos and focused on 'holy souls'. This focus on pious people is taken over by Origen in his own explanation (τοὺς ἀκούοντας τῶν λεγομένων, 27): God corrects those who listen to what he says.

In the second clause some elements of the first sentence are more specifically formulated. Here again Origen uses the word λόγος to indicate how God acts, but by adding the words κατὰ χριστιανισμόν it gets a different meaning: 'the doctrine of Christianity', or 'Christian message'.³² This change of meaning is prepared by τῶν λεγομένων (27). Origen's subtle playing with related words results in the following picture of how 'God corrects' (ὁ θεὸς ... ἐνανορθοῖ, 25-27): his permanent (ἀεί, 24) correction is performed through his Logos (τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ, 25), which is expressed in 'words that are spoken' (τῶν λεγομένων, 27); in the Christian era God's correction can be seen in the advent of Christ (ἐν τῇ Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίᾳ, 27-28) and it works through the words that are spoken in the Christian church (τῷ κατὰ χριστιανισμόν λόγῳ, 28).³³ A further development can be observed in the final section of the second clause, where Origen calls attention to the human responsibility and to the impact the correction has for the way of living: God corrects those who are not unwilling and choose to live a life that is pleasing to God (οὐχὶ ... ἐλομένους, 29-30). These words can be understood against the background of the concept of the free will, which is important in Origen's theology. This issue is discussed again some lines below (38-49).

To conclude: these lines are not only defensive, but offer to the Christian readers a condensed explanation of crucial aspects of the Christian doctrine, by pointing at the effect of God's corrective actions (to become φίλους θεοῦ καὶ προφήτας, 26) and at the importance of the choice for a better life (τὸν κρείττονα βίον καὶ τῷ θεῷ ἀρέσκοντα, 29-30).

4.3.31-32

Οὐκ οἶδα δὲ καὶ ποταπὴν ἐπ' ἀνθρώπῳ βουλόμενος ὅ I do not know what sort of correction
 32 Κέλσος γενέσθαι ἐπηπόρησε λέγων· Celsus would have liked when he raised
 another question, saying:

Here Origen introduces the next fragment from Celsus' text as the next step in his discourse (δέ, 31).

Contra Celsum for this meaning (in 2.74.25 κατὰ τὴν .. ἐπιδημίαν is used to refer to the time of Jesus' advent; Bauer, s.v. ἐν II presents some examples from the NT of a temporal ἐν + a noun that denote an event rather than a moment in time or a period). And, secondly, this would seem to limit the time in which the Christian word or doctrine functions as means of correction to the period in which Christ was on earth. Would Origen in this case not rather have written μετὰ τὴν ... ἐπιδημίαν ('after the advent ...')?

³⁰ See chapter II 6.3, text (43) and (44) for a discussion of the pragmatical functions in this passage.

³¹ See for this interpretation 6.63.5; 7.17.5; 8.14.9-10.

³² The same combination is used in 8.53.42, where it is parallel to the more frequently used phrase ὁ Χριστιανῶν λόγος (1.7.13; 1.21.19; 3.13.22; 3.28.36; 3.44.19-20; 3.76.9; 3.79.8; 3.81.1-2; 4.5.8-9; 4.6.25; 4.48.2; 5.65.22; 7.8.10; 8.52.3; 8.69.14). For a similar combination with κατὰ see 3.78.14 τῇ κατὰ χριστιανισμόν θεοσεβείᾳ.

³³ For a similar explanation see 4.4.11-21 (also in two phases and with words as method for improvement).

The words ποταπὴν ἐπανάρθωσιν (31) are in the Focus position³⁴ for Origen's criticism will concentrate on this point: what is the implied concept of correction? With οὐκ οἶδα³⁵ ... βουλόμενος (31) Origen blames Celsus for being too vague in the expression of his intention. This functions as a stepping stone: after the quotation Origen himself gives (suggestively in an interrogative form) an interpretation of the intentions of his opponent and continues to refute this interpretation.

The use of the aorist in ἐπηγόρησε is remarkable: so far in this chapter Origen had used present forms to present the 'speech-acts' of Celsus (ἀποφαίνεται, 17; ἀνθυποφέρει, 21; ἐπαπορεῖ, 22; λέγει 24), so why does he switch here to the aorist? The explanation may be that Origen using the aorist transfers the focus from the text, by which Celsus 'still speaks' (present), to the background of the text. Origen takes the reader back to the moment in the past when Celsus drafted his text. At that time certain considerations (Origen suggests that he had a certain concept of correction in mind) led him 'to raise another question' (ἐπηγόρησε, 32). Here Origen presents the Celsus' act of writing down his next question as completed and located before his own moment of speech. The use of the imperfect ἤθελε (34 below, after the quote) fits in with this focus on the past: here Origen speaks about Celsus' concept and intentions that may have led to the question. The consideration of these intentions is presented by the imperfect as a situation that lasted for some time in the past.³⁶

4.3.32-34 Celsus:

32 Ἄρ' οὐχ οἶόν τε αὐτῷ *It is possible for him to correct merely by*
 δυνάμει θεῖα ἐπανορθοῦν, ἐὰν μὴ φύσει τινὰ ἐπὶ τοῦτο *divine power without really sending*
someone for that purpose, isn't it?
 πέμψη;

Again a rhetorical question of Celsus; the particle combination ἄρ' οὐχ (32) indicates that a positive answer to the question is suggested: 'He surely is able to ..., right?' This question is linked to the previous question, in which was suggested that it is incongruous to say that God would not be able to correct in a direct way (23-24). Here the point is: it is preposterous to say that God would only be able to correct by really sending someone (and not by exercising his power). Celsus contrasts δυνάμει θεῖα and φύσει (33): 'by divine power', which seems to imply 'directly/ without (physical) means' versus 'physically, by nature' i.e. 'really, literally' (see Lampe, s.v. φύσις II D).³⁷

4.3.34-36

34 Ἄρα γὰρ ἤθελε φαντασιούμενοις τοῖς ἀνθρώποις *Did he want God to appear to men in*
 ὑπὸ θεοῦ, ἀπειληφότος μὲν ἀθρόως τὴν κακίαν ἐμφύοντος *visions and to use this means of*
 δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν, τὴν ἐπανάρθωσιν γενέσθαι; *correction in order to take away evil*
altogether and to implant virtue?

At this point Origen does not opt for denial, but rather for justification as defence position (*status*

³⁴ This constituent is marked even more by initial position, separated from the verb γενέσθαι it belongs to. The particle καί seems to give some extra urgency or (ironical) surprise to the question, see Denniston (1954:309-311); Bonifazi & Drummen & De Kreij (2016, Vol.3, 3.2.2 §45 and 3.3.1.4 §89-94).

³⁵ On the rare use of the first person *singular* see chapter II 3.2.2.

³⁶ See on the use of the tenses chapter II 4.3.

³⁷ Cf. the somewhat more specific paraphrase by Andresen (1955:92): ... (die Vorstellung) 'dass Gott sich der "Natur" (φύσει) bedienen muss, um die Welt zu bessern'. In a similar way Lona (2005:221-223): 'von Natur aus', with a reference to the human corporality. Maybe φύσει expresses some (ironical) surprise (Lampe s.v. φύσις II D2). Chadwick (1953:186) interprets φύσει as attributive with τινά; links it to ἐπὶ τοῦτο and translates 'some one specially endowed for the purpose' (in this way also Borret 1968:193 and Fiedrowicz-Barthold 2011:667), but I found no parallels for this solution. An adverbial interpretation and an opposition of the two datives seem more probable to me.

qualitatis). He reacts with a rhetorical question, which is presented as an explanation (γὰρ, 34) of his previous words Οὐκ οἶδα δὲ καὶ ποταπὴν γενέσθαι (31). Origen infers from Celsus' question that 'sending someone' is not an appropriate option for Celsus, because, as he suggested, a God would be able to correct by divine power. Origen's strategy is to accept Celsus' alternative (correction by divine power) for a moment and to put a question about the implication of this alternative: was it his intention ... ?³⁸ Origen himself formulates a possible intention of Celsus in his own words, which is rhetorically a clever move. The rhetorical question suggests that this was the only possible alternative for Celsus. Origen dedicates the rest of the chapter to the refutation of this alternative. The implicit conclusion is left to the reader: when the alternative has to be rejected, we must return to the first option ('by sending someone'), which is not so inappropriate as Celsus had suggested. Besides: this strategy of Origen is not unlike the straw man approach of Celsus in the fragments Origen has quoted and criticized previously in 4.3: he formulates himself a standpoint that has not been put forward by his opponent and subsequently replies to it.³⁹

In Origen's wording of the alternative participles have an important place: φαντασιουμένοις (34, 'receive images/ visions'⁴⁰) is marked by its position before the noun it belongs to: Origen wants to express that men are the recipients whereas God is the agent (ὕπὸ θεοῦ, 35), which is in accordance with the idea of a correction by 'divine power'. The next two participle phrases are dependent on θεοῦ and follow their noun: they are subordinated to the first participle clause and serve to offer a more detailed, two-part (μὲν ... δέ, 35-36) description of the concept of correction-through-visions. The preposed participles ἀπειλοφότος and ἐμφύοντος (35) have Focus within their clause:⁴¹ God has taken away evil altogether (the perfect denotes the result of this action: all evil is gone) and implants virtue. The image of 'implanting virtue' activates again the notion of human inactivity in this concept of correction (τὴν ἐπανόρθωσιν γένεσθαι, 36): what God planted grows like a plant without any interference of men.

4.3.36-40

36

οὖν ζητήσῃ, εἰ ἀκόλουθον ἢ εἰ δυνατόν ἐστι τῇ φύσει τὸ

38 τοιοῦτον· ἡμεῖς δὲ εἵπομεν ἂν ὅτι ἔστω, καὶ δυνατόν

αὐτὸ εἶναι· ποῦ οὖν τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, καὶ ποῦ ἐπαινετὴ συγκατά-

θεσις πρὸς τὸ ἀληθὲς ἢ ἀποδεκτὴ ἀνάνευσις ἀπὸ τοῦ ψεύδους;

Ἄλλος μὲν

Well, someone else will ask whether this is consistent with nature and intrinsically possible. But we would say: let it be granted that this is possible; but what about free will? And how can acceptance of the truth be praiseworthy or refusal of what is false be laudable?

With οὖν Origen indicates a next step in his discourse, in which he reflects on the alternative concept of divine correction he had outlined. The hypothetical character of the discussion is indicated by the inferential future ζητήσῃ (37) and the potential optative εἵπομεν ἂν (38).⁴² By μὲν (36) ... δέ (38) the two-part structure of the reply is marked. Origen firstly expresses two possible research issues which he will ignore in his discussion and which are attributed to an imaginary discussion partner (ἄλλος μὲν (36), 'someone else'). Here Origen creates the effect of the rhetorical figure of the *praeteritio*: just by mentioning these objections (εἰ ἀκόλουθον ἢ εἰ δυνατόν ἐστι, 37 – is it consistent or possible?) it is suggested (without any demonstration) to the reader that these points may be serious objections, but minor as compared to the real point Origen himself brings into the debate.⁴³ In this way Origen indicates

³⁸ On the use of the imperfect, see the comment on 4.3.31-32 above.

³⁹ See the comment on 4.3.18-19 above.

⁴⁰ φαντασιόω is used in *Contra Celsum* in the context of images in dreams, hallucinations, inspiration of prophets (1.66.34; 1.48.7; 2.55.22; 2.60.5).

⁴¹ See on the word order in participle clauses chapter II 6.6.

⁴² See chapter II 4.5.

⁴³ On *praeteritio* see Lausberg (1973:436-437).

that he has two lines of defence.

The second point is indicated by δέ (38) and is presented as an embedded dialogue between an undefined ἄλλος, whose position is reported only indirectly, and the first person (Origen), who is given plenty of space to ask his questions directly. The opposition ἄλλος μέν... ἡμεῖς δέ moreover contributes to Origen's *ethos*:⁴⁴ without disqualifying his imaginary discussion partner Origen presents himself positively as benevolent towards his opponent and willing to go along with him: 'as a concession I accept that it is possible' (ἔστω ... εἶναι, 38-39). This concession is presented as a next stage in the discourse which raises a new question (ποῦ οὖν, 39⁴⁵): what about free will (τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, 39⁴⁶)? In a rhetorical question Origen indicates that Celsus' idea of a direct intervention of God 'by divine power' leaves no room for human responsibility and moral judgements. This objection is presented in two rhetorical questions with an emphatic anaphora of the interrogative ποῦ⁴⁷ and antitheses (συγκατάθεσις – ἀνάνευσις; ἀληθές – ψεύδους, 39-40) and parallelism in the second part, as can be seen in the following diagram:

ποῦ	τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν		
ποῦ	ἐπαινετή	συγκατάθεσις	πρὸς τὸ ἀληθές
	ἀποδεκτὴ	ἀνάνευσις	ἀπὸ τοῦ ψεύδους

4.3.41-46

Ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰ ἅπαξ δοθείη καὶ δυνατόν τοῦτο καὶ πρεπόντως
42 γινόμενον, διὰ τί οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ζητήσει τις τὴν ἀρχήν,
 ἀνάλογόν τι φάσκων τῷ Κέλσῳ, ὅτι οὐχ οἷόν τε ἦν τῷ θεῷ
 θεία δυνάμει μὴδ' ἐπανορθώσεως δεομένους ποιῆσαι τοὺς
45 ἀνθρώπους ἀλλ' αὐτόθεν σπουδαίους καὶ τελείους, οὐδὲ
 τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑποστάσης τῆς κακίας;

Furthermore, if we allow for the moment that this is not only possible but also appropriate, would one not be even more justified in asking a similar question of Celsus? Viz.: Was it impossible for God by divine power even to make men needing no correction, but immediately good and perfect, so that evil should not exist at all?

Ἀλλά (41) indicates that the previous point is not continued ('So far on this point') and with καί the following argument is presented as the *next* argument, that is *also* a reply to Celsus' concept of direct correction by divine power: 'one can *also* put this question: ...'. In the subordinate clause εἰ ἅπαξ δοθείη ... γινόμενον (41) Origen reminds the reader of the conditional (εἰ) and hypothetical (optative δοθείη) status of the discussion in this passage. In δυνατόν and πρεπόντως (41) the two (emphatically indicated by καί ... καί) previous concessions are recalled (cf. εἰ ἀκόλουθον ἢ εἰ δυνατόν ἐστι, 37): 'if it is once conceded that this is not only possible, but also appropriate...'.⁴⁸

After these text structuring and introducing words Origen presents his next argument again as a

⁴⁴ To this may be added: as Origen defends the Christian approach here, this sounds positively for the *ethos* of the whole Christian community (cf. chapter II 3.2.2).

⁴⁵ On οὖν in questions, see Denniston (1954:426).

⁴⁶ The combination τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν (litt. 'what is in our power; developed from an adverbial accusative like τὸ ἐπ' ἐμοί – 'as far as it is in my power' cf. LSJ s.v. ἐπί Bg) is used by Origen (and other authors as Plutarch, Nemesius, Plotinus, Eusebius) as a noun, meaning 'free will' (without its original connection with the first person; it can be combined with a genitive: τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν Ἡρώδου – 'free will of Herod', 1.66.43, see also 5.21.15). Origen considers the concept of free will as basic for moral judgements and is eager to defend it against determinism, see *Contra Celsum* 4.67.6; 4.67.18; 4.70.10; *De principiis* 3.1.15; 3.1.24.

⁴⁷ In both questions the verbal constituent ἐστι is omitted. With the first ποῦ concerns the place (*Where* is (the room for) free will?), the second ποῦ concerns the manner (*How* is approval of the truth *praiseworthy* ...?). The predicate adjectives ἐπαινετή and ἀποδεκτὴ are Focus: *praiseworthy* are moral decisions only if free will exists.

rhetoical question in which a next point of research is suggested (διὰ τί οὐχὶ ... ζητήσῃ, 42⁴⁸). This question can be paraphrased as: ‘would God (if he acts with divine power, without involving men in his correction) not be able to create perfect men who needed no correction at all?’ This question is presented as more probable (μᾶλλον, 42; Focus) and fundamental (adverbial τὴν ἀρχὴν, 42), viz. than Celsus’ question. Origen deliberately quotes Celsus’ words (οὐχ οἷόν τε ἦν ... θεία δυνάμει, 23) and explicitly points at the analogy (ἀνάλογόν τι φάσκων τῷ Κέλσῳ, 43), with ἀνάλογόν τι as most salient point before the participle). There is some *ethos* building in this presentation: Origen makes clear that he is superior to his opponent in the debate, for his own more fundamental question reduces the significance of Celsus’ criticism. The focal constituent μηδ’ ἐπανορθώσεως δεομένους (44) is further amplified by contrast: ἀλλ’ αὐτόθεν σπουδαίους καὶ τελείους (45), with αὐτόθεν as the most salient point: ‘immediately’, meaning here ‘without human involvement, without a free choice of men’. Origen concludes his image of the ‘perfect man’ with a climax: οὐδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑποστάσης τῆς κακίας (45-46, ‘whereas evil did not exist at all’), which describes a situation that is far away from the reality.

Origen's approach can be characterized as an *argumentum ad consequentiam*, tending to a *reductio ad absurdum*. He wants to prove that Celsus’ approach leads to undesirable consequences (elimination of free will) and is highly speculative and unrealistic.

4.3.46-55

46

Ταῦτα δ’ ἰδιώτας μὲν καὶ ἄσυνέτους δύναται συναρπάσαι οὐ μὴν καὶ τὸν ἐνορῶντα τῇ φύσει τῶν πραγμάτων· ὅτι ἀρετῆς μὲν εἶναι ἀνέλης τὸ ἐκούσιον, ἀνεῖλες αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν. Ὅλης δ’ εἰς ταῦτα πραγματείας χρεια· περὶ ἧς οὐκ ὀλίγα ἐν τοῖς περὶ προνοίας καὶ Ἑλληνας εἰρήκασιν, οἱ μὴ εἰπόντες ἂν ἅπερ ὁ Κέλσος ἐξέθετο λέγων· Οἶδε μὲν, οὐκ ἐπανορθοῖ δέ, οὐδ’ οἷόν τε αὐτῷ δυνάμει θεία ἐπανορθοῦν. Καὶ ἡμεῖς δὲ πολλαχοῦ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν ἡμῖν εἰρήκαμεν περὶ τούτων, καὶ οἱ θεοὶ 55 λόγοι τοῖς ἀκούειν δυναμένοις αὐτῶν παρέστησαν.

These arguments may carry away uneducated and unintelligent folk, but certainly not the man who analyses the nature of the problem. For if you take away the element of free will from virtue, you also destroy its essence. A complete discussion of this subject is needed, though the Greeks have said much about it in their writings on providence. They would never say what Celsus has asserted when he asks: ‘Does he, while knowing, not correct and is he not able to correct by divine power?’ We too have discussed these questions in many places to the best of our ability, and the divine Scriptures have presented them to those able to understand them.

With δ’ (46) Origen marks the transition to the next step in his discourse: after a description of Celsus’ (alleged) opinion including the implications of it, summarized by ταῦτα (46, Topic), Origen moves to his judgement on the persuasive power of it. ‘Persuasion’ is indicated here by Origen with the expressive verb συναρπάσαι (47, ‘carry away’) with its associations of ‘powerful and violent, making victims’, which contributes to the negative image of his opponent Origen wants to set out here. The only possible victims that could be ‘carried away’ are, in Origen’s view, ‘uneducated and unintelligent people’ (ἰδιώτας καὶ ἄσυνέτους (46-47), the Focus constituent in the clause). This salient point is marked even more by the antithesis (with asyndeton) with τὸν ἐνορῶντα τῇ φύσει τῶν πραγμάτων (47-48, ‘someone who observes the nature of things’). With a personal commitment (the attitudinal particle μήν) Origen

⁴⁸ The future is inferential (just like ζητήσῃ, 37): this research can be inferred from the (hypothetical) acceptance of the condition worded in the εἰ-clause. The conditional clause can be interpreted as an illocutionary conditional; see below in the commentary on 4.6.1.

states that the latter man will certainly not be persuaded. Remarkable is that Origen uses here the word φύσις again, perhaps referring to the quote of Celsus and to 37-38 (εἰ δυνατόν ἐστι τῇ φύσει τὸ τοιοῦτον). Origen seems to imply that Celsus' idea is not compatible with 'nature' (thus denying here the point he had conceded before for the moment, in 38 and 41): Celsus will not persuade the man who has insight in reality (τὰ πράγματα) and understands what is possible and what is not.

To clarify (ὅτι, 'for') his judgement Origen refers to one aspect of reality: virtue (ἀρετῆς, 47⁴⁹). Origen states that the notion of free will (τὸ ἐκούσιον, 47-48) is essential for virtue. The general character of this statement is confirmed by the use of the impersonal second person, the general subjunctive (ἀνέλης, 47) and the gnomic aorist (ἀνεῖλες, 48), indicating this is an aspect of the timeless φύσις τῶν πραγμάτων.⁵⁰ By μέν ... δ' (48-49) the passage on virtue is given a two-part structure: the general statement and the treatment this subject asks for. In the δέ-clause the initial position of ὅλης (49) highlights Origen's main point here: a *complete* treatment is needed and, as is implied, for that reason Origen is not going to debate this issue for this moment.⁵¹

Origen, however, closes this passage with a few remarks on the virtue theme (περὶ ἧς (50) refers to ἀρετῆς⁵²). Origen refers to three treatments of this theme: by the Greeks (Ἕλληνες, 51), by Origen himself (ἡμεῖς, 53)⁵³ and by the divine Scriptures (οἱ θεῖοι λόγοι, 54-55). The enumeration is emphasized by the polysyndeton (3x καί). The litotes οὐκ ὀλίγα (50) and πολλαχοῦ (53, Focus) highlight the size and the importance of these treatments. By the use of two perfect forms (εἰρήκασιν, 51; εἰρήκαμεν, 54) Origen involves these utterances of the past in the present discussion: these are words of value, which are still available. The persuasive effect of the enumeration is based on the authoritative character of the sources: for Celsus 'the Greeks' can be expected to hold weight, for the Christian readers this applies to the Bible (and Origen).

A final remark on each of the three items of the enumeration: Origen emphasizes that 'the Greeks' would not agree with Celsus' words (οἱ μὴ εἰπόντες ἂν⁵⁴ ἅπερ ὁ Κέλσος ἐξέθετο, 51-52). Thus he isolates Celsus from his 'natural' friends or suggests that he does not know their writings. Speaking about his own treatment Origen adds the constituent κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν ἡμῖν (54): by this show of modesty possible damage of his *ethos*, caused by the reference to his own works (and even πολλαχοῦ, 53), could be neutralized. In the clause about the divine Scriptures Origen adds that they speak 'to anyone who is able to listen to them' (τοῖς ἀκούειν δυναμένοις αὐτῶν, 55). The intention can be to disqualify Celsus as a bad reader of the Scriptures and also to emphasize for his Christian readers the importance of careful listening to biblical words.

4.4.1-2

<p>Λελέξεται οὖν ὅπερ ἡμῖν καὶ Ἰουδαίοις προσάγει ὁ 2 Κέλσος καὶ πρὸς αὐτόν</p>	<p>Moreover, the objection which Celsus brings against us and the Jews may be addressed to him also:</p>
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Origen continues his response to Celsus' remarks quoted in 4.3 with a next step (as is indicated by οὖν,

⁴⁹ ἀρετῆς is removed from the subordinate clause it belongs to and placed in the front position. Such a constituent is called *Theme* in the pragmatological theory. The function of a Theme is: to give the audience an orientation on the message that will follow (see Rijksbaron (2000: 150); CGCG (2019:718-719 §60.33). As for the other pragmatic functions in this sentence: the phrases ἀνέλης τὸ ἐκούσιον and ἀνεῖλες καὶ τὸ οὐσίαν are Broad-Focus; in the latter phrase αὐτῆς is inserted as given Topic: it refers to the Theme ἀρετῆς.

⁵⁰ Cf. CGCG (2019:497 §40.9 and 419 §33.31).

⁵¹ Cf. a similar formula in a similar context in 6.51.4; 8.24.21.

⁵² Origen probably means the whole theme of virtue in relation to free will. This can be inferred by his reference to the Greek books *on providence* (ἐν τοῖς περὶ προνοίας), in which 'free will' is a natural issue, but 'virtue' in an isolated form probably not. Some lines below this complete issue is indicated with the neuter plural περὶ τούτων (54).

⁵³ On providence and free will see *Contra Celsum* 1.57; 2.35; 2.78; 3.28; *De principiis* 3.1; chapter VI 5.6, 6.6.

⁵⁴ ἂν + participle has a potential value here: the realization is presented as (merely) possible; see CGCG (2019: 610 §52.7).

1) in his discourse: he now turns the tables and addresses the objection Celsus directed to Jews and Christians now to Celsus himself (καὶ πρὸς αὐτόν). The future perfect λελέξεται (1) is used here to introduce an *apostrophe*-passage, which is presented as a logical follow-up in the discourse (inferential future).⁵⁵

4.4.2-11

2 ὅτι ἄρα, ὃ οὗτος, οἶδεν ὁ ἐπὶ
 πᾶσι θεὸς τὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἢ οὐκ οἶδεν; Ἀλλ' εἶπερ τίθης
 εἶναι θεὸν καὶ πρόνοιαν, ὥς ἐμφαίνει σου τὸ σύγγραμμα,
 ἀναγκαῖον αὐτὸν εἰδέναι. Εἰ δ' οἶδεν, διὰ τί οὐκ ἐπανορθοῖ;
6 Ἡ ἡμῖν μὲν ἀναγκαῖον ἀπολογεῖσθαι, διὰ τί εἰδὼς οὐκ
 ἐπανορθοῖ· σοὶ δέ, μὴ πάνυ ἐμφαίνοντι διὰ τοῦ συγγράμματος
 τὸν Ἐπικουρείον ἀλλὰ προσποιουμένῳ πρόνοιαν εἰδέναι,
 οὐκ ἐπ' ἴσης λελέξεται, διὰ τί εἰδὼς τὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις πάντα
 ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐπανορθοῖ οὐδὲ θεία δυνάμει ἀπαλλάσσει πάντα
11 τῆς κακίας;

My good man, does the supreme God know what is going on among men, or does He not? If you think that God and providence exist, as your treatise suggests, then He must know. But if He does know, why does He not correct? Or have we to explain why He knows but does not correct, while you (as you do not appear from your treatise to be an Epicurean at all, but pretend to believe in providence) may not fairly be asked why the God who knows all that goes on among men does not correct them and also deliver all men from evil by divine power?

In this passage Origen addresses Celsus in a direct way and creates thus a change in the dialogical situation in his text (*apostrophe*).⁵⁶ Whereas Origen normally refers to Celsus in the third person, here he uses the second person (τίθης, 3; σοί, 7) and ὃ οὗτος (2), a vocative in which some impatience or irritation seem to be expressed.⁵⁷ Origen seems to use *apostrophe* often to call his opponent to account or to confront him with an inconsistency: ‘if you do something yourself or accept it in a similar situation in your own culture, you should not blame Christians on that point.’⁵⁸ This approach can be traced back to a *tu-quoque*-argumentation.⁵⁹ Here the argument comprises a logical reasoning in three steps, which can be paraphrased as follows:

1.	There are two options: God <i>knows</i> the human situation or he does not.	Focus on οἶδεν
2.	The second option is excluded by Celsus if he accepts the <i>existence</i> of God and providence, as his treatise suggests..	Focus on εἶναι
3.	Conclusion: (in your view) he <i>must</i> know. Therefore your own question applies to yourself as well: why does he not correct? (a free quote from 3.23).	Focus on ἀναγκαῖον

Next the issue is worded more extensively and sharply in a rhetorical question. By ἢ (6) this question is presented as an alternative to an option that is left implicit (which could be worded as ‘You should

⁵⁵ Cf. 2.76.55 where λελέξεται is also used to introduce an *apostrophe*-passage. On the combination of the future and the perfect value see chapter II 4.5.

⁵⁶ See on *apostrophe* chapter II 3.2.3.

⁵⁷ On the vocative ὃ οὗτος see LSJ s.v. οὗτος C5, ‘This phrase mostly implies anger, impatience, or scorn’; in the TLG I found many examples, e.g. in Sophocles, Philo, Galenus, Lucianus and Aesopus. Origen uses ὃ οὗτος 13x in *Contra Celsum* to address Celsus or ‘his’ Jew (alternatives: ὃ Κέλσε, ὃ Ἰουδαῖε, ὃ γενναῖε).

⁵⁸ Examples in 1.46.31; 2.33.12; 2.53.2; 2.76.57; 3.80.4; 8.9.10.

⁵⁹ See chapter III 3.4.3. Origen moves into the defence position of the *status translationis* (see chapter III 3.4.1).

answer this question’): ‘or would you really like to agree with the following alternative?’ implying: ‘the following alternative is not acceptable’.⁶⁰ The antithesis ἡμῖν μὲν – σοὶ δέ (6-7, contrastive Topic) reinforces the pathetic effect of the question. The most salient point in the main clause is ἐπ’ ἴσης (9): ‘this question will apply to you *equally* i.e. *fairly*’, which implies that Celsus is not fair in putting a question to Christians (ἡμῖν, 6) which he does not answer himself (σοί, 7). In the σοί-clause Origen elaborates step 2 and sets Celsus explicitly apart from the Epicureans, emphatically declaring that this is (at least) how Celsus presents himself (ἐμφαίνοντο (7) and προσποιουμένῳ (8); the latter participle suggests that Celsus is acting).⁶¹ In the final part in the sentence the notion of correction (ἐπανορθοῖ, 10) is amplified by adding the phrase οὐδὲ θεία δυνάμει ἀπαλλάσσει πάντας τῆς κακίας (10-11). While taking over θεία δυνάμει (10)⁶² from Celsus’ question (see 4.3.33), Origen gives his own taste to the sentence by adding πάντα (9) and πάντας (10): even in this negatively worded sentence he draws attention to the scope of God’s knowledge and actions: he knows *everything* and delivers *all men*. With πάντας Origen announces an issue that is elaborated in the final part of 4.4.

4.4.11-21

11 Ἀλλ’ οὐκ αἰσχυρόμεθα λέγειν ὅτι αἰεὶ μὲν πέμπει τοὺς ἐπανορθωσόμενους· οἱ γὰρ ἐπὶ τὰ βέλτιστα προκαλούμενοι λόγοι, θεοῦ αὐτοὺς δεδοκότος, εἰσὶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις· ἥδη δὲ τῶν διακονουμένων τῷ θεῷ πολλαὶ εἰσι διαφοραί, καὶ ὀλίγοι εἰσὶν οἱ πάντη καὶ καθαρῶς πρεσβεύοντες τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὴν παντελεῖ ἐπανόρθωσιν ἐργαζόμενοι,
17 ὅποιοι ἦσαν Μωϋσῆς καὶ οἱ προφῆται. Παρὰ δὲ τούτους πάντας μεγάλη ἢ διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐπανόρθωσις, οὐ τοὺς ἐν μιᾷ γωνίᾳ τῆς οἰκουμένης βουληθέντος μόνους θεραπεύεσθαι
20 ἀλλὰ τὸ ὅσον ἐπ’ αὐτῷ καὶ τοὺς πανταχοῦ· «Σωτὴρ» γὰρ ἦλθε «πάντων ἀνθρώπων».

So much for that. We however are not ashamed to say that He continually sends people to correct men; for it is because God has given them that there are among men doctrines calling them to live the highest life. Now among the ministers of God there are many differences, and there are few who wholly and purely set forth the doctrines of the truth and bring about complete moral reformation. Moses and the prophets were men of this character. But greater than all these was the reformation brought about by Jesus, who did not want to cure only those in one corner of the world, but as far as was possible for him to heal people everywhere. For he came as ‘saviour of all men’.

Ἀλλ’ marks discontinuity in the discourse structure: Origen stops the *apostrophe* and replaces it by a confirmatory passage. Moreover Ἀλλ’ (11) indicates an opposition related to the content: Celsus’ negative statement ‘God does not correct’ (οὐκ ἐπανορθοῖ, 4.2.23) is replaced by the opposite: ‘God *continually* sends people to correct men’ (αἰεὶ (11) has Focus in the subordinate clause). The contrast is emphatically underlined by οὐκ αἰσχυρόμεθα (11, ‘we are not ashamed’), by which Origen responds to Celsus’ word αἰσχιστον (4.2.3): despite of Celsus’ emotional condemnation Christians (‘we’, hinting at the discourse situation: the author and his addressees are included!) maintain their position without shame. The focus on refutation is changed into an intention to explain an essential part of the Christian religion. This confirmatory passage is mainly intended to edify the Christian readers.

⁶⁰ In questions mostly πότερον ... ἤ, but the first part can be omitted or left implicit. In that case ἤ can indicate an opposition or a progress in the discourse, see above on 3.17.

⁶¹ Origen for some time seems to have had doubts about whether or not Celsus was an Epicurean (see 4.54). The issue is discussed by Chadwick (1953: Introduction p.XXVI), Fiedrowicz & Bartold (Vol.1, 2011:13-15), Cook (2000:19-22); see further chapter VI 4.3.

⁶² On the word order see chapter II 6.7.

The explanation is structured by μέν (11) ... δέ (14): in the μέν-part Origen states that God's correction is enacted by men, who speak corrective words (τοὺς ἐπανορθωσομένους (12), which is explained (γάρ) by οἱ ... λόγοι ... εἰσὶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις, 12-14⁶³). Origen clarifies that it is God who takes the initiative (πέμπει, 12; θεοῦ ... δεδοκότος, 13⁶⁴). The diversity of the corrective ministers (πολλαὶ εἰσὶν διαφοραί, 14-15; the hyperbaton underlines πολλαί) is pointed at in the δέ-part. The adverb ἤδη (14) marks the start of a comparison of unequal issues used to amplify the last issue:⁶⁵ the general group of God's ministers (τῶν διακουμένων τῷ θεῷ, 14⁶⁶) is distinguished from 'few' (ὀλίγοι, 15) more qualified ministers: Origen underlines their qualities by indicating their personal commitment and the effect of their actions (πάντη καὶ καθαρῶς and παντελῇ, 15-16⁶⁷) and by comparing them to Moses and the prophets.

Then, as final step (δέ, 17) in the comparison (παρὰ δὲ τούτους πάντας, which functions as Setting), the most preeminent 'corrector' is mentioned: Jesus.⁶⁸ His reformation has a great (μεγάλη (18) has Focus) impact because of its global operating area (τοὺς πανταχοῦ⁶⁹ is underlined by the antithesis with οὐ τοὺς ἐν μίᾳ γωνίᾳ τῆς οἰκουμένης ... μόνους, 18-19⁷⁰). Origen concludes this point with a short statement, which is more powerful because it is a biblical phrase: 'Jesus' came 'as saviour of all men' (cf. 1 *Tim.* 4.10).⁷¹ In this condensed expression a summary is given of the previous formulas which described the 'corrective actions' as ἐπὶ τὰ βέλτιστα προκαλούμενοι (12-13), πρεσβεύοντες τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας (15-16), τὴν ... ἐπανόρθωσιν ἐργαζόμενοι (16), θεραπεύεσθαι (19). By the use of the conventional biblical terminology (σωτήρ, 20) Origen frames the theme: what Celsus means by ἐπανορθοῖ (4.3.23) is brought back to the Christian soteriology.

⁶³ For the combination εἰσὶν ἐν + *dat.* see LSJ s.v. ἐν A16 'it depends on..., rests with ...'.

⁶⁴ The genitive absolute functions as Focus after the Topic οἱ ... λόγοι. The perfect indicates that God's gift is not reduced to a remotened and completed action in the past, but has resulted in the still relevant availability of his words.

⁶⁵ *Locus a minore ad maius*: see Lausberg (1973:222-223). See for a similar use of ἤδη (δέ) 4.94.13; 5.7.17 and 21; 5.12.12; 5.45.16; 5.47.10; 5.57.6.

⁶⁶ Mind the present of the participle, as in the following πρεσβεύοντες and ἐργαζόμενοι: the action is not completed. Origen refers to the work of Christian preachers which still continues in his own time (cf. the present in αἰεὶ πέμπει). The present contrasts with the following aorist βουληθέντος, which refers to Jesus' activities as connected to his lifetime and therefore now completed.

⁶⁷ The preposed adjective is extra marked in the constituent τὴν παντελῇ ἐπανόρθωσιν, which has Focus in the participle clause.

⁶⁸ Cf. 4.8 for a similar ascending series: some prophets > special prophets > Jesus (ἐξαίρετόν ... καὶ διαφέρον).

⁶⁹ The preceding τὸ ὅσον ἐπ' αὐτῷ functions as Setting in the second part of the participle clause. Origen seems to refer to the element of 'free will', which is in Origen's view besides Jesus' 'therapy' a determining factor in the salvation of each individual.

⁷⁰ The interruption of this constituent by the participle βουληθέντος causes hyperbaton, which highlights the part before the participle and gives more emphasis to the antithesis (Cf. chapter II 6.6). Origen refers to the Old Testament period of the prophets, in which God's grace was limited to the Jews, only 'one corner' of the world. In the Christian era the message is spread all over the world, cf. 2.79.4-5; 3.75.35-37; 7.26.26-35. See also 5.50 and 6.78, where Origen discusses the *translatio* from 'one corner in the land of Judaea to the whole of mankind', which is also indicated in 4.3.5-13 and 4.22.26ff.

⁷¹ On the use of the aorist see chapter II 4.3.

4. Section 4: *Contra Celsum* 4.5

4.1 Strategy

Celsus

Celsus' next argument against a divine descent is, as it seems, not quoted by Origen in its entirety. Origen refers to two fragments from Celsus' work, which are placed at some distance from each other in his text. The first fragment (2-4) is embedded in Origen's own text and Celsus' original words have to be reconstructed. The second fragment (28-29) is reproduced literally. It is plausible that these two fragments are part of one and the same argument. Origen seems to connect the two fragments by linking the key words of both passages (καταλείπεσθαι and μεταβάλλεσθαι, 28). The use of the particle γὰρ at the beginning of the second fragment indicates that this fragment does not have the status of an independent statement, but has to be considered as an explanation of a previous clause. The connecting part is not rendered in Origen's text,¹ but can be deduced from it (step 2 in the diagram).

My reconstruction of Celsus' three steps argument is as follows:

Step	Content
1.	(a) If Christians say that God himself comes down to men, (b) it follows from this that he leaves his throne.
2.	If God would leave his throne, this would mean a change of the stable situation on earth; the consequences of such a change of universal laws must be disastrous.
3.	'For if you change any one quite insignificant thing on earth, you would upset and destroy everything.'

If this reconstruction is right, Celsus' argument can be characterized as an *argumentum ad consequentiam*: a statement is rejected by referring to the unacceptable or impossible consequences.²

Origen

Origen only responds to step 1 and 3. His first defence line can be characterized as a choice for the *status coniecturalis*: he denies Celsus' step 1b. In a passage full of negatives Origen demonstrates that Celsus' conclusion ('God leaves his throne') does not agree with biblical data. This proof is supplemented with elements of a personal attack: Origen denotes his opponent ironically as 'most estimable' (*ethos* argumentation). Moreover, Origen shows that Celsus has insufficient knowledge of God's power and omnipresence as presented in the Bible.

Next he discusses Celsus' premise (1a), rewords it in a more Christian way and explains that Christians do use the verb 'to leave' in this context, but never in a literal sense. 'Leaving one place' and 'filling another' should not be interpreted in a spatial sense, but as related to moral development. The same approach can be seen in Origen's reaction in step 3: he presents a redefinition of the term 'change' which is used by Celsus. Here Origen chooses for the *status definitivus*. Remarkably Origen does not respond to the core of Celsus' statement ('a little change leads to a total catastrophe') and its philosophical background.³

As is explained in chapter III 3.4.1, Origen could have omitted the weaker defence line of the *status definitivus*: after his preceding denial a further reaction was unnecessary. The fact that Origen

¹ Maybe the words μεταβάλλεσθαι τὰ τῆδε can be considered as an echo of the missing link. In the edition of Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.3, 2011:670) these words are put in quotation marks and presented as a possible part of Celsus' text. At this point they depart from Borret (1968), whose text is printed in their edition, and Chadwick (1953).

² See chapter III 3.4.3 for the comment on incorrect arguments from the view of the pragma-dialectical argumentation theory.

³ See chapter VI 3.5 and 4.2.

nevertheless adds this passages seems to be caused by his wish to explain an element of the Christian doctrine. By reusing words of his opponent and reframing them Origen offers instructions to his Christian readers concerning God's intentions and his methods to bring about moral improvement. So Origen presents an intelligent combination of refutation and confirmation here. Here is a schematic representation of Origen's strategy:

Type	Approach	Content
1. <i>Refutatio</i> Related to Content	Denial	God does not leave his throne, for he is always omnipresent.
	Denial	Even if God 'comes down', this does not mean that he leaves his throne; Celsus' 1b does not follow from 1a.
2. Personal	Irony	γενναιότατος to denote Celsus
	Blame	Celsus has no knowledge of the Christian doctrine and texts from the Bible.
3. Redefinition	Negative	'To descend' and 'to leave' cannot be interpreted in a spatial way.
	Constructive	These concepts are related to moral development.

4.2 Structure of the text

Origen divides the argument of Celsus and discusses both parts separately. The structure of his discourse can be described as follows:

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
1. Introduction	1-2	Statement: criticism of source and reasoning of Celsus	μετὰ ταῦθ'
Embedded Quote 1	2-4	'Coming down' means 'leaving the throne'.	
Reaction	4-10	Explanation: Celsus lacks knowledge of biblical data.	γάρ οὐ ... οὐδέ ... οὐδέ
	11-19	Denial and confirmation: If God descends, this means: - no spatial change - that God dwells within men.	τοίνυν οὐκ ... οὐδέ δέ
	19-24	Explanation: New definition of 'leave' and 'fill': - not in a spatial sense, - but related moral developments.	γάρ οὐ ἀλλά, μὲν ... δέ
2. Conclusion and introduction	25-27	God does not leave his throne and things on earth do not change.	οὖν
Quote 2	28-29	'A little change leads to total destruction.'	γάρ
Reaction	29-34	Redefinition of 'change'	δέ

4.3 Commentary

4.5.1-4 Celsus (embedded quotes):

Μετὰ ταῦθ' ὁ γενναιότατος Κέλσος οὐκ οἶδ' ὁπόθεν λαβὼν ἐπαπορεῖ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὡς λέγοντας ὅτι αὐτὸς κάτεισι πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ὁ θεός· καὶ οἶεται ἀκολουθεῖν τούτῳ τὸ
4 τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἔδραν αὐτὸν καταλιπεῖν.

After this the most estimable Celsus for some unknown reason brings up the objection against us that we affirm that *God Himself will come down to men*. And he thinks it follows from this that *He leaves his throne*.

Μετὰ ταῦθ' (1) indicates that Origen moves on to the next issue. The next reproduction of a fragment from Celsus' text is introduced by some words and phrases that are meant to control the reader's reception: Celsus is denoted as γενναιότατος (1), which in this context has to be interpreted as an ironical qualification⁴ and therefore can have a negative influence on Celsus' *ethos*. Moreover Origen already anticipates some of the points of criticism he will elaborate later: Celsus puts words in the mouth of his opponents which they do not say (ὡς λέγοντας, 2), the source of his allegations is uncertain (οὐκ οἶδ' ὁπόθεν λάβων, 1-2) and the logic of his conclusion (only) exists in his opinion (οἶεται ἀκολουθεῖν τούτῳ, 3). Origen prepares his readers to words of Celsus in which he criticizes rather a self-designed image than the real opinions of his opponents (the 'straw man').

The fragments from Celsus' text Origen brings up for discussion are not quoted literally, but embedded in his own text. The content can be described as follows: (according to Celsus) Christians say 'that God himself comes down to men' and therefore 'leaves his own throne'.

4.5.4-10

Οὐ γὰρ οἶδε δύναμιν
5 θεοῦ καὶ «ὅτι πνεῦμα κυρίου πεπλήρωκε τὴν οἰκουμένην, καὶ τὸ συνέχον τὰ πάντα γινώσιν ἔχει φωνῆς», οὐδὲ συνιέναι δύναται τὸ «Οὐχὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν ἐγὼ πληρῶ; λέγει κύριος». Οὐδὲ βλέπει ὅτι κατὰ τὸν Χριστιανῶν λόγον οἱ πάντες «ἐν αὐτῷ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν»,
10 ὡς καὶ Παῦλος ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἀθηναίους δημηγορίᾳ ἐδίδαξε.

For he does not understand the power of God, and that 'the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world, and that which holds all things together has knowledge of every voice'. Nor is he able to understand the words, 'Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?' Nor does he see that according to the Christian doctrine in Him we all 'live and move and have our being', as Paul also taught in his public speech to the Athenians.

This passage is presented by γὰρ (4) as an explanation: Origen adds it to the words οἶεται ἀκολουθεῖν τούτῳ (3) from his introduction. He starts his defence by concentrating his attack on Celsus' opinion at the point of logic (ἀκολουθεῖν): Celsus' assumption of the logic of his conclusion is caused by misunderstanding of the power of God. The presentation of Celsus' lack of knowledge is amplified by a threefold negation and a variation of the verbs that denote the understanding (οὐ ...οἶδε, 4; οὐδὲ

⁴ Origen mostly denotes his opponent in a neutral way; his intentions are often denoted negatively. I have not found a sincere positive qualification for Celsus in *Contra Celsum*. Once in a while Origen uses ironical compliments, often in situations in which he blames Celsus for being not well informed. I found the following epithets (in which the superlative is used to enhance the effect of quasi-politeness): γενναῖος - γενναιότατος ('(most) worthy man', 1.17.5; 1.48.78; 3.19.7; 6.29.17), ὁ πάντ' ἐπαγγελλόμενος εἰδέναι ('the man who professes to know everything', 1.26.2,6; 1.34.4-5; 1.40.14-15; 1.54.1; 2.1.12; 2.32.8; 5.64.20; 6.8.30; 7.18.20), ὁ σοφώτατος ('most intelligent', 1.43.5; 2.18.5; 2.20.83), ὁ βωμολόχος ('coarse fellow', 3.22.2), ὁ γεννάδας Κέλσος ('noble', 7.10.26).

συνιέναι δύνανται, 6-7; οὐδὲ βλέπει, 8; these three verbs function as Focus). Origen quotes three biblical passages⁵ illustrating God's power (δύναμιν θεοῦ, 4-5): he holds all things together (τὸ συνέχον τὰ πάντα, 6) and fills it all: the (populated) world, heaven and earth, and also 'we all': 'we live and move and have our being in him'. The salient point in each of the quotes is the constituent that refers to God: πνεῦμα κυρίου (5), ἐγώ (7), ἐν αὐτῷ (9).

The three fragments are not only quoted because of their content, but also play a rhetorical role: they serve to mark the contrast between Celsus and Origen. Whereas the sources of Celsus are unclear (οὐκ οἶδ' ὁπόθεν λάβων, 1-2), Origen presents his opinion as based on well-known and authoritative sources: the Bible, the Christian doctrine (κατὰ τὸν Χριστιανῶν λόγον (8-9) is added as Setting) and Paul's public speech to the Athenians (ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἀθηναίους δημηγορίᾳ, 10). For Origen's Christian reader it has to be clear: Celsus' opinion results from ignorance.

4.5.11-19

Κἂν ὁ θεὸς τοίνυν τῶν ὅλων τῇ ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμει συγκαταβαίνει
τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίον, κἂν ὁ «ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς
τὸν θεὸν» λόγος, «θεὸς» καὶ αὐτὸς ὢν, ἔρχεται πρὸς
14 ἡμᾶς, οὐκ ἐξεδρός γίνεται οὐδὲ καταλείπει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ
ἔδραν, ὡς τινὰ μὲν τόπον κενὸν αὐτοῦ εἶναι ἕτερον δὲ πλήρη,
οὐ πρότερον αὐτὸν ἔχοντα. Ἐπιδημεῖ δὲ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης
θεοῦ δι' οὗ βούλεται καὶ ἐν ᾧ εὐρίσκει χώραν, οὐκ ἀμείβοντος
τόπον οὐδ' ἐκλείποντος χώραν αὐτοῦ κενὴν καὶ ἄλλην
19 πληροῦντος.

Even if, mind you, the God of the universe descends with Jesus into human life by His power, and even if the Logos who 'was in the beginning with God', who was himself God, comes to us, He does not go away from where He was, nor does He leave His throne, as though one place were deprived of him, and another which previously did not possess him were filled. The power and divinity of God come to dwell among men through the man whom God wants to choose and in whom He finds room without any changing from one place to another or leaving His former place empty and filling another.

With τοίνυν (11) Origen asks special attention for the crucial point he will now make after this preliminary remarks. This point comprises the denial of Celsus' statement (οὐκ and οὐδέ (14) in the main clause of the first sentence and the final participial clause in the second) and a reformulation of Celsus' words.

The heart of the first sentence is the negative main clause: 'God does *not* leave his throne (in a literal sense).' The force of this denial (*status coniecturalis*) is enhanced by two concessive⁶ subordinated clauses, both introduced by κἂν (the *anaphora* underlines the concession). In these subordinated clauses Origen discusses Celsus' first step (1a, see above). In his introduction he had blamed Celsus for attributing to Christians what they do not say (ὡς λέγοντας, 2). Therefore he wants to correct Celsus' words αὐτὸς κάτεισι πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ὁ θεός (2-3) into a formula that is acceptable for Christians and which is connected by the word δύναμις to Origen's previous remark (in 4): ὁ θεός ... τῶν ὅλων τῇ ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμει συγκαταβαίνει τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίον (11-12). Essential for Origen is the

⁵ *Wisd.* 1.7; *Jer.* 23.24; *Acts* 17.28.

⁶ κἂν = καὶ εἰ ἂν, the introduction of a concessive clause, a special form of a conditional clause in which 'an exceptional or unlikely condition' is expressed, 'i.e. a condition that may be considered unfavourable for the realization of the state of affairs of the *apodosis*': *even in that case* it is realized. (Rijksbaron 2002:74; CGCG 2019:558-559 §49.19-20). Cf. Denniston (1954:299): 'καὶ εἰ represents the condition as an extreme case, and does convey an effect of climax'. See also Wakker (1994:329-339) on the combination of εἰ with the scope particle καί. The subjunctive + ἂν here has a general value.

distinction between ὁ θεὸς and Jesus/the Logos (who was πρὸς τὸν θεόν). After the second κἂν Origen refers to the term ‘God’ that is used in *John* 1.1 for the Logos: the Logos, who is ‘God’ (but different from ὁ θεὸς τῶν ὅλων⁷), is said to come down to mankind. Thus Celsus’ formula is corrected in the following way: Christians do not say indiscriminately ‘God comes down’, but: ‘the God of the universe (ὁ θεὸς ... τῶν ὅλων is Topic) *descends together* (συγκαταβαίνει is Focus) with Jesus’; and: ‘the Logos (ὁ ... λόγος (12-13) is Topic) *comes to us*’ (ἔρχεται (13) is Focus).

The concessive clauses are followed by the main clause, in which two negatives are dominant: God ‘does not go away and does not leave his throne’ (Focus: ἔξεδρος; Broad-Focus: καταλείπει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἔδραν, 14-15), ‘in the sense that one place would be deprived of him and another were filled by him’ (in the ὥς-clause contrastive Topic is τινὰ μὲν τόπον ... ἕτερον δέ, 15; Focus is κενὸν αὐτοῦ and πλήρη). This negative formula is contrasted with a positive sentence (ἐπιδημεῖ δέ ..., 16), which however is concluded again with two negated participles (οὐκ ἀμείβοντος ... οὐδ’ ἐκλείποντος, 17-18). This cyclic structure emphasizes the explicit statement that God’s descent has not a spatial character. This is the negative part of Origen’s *definitio* strategy.

Amidst all these negatives Origen places one positive element: Ἐπιδημεῖ ... θεοῦ (16). This phrase functions as Broad-Focus: Origen assures his readers that God’s divine power⁸ *really comes to dwell* among men. Origen replaces Celsus’ κάτεισι (2) by ἐπιδημεῖ, the verb Origen frequently uses to denote Christ’s advent and dwelling on the earth. Origen uses the present tense in ἐπιδημεῖ, βούλεται and εὐρίσκει (16-17) (and also in γίνεται and καταλείπει (14) in the previous sentence): this suggests that he does not (only) refer to the historical fact of the ‘incarnation’, but to the more metaphorical meaning of ‘Christ’s dwelling in the heart of believers.’⁹ Although Origen leaves this meaning implicit, the present forms in the previous sentence can be interpreted in the same sense: the passage refers to a permanent and on-going interference of God and the Logos in the lives of men. In relative clauses Origen presents two details: it depends on God’s choice (δι’ οὗ βούλεται, 17) and on the ‘room’ he finds in a person (ἐν ᾧ εὐρίσκει χώραν, 17). The latter words contain an implicit reference to the human factor: free will and human responsibility are important issues in Origen’s theology.¹⁰

4.5.19-24

Ἵνα γὰρ καὶ ἐκλείπειν αὐτὸν φῶμεν καὶ ἄλλον
20 τινὰ πληροῦν, οὐ περὶ τόπου τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀποφανόμεθα·
 ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν τοῦ φαύλου καὶ κεχυμένου ἐν τῇ κακίᾳ ψυχὴν
 φήσομεν καταλείπεσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, τὴν δὲ τοῦ βουλομένου
 ζῆν κατ’ ἀρετὴν ἢ καὶ προκόποντος ἢ καὶ ἡδὴ ζῶντος κατ’
 αὐτὴν ἀποφανόμεθα πληροῦσθαι ἢ μετέχειν θείου πνεύματος.

Even supposing that we do say that He leaves one place and fills another, we would not mean this in a spatial sense. No, we would say that the soul of the bad man who is deluged with evil is deserted by God, and would maintain that the soul of the man who desires to live virtuously, or has even made some progress, or is even already living

⁷ This difference is indicated also in 2.9; 3.81; 4.99; 5.5; 5.12; 6.17; 6.65; 6.68; 7.39; 7.41; 7.49; 8.13; 8.26; 8.67.

⁸ Is this an indication of Christ? δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης can be considered as a *hen dia dyoin* (Lausberg 1973:340). Possibly the combination is derived from *Rom.* 1.20; in *Contra Celsum* Christ, the Logos, is denoted as δύναμις θεοῦ in 1.13.40; 1.66.51; 2.9.74; 2.79.14; 7.23.24.

⁹ See above commentary on 1.34. When ἐπιδημέω is used with God (etc.) as Agens usually the aorist and perfect forms denote the incarnation and the life of Christ on earth (presented as completed), e.g. in 1.9.37; 1.60.26; 1.69.5; 2.8.19; 2.57.9; 3.28.21; 6.11.16. Present forms can be used (a) to denote the dwelling of (the Spirit of) Christ (or virtue) in the soul of men (presented as not completed), e.g. in 2.79.40; 3.71.16; 4.6.13; 5.1.15; 8.18.10 (b) to denote God’s ‘descent’ in his providential care, e.g. in 5.3.5. (cf. καταβαίνει in 4.12.19 in the latter sense). In καταλείπει (14) Origen changes Celsus’ aorist καταλιπεῖν (4) into a present, thus changing the reference from a completed action to a continuous, repetitive series of events.

¹⁰ Cf. 4.67; 4.70.10; 5.10.60-61; 5.21. In the next lines Origen makes a link to the will of men to live virtuously (τοῦ βουλομένου ζῆν κατ’ ἀρετὴν).

virtuously, is filled by or shares in
a divine spirit.

This sentence is introduced by γάρ (19) as a digression. It offers an explanation of the use of the terms ἐκλείπειν and πληροῦν in the previous sentence. With ἵνα (19) Origen makes clear that he does not turn to a real situation, but to a possible one: ‘supposing that’:¹¹ he indicates in what sense also in the Christian doctrine could be said that God ‘leaves’ and ‘fills’. The future forms ἀποφανούμεθα (20, 24) and φήσομεν (22) can be interpreted as inferential future¹²: *considering* the hypothetical situation ‘we will say ...’. Origen’s redefinition is the positive part of his *definitio* approach: after the rejection of the spatial interpretation Origen discusses an allegorical one and connects these verbs to moral development and God’s ‘movement towards men’ (τὴν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιστροφήν, 25-26).¹³

In his explanation the negative part is shortly formulated in οὐ περὶ τόπου (20, ‘not in a spatial sense’). It is eliminated by ἀλλά (21): ‘no, on the contrary...’. This particle introduces a longer positive clause with two parts (μὲν ... δέ, 21-22), in which ἐκλείπειν is linked to an evil way of life and πληροῦν to a desire to live virtuously. Focus in these clauses are the contrastive constituents that describe the two different attitudes: τὴν μὲν ... ψυχὴν (21) versus τὴν δὲ ... κατ’ αὐτήν (22-23). Both constituents are marked by their front position in the clause (before the main verbs) and a separation of the infinitives they belong to in the accusative plus infinitive construction (hyperbaton).

It is worth noting that the interpretation of the use of the present tenses in these clauses contributes to the precise presentation of the difference. In the first part Origen uses terms that indicate a status that is already reached: a man who ‘is bad’ (τοῦ φαύλου, 21) and ‘is deluged’ with evil (κεχυμένου ἐν τῇ κακίᾳ, 21¹⁴) is deserted (on that moment, present καταλείπεσθαι, 22) by God. Origen implies that the evil state is not the result of God’s abandonment, but that God leaves a person when he had reached the evil state. In the second part Origen uses present forms which indicate the process side: he distinguishes three phases in the process of moral development: βουλομένου ζῆν, προκόπτοντος and ἤδη ζῶντος (22-23).¹⁵ The present forms indicate that not just at the end of the process, but already in each¹⁶ of the preceding phases a soul is filled by ‘a divine spirit’. With βουλομένου (22) Origen again refers to the notion of free will, which plays a decisive role in the process of moral improvement.

4.5.25-27

25 Οὐ χρεῖα οὖν εἰς τὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ κάθοδον ἢ εἰς τὴν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιστροφήν τοῦ θεοῦ καταλείπεσθαι ἔδραν μείζονα καὶ μεταβάλλεσθαι τὰ τῆδε, ὥς ὁ Κέλσος οἶεται, λέγων·

Therefore, it is not necessary for the descent of Christ or the movement of God towards men that He should forsake an exalted throne and change things on earth, as Celsus thinks when he says:

With οὖν (25) Origen marks the transition to the next part of his discourse: on the one hand he draws a conclusion (‘God does not necessarily leave his throne’), on the other hand he introduces the next quote from Celsus. In advance he declares that Celsus’ statement is not necessary (Οὐ χρεῖα, 25) and

¹¹ See Lampe, s.v. ἵνα 3 *supposing that* (with reference to 1.21.3 and to this passage).

¹² See chapter II 4.5.

¹³ The spatial interpretation is also rejected in 4.12.18-21 and 5.12.1, where Origen links God’s descent to his providential care (οὐ τοπικῶς ἀλλὰ προνοητικῶς συγκатаβαίνει).

¹⁴ The metaphor of the ‘deluge’ (χέω and χύσις) to indicate the massive and overwhelming power of evil is also used in 4.12.16; 4.20.11; 4.25.8; 4.63.26; 6.45.27; 8.42.31. Moreover Origen differentiates in the degree ‘the flood of evil’ can affect a person: ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἢ ἐπ’ ἑλάττω (4.64.9; 6.45.12).

¹⁵ Similar descriptions of a progress in moral improvement in 2.79.24-27; 3.30.22-24; 3.59.25-28; 4.16.3-5; 4.64.9-12; 7.60.17-21.

¹⁶ The three constituents are connected by ἢ, which indicates that it applies to each of the phases in a similar way.

reproduces not a fact, but an opinion (ὡς ὁ Κέλσος οἶεται, 27). Focus is on the infinitives καταλείπεσθαι (26) and μεταβάλλεσθαι (27); the constituent εἰς τὴν ... ἐπιστοφὴν τοῦ θεοῦ (25-26) serves as Setting in the infinitive clause. The adjective μείζονα (26) is placed in the unmarked position following its noun: it does not contribute essentially to the argumentation.

4.5.28-29 Celsus:

Εἰ γὰρ ἔν τι τῶν τῆδε τοῦλάχιστον μεταβάλοις, ἀνατραπέντα For should you change any one quite
29 οἰγήσεται σοι τὰ πάντα. insignificant thing on earth, you will
 upset and destroy everything.

The fragment quoted in this passage is connected to a previous remark by γάρ (28). The wording of this remark for which is given an explanation here, is not recorded in Origen's text, but can be reconstructed as indicated above (in the section on the strategy): a divine descent would intrude the stable situation on earth, which cannot remain without serious repercussions. In the sentence quoted here Celsus explains this statement: 'even any one insignificant change of the things on earth (ἐν τι τῶν τῆδε τοῦλάχιστον μεταβάλοις, 28) would mean a total destruction'. Andresen (1955:92 f.) traces back this argument to a Stoic idea: '... dass die geringste Veränderung des naturgesetzlichen Ablaufs das gesamte Weltall in ein Chaos stürzen würde.' Both gods and men should, according to the Stoics, respect the universal laws and the descent of a god to the earth would disturb these laws.¹⁷

Celsus increases the dramatic effect by the antithesis between ἐν τι ... τοῦλάχιστον (Focus) and τὰ πάντα. Moreover he uses τὰ πάντα as subject in the main clause and leaves the Agens of ἀνατραπέντα (28) implicit: this suggests that the destruction takes place automatically and happens without someone having influence on it. Remarkably the conditional subordinate clause starts to present the affair as (only) a possibility (εἰ + *potential optative*), whereas in the main clause the future indicative οἰγήσεται presents the destruction as really threatening.¹⁸ The second person in μεταβάλοις (28) can be interpreted as an address of the opponents, but it seems to be more probable to consider it as impersonal.¹⁹ This also applies to the ethical dative σοι. Celsus' statement gets a general character in this interpretation, as can be seen in the translation of Borret (1968:201): 'Changer la moindre des choses d'ici-bas serait bouleverser et détruire l'univers'.

The argument Celsus uses here is an example of an *argumentum ad consequentiam*, a type of fallacy that appeals to emotions: by indicating undesirable consequences the conclusion is suggested that a premise cannot be true. In this case: 'God's coming down to earth would cause a total destruction; therefore it is not true that God comes down to earth.' Celsus evokes emotions of fear for this disaster, addressing his readers with *pathos* rather than with *logos*.

4.5.29-34

29 Εἰ δὲ χρὴ λέγειν μεταβάλλειν But if one may say that certain
 παρουσία δυνάμεως θεοῦ καὶ ἐπιδημία τοῦ λόγου εἰς ἀνθρώ- things change by the presence of
 God's power and the advent of the

¹⁷ Cf. Lona (2005:222): a divine descent implies that God would have to change his nature and become similar to the human nature; this would imply a destabilization of the structure of the world.

¹⁸ See on 'mixed conditionals' CGCG (2019:557 §49.17).

¹⁹ Celsus' use of the second person is not always clear. He indicates his opponents commonly in the 3rd person, but occasionally he uses an *apostrophe*. In 6.29.4ff. he addresses his opponent explicitly with ὃ δυσσεβέστατε (8) and in 8.39.4 and 8.48 with ὃ βέλτιστε; in these passages he uses verbs in the singular 2nd person. Elsewhere he uses an explicit *apostrophe* with a plural 2nd person, e.g. 5.2.2ff; 7.36.8ff; 7.45.27ff.; 7.53.2ff. In 4.79.3ff. and 6.66.3f. Celsus' use of the 2nd person is explicitly introduced by Origen as a special communicative move. At other places Celsus seems to use the singular 2nd person impersonally, e.g. in 4.70.2; 4.75.16; 4.77.6; 6.10.1. Also in Origen's part of the text this impersonal use can be traced, e.g. 1.40.21; 2.76.18; 3.25.15; 3.30.13; 3.45.12; 3.46.2; 4.27.5; 4.93.12; 6.13.31; 7.19.24. It seems probable to me that Origen does not (only) address Ambrose in these passages.

πους τινά, οὐκ ὀκνήσομεν λέγειν μεταβάλλειν ἐκ φαύλου
εἰς ἀστεῖον καὶ ἐξ ἀκολάστου εἰς σώφρονα καὶ ἐκ δεισιδαί-
μονος εἰς εὐσεβῆ τὸν παραδεξάμενον τὴν τοῦ λόγου τοῦ
34 θεοῦ ἐπιδημίαν εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν.

Logos to man, we will not hesitate to affirm that anyone who has received the coming of the Logos of God into his own soul changes from bad to good, from licentiousness to self-control, and from superstition to piety.

Origen limits his response to a discussion on μεταβάλλειν (29, which is Focus in both accusative plus infinitive constructions). Origen takes over this verb from Celsus, but changes the tense and the interpretation. He does not speak a single word about Celsus' reference to a total destruction of the world. He seems to present his reaction with some polite repulsion (Εἰ²⁰ δὲ χρή, 29), but continues without restraint (οὐκ ὀκνήσομεν λέγειν, 31). The future is inferential: following previous remarks about the connection between God's interference and virtuous life Origen (involving his fellow Christians in the first person plural?) will now proceed to the next statement: μεταβάλλειν can be interpreted within this context (again an approach which is based on the *status definitivus*).

In his redefinition Origen slightly changes the sense of μεταβάλλειν. Celsus had used it as a transitive verb, but in Origen's sentence the word has to be interpreted as intransitive, with τινά (31) and τὸν παραδεξάμενον (33) as subjects.²¹ Origen does speak about a change (implemented by God and the Logos, παρουσία δυνάμεως θεοῦ and ἐπιδημία τοῦ λόγου εἰς ἀνθρώπους, 30), but transfers the domain where this change takes place: not in the outer world, but in the human soul. Thus he does not speak about Jesus' advent on the earth, but about a change of attitude in the soul. The present tense of μεταβάλλειν presents this change not as a one-time, completed event, but as a continuing process, that is at work when God's power is present in a person. Origen presents a contrast between the destructive change that was announced by Celsus and the change for the better he affirms 'without hesitation', the positive turn in the lives of everyone 'who has received the coming of the Logos in his soul' (τὸν παραδεξάμενον τὴν τοῦ λόγου τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιδημίαν εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν, 33-34). This positive change is formulated in three antithetic, parallel structured phrases in a polysyndetic coordination: ἐκ φαύλου εἰς ἀστεῖον καὶ ἐξ ἀκολάστου εἰς σώφρονα καὶ ἐκ δεισιδαίμονος εἰς εὐσεβῆ (31-33). This rise of the stylistic level is appropriate in an eulogy to the positive change that is achieved in human life by God's power. In this passage the character of the discourse changes to the domain of the epideictic genre (*genus demonstrativum*).²² In such a passage it is clear that Origen combines in his work apologetic aims with the intention to edify readers who might have sympathy for the Christianity, but were still hesitating to join it. Origen shows them what the beneficial effect the Christian faith has on human life.

²⁰ The conditional can be interpreted as illocutionary, according to the classification of Wakker (1994:49). She discerns three types of conditionals: predicationals (providing the condition for the realization of the SoA designated in the main clause), propositional conditionals (providing the conditional for the truth of the proposition presented in the main clause) and illocutionary conditionals (providing the condition for the appropriateness of the speech act in the main clause). The latter two have to do with interaction management: they enable the speaker to appeal to the addressee or to dissociate himself from the truth or appropriateness of his words. Often politeness (or the pretense to be polite) is involved (see for an extended discussion on the propositional and illocutionary conditionals Wakker's chapter 5, p.227-273; cf. CGCG 2019:550-551 §49.3). Here Origen prepares the reader for his next words by indicating his attitude towards the utterance: he speaks (only) on the condition that this *has to be said* (suggesting that otherwise he rather would have remained silent).

²¹ See LSJ s.v. μεταβάλλω A III *undergo a change*.

²² See chapter III 3.2.

5. Section 5: *Contra Celsum* 4.6

5.1 Strategy

Celsus

To prepare his next attack Celsus first evokes an image of the behaviour and the motives that in his view are attributed by Christians to God. In this image Celsus suggests that God would think that he would be unknown and therefore underestimated; for that reason he would wish to be recognized and to test people. Celsus compares the Christian God to newly rich people who wish to show themselves off. This far from positive sketch will, as Celsus obviously expects, result in a serious decrease of goodwill for the Christians. The presentation of his criticism in the form of a rhetorical question reinforces the persuasive effect: without stating anything directly Celsus seizes the opportunity to discredit his opponents. Having built up this picture, Celsus subsequently attacks it and blames the Christians for attributing a strong and very human ambition to God.

This approach can be considered as an example of the fallacy of the ‘straw man’: the standpoint of the opponent is represented in an incorrect way or a fictitious standpoint is attributed to him; and then this representation is criticized.¹

Origen

Origen distances himself from the image Celsus created: in no way the Christian doctrine can be recognized in the misrepresentation. Origen’s defence line is based on denial (*status coniecturalis*). In his introduction he sounds more emotional than usual: he appeals to feelings of indignation and anger (*pathos*) and involves his addressee in his emotions. Having quoted the appalling fragment from Celsus Origen’s tone sinks to a more objective level and then he presents his usual rational response (*logos*).

Origen’s defence is centered round four key words (‘unknown’, ‘to test’, ‘to show off’ and ‘ambition’) and he chooses a double strategy: he denies that Celsus’ allegations are true and contrasts them with the Christian standpoint. In these affirmative passages Origen’s readers group is intended: Origen turns Celsus’ criticism into a positive representation of the belief in God, who wants to deliver man from misfortune and to give them happiness. For readers who may still have some doubts to join the Christian belief these passages can work as an invitation, which is however never explicitly expressed by Origen.

5.2 Structure of the text

Origen follows his standard pattern: introduction – quote – reaction. In the latter part Origen deals with four elements from Celsus’ text in a two-part discussion: he refutes Celsus’ statement and offers his own alternative. The last element is finished quickly: a short denial, presented as a conclusion, should be enough.

Here is an outline of the structure:

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
Introduction	1-2	‘... the most ludicrous argument’	δέ
Quote	2-7	‘Maybe God thought he was too obscure and wanted to test men and to show himself off, just as newly rich people do.’	ἀλλὰ γάρ

¹ See chapter III 3.4.3.

		Christians attribute to God an excessively human ambition.'	<δη>
Reaction	7-26		οὖν
a. 'unknown'	8-11	Denial: God does not want to make himself known for his own sake, Alternative: ... but to deliver men through knowledge of himself.	οὐ ἀλλά
b. 'test'	11-17	Denial: God does not wish to test believers and not-believers, Alternative: ... but to deliver believers from misfortune and to deprive not-believers of an excuse.	Ἀλλ' οὐδέ ἦτοι ... ἦ ἀλλ' μέν ... δέ
c. 'show off'	17-24	Rhetorical question: What argument can Celsus show? Denial: God does not show off, Alternative: ... but implants happiness in us and aims at friendship.	οὖν οὐ γάρ ἀλλά
d. 'ambition'	25-26	Denial: No human ambition is attributed to God.	οὐδεμίαν οὖν

5.3 Commentary

4.6.1-2

1 Εἰ δὲ καὶ πρὸς τὰ καταγελαστότατα τοῦ Κέλσου If you want us to meet even the most
θέλεις ἡμᾶς ἀπαντᾶν, ἄκουε αὐτοῦ λέγοντος· ludicrous arguments of Celsus, listen to
him when he says:

The particle δέ (1) marks the start of Origen's next section, in which the next fragment from Celsus will be discussed. Before quoting this text Origen announces his adverse opinion on these words. He characterizes them as τὰ καταγελαστότατα τοῦ Κέλσου (1, Focus constituent) and clarifies by the words Εἰ δὲ ... θέλεις ἡμᾶς ἀπαντᾶν (1-2) that he thinks Celsus' words are so beside the point that he rather would pay no attention to them. Εἰ can be characterized as an illocutionary conditional:² it provides a condition for the appropriateness of the directive ἄκουε (2). Origen seems to protect himself (ironically) against possible criticism from his addressee: 'do you really need to burden me with these ludicrous statements?' In the meantime the rhetorical effect is clear: the reader has to understand that what follows can hardly be taken seriously. After such an introduction it is hard to listen to Celsus' words with an open mind. Besides the intention to influence the reception of Celsus' text in a negative way this introduction can attribute to corroborate the positive image of Origen himself. The reader can understand that he only responds to these 'ridiculous' words of Celsus from a sense of duty. Origen strengthens his profile as a persistent and dedicated worker, who is able to get over his aversion (*ethos*). By the use of the second person in θέλεις and ἄκουε Origen recalls the communicative setting he is writing in: he shows respect for Ambrose, who mandated him and who is addressed here explicitly. Strictly spoken these verbs refer to Ambrose, but at the same time the reader in general is also addressed.

² See comment on 4.5.29 above.

4.6.2-7 Celsus:

2	Ἀλλὰ γὰρ	Furthermore, if God was unknown
ἀγνοούμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις καὶ παρὰ τοῦτ' ἔλαττον		among men and on this account thought
ἔχειν δοκῶν ἐθέλοι ἂν γνωσθῆναι καὶ τοὺς πιστεύοντάς τε		Himself to be underrated, would he want
καὶ ἀπιστοῦντας διαπειράσαι, καθάπερ οἱ νεόπλουτοι τῶν		to make Himself known, and try out both
ἀνθρώπων ἐπιδεικτιῶντες; Πολλὴν <δὴ> τινα καὶ πάνυ		those who believe Him and those who do
7 θνητὴν φιλοτιμίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καταμαρτυροῦσι.		not, just like men who have just come into
		wealth and show off? It is, indeed, a
		strong and very mortal ambition which
		they attribute to God.

The text structuring particles Ἀλλὰ γάρ (2) are a signal that Celsus breaks off the presentation of his previous point ('God leaves his throne'), because he introduces his next theme: 'so far on this subject, for I will continue ...'. This fragment provides no evidence concerning the framework in which these words were originally written by Celsus, but it can be inferred from the context in which Origen quotes them, that Celsus continues his discussion on the Christian idea of a 'divine descent' and reproduces here a possible motive for it he attributes to his opponents.

The passage has two parts. Firstly a rhetorical question in which Celsus makes a suggestion concerning the reasons God could have had for his alleged descent to the earth: 'maybe he wants to make himself known'. The main clause is preceded by a Setting constituent, which consists of two participial clauses in which the background situation is sketched that would have brought God to the wish to make himself known. The initial participle ἀγνοούμενος (3) has Focus in this Setting constituent and immediately indicates the theme of the passage: God was unknown among men. The second participle δοκῶν (4, 'God thinks he is underestimated') and the main verb ἐθέλοι (4) grant the reader a closer look into God's thoughts and wishes. The potential optative ἐθέλοι ἂν in the main clause presents the statement as a cautious, friendly suggestion, but the kindness seems to be meant ironically. The sympathetic atmosphere decreases in διαπειράσαι (5, God would like to test believing and not-believing people) and totally disappears in the comparison with the νεόπλουτοι (5) who want to show themselves off (ἐπιδεικτιῶντες, 6). Celsus' presentation of God's motives he attributes to Christians a more neutral tone gradually changes into a clear disapproval.

In the second part, the final sentence of this fragment, Celsus expresses his criticism more directly:³ Christians (who are the intended subject of καταμαρτυροῦσι, 7) attribute to God a strong and very mortal ambition. The antithesis πάνυ θνητὴν – τοῦ θεοῦ (6-7) helps to indicate the absurdity of the Christian theology.

4.6.7-11

7	Φαμὲν οὖν	Well, we say that God, being unknown
ὅτι ἀγνοούμενος θεὸς ὑπὸ φαύλων ἀνθρώπων οὐ παρὰ τὸ		by bad men, wanted to make Himself
αὐτὸς ἔλαττον ἔχειν δοκεῖν θέλοι ἂν γνωσθῆναι, ἀλλὰ τὸ		known, not because He thought
τὴν γνῶσιν αὐτοῦ κακοδαιμονίας ἀπαλλάσσειν τὸν γινώσ-		Himself to be underrated, but because
κοντα.		the knowledge of Him delivers the man
		who knows Him from misfortune.

³ To mark the transition from the representation of the argument to Celsus' judgement various additions have been proposed by editors of the text (e.g. οὖν, γοῦν, see critical apparatus in Borret (Vol.2, 1968:200); Marcovich (2001) adds γέ). I follow Borret in his acceptance of δὴ, which has been proposed by O. Glöckner (1924). I think δὴ could be a fitting particle here to ask special attention from the reader for the concluding judgement and to present it as evident: Celsus makes clear that in the system of thoughts and values that is common to author and readers, the conclusion cannot be denied.

Origen marks the start of his next discourse section by οὖν (7): he expresses a Christian response (φαμέν, 7) to Celsus' statement. He takes over some elements from the text of Celsus and uses them by means of additions, denials and antitheses to formulate the Christian doctrine (ὁ Χριστιανῶν λόγος, 25).

In the first part of the response the focus is on the concept of knowledge (indicated in ἀγνοούμενος, 8; γνωσθῆναι, 9; τὴν γινώσκιν, 10; τὸν γινώσκοντα, 10-11). Origen replaces Celsus' statement 'God was unknown among men (ἐν ἀνθρώποις, 3)' by 'God was unknown by bad men (ὑπὸ φαύλων ἀνθρώπων, 8; the adjective is marked by its position before the noun)'. By this correction Origen changes the frame: knowledge of God is given a context of morality and redemption: it delivers men from misfortune (κακοδαιμονίας (10) has Focus). This is Origen's alternative interpretation, which is underlined by contrasting it with the statement of Celsus, which is put aside by ἀλλὰ (οὐ παρὰ τὸ αὐτὸς ἔλαττον ἔχειν δοκεῖν (8-9),⁴ in which αὐτός is added to the quote to mark the antithesis with τὸν γινώσκοντα (10-11) 'the man who knows him'). It is worth noting that Origen retains the potential optative (θέλοι ἄν, 9⁵) from the text of Celsus: he seems to demonstrate caution in making a confident assertion about God's wishes. Any ironical undertone is absent now.

4.6.11-17

11 Ἀλλ' οὐδὲ διαπειράσαι θέλων τοὺς πιστεύοντας ἢ τοὺς ἀπιστοῦντας ἤτοι αὐτὸς ἀρρήτῳ καὶ θείᾳ δυνάμει ἔντισιν ἐπιδημεῖ ἢ πέμπει τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τοῦ πιστεύοντας μὲν καὶ καταλαμβάνοντας αὐτοῦ τὴν θεότητα ἀπαλλάσσεσθαι πάσης κακοδαιμονίας, ἀπιστοῦντας δὲ μηδ' **16** ἀπολογίας ἔτι χώραν ἔχειν, ὥς παρὰ τὸ μὴ ἀκηκοέναι καὶ δεδιῶχθαι οὐ πιστεύσαντας.

Furthermore, it is not with any desire to try out those who believe Him and those who do not that He either dwells in certain people Himself by a mysterious divine power, or sends His Christ. He does so with the motive of delivering from all misfortune those who believe and comprehend His divinity, and in order that those who disbelieve may no longer have any occasion for excusing themselves on the ground that the reason why they do not believe is that they have not heard and been taught.

With Ἀλλ' (11) Origen indicates that he breaks off the preceding subject and moves on to his second point: the notion of 'testing' (διαπειράσαι, 5) from Celsus' text. As main verbs he now uses indicative forms (ἐπιδημεῖ, πέμπει, 13); Origen speaks with certainty now, the cautious tone is abandoned (also this contrast is marked by the introductory Ἀλλ', 11). Origen replaces theoretical statements by (what he considers as) factual information: 'God dwells in certain people and sends his Christ'. The present tense presents this 'dwelling' and 'sending' as not completed. Focus constituents are the verbs ἐπιδημεῖ and πέμπει; αὐτός (12) functions as Topic and is contrasted by τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτοῦ (13); the words ἀρρήτῳ ... τισιν (12-13) function as Setting.

The main clauses are preceded by the element from Celsus' text that is denied by Origen (οὐδὲ διαπειράσαι ..., 11); the Focus element here is the infinitive διαπειράσαι: God's motive was *not* a desire to *test*. This rejected motive is replaced (ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τοῦ ..., 13) by Origen's alternative, in which the

⁴ τὸ ... δοκεῖν is an articular infinitive construction; in 4.6 we find a concentration of this construction (also in 9-10; 13-15; 16-17; 18; in my corpus more examples in 4.3.8; 4.8.10-11; 4.12.24; 4.15.16; 4.18.2-3). In classical Greek this construction was possible, but in Koine Greek it became a favorite subordinate construction (Horrocks 2010:94-96). It is frequently used in the New Testament (Blass 1949:179-182) and as it seems, Origen does not totally avoid this Koine influence.

⁵ In Celsus' tekst: ἐθέλοι; in Origen's tekst: θέλοι. The forms without ε are more common from 250 BC (LSJ s.v. ἐθέλω). In *Contra Celsum* both variants occur, but forms without ε prevail (99x θελ- and 49x ἐθέλ-).

words πιστεύοντας (14) and ἀπιστοῦντας (15) are quoted from Celsus' text, but now are separately treated in a two- part structure (μέν ... δέ). The first group is specified as καταλαμβάνοντας αὐτοῦ τὴν θεότητα (14, 'who comprehend⁶ his divinity'): it is God's intention to deliver them from all misfortune. Origen here picks up what he said above about the redemptive power of the knowledge of God (10-11). Concerning the second group the intention is different: they should be deprived of an excuse (ἀπολογία) for not believing. They may not defend their impiety with the assertion (ὥς ... οὐ πιστεύοντας, 16-17) that they did not hear God's education.⁷

4.6.17-24

Τίς οὖν λόγος παρίστησιν ἀκολουθεῖν ἡμῖν τὸ τὸν θεὸν καθ' ἡμᾶς εἶναι ὡς τοὺς νεοπλούτους τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιδεικτιῶντας; Οὐ γὰρ ἐπιδεικτιᾷ ὁ **20** θεὸς πρὸς ἡμᾶς, βουλόμενος ἡμᾶς συνιέναι καὶ νοεῖν αὐτοῦ τὴν ὑπεροχὴν· ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ γινώσκεισθαι ἡμῖν αὐτὸν ἐγγινομένην ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἡμῶν μακαριότητα ἐμφύεσθαι ἡμῖν θέλων, πραγματεύεται διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς αἰὲ ἐπιδημίας τοῦ λόγου ἀναλαμβάνειν ἡμᾶς τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἰκείωσιν.

By what argument, then, can he show that it follows from our opinion that God is like men who have come into wealth and show off? God does not want to show off to us when He wants us to understand and think about His excellence. But, from a desire to implant in us the blessedness which comes to our souls as a result of knowing Him, He is concerned to enable us to obtain friendship with Him through Christ and the constant indwelling of the Logos.

The particle οὖν (17) marks the transition to the third part of Origen's reaction, in which he deals with Celsus' comparison with νεόπλουτοι (5) 'who wish to show off'. Origen increases the pressure by a rhetorical question, in which he suggests that there is no logic and consistency in what Celsus alleges to be a Christian opinion (τίς ... λόγος ... ἀκολουθεῖν ἡμῖν ..., 17-18).⁸ The first person plural pronoun is used twice in this sentence: ἡμῖν refers to 'we, Christians', whereas in καθ' ἡμᾶς (18) is meant 'we, humans in general' (as 5x in the next sentence, 20-24).

Next the evoked negative reaction to this question is explained (γάρ, 19) in the next two sentences. Again the two-part structure, with ἀλλά (21) as the turning point, is clear: in the first part Celsus' ἐπιδεικτιᾷ is denied (οὐ, 19): when God wants (βουλόμενος, 20) us to understand his excellence, this is *not* a desire to show off. Here Origen refers to Celsus' theme of 'knowing God' (in 3-4): God indeed wants us to know his excellency (ὑπεροχὴν (21), which corresponds with θεότητα, 14; both contrasting to θνήτην φιλοτιμίαν, 7). Then in the second part of the sentence Origen explains that God's intention is totally different from what Celsus had suggested. Origen again explicitly refers to God's desire and his action (θέλων and πραγματεύεται (23); the present tense presents both actions as continuous): it is his desire to implant in us happiness (τὴν ... μακαριότητα (21-22) has Focus in the participle clause); hence his activity to allow us to become familiar with him (ἀναλαμβάνειν ἡμᾶς τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἰκείωσιν, 24). In both phrases Origen adds a constituent that indicates the way this goal is reached: happiness by 'knowing God' (ἀπὸ τοῦ γινώσκεισθαι ἡμῖν αὐτόν (21) is in a Focus position before the participle ἐγγινομένην), familiarity by 'Christ and the constant dwelling of the Logos' (διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς

⁶ For καταλαμβάνω as 'comprehend' see 5.11.11 (καταλαμβάνοντες parallel to νοήσαντες and συνιέντες, cf. συνιέναι and νοεῖν here in 20; also the context in 5.11 is comparable: Origen speaks about 'comprehend that the son of God is the true light'), 5.19.12; 6.14.14. See LSJ s.v. 3.

⁷ I interpret ἀκηκοέναι καὶ δεδιδάχθαι as a *hen dia dyoin*, cf. Borret (Vol.2, 1968:201) 'qu' ils n'ont pas entendu son enseignement'. On ὥς + participle ('subjective motivation') see CGCG (2019:627 §52.39).

⁸ See Somos (2012:214-215) on arguments that contain an incorrect inference.

ἀεὶ ἐπιδημίας τοῦ λόγου (23-24) is in the Focus position before the infinitive ἀναλαμβάνειν).⁹

In the constituent order in these sentences a chiasmic structure is used, on two levels. Firstly on the level of the total sentence:

Main clause	Participle clause	Participle clause	Main clause
Οὐ γὰρ ἐπιδεικτὰ ... πρὸς ἡμᾶς (19-20)	βουλόμενος ... ὑπεροχὴν (20-21)	τὴν ἀπὸ ... θέλων (21-23)	πραγματεύεται ... οἰκείωσιν (23-24)

And also within the two participle clauses: in the first one the participle is placed in the front position, in the second one in the final position:

Participle 'to want'	Infinitival construction	Infinitival construction	Participle 'to want'
βουλόμενος (20)	ἡμᾶς συνιέναι καὶ νοεῖν (20)	τὴν ... μακαριότητα ἐμφύεσθαι ἡμῖν (21-22)	θέλων (23)

4.6.25-26

25 Οὐδεμίαν οὖν θνητὴν φιλοτιμίαν ὁ Χριστιανῶν λόγος καταμαρτυρεῖ τοῦ θεοῦ. So the Christian doctrine attributes no mortal ambition to God.

The final sentence of this chapter is presented as a separate unit, in which Origen draws his conclusion (οὖν, 25). Essential is that Celsus' suggestion is denied; οὐδεμίαν (25) is in the front position so that there can be no misunderstanding about this denial: 'the Christian doctrine attributes no mortal ambition to God'. The present in καταμαρτυρεῖ (26) can be interpreted as a timeless, universal present.¹⁰ The phrase ὁ Χριστιανῶν λόγος (25) sounds somewhat distant and formal as compared to the use of the first person, which is found elsewhere in indications of the Christian position to express the involvement of Origen (and his readers).¹¹

⁹ The particle καὶ indicates here that the second constituent defines the first one more precisely: 'and specially ...'. On καὶ introducing specifications see Bonifazi & Drummen & De Kreij (2016, Vol.3 2.2.2 §36; Vol.4, 2.4.2 §102-105). Cf. 4.3.24-28, where Origen speaks in similar words (ἀεὶ, τῷ λόγῳ, ἐν τῇ Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίᾳ). The phrase φίλους θεοῦ ... κατασκευάζοντι (from *Wisd.* 7.27) is the equivalent of τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἰκείωσιν.

¹⁰ See Rijksbaron (2002:4-5, 10-11); CGCG (2019:412 §33.16).

¹¹ In my corpus both indications are used: ὁ Χριστιανῶν λόγος (with similar variants) also in 4.3.28; 4.5.8; 4.21.2; indications with the first person are more frequent, e.g. 4.3.5; 4.3.18; 4.4.11; 4.5.19-20; 4.5.31; 4.10.12; 4.12.13-14; 4.14.20; 4.16.7; 4.17.7; 4.20.20.

6. Section 6: *Contra Celsum* 4.7-9

6.1 Strategy

Celsus

In 4.7 two fragments of Celsus are quoted. It seems that the first fragment can be considered to be a passage in which Celsus quotes a Christian source or reproduces the Christian standpoint in his own words.¹ In the second fragment Celsus raises a critical question in response to this standpoint. The first fragment is closely related to the fragment quoted in 4.6 and still deals with the reason why God would want to be known. In 4.6 was suggested that God wanted this for his own sake, here an alternative motive is given: the salvation of mankind. Celsus renders this standpoint in order to mention his point of criticism: ‘why did God wait so long to correct the life of men? Did he not care before?’² The argument sounds like an *argumentum ad consequentiam* and has more suggestive power than logical probative value.³ Perhaps the underlying issue is an image of God in which a divine intervention in the time is problematic anyway. It is improbable, in this view, that God, if he would want to intervene, would do this over time and that there is a period in which he seems to be careless.

Celsus’ intention in these passages is clear: he wants to show that there can be no good reason for God to make himself known to men. A rejection of the two suggested reasons must contribute to his main purpose in this part of his book: to demonstrate that the Jewish-Christian idea of a divine descent to the earth is unacceptable.

Origen

Origen does not say any word about the first quoted fragment. The most probable explanation is that he agrees with these words. The response to the second fragment is more comprehensive. Origen starts with a denial: there was never a moment God did not want to correct men (4.7). After this he deals in a more constructive way with the problem Celsus raised and recognizes the mysterious character of God’s salvation plan. From Old Testament quotes Origen deduces that this plan had two phases: a period in which the focus was on Israel and then a period in which Christ came as a savior of the whole world (4.8-9). Questions about the reason of this phasing are raised by Origen, but not answered: Origen wants to clarify that God’s two-phased providence is known to us as a fact, but that we cannot understand or express the reasons for it. Despite Celsus’ critical question Origen continues to insist that Christ came as a reformer *at some point in time*.

Gradually the defensive character of Origen’s discourse changes and the debate with Celsus is set aside for a short moment. Origen seems to be aware of the questions that can raise on this issue in his Christian reader group: how to react on these mysterious aspects of the Christian faith? In a confirmative passage he offers a response to such questions, that sounds more or less as an advice, though it is not explicitly presented as such. Origen distinguishes two groups in the Christian community, for whom he sees a different task: ‘the philosopher’ has to argue the truth of the doctrine and use his rational qualities, whereas ‘common people’ must trust themselves to God and be content with the *ipse dixit*.

In the following diagram Origen’s approach is reproduced:

Type	Approach	Content
A. Refutation	Denial (4.7)	God did not neglect the world, but always worked on his salvation plan.

¹ For a discussion on this fragment and the questions that are raised by the introduction I refer to the commentary section below.

² Cook (2000:151.247.311) shows that a similar argument is used more than a century later by Porphyry (*Contra Christianos*, fragment 81 ed. Von Harnack): if Christ is the way of salvation, what happened to all the people who lived before Christ came?

³ See chapter III 3.4.3.

IV. Commentary, section 6: *Contra Celsum* 4.7-9

B. Confirmation	Explanation (4.7-9)	In every generation there were friends of God and prophets. God's salvation plan has two phases: - Israel (~ prophets, coercive approach) - the whole world (~ Christ, teaching)
C. Conclusion	How to deal with mysteries? (4.9)	Differences between believers: - philosophers - 'more simple-minded' people

6.2 Structure of the text

After a short introduction Origen quotes two fragments from Celsus. The response to the second fragment consists of a short denying part and a longer confirmative part. The discourse structure is linear. Transitions are often marked by the rather neutral particle *δέ*. In chapter 8 a cyclic structure can be noticed: Origen states that the matter discussed has something rather mysterious (8-10), then shows this by enumerating some hard questions (10-26) and closes the section again with the statement that God's plan is hard to explain (26-28).

The structure can easily be read from the following diagram:

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
1. Introduction	7.1-2	Reference to previous 'futile nonsense'	δέ
Quote 1	7.2-6	'God gives knowledge of himself for our salvation; salvation is to be expected for those who accept it, but punishment for those who do not.'	οὐ ... ἀλλὰ μέν ... δέ
2. Introduction	7.6-7		Καί
Quote 2	7.7-8	'Why after such a long time? Did God not care before?'	νῦν ἄρα
Response	7.8-9.17		Καί ... δέ
	7.8-11	Denial: God never wanted no correction. Alternative: He always cared.	οὐκ ἀλλὰ καί
	7.12-16	Explanation: there were friends of God and prophets in every generation.	γάρ καί, γ'
	8.1-8	Continuation: some prophets surpassed others. Analogy: So there came one prophet who surpassed all others.	δέ οὕτω δέ
	8.8-28	Explanation concerning the question of God's supposed waiting and carelessness: - mysterious - though questions relating to Old Testament texts - ineffable	δέ καί ... καί ... γάρ
	9.1-7	Conclusion and specification: - advent of Christ (after the prophets) - no coercion because teaching was enough	οὖν γάρ
	9.7-19	Implications - for philosophers - for 'common people'	δ' μέν ... δέ

6.3 Commentary

4.7.1-2

Οὐκ οἶδα δ' ὅπως φλυαρήσας μάτην ἐφ' οἷς ἐξεθέμεθα, For some unknown reason, after the futile
 2 ὕστερόν ποτε ἐκτίθεται ὅτι nonsense he has uttered besides the
 nonsense we have quoted, he afterwards
 presents the following quote:

This short introduction of the next quote includes two elements: Origen characterizes Celsus' previous remarks as 'nonsense' and 'not-effective' (φλυαρήσας μάτην, 1)⁴ and he announces the next quote. Both elements need some discussion.

As for the words φλυαρήσας μάτην ἐφ' οἷς ἐξεθέμεθα (1): Does this phrase refer to the fragment quoted in 4.6 or to words that are omitted by Origen? Chadwick (1953:188) translates 'after talking the futile nonsense which we have just quoted', choosing apparently for the first option. But he seems to translate not ἐφ' οἷς, but ἄ. I prefer the second option and think the most appropriate meaning of ἐπί here is 'besides, in addition to' (LSJ s.v. B1e). I propose as translation: 'after the useless nonsense he has uttered besides (the nonsense) we quoted'.⁵ With ἐξεθέμεθα Origen then refers to the fragment quoted in 4.6 and introduced there as 'most ludicrous'. Do we have to assume that Origen omitted the words he here characterizes as nonsense (φλυαρήσας μάτην, 1), as was already suggested by Bader?⁶ The words ὕστερόν ποτε (2) can indicate that there is indeed a small gap in Origen's representation of Celsus' text. I am inclined to agree with Arnold (2016:554-555), who assumes that Origen changed the order in which he quotes Celsus' fragments: the fragments quoted in 4.7 seem to be taken out of their original context and brought forward by Origen for the sake of his own argument, viz. to demonstrate that Celsus' allegation in the fragment quoted in 4.6 was motivated by polemical reasons: from the fragment quoted in 4.7 can be deduced that he knew very well for what reason God descended according to the Christian belief.

As for ἐκτίθεται (2): we might consider that this verb can have the specific meaning of 'to quote' here.⁷ Celsus seems to introduce his opponents as speakers in his own text: he 'quotes' them while they formulate their own conviction.⁸ In this interpretation it is not necessary to keep the words ἡμετέραν and ἡμῖν outside the quotation, as is done by Borret (but not in Chadwick's translation). This interpretation would also explain why Origen does not respond to this quote with a single word: he agrees. That Origen is surprised by these words can be inferred from the introductory formula οὐκ οἶδα δ' ὅπως (1).

4.7.2-6 Celsus:

2 οὐ δι' αὐτὸν δεόμενος γνωσθῆναι God does not need to be known for
 ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν γινῶσιν ἡμῖν παρασχεῖν His own sake, but He wants to give us
 knowledge of Himself for our

⁴ The objection of 'nonsense' also in 2.74.5; 4.47.30; 6.32.2; 6.74.28; 8.71.16; μάτην ('without effect' or 'without a good reason') is used to characterize Celsus' words in 1.7.19; 2.19.15; 2.67.19; 3.75.13; 4.49.17; 4.87.36; 6.26.25; 6.72.1; 7.40.8; 8.1.4; 8.8.9; 8.37.7.

⁵ In that case I read ἐφ' οἷς as ἐπὶ τούτοις ἄ. Borret seems to have made the same choice in his translation 'sornettes sur ce que je viens de dire' (1968:203). I cannot agree with Fiedrowicz & Bartold ('Geschwätz zu unseren Ausführungen', Vol.3, 2011:673): on which 'Ausführungen' of Origen (or of Christians in general) would Celsus have responded here?

⁶ This suggestion of Bader is taken from a note of Borret (Vol.2, 1968:202 n.1). Bader (1940) presents the fragments of Celsus' text in a critical edition. See also Arnold (2016:554 n.85).

⁷ Rather than the more neutral translations of Chadwick ('affirm'), Borret ('explique') and Fiedrowicz & Bartold ('hinzufügt'). Origen uses ἐκτίθεμαι in situations where Celsus quotes other authors, e.g. Plato, see 1.5.7; 6.6.1; 6.7.17; 6.9.1; 6.17.4. Lona (2005:224) suggests that an introductory formula as 'they say' should be added.

⁸ Arnold (2016:555-556) suggests that the original position of the fragment quoted in 4.7.2-6 in Celsus' discourse might have been the passage quoted in 4.23, where Jews and Christians (in a comparison) are 'quoted' by Celsus as speaking from their own perspective. This would explain the use of the first person in ἡμετέραν and ἡμῖν in 4.7.3.

ἐαυτοῦ βούλεται· ἵν' οἱ μὲν παραδεξάμενοι αὐτὴν χρηστοὶ
γενόμενοι σωθῶσιν, οἱ δὲ μὴ παραδεξάμενοι ἀποδειχθέντες
6 πονηροὶ κολασθῶσιν. *salvation, in order that those who
accept it may become good and be
saved, but that those who do not
accept it may be proved to be wicked
and punished.*

This fragment can easily be linked to the words quoted in 4.6. It concerns the reason why God wishes to be known among men. Firstly the motive Celsus had suggested is rejected ('not for his own sake', οὐ δι' αὐτόν (2) has Focus as placed before the participle). Then this motive is put aside and replaced (ἀλλά, 3) by the Christian alternative: 'for our salvation (διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν, 3) he wants to give us knowledge of himself'. In the subordinate clause the purpose of this (ἵν', 4) is elaborated in two directions: knowledge of God brings salvation and punishment, depending on whether or not people accept it. This two-part clause (4-6) is carefully structured and marked by antithesis, chiasm, and parallelism:

Subject	Participle phrase in chiasmic order	Verb
οἱ μὲν παραδεξάμενοι αὐτήν	χρηστοὶ γενόμενοι	σωθῶσιν
οἱ δὲ μὴ παραδεξάμενοι	ἀποδειχθέντες πονηροὶ	κολασθῶσιν

4.7.6-7

6 Καὶ ἐκθέμενός γε τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐπαπορεῖ *After this quote he raises a new
λέγων· objection saying:*

In this introduction to the second quote the particle καὶ connects this sentence to the previous part of the discourse and γε (6) is used to mark the participle ἐκθέμενος. The participle phrase is placed before the main verb and functions as Setting. Origen seems to suggest an antithesis with the main verb ἐπαπορεῖ (6): 'And yet, even after such a (fine) quote, he raises another question'.

4.7.7-8 Celsus:

7 Νῦν ἄρα μετὰ τοσοῦτον αἰῶνα ὁ θεὸς ἀνεμνήσθη *Is it only now after such a long age
δικαιῶσαι τὸν ἀνθρώπων βίον, πρότερον δὲ ἡμέλει; that God has remembered to correct
the life of men? Did he not care
before?*

With the initial Νῦν (7), which is placed emphatically before the interrogative particle ἄρα (7),⁹ Celsus immediately introduces the key element 'time' in the discourse. The adverb functions as a marker and announces the Setting constituent μετὰ τοσοῦτον αἰῶνα (7). The temporal constituents modify the focal verb ἀνεμνήσθη: 'Now, after such a long time God remembered ...?'¹⁰ Celsus highlights his point even more by adding an antithetic second clause: πρότερον (8, opposite to νῦν, 7) ἡμέλει (8, opposite to ἀνεμνήσθη, 7).¹¹

⁹ In main clauses ἄρα usually has the initial position. Only exceptionally an element precedes: a Theme constituent in 3.59.13 and a conditional clause in 4.61.10; 5.7.21; 5.53.31; 7.15.3. For consideration I mention a suggestion made by G.C. Wakker (personal communication): perhaps Celsus did not write ἄρα, but the attitudinal particle ἄρα, which would give an ironical flavor to the rhetorical question ('Now apparently ...'). The second position location (the usual position of particles like ἄρα) could be an argument in favour of this suggestion. Marcovich' edition (2001) reads ἄρα, as can be seen above in the diagram in chapter I 3.5.

¹⁰ Νῦν does not refer to 'the moment of speech' (given the connection to the aorist indicative ἀνεμνήσθη), but to the (in Celsus' reasoning evoked and according to him imaginary) moment in which things 'came to God's mind' and he ended his period of not-caring.

¹¹ See a similar criticism of God's 'carelessness' in 6.78, where Celsus compares God with Zeus who in a comedy woke up out of a long period of sleep. Mind the tense difference between the imperfect ἡμέλει (durative, not completed) and the aorist ἀνεμνήσθη (completed).

The connection of this fragment to the previous one is made by δικαιῶσαι ('set right, correct') and can be linked to both σωθῶσιν and κολασθῶσιν (5-6):¹² correction can take the shape of salvation and punishment. The verb δικαιῶσαι (8) refers to δικαιωτής ('corrector' rather than 'judge'), which was used in the fragment quoted in 4.2, and corresponds to ἐπανορθοῦν (see the fragment quoted in 4.3.23-24.33).¹³

The intention of the rhetorical question is clear: Celsus wants to demonstrate that the idea of a divine intervention *at a certain moment* to correct the world is untenable, because it implies that God, who did not intervene previously, obviously postponed the implementation of his correction. By the use of the verbs ἀνεμνήσθη and ἡμέλει (7-8) Celsus suggests that this postponement has to be attributed to lack of involvement and forgetfulness. Thus, as Celsus implies, the Christian idea is based on an anthropomorphic conception of God. It leads to inappropriate criticism addressed to God and therefore has to be rejected.

4.7.8-11

8

πρὸς τοῦτο δὲ φήσομεν ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτ' οὐκ ἐβουλήθη
δικαιῶσαι τὸν ἀνθρώπων βίον ὁ θεός, ἀλλὰ καὶ αἰεὶ ἐπεμελήθη
διδόνς ἀρετῆς ἀφορμὰς τοῦ ἐπανορθοῦσθαι τὸ λογικὸν ζῷον.

Kaì We will reply to this that God has
at no time not desired to correct the
life of men, but He has always
cared for the reformation of the
rational being and given
opportunities of virtue.

Origen announces his response with the conventional phrase Καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο δὲ φήσομεν (8-9),¹⁴ by Καί ('also') placing this response in the long series of previous comments. The future φήσομεν may have an inferential meaning.¹⁵ Origen's response is only related to the second quote: he has nothing to say against the first one.

Origen starts with a strong denial of Celsus' time-related argument. By placing the temporal constituents οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτ' οὐκ (9, with a double negative) and αἰεὶ (10) in the Focus position Origen emphasizes that Celsus' objection is wrong. Celsus' suggestion that God was not involved for a long time is denied by Origen ('*at no time not*' – *status coniecturalis*) and replaced (ἀλλά, 10) by the positive counterpart: God '*always*' cared for correction. In the first part of the sentence Origen takes over some words from Celsus' text (δικαιῶσαι, τὸν ἀνθρώπων βίον, ὁ θεός, 10), but later on he uses his own vocabulary. He replaces ἡμέλει (8) by the positive ἐπεμελήθη (10), δικαιῶσαι (8) by the more significant ἐπανορθοῦσθαι (11) and indicates 'humans' as τὸ λογικὸν ζῷον (11). The last change is in line with Origen's explanation of the method of divine correction: it is implemented, as he says, by 'giving' men 'opportunities of virtue' (διδόνς ἀρετῆς ἀφορμὰς, 11). The background of this view is Origen's idea of free will and human responsibility: virtue is only virtue if a decision for it is taken freely.¹⁶ God grants this opportunity only to humans (τὸ λογικὸν ζῷον as opposed to animals); they can make their choice because of the λόγος they are equipped with.¹⁷

4.7.12-16

12 Κατὰ γὰρ ἐκάστην γενεὰν ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ψυχάς,
ἃς εὕρισκει ὁσίας, μεταβαίνουσα φίλους θεοῦ καὶ προφήτας
κατασκευάζει. Καὶ εὐρεθεῖν γ' ἂν ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς βίβλοις

For in every generation the wisdom
of God, entering into souls which
she finds to be holy, makes them
friends of God and prophets. In fact,
in the sacred books you could find

¹² See Lampe, s.v. δικαιῶ A (with reference to this text).

¹³ See 4.7.10-11 where δικαιῶ and ἐπανορθῶ are used in parallel by Origen. Cf. the note on δικαιωτής in the comment on 4.2.3 above.

¹⁴ See also 3.12.8; 3.14.5; 3.19.6; 3.32.5; 3.42.6; 3.61.18; 4.40.4. Origen uses equivalent variants with ταῦτα or with λεκτέον, ἐροῦμεν, λέγομεν or φαμεν as verbal elements.

¹⁵ See chapter II 4.5.

¹⁶ Cf. 4.3.48-49 above.

¹⁷ The difference with animals and the connection between God and men is further discussed in 4.25 and 4.29; also there the issue is related to moral choices (cf. also 7.66.27). For further discussion on the difference between rational and irrational beings see 4.74-99.

οἱ καθ' ἐκάστην γενεάν ὅσοι καὶ δεκτικοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεύ-
16 ματος, καὶ ὡς ἐπέστρεφον τοὺς καθ' αὐτοὺς ὅση δύναμις.

holy men in every generation who
 were receptive of the divine Spirit,
 and who devoted all their powers to
 converting their contemporaries.

Origen continues with an explanation (introduced by γὰρ, 12) of his statement. In the explanation he quotes words from *Wisdom* 7.27, where it is said about God's Wisdom (ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ, 12): κατὰ γενεὰς εἰς ψυχὰς ὁσίας μεταβαίνουσα φίλους θεοῦ καὶ προφήτας κατασκευάζει ('For generations she comes to holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets'). Origen inserts two elements to clarify his intention even more: in the Setting constituent ἐκάστην is added (so we get the singular phrase κατὰ ἐκάστην γενεάν, 12) to mark the contrast with Celsus' μετὰ τοσοῦτον αἰῶνα, 7; besides the constituent ψυχὰς ὁσίας is expanded to ψυχὰς ἃς εὐρίσκει ὁσίας (12-13, Focus in the participle phrase), in order to emphasize that the souls were already holy when God's Wisdom found them: their sanctity precedes the activity of God who allows full space to the free choice of the rational souls. In the next sentence the 'holy souls' are resumed again. This sentence is added as an extra (καὶ 14) argument: these holy people *can* really *be found* in the Scriptures (εὐρεθεῖεν starts a Broad-Focus constituent and is underlined by γ', 14). Their holy status is more clearly defined as δεκτικοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεύματος (15-16, 'receptive of God's Spirit', referring to προφήτας who were filled by divine Spirit¹⁸) and once again it is repeated that they occur 'in each generation'. As a final statement Origen mentions their commitment to convert their contemporaries. The tense of verb ἐπέστρεφον indicates the conative and durative character of their actions.

Summarizing this embedded passage: Origen points out that God always, in every generation, implemented his correction project: he made holy people his friends and prophets, who devoted all their powers to converting other people. The argument is given extra authority by the reference to a biblical passage and to holy people described in the Scriptures. In this way Origen counters Celsus' suggestion that the Christian belief implied that God was careless and waited a long time with his corrective intervention.

4.8.1-8

1 Οὐδὲν δὲ θαυμαστὸν τὸ γενεαῖς τισι προφήτας γεγο-
 νέναι, ὑπερέχοντας ἐν τῇ παραδοχῇ τῆς θειότητος διὰ τὸν
 ἐπὶ πλεῖον εὖτονον καὶ ἐρρωμένον βίον ἑτέρων προφητῶν,
4 τινῶν μὲν κατ' αὐτοὺς ἄλλων δὲ προγενεστέρων ἢ μεταγε-
 νεστέρων. Οὕτω δὲ οὐ θαυμαστὸν καὶ τινα καιρὸν γεγονέναι,
 ὅτ' ἐξαίρετόν τι χρῆμα ἐπιδεδήμηκε τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων
 καὶ διαφέρον παρὰ τοὺς προγενεστέρους αὐτοῦ ἢ καὶ μετα-
8 γενεστέρους.

It is not surprising that there have
 been prophets in certain generations,
 who on account of their more active
 and zealous life surpassed other
 prophets in their reception of divine
 inspiration, some of whom were
 their contemporaries whereas others
 lived earlier and later than they. So
 neither is it surprising that it has
 happened at a certain time that some
 special person has visited the human
 race, who was pre-eminent beyond
 those who lived before or even after
 him.

The passage is connected to the previous one by the particle δέ (1): Origen continues the explanation of the statement presented in 7.9-11 ('God always desired to correct mankind') with an analogical argumentation. This passage is linked to the previous one by the reuse of some terms (γενεαῖς, προφήτας) and thoughts (ἐν τῇ παραδοχῇ τῆς θειότητος (2) resumes δεκτικοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεύματος, 4.7.15). New is the comparison element (ὑπερέχοντας and ἐπὶ πλεῖον, 2-3).

The first part of the reasoning is the statement that it is not surprising (θαυμαστόν (1) has Focus in the main clause) when some prophets surpass other prophets. The difference in their way of life (τὸν ἐπὶ πλεῖον

¹⁸ Cf. 1.35.31; 3.81.19; 6.19.15; 7.4.2; 7.18.25.

εὐτονον καὶ ἐρρωμένον βίον (2-3) a difference depending on their own choices) results in a different reception of divine inspiration (ὑπερέχοντας ἐν τῇ παραδοχῇ τῆς θεϊότητος (2); the participle ὑπερέχοντας at the head of its clause contains the salient information). These differences will obviously occur because of the continuous character of God's correction, which is extended to all generations (referred to in γενεαῖς τισι, 1). This notion of 'time' is also evoked by the explicit reference to people of three periods: contemporaries and people living earlier or later (τινῶν μὲν κατ' αὐτοὺς ἄλλων δὲ προγενεστέρων ἢ μεταγενεστέρων, 4-5).

In the second part of the argument, introduced by δέ (5), the analogy character is clarified by οὕτω, by the repetition of words (θαυμαστόν – Focus again, γεγονέναι, 5), the correspondence between γενεαῖς τισι (1) and τινα καιρόν (5) and the repeated comparison with 'people who lived before or after him' (παρὰ τοὺς προγενεστέρους αὐτοῦ ἢ καὶ μεταγενεστέρους, 4-5). Part 1 appears to be a stepping stone to part 2: the logic of the analogy increases the credibility of part 2, the real point of interest: if it is not surprising that some prophets are surpassed by others, then it is also not surprising that at a certain time 'the most excellent one' (in the Focus position) appears. Origen indicates him provisionally with a distant, neutral phrase ἐξάιρετον τι χρῆμα (6), an expression which indicates his extraordinary status.¹⁹ At the same time Origen uses as verb ἐπιδεδήμηκε (6), his favourite word to denote Christ's dwelling on the earth: a word to the wise is enough – experienced readers will understand what is meant.

4.8.8-10

8 Ἔχει δέ τι ὁ περὶ τούτων λόγος μυστικώτερον καὶ βαθύτερον καὶ μὴ πάνυ τι φθάνειν δυνάμενον ἐπὶ τὴν 10 δημωδεστέραν ἀκοήν.	The explanation of this has something rather mysterious and profound about it, the understanding of which is quite beyond the capacity of the common people.

The particle δέ (8) marks the transition to a next part of the discourse, in which Origen will give an explanation of the previous argument (ὁ περὶ τούτων λόγος, 8), but starts with an announcement to the reader: the issue discussed has a profound character and cannot be understood by the common people.²⁰ This statement is repeated below in similar words (8.26-28, again in a Broad-Focus phrase), which gives a cyclic structure to the passage. The hyperbaton τι ... μυστικώτερον (8) and the polysyndeton καὶ ... καὶ (9) seem to be intended to underline the mysterious character. From the fact that Origen in spite of this announcement still continues his explanation can be deduced that at least a part of the intended readers is expected to be able to follow his discourse, which means that they are well-educated and no strangers in the biblical exegesis. From the perspective of communication can be noticed that Origen's announcement contains an implicit compliment to his readers: he presumes that these well-educated people will appreciate his discussion on this mysterious subject.

4.8.10-26

10 Καὶ δεῖ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ταῦτα σαφηνισθῆναι καὶ ἀπαντηθῆναι πρὸς τὰ λεγόμενα περὶ τῆς Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίας, ὅτι νῦν ἄρα μετὰ τοσοῦτον αἰῶνα ὁ θεὸς ἀνεμνήσθη δικαιοῦσαι τὸ ἀνθρώπων γένος, πρότερον δὲ ἡμέλει; ἄψασθαι τοῦ περὶ μερίδων λόγου καὶ σαφηνίσαι, διὰ τί «Ὅτε διεμέ-	To explain these matters, and to reply to Celsus' question about Christ's advent 'Is it only now after such a long age that God has remembered to correct the human race? Did He not care before?' it is necessary to touch on the subject

¹⁹ See LSJ s.v. χρῆμα 3 'used in periphrases to express something strange or extraordinary'; it can be used to refer to persons as well; see 4.22.16-17: θεῖόν τι καὶ ἱερὸν χρῆμα γεγονέναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

²⁰ In 5.29 Origen is more explicit. Having quoted the same biblical passage from *Deut.* 32 he refers to the hidden meaning of these words. Origen explicitly states that the explanation should not be given to uneducated people ('no pearls before swines'); the competent readers can work out the meaning of the passage for themselves.

15 ριζεν ὁ ὕψιστος ἔθνη, ὡς διέσπειρεν υἱοὺς Ἀδάμ, ἔστησεν ὅρια ἔθνων κατ' ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ· καὶ ἐγενήθη μερίς κυρίου λαὸς αὐτοῦ Ἰακώβ, σχοίνισμα κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ Ἰσραήλ»· καὶ δεήσει τὴν αἰτίαν εἰπεῖν τῆς εἰς ἕκαστον ὅριον γενέσεως ὑπὸ τὸν κεκληρωμένον τὸ ὅριον, καὶ πῶς εὐλόγως «ἐγενήθη μερίς κυρίου λαὸς αὐτοῦ Ἰακώβ, σχοίνισμα **21** κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ Ἰσραήλ»· καὶ διὰ τί πρότερον μὲν ἦν «μερίς κυρίου λαὸς αὐτοῦ Ἰακώβ, σχοίνισμα κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ Ἰσραήλ», περὶ δὲ τῶν ὕστερον λέγεται πρὸς τὸν σωτῆρα ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός· «Αἵτησαι παρ' ἐμοῦ, καὶ δώσω **25** σοι ἔθνη τὴν κληρονομίαν σου καὶ τὴν κατάσχεσίν σου τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς.»

of divisions, and to explain why 'when the most High divided the nations, as he scattered the sons of Adam, he set the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God; and the Lord's portion was Jacob his people, Israel the lot of his inheritance'. And it will be necessary in each case to give the reason for the birth of a man into a particular region as the subject of the one who has been assigned that region, and how it is reasonable that 'the Lord's portion was Jacob his people, Israel the lot of his inheritance'. We must explain why formerly 'the Lord's portion was Jacob his people, Israel the lot of his inheritance', whereas concerning the later dispensation the Father said to the Saviour, 'Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the bounds of the earth for thy possession.'

This passage is divided into two parts as is indicated by καὶ δεῖ (10) καὶ δεήσει (18): this explanation Origen has in mind comprises two necessary parts, which have to be treated in succession. The future δεήσει is inferential: the second part is introduced as a logical follow-up after the first part of the discussion.

Before Origen comes to the point he formulates the intention of his investigation (in a long Setting constituent): to give an explanation (ὑπὲρ τοῦ ταῦτα σαφηνισθῆναι, 10) and the reply to Celsus' question (ἀπαντηθῆναι πρὸς τὰ λεγόμενα, 11), which is quoted once again in its entirety (after ὅτι). In his introduction of this quote Origen adds the phrase περὶ τῆς Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίας (11-12), thus framing Celsus' question and relating it explicitly to the Christ's advent. After the quote Origen presents his explanation in which a biblical passage has a key role. This passage, *Deut.*32.8-9, is indicated as dealing with 'the issue of the division' (τοῦ περὶ μερίδων λόγου, 14). Origen's contribution in this 'mysterious' issue is quite limited: he formulates a problem which has to be solved by placing the interrogative διὰ τί (14) before the quotation, thus turning the statement of *Deut.*32 into a question: 'why did the most High ... set the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God ...'.²¹

Without giving any answer Origen continues in the second part with follow-up questions: again 'why'-questions, worded with a certain variation (τὴν αἰτίαν εἰπεῖν τῆς, 18; πῶς, 19; διὰ τί, 21). For the debate with Celsus the last question seems to be the most relevant one. Here Origen differentiates between two phases in God's plan (μὲν ... δέ, 21-23). The first phase (πρότερον, 21) is described in *Deut.*32 according to him and comprises a special position for Israel as God's nation; in the second phase (ὕστερον, 23), indicated in the quoted verse from *Psalms* 2, God attributes all nations to the Saviour. Moreover the answer to the question why this change is carried out is not given by Origen.²² Despite all these open questions the passage

²¹ This passage from the song of Moses about the division of the earth plays an important role in Origen's thoughts about God's plan (οἰκονομία, see 28) and is quoted again in 5.29 and 5.31 as part of a comprehensive discussion on the issue in 5.26-32. In Origen's vision God established borders within which each nation on earth should live. To each nation an angel was attributed as supervisor. In case of bad behaviour the nations would temporarily be placed under the power of 'rulers' of other nations for pedagogical punishment. In this division Israel got a special position: it was placed directly under God's authority. Cf. Borret *ad* 5.26. (Vol.3, 1969:80 n.1).

²² Cf. the discussion on the comparable subject in 4.3.1-13 (the transition from the Jews to the Christians).

contributes to the refutation of Celsus' critical question: Origen pointed out that also before Christ's advent God was active and not careless.

4.8.26-28

<p>26 Εἰσὶ γάρ τινες εἰρμοὶ καὶ ἀκολουθίαι ἄφατοι καὶ ἀνεκδιήγητοι περὶ τῆς κατὰ τὰς ἀνθρωπίνας ψυχὰς διαφόρου οἰκονομίας.</p>	<p>For there are logical and consistent reasons for the different ways in which providence cares for human souls which cannot be expressed or explained in detail.</p>
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At the end of the chapter we find an explanatory digression (γάρ, 26), in which the circle is closed with the repeated statement that the mystery cannot be explained totally (ἄφατοι καὶ ἀνεκδιήγητοι, 27). Nevertheless Origen indicates some aspects of the mystery in a condensed form: (1) he calls it a plan (οἰκονομία, 28), which is not random, but (2) characterized by coherence and logic (εἰρμοὶ καὶ ἀκολουθίαι, 26), (3) by differentiation (διαφόρου, 28) and (4) is related to the human soul (κατὰ τὰς ἀνθρωπίνας ψυχὰς, 27). In this final aspect Origen shows that he is in favour of an allegorical interpretation of the *Deuteronomy*-passage: the division of the nations is an image of the differentiated way in which God works on the salvation of the *souls*. So addressing Celsus Origen maintains: σωτηρία is God's intention and his plan includes differentiation and temporal phasing.

In his words Εἰσὶ γάρ τινες εἰρμοὶ καὶ ἀκολουθίαι (26) Origen allows the possibility that there also are elements of God's plan that *can* be explained. This can be seen as an announcement of a remark in 4.9, where he formulates as task for philosophical Christians to present a rational substantiation of the doctrines.

4.9.1-7

<p>Ἦλθεν οὖν, κἂν μὴ βούληται Κέλσος, μετὰ πολλοὺς προφήτας ἐπανορθομένους τὰ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἐκείνου ἐπανορθωτῆς ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου ὁ Χριστός, οὐ δεόμενος κατὰ τὴν προτέραν οἰκονομίαν τῆς κατ' ἀνθρώπων χρήσεως μαστίγων 5 καὶ δεσμῶν καὶ βασανιστηρίων· ἥρκει γὰρ ἡ διδασκαλία, ὅτε «ἐξῆλθεν ὁ σπείρων τοῦ σπείρειν», ἵνα σπείρῃ τὸν λόγον πανταχοῦ.</p>	<p>Accordingly, even if Celsus will not admit it, after many prophets who were reformers of the old Israel, Christ came as reformer of the whole world. He did not need to punish men by the method of the earlier dispensation, with whips and bonds and tortures. For when 'the sower went forth to sow', his teaching was enough to sow the word everywhere.</p>
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After the exegetical digression Origen marks by οὖν (1) the return to the main line of his discourse. The verb Ἦλθεν in the front position functions as Topic and resumes the notion of 'coming' in 8.5-8. Then Origen inserts three Setting constituents: the conditional clause κἂν μὴ βούληται Κέλσος (1),²³ the adverbial constituent μετὰ πολλοὺς προφήτας (1-2) and the participle phrase ἐπανορθομένους τὰ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἐκείνου (2). Together these constituents cause a postponement of the Focus: some tension is built up and presentation of the Focus is given an element of surprise: ἐπανορθωτῆς ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου ὁ Χριστός (2-3). Even within this constituent the qualifier is placed before the proper name, which enhances the surprise effect: the vaguely indicated ἐξαίρετον τι χρῆμα (8.6) turns out to be Christ! The beginning of 4.8 and the debate with Celsus are also recalled in the words μετὰ πολλοὺς προφήτας, modified by the participle phrase (with the participle as Focus: they were *reformers*): Origen reminds the reader of the corrective prophets in the ages

²³ See Wakker (1994:329-339) on concessive conditional clauses: the main clause SoA is realized *in spite of* the unfavourable circumstance presented in the subordinated clause ('*even if*'); cf. CGCG (2019:558-559 §49.19). The subjunctive in the concessive clause indicates here that realization of this circumstance is very well possible: in the context of this debate it might be expected that Celsus does not agree.

before Christ's advent, whom he had presented as proof of God's constant care for the reformation of mankind (the focus of Celsus' criticism, μή βούληται Κέλσος, 1). The link to the final passage of 4.8 is established in the words τὰ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἐκείνου (2, 'the just mentioned Israel') and the antithesis Israel vs. the whole world (ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου, 3), which corresponds to the two phases of 8.21-23 (πρότερον - ὕστερον).

In the Remainder of the sentence a new aspect of the antithesis 'earlier – later' is presented: the plan of the first period (κατὰ τὴν προτέραν οἰκονομίαν, 3-4) worked with coercion, which is enumerated in triplicate with an emphatic polysyndeton: μαστίγων καὶ δεσμῶν καὶ βασανιστηρίων (4-5). The exact meaning is not elaborated by Origen,²⁴ but it is clarified that this harsh approach is no longer needed in the second period, the period of Christ (οὐ δεόμενος, 3). The reason for this is presented in the next sentence, introduced by γὰρ: the teaching (ἡ διδασκαλία, 5) of Christ was enough now. In this period the previous limitation is removed as is indicated in πανταχοῦ and the image of the sower and the seed (from *Matt.* 13). The word (τὸν λόγον, 6-7) of Christ is spread everywhere; by this method Christ is the ἐπανορθωτής ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου (2-3). The continuity of this action is indicated in the aspect of the verbs ἥρκει and σπειρή (5-6).

4.9.7-17

Εἰ δ' ἐπιστήσεται τις χρόνος, περιγράφων
τὸν κόσμον ἀναγκαίαν περιγραφὴν τῷ αὐτὸν ἀρχὴν ἐσχηκέναι,
καὶ ἐπιστήσεται τι τέλος τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ μετὰ τὸ τέλος δικαία
10 περὶ πάντων κρίσις· δεήσει μὲν τὸν φιλοσοφοῦντα τὰ τοῦ
λόγου κατασκευάζειν μετὰ παντοδαπῶν ἀποδείξεων, τῶν τε
ἀπὸ τῶν θείων γραμμάτων καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις
ἀκολουθίας, δεήσει δὲ τὸν πολὺν καὶ ἀπλούστερον καὶ μὴ
δυνάμενον παρακολουθεῖν τοῖς ποικιλωτάτοις τῆς σοφίας
15 τοῦ θεοῦ θεωρήμασιν, ἐμπιστεύσαντα ἑαυτὸν θεῷ καὶ τῷ
σωτῆρι τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν, τούτου μᾶλλον ἀρκεσθῆναι τῷ
«Αὐτὸς ἔφα» ἢ ἄλλου οὐτινοσοῦν.

But if there will be a certain fixed time when the world will be brought to the end which it must necessarily have if it had any beginning, and if it is true that there will be a certain appointed end of the world and after that a righteous judgement of all men, then anyone who constructs a Christian philosophy will need to argue the truth of his doctrines with proofs of all kinds, taken both from the divine Scriptures and from rational arguments. The simple-minded masses, however, who cannot comprehend the complex theology of the wisdom of God, must trust themselves to God and to the Saviour of our race, and be content simply with the *ipse dixit* of Jesus rather than of anyone else.

In this long final sentence Origen discusses the implications his discourse has for the task of Christians. The future is the ruling tense here: in the double conditional clause we find two times ἐπιστήσεται (7, 9), in the main clause two times δεήσει (10,13). The first two refer to a moment in the future (the end of the world and the final judgement). In the main clause the futures are inferential: they formulate what, given the fact of the future end of the world, consequently will be necessary for Christians. The condition is worded neutrally in the εἰ-clauses, but it may be inferred from ἀναγκαίαν (marked by its position before its noun) that Origen is not uncertain about it: this fixed moment (τις χρόνος, 7) *will inevitably* come. Origen invokes a philosophical axiom:²⁵ what has a beginning (τῷ αὐτὸν ἀρχὴν ἐσχηκέναι) is necessarily limited (περιγράφων ... ἀναγκαίαν περιγραφὴν, 7-8) and finite (τέλος, 9). He submits this philosophical approach

²⁴ Perhaps Origen refers to coercion with pedagogical or therapeutic intentions, as discussed in 6.56. The plagues which hit Egypt (*Ex.* 7) are indicated as μαστίξ in 3.5.15 and 5.59.30. Or did Origen think of the Pauline antithesis coercion by the Law vs. freedom in Christ (*Gal.* 3.23-24)?

²⁵ See the notes of Chadwick (1953:189 n.4) and Borret (Vol.2, 1968:207, who refers to p.103 n.2).

with an element from the Christian expectation: at the end of the world there will be a righteous judgement of all men (μετὰ τὸ τέλος δικαία περὶ πάντων κρίσις, 9-10).²⁶

If we expect the coming judgement this imposes obligations, as Origen states here. These obligations are explained in a two-part structure (δεήσει μὲν ... δεήσει δέ, 10-13): Origen distinguishes between the philosophical educated Christian (τὸν φιλοσοφούντα, 10) and the ‘simple-minded masses’ (τὸν πολλὸν καὶ ἀπλούτερον, 13); both constituents function as Topic. The ‘philosopher’ has to lay the foundations of the Christian doctrine with proofs from both the Scriptures and rational arguments.²⁷ The words τὰ τοῦ λόγου have Focus (before the infinitive) and refer to τὸν λόγον (6-7). Here we find terms from the vocabulary of philosophy: ἀποδείξων, τοῖς λόγοις, ἀπὸ τῆς ... ἀκολουθίας (11-13) and further on παρακολουθεῖν, τοῖς ... θεωρήμασιν (14-15). It is not far-fetched to assert that Origen refers here implicitly to his own work as author of his present book.²⁸

The section on the task of the ‘philosopher’ is balanced by a section about the ‘common man’. Whereas in the previous section rationality had Focus, here the Focus position is given to τούτου (μᾶλλον), i.e. to Christ. The ‘common man’ has to be satisfied (ἀρκεσθῆναι, 16) with believing under the authority of Christ, which means ‘trusting himself to God and the Saviour’, as is said in the Setting constituent ἐμπιστεύσαντα ... ἡμῶν (15-16). Origen uses the formula Αὐτὸς ἔφα (17), known from the school of Pythagoras: this *ipse dixit* was enough for the students to accept his doctrine.²⁹ This reference contributes to the argument: what was accepted in Greek philosophy, cannot be denied to Christians. Origen states that the use of this formula applies to Christ (τούτου) more than to whatever other person (ἄλλου οὐστινοσοῦν, 17).³⁰

I will conclude this section with a general remark about 4.8-4.9, in line with the words Origen wrote about the task of ‘philosophers’. What he describes in 4.9.10-13 as the approach of the ‘philosopher’, viz. arguing, providing proof based on the Scriptures and rationality, seems to be particularly characteristic for the discourse in these chapters. The debate with Celsus, prominently present in 4.7, seems to fade away for a moment in 4.8-4.9, where Origen concentrates on confirmation and explanation (though Celsus pops up one time, in 4.9.1). The character is reflected in the use (or rather the absence) of linguistic and rhetorical features. We do not find signs that refer to the communicative situation: no first and second persons, no rhetorical questions, no evaluative remarks. No interactional particles either: the particles used here are all presentational. The author seems to step back from his discourse and confines himself to indicating the structure of the text. The only phrase that could be interpreted as a reference to the author (τὸν φιλοσοφούντα, 10), is in fact a distant, general third person indication without any personal traits. Rationality appears in the dominant logos argumentation: no *ethos* arguments here, but we do find a well-balanced analogy and a cyclic structured argument. Even ‘the proof based on the Scriptures’ remains rather theoretical here: the explanation is restricted to a preliminary investigation of the questions that should be asked. The use of the inferential future (3x) fits well in this environment of theory and reasoning.

²⁶ The semicolon (raised period ‘) after κρίσις in the text in the Borret-edition seems to be wrong. I would prefer a comma (,) to mark the transition from the subordinate clause to the main clause.

²⁷ Cf. 3.16.5-6 for the same combination.

²⁸ These remarks can be seen in the perspective of Celsus’ objections against Christians: they would demand a blind belief and glorify foolishness (1.9.1-13). Origen responds that there is nothing wrong with simple believing, but that Christianity allows plenty of scope for intellect and rational argumentation.

²⁹ The expression became proverbial, see Chadwick (1953:11 n.1) with many references. Origen refers to this formula also in 1.7, in a slightly different, but comparable context: on account of Celsus’ charge that Christianity would be a secret doctrine, Origen firstly denies this in general: the central doctrines are well known. Then he points out that there are indeed elements beyond those which are exoteric and do not reach the multitude, but: this is not special for Christianity; it also occurs in the Greek mysteries and philosophical school. As example of this Origen refers to the Pythagoreans: for some hearers the *ipse dixit* is enough, others were taught in secret doctrines.

³⁰ I agree with a revised translation presented by Borret in his *Addenda et corrigenda* (Vol. 5, 1976:528): ‘satisfaite de l’ affirmation “Il l’a dit”, à propos de Jésus plus que de toute autre’. Chadwick’s version ‘with the *ipse dixit* of Jesus more than with anything beyond this’ has to be rejected: in his translation the two final Greek words correspond with τῷ Αὐτὸς ἔφα, but in that case the dative had been used. The genitive corresponds to τούτου, as Borret rightly saw.

7. Section 7: *Contra Celsum* 4.10

7.1 Strategy

Celsus

In the fragments quoted here Celsus' criticism concentrates on two issues: (1) Christians 'speak about God impiously and impurely'; (2) they want 'to arouse amazement and terrify common people by telling lies about a punishment for sinners'. His approach is offensive and almost intimidating: the first point is presented in a clear statement as obvious without any proof. To underline his objections he uses a comparison that is meant to deprive Christians of any sympathy: they act like 'adherents of the Bacchic mysteries, who introduce horrible phantoms'. In sentences full of *pathos* Celsus presents the Christian opinion on punishment in a frame of impiety, lies and intimidations.

Origen

As for the first objection Origen chooses for a procedural defence line (*status translationis*): he points out that Celsus produces no proof or argument. This formal objection is completed with a personal attack, which aims at a disqualification of the opponent: 'this is usual for Celsus' (*ethos* argument). The second point of Celsus is responded with a twin-track of rejection and reframing: the comparison with the Bacchic mysteries is rejected as irrelevant and the negative frame of intimidation is turned into a positive image of punishment as beneficial. Besides Origen corrects Celsus' one-sided image by pointing out that Christians do speak about punishments, but also about promises of a blessed life. This defence line fits within the third option of the *stasis*-theory: *qualitas*: the objection is not denied totally, but presented from a different perspective.

Origen's strategy is reproduced in the following diagram:

Type	Approach	Content
A. Procedural	Formal objection	Celsus produces no proof or argument.
B. Personal	Personal attack	This is Celsus' usual behaviour.
C. Procedural	Rejection of the comparison	The comparison is irrelevant.
D. Content	Correction	The intention is not intimidation, but improvement of mankind.
		Threatening with punishment aims at correction.
		Besides punishment also promises.

7.2 Structure of the text

The structure is conventionally divided into three parts: introduction, quotes from Celsus and response of Origen. We can notice a variety in the presentation of the quotes: the first sentence is presented in its entirety as formal quote, whereas the other fragments are embedded in Origen's text. The structure of 4.10 is reproduced in the following diagram:

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
Introduction	1-3	Statement: no proof	μετὰ ταῦτα
Quote 1	4-5	Statement: Christians speak impiously about God.	μέν οὖν

Embedded quote 2	5-7	[Celsus thinks that] Christians wish to arouse amazement of common people and tell lies about punishments.	καί, γέ δέ
Embedded quote 3	7-9	[Celsus compares us] with adherents of Bacchic mysteries.	
Response	9-11	Rejection: remarks about Bacchic mysteries involve the Greeks, not the Christians.	μέν οὖν εἴτε ... εἴτε
	11-18	Defence: - different intention - two methods: punishment and promise	δέ εἴτε ... εἴτε

7.3 Commentary

4.10.1-3

1 Μετὰ ταῦτα πάλιν, ὡς σύνηθές ἐστιν αὐτῷ, μηδὲν κατασκευάσας μηδ' ἀποδείξας ὁ Κέλσος, ὥσπερ εἰ οὐχ ὁσίως ἡμῶν οὐδ' εὐαγῶς περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ θρυλούντων, φησίν· After this again Celsus as usual produces no argument or proof at all, and as though we babbled about God impiously and impurely says:

Origen uses his introduction of the next Celsus-fragments to influence the reception of them. He characterizes them as allegations without proof. By using two verbs and polysyndeton (μηδὲν κατασκευάσας μηδ' ἀποδείξας, 1-2) he gives more weight to his point. A personal attack (*ad hominem*-argumentation) completes the defence lines that Origen builds up in advance: πάλιν (1) in the main clause and σύνηθες (1) in the subordinate clause indicate that this is Celsus' *habit* and that he does it *again*. After these Setting constituents ὁ Κέλσος functions as Topic, followed by the preverbal constituent, which seems to function as Focus: the clause introduced by ὥσπερ εἰ. (2) In fact this clause contains a reproduction of the major part of Celsus' quote,¹ but modified by ὥσπερ εἰ ('as though'): a signal for the reader that Celsus' words are inadequate.²

4.10.4-5 Celsus:

Ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὐχ ὁσίως οὐδὲ εὐαγῶς ταῦτα περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ θρυλοῦσιν εὐδηλον, So it is quite clear that they babble about God impiously and impurely.

In this fragment Celsus characterizes the previous words (ταῦτα, 4) of Christians as language without any piety and purity (οὐχ ὁσίως οὐδὲ εὐαγῶς (4), the use of two negated adverbs emphasize the charge). He depreciates them as 'babble' (θρυλοῦσιν, 5) about God.³ The particle οὖν (4) marks this robust evaluation as a next item in the discourse; μὲν (4) seems to announce a corresponding part of the utterance, but Origen's fragmentary reproduction of Celsus' words hinders our view of the structure.⁴ If

¹ The differences are related to the wording only: ταῦτα is omitted, ἡμῶν inserted and the sentence is transformed into a genitive absolute.

² On ὥσπερ εἰ introducing comparative conditional clauses see CGCG (2019:560 §49.22): an action is compared with another hypothetical one.

³ Moreover, Origen uses this term also to depreciate Celsus: 1.1.9; 6.7.14.

⁴ Correspondence with δέ in 6 is an option, but because of the different content not a probable one. Moreover it is uncertain whether this word belongs to Celsus' text or to Origen's. Borret keeps it outside the quote, Fiedrowicz & Barthold (who use

this fragment in Celsus' text followed the fragment quoted in 4.7,⁵ then ταῦτα refers to the statement that the salvation of mankind was the reason for God to give us knowledge of himself (the Christian opinion reproduced by Celsus in 4.7.2-4). If this reconstruction is right, the sentence quoted here can be considered as the conclusion (οὖν, 4) and evaluation: who asserts these things, speaks about God disrespectfully. In my opinion, however, the suggestion of Arnold (2016:554-556; see comment on 7.1-2 above) can provide a more satisfying interpretation. If indeed, as Arnold argues, Celsus' words quoted in 4.7 were originally not written in this context, but inserted by Origen here from elsewhere (4.23?), then ταῦτα (4) refers to Celsus' text quoted in 4.6. In that passage Celsus mockingly presented the standpoint of his opponents by attributing a 'strong mortal ambition' to God and by comparing him to a 'nouveau riche' who wants 'to show off'. It would make sense that this 'standpoint' is evaluated here by Celsus as disrespectful as is expressed in his words οὐχ ὁσίως οὐδ' εὐαγῶς (4) and θρυλοῦσιν (5).

Anyway, Celsus closes his sentence with a short nominal main clause (εὐδὴλον (5), ‘it is quite clear’), thus suggesting that his assessment is evident. This approach caused Origen’s protest: μηδὲν κατασκεύασας μηδ’ ἀποδείξας (1-2).⁶

4.10.5-9 Celsus (embedded):

5 καὶ οἶταί γε ἐπὶ θάμβει τῶν ἰδιωτῶν
ταῦθ' ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν, οὐχὶ δὲ τάληθῇ περὶ κολάσεων λέγοντας
ἀναγκαίων τοῖς ἡμαρτηκόσι· διόπερ ἐξομοιοῖ ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἐν
ταῖς Βακχικαῖς τελεταῖς τὰ φάσματα καὶ τὰ δαίματα
προεισάγουσι.

And he actually thinks that we do
this to arouse the amazement of the
uneducated people, and that we do
not speak the truth about the
punishments which are necessary
for those who have sinned. For this
reason he compares us to those in
the Bacchic mysteries who
introduce phantoms and terrors.

The next fragments are embedded in Origen's text, which impedes us to make an exact reconstruction, but offered Origen the possibility to influence their reception and to pursue a rhetorical effect. This is done with the words ἐπὶ θάμβει τῶν ἰδιωτῶν (5), which obviously belong to Celsus' text: by the introduction with οἰεταὶ and the scope particle γε (5) Origen reduces the utterance in advance to (only) an opinion of Celsus. Celsus' criticism seems to be related to the 'babble' of Christians about punishment for those who did not accept God's knowledge (4.7.5-6): this was meant, according to Celsus, to astonish the common men. With some pathos Celsus presents the Christian spokesmen as malevolent and the common men as their victims.

In the next line the exact demarcation of the quote is problematic. I follow Borret in his attribution of δέ (6) to Origen's text.⁷ With δέ Origen marks the connection between ἐπὶ θάμβει ... ποιεῖν and οὐγὰρ

the text of Borret) present it as part of it. I propose to interpret it as a part of Origen's text (see below in the commentary on 4.10.6).

⁵ The words μετὰ ταῦτα (1) argue in favour of this connection. As confirmation of this interpretation I point at the fact that Celsus in 4.10.6 speaks again about punishment (περί κολάσεων), which then can be seen as reference to an element in 4.7 (viz. κολασθῶσιν in 4.7.6).

⁶ Cf. Origen's reaction in 4.2.14ff. to a similar judgement in a short nominal sentence: τοῦτ' αἰσχιστον (4.2.3).

⁷ Maybe the case of λέγοντας is also assimilated by Origen to his own text. I am not so sure about ἀναγκαίων (τοῖς ἡμαρτηκόσι): Borret keeps the adjective outside the quote, but italicizes the participle. That may be right, but attributing the participle to Origen seems to be tenable too. That punishment for sinners is necessary is indeed Origen's opinion, but also Celsus adhered to the idea of reward and punishment after life (see 3.16; 8.49), so ἀναγκαίων may also belong to the quote. In the edition of Marcovich (2005) the whole phrase οὐχὶ ... ἡμαρτηκόσι is attributed to Celsus. Cf. Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.5, 2012:1414 n.199); Cook (2000:97-99). The theme of the eternal character of the punishment is discussed in May (1998): in his opinion Celsus and Origen do not agree on this point. From Celsus' words quoted in 8.49 is deduced that Celsus assumes an *everlasting* punishment for unjust people. Origen is reluctant in his reaction: he repeats Celsus' statements about punishment, but never agrees with the idea of eternal punishment. In his view God's punishments are limited, because they aim at education and purification: the grace of God will conquer the sins of his creatures.

τάληθῃ ... λέγοντας (5-6), which both determine the Christian ‘babble’ about punishment for sinners: what they say is not only astonishing and intimidating, but also not true.

Then Origen announces a comparison (ἐξομοιοῖ ἡμᾶς, 7) used by Celsus to illustrate his opinion and to discredit the Christians: they are like people of the Bacchic cult who wish to scare and terrify (τὰ φάσματα καὶ τὰ δαίματα (8) corresponds with ἐπὶ θάμβει). The pathetic comparison is intended to function as catalyst of emotions in the persuasion process.

4.10.9-11

9 Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν Βακχικῶν τελετῶν εἴτε τις
ἐστὶ πιθανὸς λόγος εἴτε μηδεὶς τοιοῦτος, λεγέτωσαν Ἕλληνες
καὶ ἀκούετω Κέλσος καὶ οἱ συνθησῶνται αὐτοῦ.

Well, concerning the Bacchic mysteries it is for the Greeks to say whether there is a convincing interpretation of them, or if there is nothing of the kind; and Celsus and his associates may listen to them.

With οὖν (9) Origen marks the transition to his reply. This reply is structured by μὲν (9) ... δέ (11): the first part is related to the issue of the Bacchic mysteries, the second (11ff.) to the explanation of the Christian view. As for the Bacchic mysteries Celsus is referred to ‘the Greeks’: *they* have to *speak* and *Celsus* has to *listen* (the attention is drawn to these contrastive Broad-Focus constituents), implying that Celsus’ image of these mysteries possibly will not be considered as complete and correct by the adherents themselves. At the same time Origen’s observations are not so neutral as may be expected in a situation in which he pretends not to be involved. In passing the possibility of a convincing interpretation (πιθανὸς λόγος (10) with a marked adjective placed before its noun) of them is called into question in the εἴτε ... εἴτε-clauses. Besides Origen strikes back by denoting Celsus’ fellows as οἱ συνθιασιῶται αὐτοῦ (11; literally: ‘his partners in the Bacchic parade’): in fact he and his fellows are the adherents of the Bacchic cult. So if someone has to be associated with phantoms and terror, then more likely it is Celsus himself, as is implied by Origen.

4.10.11-18

ἡμεῖς δὲ
περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀπολογούμεθα, λέγοντες ὅτι τὸ προκείμενον ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ἐπανορθοῦν τὸ γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἴτε διὰ τῶν περὶ κολάσεων ἀπειλῶν, ἃς πεπεισμεθα ἀναγκαίαις
15 εἶναι τῷ παντὶ τάχα δὲ καὶ τοῖς πεισομένοις αὐτὰς οὐκ ἀχρήστους, εἴτε διὰ τῶν ἐπὶ τοὺς καλῶς βεβιωκότας ἐπαγγελιῶν, περιεχουσῶν τὰ περὶ τῆς μακαρίας ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῖς ἀξίοις ὑπ' αὐτοῦ βασιλεύεσθαι διεξαγωγῆς.

But we defend our teaching by saying that we are concerned with the improvement of the human race, whether we use threats of punishments which, we have been persuaded, are necessary for the whole world, and probably also not unbeneficial to those who will suffer them, or whether we use promises of what is in store for those who have lived good lives, which include promises of the blessed life after death in the kingdom of God for those worthy to be under His rule.

Origen marks by antitheses the Topic ἡμεῖς (11; vs. Ἕλληνες, 10) and the Focus περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων (12; vs. περὶ τῶν βακχικῶν, 9) to clarify the distinction between issues he is involved in (together with his Christian readers) and issues he holds others responsible for.

The phrase ending in the present ἀπολογούμεθα (12) functions as a discourse organizing remark: Origen announces his reply and makes clear what his position will be: he does not deny that punishment has its place in Christian doctrine, but defends this place by justifying it (*status qualitatis*). He reframes

Celsus' image by putting the issue into the perspective of intention and means. As the intention (τὸ προκείμενον, 12-13) he presents the positive phrase: ἐπανορθοῦν τὸ γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων (13). As means (διά, 14 and 16) he presents a dual approach (εἴτε ... εἴτε, 13-16): punishment and promise. This comprises an addition and correction of the picture given by Celsus. Origen admits that punishment indeed has its place, but scales it down to *threats* of punishments (τῶν περὶ κολάσεων ἀπειλῶν, 14), which may be or may be not implemented. In a relative clause he formulates as Christian conviction (ὥς πεπεύσμεθα, 14⁸) that punishment is necessary and probably not unbeneficial.⁹ In addition to this positive presentation of punishment Origen brings forward a second means for the correction of humanity: the promises (τῶν ... ἐπαγγελίων, 16-17) of the blessedness. So Origen concludes 4.10 in a climax: the correction (ἐπανορθοῦν) of men ends in the blessed life (τῆς μακαρίας ... διεξαγωγῆς, 17-18) in the kingdom of God.¹⁰ This promise applies to people who have lived good lives (ἐπὶ τοῖς καλῶς βεβιωκότας, 16) and are worthy to be ruled by God (τοῖς ἀξιοῖς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ βεβασιλεύεσθαι, 18). In this passage Origen presents his Christian readers a perspective, which they may interpret as an implicit invitation to choose for a good way of life.

⁸ The perfect marks that the result of the persuasive process is involved in and relevant for the moment of the present discussion, cf. chapter II 4.4.

⁹ Mark the chiasm and litotes. On the corrective and purifying effect of the announcement of punishment see also 3.65; 3.75; 3.78-79; 4.71-72; 4.99; 6.72.

¹⁰ Similar descriptions in 3.56; 3.80-81.

8. Section 8: *Contra Celsum* 4.11-13

8.1 Strategy

Celsus

In the fragment quoted in 4.11 Celsus raises the issue of ‘flood and conflagration’, but the passage has to be considered as a continuation of his discussion on the Jewish-Christian idea of a divine descent to the earth, as is apparent from the final clause in which the words *ὁ θεὸς καταβήσεται* refer to the passage quoted in 4.2. Celsus discusses a next aspect of this theme: in the previous fragments he wanted to demonstrate that the idea of his opponents is unacceptable, here he moves on to giving his explanation of the origin of this idea. He asserts that it is the product of a misunderstanding of Greek and ‘barbarian’ stories about floods and conflagrations. Stories about conflagration they had heard would have led his opponents to the assertion that ‘God would come down bringing fire like a torturer’. The heart of Celsus’ explanation is made up by the connection fire – conflagration. Right from the start the classification ‘misunderstanding’ sets the tone and at the end of the fragment this judgement is repeated in the qualification ‘their mistaken opinion’. The discrediting effect of the comparison of God with the torturer seems to be intentional¹ and contributes to the refutation of what Celsus had characterized as a ‘most shameful’ idea (4.2.3). It may be asked how serious Celsus was in his ‘explanation’: was it his intention to do justice to his opponents? Origen characterizes the comparison as mockery (*χλευάζων*, 4.13.1). It seems that Celsus does not escape here from the danger of the construction of a *straw man* argument and the presentation of a caricature.

Origen

Origen’s response contains a refutation part and an explanation of his own view (*confirmatio*). The refuting part starts with denial of the allegation (*status coniecturalis*). Origen answers the charge of misunderstanding with the antiquity argument: Moses’ story of the flood is older than the sources that are mentioned by Celsus (4.11). Origen turns the tables: it is more probable that others misunderstood Moses and invented an idea of cycles of identical periods. Origen does not deny the possibility of the existence of cycles with floods and conflagrations, but indicates that Christians think they have a different cause: not periodical conjunctions of stars, but the existence of evil and the necessity of purification (4.12).

The confirming part of Origen’s defence consists of a discussion of the expression ‘God comes down’: Origen presents an allegorical interpretation (4.12). In 4.13 he continues with a similar interpretation of biblical expressions in which God is connected with ‘fire’.

Remarkably, Origen introduces the confirmative parts with an explicit reference to his readers and the effect he wants to achieve: a few remarks concerning the profounder meaning of biblical phrases will give them enough to taste of the defence against Celsus’ mockery. Here Origen explicitly connects his *confirmatio* with *ἀπολογία*.

In the diagram Origen’s defensive moves are represented in outline:

Type	Approach	Content
<i>Refutatio</i>	Denial	No misunderstanding: Moses is older.
	Turning the tables	It was the others who misunderstood Moses.
	Statement	The cause of floods and conflagrations is different: evil.

¹ Cf. the similar comparison of God with a cook who brings in the fire to roast mankind in 5.14. Cook (2000:98) characterized these views correctly as ‘an attempt to discount Christian conceptions using the resources of vituperative rhetoric’.

<i>Confirmatio</i>	Parenthesis	This is not the right moment to deal with the question about the existence of cycles of catastrophes and clues of them in the Bible.
	Allegorical exegesis 1	Of the expression ‘God comes down’ (and ‘God ascends’).
	Allegorical exegesis 2	Of three expressions about ‘God and fire’.

8.2 Structure of the text

The structure of this section is represented in the following diagram:

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
Introduction	11.1-5	Statement with embedded quotes: Celsus presents our stories of floods and conflagrations as not original, but as borrowed and based on misunderstanding.	μετὰ ταῦτα ἀλλὰ καί
Quote	11.5-12	Statement: The idea that God will descend as a torturer with fire is derived from misunderstood stories about catastrophes.	δ’ δή
Reaction	11.12 – 13.37		Καί ... δέ
a. <i>refutatio</i>	11.12-25	Denial: Christians did not borrow: Moses is older.	καί, ἀλλὰ καί καί
	12.1-13	Parenthesis: I do not deal now with questions about cycles of catastrophes and biblical clues. Argument: for now it is enough to say that Moses did not borrow, but that the others misunderstood Moses and invented their theories about identical cycles.	μὲν οὖν γάρ ἀλλ’
	12.13-16	Statement: we mention a different cause for the catastrophes.	δέ, οὔτε ... οὔτε ἀλλά
b. <i>confirmatio</i> 1 ‘coming down’	12.17-27	Interpretation of ‘God comes down’: - allegorical - analogy The same applies to ‘God goes up’ .	δέ γάρ καὶ ὥσπερ .. οὕτως δέ
c. <i>confirmatio</i> 2 ‘God and fire’	13.1-5	Introduction: compelled by Celsus’ mockery.	δέ
	13.6-9	Quote of three fragments from the Bible	δή, καί, ἀλλὰ καί
	13.9-29	Interpretation of fragment 1	οὖν, γοῦν εἰ μὲν οὖν .. εἰ δ’ γάρ, δέ, οὐκοῦν
	13.29-33	Fragment 2 on the model of fragment 1	καὶ οὕτως
	13.33-35	Fragment 3 on the model of fragment 1	οὕτω δέ
	13.35-37	Closure	Ἀλλὰ γάρ

8.3 Commentary

4.11.1-5

Μετὰ ταῦτα βουλόμενος ἡμᾶς παραδείξαι μηδὲν παράδοξον μηδὲ καινὸν λέγειν περὶ κατακλυσμοῦ ἢ ἐκπύρωσεως, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρακούσαντας τῶν παρ' Ἑλλήσιν ἢ βαρβάροις περὶ τούτων λεγομένων ταῖς ἡμετέραις πεπιστευ-

5 κέναι περὶ αὐτῶν γραφαῖς, φησὶ ταῦτα·

After this he wants to demonstrate that we have nothing either remarkable or original to say about a flood or conflagration, and furthermore that it is because we have misunderstood what is said by the Greeks or barbarians about these matters that we have believed the accounts of them in our Scriptures. This is what he says:

Origen marks the transition to his treatment of the next quote by μετὰ ταῦτα (1),² thus indicating that he complies with the order of Celsus' text.³ The quote is introduced by φησὶ ταῦτα (5).⁴ A rather long participle clause (βουλόμενος ... γραφαῖς, 1-5) functions as Setting: Origen prepares the reader to the following quote and influences the perception of it, by presenting (what he sees as) the intention of Celsus (βουλόμενος has Focus in the participle clause). This introduction, in which some fragments of Celsus seem to be embedded,⁵ highlights two aspects which will be the core of the comment Origen will present later on. In the first place: what Christians⁶ say is not remarkable or original (μηδὲν παράδοξον μηδὲ καινόν, 1-2⁷ has Focus in the accusative cum infinitive); and secondly: they misunderstood⁸ the Greek or barbarian sources they borrowed from (the participle παρακούσαντας has Focus in the second part). The hyperbaton ταῖς ἡμετέραις ... γραφαῖς (4-5) marks the antithesis between ἡμετέραις and παρ' Ἑλλήσιν ἢ βαρβάροις (3-4): Celsus wants to demonstrate (according to Origen) that Christians believe⁹ the biblical accounts of floods and conflagrations because they misunderstood what was said by Greeks or barbarians. Origen's introduction points to the importance of the issue at stake: it is about the fundament of the confidence in biblical accounts. Origen's presentation can be interpreted in the

² The combination μετὰ ταῦτα is found 70x in *Contra Celsum* as introductory formula. Alternatives are: εἶτα (51x) and ἐξῆς (41x). Arnold (2016:42-50) argues that the use of these words not necessarily implies that the passages in Celsus' text followed each other always immediately: it cannot be excluded that there was some distance between them.

³ Cf. 1.41, where Origen says that he abides by Celsus' order to prevent the impression that he could not face all his arguments. A deviation from this rule is announced explicitly in 5.33-34 and 6.60. See Borret (Vol. 5, 1976:17-21), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:24), Arnold (2016:35-201) discuss whether Origen indeed kept the order. Frede, M. (1999:146-152) connects this approach of Origen with the lack of structure in Celsus' argumentation: this caused Origen to quit his initial plan of a systematical treatment. From 1.28 he switched to and decided to go through all the points in Celsus' order (as explained in Preface 6).

⁴ The use of ταῦτα here is remarkable. This combination φησὶ ταῦτα used to announce a following quote is found only here and in 4.86.7 (the reversed ταῦτά φησι is found in 3.26.5 and 7.62.1). Quotes are further introduced by τοιαῦτά φησι (11x) and mostly only by φησι(v); less frequently: λέγει and other forms of that verb (λέγει ταῦτα in 5.14.1). The classical formula λέγει/φησι τάδε is not used in *Contra Celsum*. Moreover, forms of ὅδε are far less frequent in *Contra Celsum* than forms of οὗτος (163x ὅδε and 2014x οὗτος); οὗτος is mostly used to refer backwards (to what preceded, e.g. μετὰ ταῦτα in the sentence discussed here; see CGCG 2019:354 §29.32), but I found several examples of a forward referring οὗτος, e.g. 1.2.7; 1.51.2; 1.58.21; 1.64.22; 2.1.7; 2.31.18; 2.34.3; 2.51.11; 3.54.16; 3.55.2. This seems to indicate a development of use of the demonstrative pronoun: in post-classical times οὗτος is by far the most frequently used. See on the development of the demonstrative pronoun Horrocks (2010: 128-129); for the use in the New Testament: Blass & Debrunner (1949: §289-292).

⁵ The constituents κατακλυσμοῦ ἢ ἐκπύρωσεως (2-3) and παρακούσαντας τῶν παρ' Ἑλλήσιν ἢ βαρβάροις περὶ τούτων λεγομένων (4-5) are considered by Chadwick (1953:190) and Borret (Vol.2, 1968:208) to be fragments of Celsus' text. This seems to be plausible: otherwise it would not be clear to what items the demonstratives τούτων (4) and ἐκείνων (6) would refer.

⁶ ἡμᾶς is parallel to αὐτοῖς in Celsus' text (5) and refers to the Christians as group (and not to Origen himself; below the first person plural φήσομεν (12) refers to the author himself).

⁷ Cf. 1.4.3; 2.5.7.

⁸ LSJ s.v. παρακούω III *hear imperfectly or wrongly, misunderstand*.

⁹ The perfect πεπιστευκέναι presents this belief as a result of the preceding 'action' of 'giving credence to' and as a fact that is still significant in the life of the readers.

perspective of the *exordium*-approach: he wants to draw the attention of the readers for this fundamental theme.

4.11.5-12 Celsus:

5

καὶ ταῦτα ἐκείνων παρακούσασιν, ὅτι δὴ κατὰ χρόνων μακρῶν κύκλους καὶ ἄστρων ἐπανόδους τε καὶ συνόδους ἐκπυρώσεις καὶ ἐπικλύσεις συμβαίνουσι, καὶ ὅτι μετὰ τὸν τελευταῖον ἐπὶ Δευκαλίωνος κατακλυσμὸν ἡ περίοδος κατὰ

10 τὴν τῶν ὅλων ἀμοιβὴν ἐκπύρωσιν ἀπαιτεῖ· ταῦτ' αὐτοὺς ἐποίησεν ἐσφαλμένη δόξη λέγειν ὅτι ὁ θεὸς καταβήσεται δίκην βασανιστοῦ πῦρ φέρων.

Ἐπῆλθε δ' αὐτοῖς

This idea occurred to them, for the very reason that they misunderstood them, that after cycles of long periods and after returns and conjunctions of stars there are conflagrations and floods, and that after the last flood in the time of Deucalion the cycle demands a conflagration in accordance with the alternating succession of the universe. This was responsible for their mistaken opinion that God will come down and bring fire like a torturer.

The quote from Celsus consists of two main clauses in which the aorist is used in the main verbs ἐπῆλθε and ἐποίησεν: they indicate completed actions in the past. In these sentences Celsus describes a historical development that in his view resulted in the Christian opinion of a divine descent to the earth. Even before he starts his presentation of this process Celsus highlights in a participle phrase that the whole thing is based on misunderstanding¹⁰ (καὶ ταῦτα¹¹ ἐκείνων παρακούσασιν, 6). After this guiding remark Celsus distinguishes three phases in the development: (a) Christians heard from Greeks or barbarians about cycles of floods and conflagrations; (b) from the fact that the flood in Deucalion's time was the most recent catastrophe, they inferred that next a conflagration had to follow, for in the cycle both catastrophes occur alternately;¹² (c) from this they concluded that God will come down bringing fire. This reasoning shows some resemblance to a syllogism, with two premises and a conclusion. Apparently Celsus regarded the catastrophes as parts of a natural sequence of events, which were not related to any divine intervention.¹³

The elements (a) and (b) are presented in the first, well-balanced sentence: the two ὅτι-clauses both start with a long preposition clause (Setting)¹⁴ and end with the finite verbs.¹⁵ The most salient information is worded in the constituents ἐκπυρώσεις καὶ ἐπικλύσεις and ἐκπύρωσιν (8,10, as Focus placed before the verbs).¹⁶ The first statement is presented as evident by δὴ: Celsus inserts an element of interaction with his readers and appeals to the common knowledge he shares with them. The cyclic

¹⁰ The reproach of misunderstanding (παρακούειν) is also addressed by Celsus to Christians in 5.65.19; 6.7.5; 6.19.1; 7.32.13. Inversely Origen accuses Celsus of the same fault: 4.11.23; 4.29.1; 4.30.1; 5.29.1; 5.54.16; 5.61.16; 5.64.1; 6.27.1; 6.35.18; 6.36.27; 6.51.13,17; 6.62.1; 6.74.3; 8.14.17. On the reproach of plagiarism, see Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:78).

¹¹ The combination καὶ ταῦτα + participle is used to present a circumstance which makes the utterance even more significant; other examples: 1.14.21; 3.22.10; 3.43.35; 4.33.6. A different interpretation is given by Arnold (2016:556-560), who argues that Origen changed the order of Celsus' fragments: probably the fragments quoted in 4.20-22 were originally positioned between the fragments quoted in 4.10 and those in 4.11. In this reconstruction καὶ means here 'also': καὶ ταῦτα would indicate that other examples of stories about divine punishment had preceded in Celsus' text; the stories quoted in 4.20-21 are, in Arnold's view, good candidates for such preceding examples.

¹² Perhaps Celsus picked up the idea that is found in Justin, who identifies Deucalion and Noah (*Apologia* 2.7.2); this idea was criticized by Theophilus of Antiochia (*Ad Autolycum* 2.30; 3.18-19). See Droge (1989:52-53, 120-123), who suggests that it is not unlikely that Theophilus in his *Ad Autolycum* responded to Celsus.

¹³ See chapter VI 3.5.

¹⁴ In the first constituent κατὰ is used distributively, LSJ s.v. κατὰ B II ('after each of the...'); the second phrase introduced by μετὰ ('after') indicates an event that occurred only once: the flood of Deucalion.

¹⁵ The present of συμβαίνουσι and ἀπαιτεῖ presents these statements as general, timeless. Cf. CGCG (2019: 412 §33.16).

¹⁶ The constituent ἡ περίοδος κατὰ τὴν τῶν ὅλων ἀμοιβὴν functions as known Topic in the second clause: it repeats in different words the Setting constituent of the first clause.

occurrence of floods and conflagrations is presented as a generally accepted fact.¹⁷ The second ὅτι-clause presents an opinion attributed to the Christians, which is of course not evident for Celsus and his readers (therefore δὴ is not repeated).¹⁸

In the final sentence of this fragment the element (c) is presented: the statement that God will descend ‘bringing fire like a torturer’.¹⁹ The future καταβήσεται (11) presents the divine descent as an event that is expected to take place after the moment of λέγειν.²⁰ Just like above Celsus evaluates the Christian opinion before he presents it: it has to be clear to the reader that this is a *false* opinion (ἐσφαλμένη δόξη (11), Focus before λέγειν; the adjective is placed emphatically before the noun).

The background of Celsus’ judgement is explained by Andresen as ‘Die Depravationstheorie’: according to Celsus the Christians have borrowed their opinions from the ‘old wisdom’, which in a degenerated form ended up in their doctrines. As to the issue of floods and conflagrations Andresen explains Celsus’ accusation in the following way: the Christians overlook that the doctrine of the great catastrophes assumes an immanent, physical process; they incorrectly claim a direct intervention of God into the history of the world and combine this with an anthropomorphic image of God who descends as a torturer bringing fire.²¹

4.11.12-25

Καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα δὲ φήσομεν
ὅτι οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅπως ὁ πολλὰ ἀναγνοὺς καὶ ἱστορίας πολλὰς
ἐπιδειξάμενος ἐγνωκέναι Κέλσος οὐκ ἐπέστησε τῇ Μωϋσέως
15 ἀρχαιότητι, ἱστορουμένου ὑπὸ τινων ἐλληνικῶν συγγραφέων
κατὰ τοὺς χρόνους γεγονέναι Ἰνάχου τοῦ Φορωνέως· καὶ
ὑπὸ Αἰγυπτίων δ’ ἀρχαιότατος εἶναι ὁμολογεῖται ἀλλὰ καὶ
ὑπὸ τῶν τὰ φοινικικὰ πραγματευσαμένων· καὶ ὁ βουλόμενός
γε ἀναγνώτω τὰ Φλαυτίου Ἰωσήπου περὶ τῆς Ἰουδαίων
20 ἀρχαιότητος δύο βιβλία, ἵνα γνῶ, τίνα τρόπον ἀρχαιότερος
ἦν Μωϋσῆς τῶν κατὰ χρόνων μακρὰς περιόδους κατακλυσ-
μοὺς καὶ ἐκπυρώσεις φησάντων γίνεσθαι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ·
ὧν παρακηκοέναι λέγει ὁ Κέλσος Ἰουδαίους καὶ Χριστιανούς
καὶ μὴ νοήσαντας τὰ περὶ ἐκπυρώσεως εἰρηκέναι ὅτι ὁ
25 θεὸς καταβήσεται δίκην βασανιστοῦ πῦρ φέρων.

We will reply to this that for some unknown reason, although Celsus has read widely and shows that he knows many stories, he failed to give attention to the antiquity of Moses, who is related by certain Greek writers to have lived in the time of Inachus the son of Phoroneus. He is also admitted by Egyptians to be of great antiquity, and also by those who compiled Phoenician history. Anyone interested may read the two books of Flavius Josephus on the Antiquity of the Jews, that he may know how Moses was more ancient than those who said that at long intervals of time there are floods and conflagrations in the world. Celsus maintains that these men were misunderstood by Jews and Christians who, because they did not understand the doctrine

¹⁷ See 1.19, where Celsus speaks about ‘many conflagrations from all eternity and many floods’; the deluge in the time of Deucalion was the most recent flood, the fire in the time of Phaethon the most recent conflagration. Celsus seems to refer to Plato, *Timaeus* 22b-d.

¹⁸ The combination ὅτι δὴ occurs also in 2.55.16; 6.42.7 (both in Celsus’ text) and 4.32.30 (Origen’s text). In the last passage ὅτι is used two times, just like here in 4.11 once with δὴ and once without. In both cases Origen repeats phrases from Celsus’ text that he quoted earlier (in 4.31) and that was already known to the readers; in the second case he adds a new element to these quotes words, which caused that the reference to common knowledge no longer exists.

¹⁹ In 4.2 Celsus described the descending God or son of a God as τῶν τῇδε δικαιοτήν (‘as corrector of the people here’). In 4.7 this thought was elaborated in ‘salvation’ and ‘punishment’. It seems that Celsus here refers to the latter aspect, which was also mentioned in 4.10.

²⁰ So the future is here different from the future καταβήσεται in 4.2.2 where the future contrasts with the perfect καταβεβηκέναι to denote the opinions of the Jews and Christians respectively.

²¹ Andresen 1955:146-166; the fragment quoted in 4.11 is discussed on p.161-162.

about the conflagration, said that
*God will come down and bring fire
like a torturer.*

The formula Καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα δὲ φήσομεν (12) marks the beginning of Origen's response.²² His first reaction applies to Celsus' words καὶ ταῦτα ἐκείνων παρακούσασιν (6): he denies the truth of this allegation. To demonstrate that there can be no borrowing and misunderstanding at the side of the Christians and Jews he structures his discourse as follows:

(1) Before presenting his rational argument (*logos*), Origen starts with an *ad hominem*-attack: he characterizes ironically Celsus as a literate man, who shows to know a lot of history (ὁ πολλὰ ἀναγνούς καὶ ἱστορίας πολλὰς ἐπιδειξάμενος ἐγνωκέναι Κέλσος, 13-14)²³ and remarks that for some unknown reason (οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως) he failed to give attention to the antiquity of Moses.²⁴

(2) This is his main argument: Moses lived in a distant past: τῇ Μωϋσέως ἀρχαιότητι (14-15), κατὰ τοὺς χρόνους ... Ἰναχου τοῦ Φορωνέως (16),²⁵ ἀρχαιότατος (17).²⁶

(3) To prove his argument he invokes sources from outside the Bible: some Greek historians, Egyptians, specialists of the Phoenician history and Flavius Josephus.²⁷ Origen uses an *argumentum ad verecundiam*: an appeal to authorities, in this case deliberately authorities which may be expected to be acceptable for Celsus and his companions as well.²⁸ At the same time Origen works on his *ethos*: he shows that he has knowledge of all these sources and is better informed than his opponent. This length of the catalogue of sources is emphasized by the polysyndeton: καὶ ... ἀλλὰ καὶ ... καὶ ... (16-18).²⁹

(4) After this impressive list of unsuspected witnesses Origen once more repeats his argument, but now in a more persuasive, comparative sense: Moses is not only old, he is even *older* (ἀρχαιότερος (20) has Focus) than the people who spoke about the cycles of catastrophes.³⁰

(5) The obvious conclusion of the reader has to be: Celsus is wrong in his allegation about the misunderstanding of Jews and Christians. The infinitive παρακηκοέναι (23) is given a front position, separated from the subject in the accusative plus infinitive construction: this is the emphatic Focus-

²² On the use of the future, see chapter II 4.5. In *Contra Celsum* φήσομεν is used 65x to announce Origen's response; the formula καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα δὲ φήσομεν occurs 4x, the variant with τοῦτο 10x; also the future ἐροῦμεν is used in this formula. Besides λεκτέον is used. Sometimes we also find the present φαμεν, but this seems to indicate mostly a statement that Origen or Christians also would issue outside the context of Celsus' allegations. The combination of καὶ and δέ is discussed in the comment on 4.3.24 above.

²³ Cf. 3.33.1. The phrase functions as Topic; within the phrase the repetition of πολλὰ(ς), both in the Focus position before their participle, underlines the irony; this applies also to the separation of ἱστορίας πολλὰς from their infinitive ἐγνωκέναι by the participle.

²⁴ Cf. 4.21.15-30.

²⁵ By placing Moses in the time of 'Inachus, the son of Phoroneus' Origen himself also makes a mistake: Inachus was the father of Phoroneus. 'Origen's memory probably failed him' (Chadwick 1953:190 n.4). See also Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.3, 2011:678 n.22). For a discussion on this date see Feldman (1990:110-111).

²⁶ See Droge (1989:1-11) for a discussion 'archaiologia'-theme. He points out that the antiquity-argument was used by several writers in the ancient world to defend the status of a religion, nation or culture. In the encounter between Hellenism and the civilisations of the eastern Mediterranean this argument was used to claim that the Egyptian, Phoenician, Babylonian or Jewish history, religion or culture were superior in comparison to the Greek ones. The argument was based on the general conviction that the oldest was always the best. 'Nothing could be both *new and true*' (p.9). Christian authors who used the antiquity-argument to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity in fact used an argument that would appeal to an opinion generally accepted in the ancient world. See also p.157-167, where Droge deals with the discussion on the priority of Moses in *Contra Celsum*; he points out that Origen never offers any detailed chronological proof for his claim; he seems to refer an interested reader to the work that had been done before him by Josephus, Tatian, Theophilus and Clement.

²⁷ See Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I 13.70ff. In 1.16.9 Origen also referred to this work and invited 'people interested' (τὸν βουλόμενον) in almost the same words to read it. The arguments of Josephus and Origen concerning the antiquity of the Jewish people are discussed in Feldman (1990:108-115).

²⁸ The adjective ἐλληνικῶν is placed in a marked position before its noun.

²⁹ The combination ἀλλὰ καὶ is sometimes used by Origen in enumerations (after a preceding καὶ and without οὐ μόνον); in these contexts ἀλλὰ seems to lack its usual eliminating, discourse-interrupting meaning. See e.g. 2.12.25; 4.13.8; 6.6.16; 7.63.13; 8.22.6.

³⁰ Also in 4.21; 4.22; 4.26; 6.7; 6.15; 6.19; 6.43; 7.28 Origen uses the argument that biblical authors are older than Greek authors like Homer and Plato. See on the chronology argument Reemts (1998:183-192).

constituent. The perfect marks the fact as important for the present defence situation: here we have a statement of the opponent that can be used as an argument against him and characterizes him as untrustworthy.³¹ Remarkably Origen does not draw explicitly the conclusion that Celsus is wrong. He only quotes once more Celsus' statement in an abridged form and contrasts it with his own arguments. The confrontation without comment of the proof of Moses' antiquity and Celsus' statement is obviously considered significant enough. Here rhetoric is at work: Origen suggests more than he writes down and leaves it to the reader to conclude that Celsus' statement is untenable.

4.12.1-13

Πότερον μὲν οὖν εἰσι περίοδοι καὶ κατὰ περιόδους κατακλυσμοὶ ἢ ἐκπυρώσεις, ἢ μὴ εἰσί, καὶ εἰ ἐπίσταται καὶ ταῦθ' ὁ λόγος, ἐν πολλοῖς μὲν καὶ ἐν οἷς δὲ Σολομών φησι· «Τί τὸ γεγονός; Αὐτὸ τὸ γενησόμενον· καὶ τί τὸ πεποιη-
5 μένον; Αὐτὸ τὸ ποιηθισόμενον» καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς, οὐ τοῦ παρόντος ἐστὶ καιροῦ λέγειν. Ἀρκεῖ γὰρ μόνον ἐπισημειώ-
 σασθαι ὅτι ἀρχαιότατοι ἄνδρες γενόμενοι Μωϋσῆς καὶ τινες τῶν προφητῶν οὐ παρ' ἐτέρων εἰλήφασιν τὰ περὶ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ἐκπυρώσεως ἀλλ' εἰ χρή ἐπιστήσαντα τοῖς χρόνοις
10 εἰπεῖν, μᾶλλον τούτων ἕτεροι παρακούσαντες καὶ μὴ ἀκριβώσαντες τὰ ὑπὸ τούτων λεγόμενα ἀνέπλασαν κατὰ περιόδους ταυτότητας καὶ ἀπαραλλάκτους τοῖς ιδίως ποιοῖς καὶ τοῖς συμβεβηκόσιν αὐτοῖς.

It is not the right time to say whether or not there are cycles, and floods or conflagrations in each cycle, and whether this doctrine is mentioned in the Bible, as in these words of Solomon among many others: 'What is it that has been? That very thing which shall be. And what is that which has been made? That very thing which shall be made', and so on. For it is enough merely to remark that Moses and some of the prophets, being men of great antiquity, did not receive from others the idea of the world-conflagration. The truth is rather, if we may pay regard to the matter of their dates, that others misunderstood them and failed to reproduce accurately what they said, and invented the notion that identical occurrences happen periodically, which are indistinguishable from one another in both their essential and their incidental characteristics.

4.12 begins with text structuring particles: οὖν (12) marks that Origen moves to the next part of his refutation and μὲν indicates that a second part of the argument will follow later on (Ἡμεῖς δέ in 13 below). Here Origen discusses in two sentences the issue of cyclic catastrophes, which was raised by Celsus.

With πότερον ... ἢ an alternative question is introduced.³² Origen asks whether or not there are cycles with recurring floods and conflagrations, and whether an indication about this can be found in the Bible (for instance in *Eccl.* 1.9). The mere fact that he asks the question and his words ἐν πολλοῖς μὲν καὶ ἐν οἷς δὲ Σολομών φησι (3) seem to point in the direction of a positive answer, but Origen leaves the question unanswered: he asserts that this is not the right time to comment on that issue (οὐ τοῦ παρόντος ἐστὶ καιροῦ λέγειν (5-6); the Focus constituent is highlighted by an hyperbaton).³³ As reason (γάρ introduces an explanatory embedded section) for this he argues that it is enough (ἀρκεῖ,

³¹ Cf. Nijk (2013:247-248).

³² Cf. CGCG (2019:477 §38.10).

³³ In e.g. 1.48.73; 1.55.31; 4.51.23; 6.26.7 Origen indicates in similar words that he will not address an issue.

6) to note that ‘Moses and some of the prophets’ did not borrow from others. With ἀρκεῖ³⁴ Origen suggests that he could have said more about it, but that this is irrelevant in the present discussion. Is this Origen’s real reason? It seems to be not impossible that Origen leaves the question unanswered because there was no uniform view on this issue in the Christian community. In his early work *De principiis*, which was not unanimously appreciated, Origen had written that the end of the world was the beginning of a new world (3.5.3). Maybe he wanted to avoid internal commotion on such positions.³⁵

Origen seems to be eager to draw back the attention to the chronology and the παρακούειν-issue. In the ὅτι-clause this argument is repeated and further developed. This long clause consists of a negative (οὐ) part and a corresponding positive part. In the first part the antiquity-argument is once more worded in the Setting constituent (ἀρχαιότατοι ἄνδρες γενόμενοι (7), within this constituent the first words have Focus and the preposed adjective is marked as salient). After the Topic (Μωϋσῆς καὶ τινες τῶν προφητῶν) the central element in this sentence is placed before the verb: οὐ παρ’ ἐτέρων (8, Focus). Origen replaces Celsus’ formula καὶ ταῦτα ἐκείνων παρακούσασιν (4.11.6) by the more neutral οὐ παρ’ ἐτέρων εἰλήφασιν (8),³⁶ perhaps because he does not want to relate Moses and prophets to misunderstanding.

In the second part of the sentence (introduced by the ‘replacing’ particle ἀλλ’, 9) Origen changes his tactics: the chronology argument (εἰ χρή ἐπιστήσαντα τὰ τοῖς χρόνοις εἰπεῖν, 9-10) is reversed into an attack. It is more probable (μᾶλλον, 10), as Origen argues, that ‘others’ (ἕτεροι, Focus before the participle) used Moses and the prophets as their sources.³⁷ The attack is carefully executed: not only Celsus’ verb παρακούσαντες (10) is repeated, but the issue is also amplified in μὴ ἀκριβώσαντες and ἀνέπλασαν (10-11). The charge of misunderstanding, inaccuracy and invention is now addressed to the opposite side. At the same time Origen leaves it to the competent reader to identify the provenance of the thoughts he alludes to, but he seems to refer to Stoic ideas: after the conflagration the world will return in an identical condition (ταυτότητας καὶ ἀπαραλλάκτους τοῖς ἰδίως ποιοῖς καὶ τοῖς συμβεβηκόσιν αὐτοῖς, 12-13).³⁸

4.12.13-16

Ἡμεῖς δὲ οὔτε τὸν κατακλυσμὸν οὔτε
τὴν ἐκπύρωσιν κύκλοις καὶ ἀστέρων περιόδοις ἀνατίθεμεν,
15 ἀλλὰ τὴν τούτων αἰτίαν φαμέν εἶναι κακίαν ἐπὶ πλεῖον
χρομένην καὶ καθαιρομένην κατακλυσμῷ ἢ ἐκπύρωσει.

But we do not attribute either the
flood or the conflagration to any
cycles and periodical conjunctions of
the stars. We maintain that the cause
of these events is the excessive torrent
of evil which is purged by a flood or
conflagration.

³⁴ Elsewhere in *Contra Celsum* Origen uses ἀρκεῖ to close a discussion (3.69.31; 8.23.24), to refer to a previous treatment of the issue (2.72.24; 6.7.16) or to justify that he limits himself to just one example (1.56.10; 4.18.38). In these cases there is at least a short (or even a longer) comment of Origen on the issue.

³⁵ in 4.20 Origen refers to the Greek doctrine about a periodical purification of the earth by a flood or by fire. Origen says there that certain elements of this doctrine are accepted by ‘us’ (Christians, or does he only refer to himself?). In a different context Origen mentions in 4.64.21 ‘floods and conflagrations’ (plural!), but Chadwick and Borret (*ad loc.*) refer to the possibility that Origen renders words of Chrysippus here. In 4.67 Origen strongly rejects the Stoic idea of cyclic periods *in which exactly the same events will occur again* (‘Celsus will write again the book he has written before an infinite number of times’); this eliminates the concept of free will.

³⁶ Cf. 6.19.8-9; 7.30.15-16, where in a similar context also the perfect of λαμβάνω is used. The tense seems to highlight that the originality of the biblical authors (‘not borrowed’) is still relevant in the present discussion. The perfect εἰλήφασιν is contrasted here in 4.12 with the aorist ἀνέπλασαν (11), which presents the invention of the other (non-biblical) authors as a mere historical fact without a similar relevance.

³⁷ Cf. a comparable approach in Justin, *Apologia* I 44.8-10; 59-60 (Moses is older than all the Greek writers; Plato borrows from Moses) and I 54-56, where Justin enumerates ‘false’ imitations (in fact produced by ‘evil demons’) of biblical elements in Greek myths, religious practices. See Droge (1989:57-65).

³⁸ Origen discusses and rejects this view more extensively in 4.62; 4.67-68 and 5.20. See Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.3, 2011:680 n.24): the idea of cycles and παλιγγενεσία (rebirth of the cosmos) occurs in the work of Anaximander, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Zeno and Chrysippus. See also chapter VI 2.3 and 5.5.

Origen moves on to the next argument to prove that Celsus is wrong (δέ (13) corresponds with μέν, 1). This argument concerns the cause of the flood and the conflagration (singular!). In the first person (Ἡμεῖς, 13) the communicative situation is referred to: author and readers are involved in the antithesis between Christians ('we') and the Stoics just mentioned (and to the Greeks in general). The cause the Stoics assume ('cycles and periodical conjunctions of stars', κύκλοις καὶ ἀστέρων περιόδοις (14), a free quote from Celsus) is contrasted by the cause (τὴν τούτων αἰτίαν (15) has Focus; the phrase is even more marked by hyperbaton) in the Christian view. Christians point at 'the excessive torrent of evil' (κακίαν ἐπὶ πλεῖον χεομένην, 15-16³⁹) and assert that 'evil is purged away by the flood or the conflagration'.⁴⁰ Origen prepares the reader for a more extended discussion of the issue in 4.13.

4.12.17-27

Θεὸν δὲ καταβαίνοντα ἐὰν λέγωσιν αἱ προφητικαὶ φωναὶ τὸν
 φήσαντα· «Οὐχὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν ἐγὼ πληρῶ;
 λέγει κύριος», τροπολογοῦμεν. Καταβαίνει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀπὸ
20 τοῦ ἰδίου μεγέθους καὶ ὕψους, ὅτε τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ
 μάλιστα τῶν φαύλων οἰκονομεῖ. Καὶ ὥσπερ ἡ συνήθεια
 συγκαταβαίνειν φησὶ τοῖς νηπίοις τοὺς διδασκάλους καὶ τοῖς
 ἄρτι προτραπεῖσιν ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν νέοις τοὺς σοφοὺς ἢ τοὺς
 προκόπτοντας οὐ τῷ σωματικῶς αὐτοὺς καταβαίνειν, οὕτως
25 εἴ που λέγεται ἐν ταῖς θεαῖς γραφαῖς καταβαίνειν ὁ θεός,
 ἀνάλογον νοεῖται τῇ οὕτωςι χρωμένη τῷ ὀνόματι συνηθεία,
 οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἀναβαίνειν.

If the words of the prophets speak of God as coming down, we take this in a symbolical sense; for He says: 'Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.' God comes down from His own greatness and majesty when He cares for the affairs of men, and particularly of bad men. Just as people commonly say that teachers come down to the level of children, and wise men or advanced students to those only recently led to study philosophy, without meaning that they make a physical descent; so, if anywhere in the divine Scriptures God is said to 'come down', it is to be understood in a similar sense to that of the common usage. The same is true also of 'going up'.

With δέ (17) the transition to a next step in the discussion is marked. The subject 'God comes down' is presented right from the start. Θεὸν καταβαίνοντα (17) functions as Theme, a Topic constituent placed outside the sentence, expressing what the whole subsequent sentence relates to.⁴¹ Here Origen responds to the first part of the last sentence of Celsus' quote: ὁ θεὸς καταβήσεται (4.11.11). This brings back the debate to the main item that is on the agenda from 4.2. After the previous refutations of Celsus' criticism Origen switches to a more confirmative part of his discourse: now he presents an alternative, allegorical interpretation of the expression 'God comes down'; such a redefinition is typical for the *definitio*-defence line, that Origen also applied in 4.5.19-24.⁴²

The section consists of (1) a statement, (2) an elaboration of it, (3) an analogical argumentation and (4) a short final remark.

(1) In the first sentence Origen directs the reader through two well-chosen considerations to his

³⁹ The same metaphor of evil or sin poured out as a flood is often used by Origen to express the serious and comprehensive character of evil; see also 1.4.14; 1.9.27; 1.26.34; 1.64.32; 2.44.11; 3.71.20; 4.20.11; 4.25.8; 4.63.26; 4.64.8; 4.69.11; 5.55.14; 6.26.13; 6.45.12,27; 8.31.35; 8.42.31.

⁴⁰ Cf. similar notes on purification in 4.20; 4.62; 4.64; 4.69. The idea of purification by the waters of the flood is also found in Plato, *Timaeus* 22d, quoted in 4.20.17; 4.62.14; 6.58.23. By the way, Borret (Vol.2, 1968:213) translates καθαιρουμένην as 'détruit', which would rather be καθαρουμένην.

⁴¹ See CGCG (2019:718-719 §60.33).

⁴² See chapter III 3.4.1.

conclusion, which consists of the key word in his Bible interpretation: τροπολογοῦμεν (19, 'I take it in a symbolic sense').⁴³ Firstly he argues that there is no reason to reject the expression 'God comes down' because it occurs sometimes⁴⁴ in the words of the prophets. Then Origen points out that this is said about God, who declares of himself that he fills heaven and earth (a quote from *Jer.* 23.24⁴⁵). The assumption that biblical data cannot be contradictory is left implicit, just like the following line of thought: in case of someone who 'fills heaven and earth' 'coming down' cannot denote a physical, spatial descent and therefore a literal interpretation of the expression has to be excluded. Not making explicit these parts of the reasoning belongs to the rhetorical procedure in which the reader is invited to add the missing elements himself and to draw the obvious conclusion: 'coming down' has to be taken allegorically.

(2) Next Origen presents as an elaboration (γάρ, 19) his own allegorical interpretation of the expression under discussion (Καταβαίνει ὁ θεός, Broad-Focus). As starting point of the descent Origen indicates not a spatially defined place, but God's 'own greatness and majesty' (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου μεγέθους καὶ ὕψους, 19-20). He interprets 'coming down' as a designation of God's direction and care (οἰκονομεῖ, 21) for people, and 'particularly for bad people' (τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ μάλιστα τῶν φαύλων (20-21), Focus).⁴⁶

(3) Origen illustrates his interpretation with an analogy: ὥσπερ (19) ... οὕτως (24), ἀνάλογον (26).⁴⁷ He compares the biblical expressions (εἴ που λέγεται ταῖς θείαις γραφαῖς, 25) with 'common language' (συνηθεία, new Topic).⁴⁸ Focus in the ὥσπερ-clause has the infinitive συγκαταβαίνειν, which is even more highlighted by its separation from the rest of the accusative plus infinitive construction by φησί (22). The addition of the prefix συν to the verb καταβαίνειν (22)⁴⁹ seems to denote the social aspect of this 'coming down': it marks the focus of the teacher (~ God) on the other. Men (τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 20) are compared to children (τοῖς νηπίοις, 22) and starting philosophy students (τοῖς ἄρτι προτραπεῖσιν ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν νέοις, 22-23), whereas God is compared to the teachers (τοὺς διδασκάλους, 22) and the wise men or advanced students (τοὺς σοφοὺς ἢ τοὺς προκόπτοντας, 23-24). The central point in the comparison is expressed in οὐ τῷ σωματικῶς αὐτοὺς καταβαίνειν (24): in both cases there is not a *physical* descent. By this comparison the καταβαίνειν (25) of God is associated with benevolence and bowing down (of God) and the need for care and help (of men). Besides the issue is framed as an element of an education process, which is a favorite frame in Origen's work.⁵⁰ The use of the analogy and the connection to common language can help to persuade the reader to accept Origen's interpretation. The comparison has a cyclic character: the section is opened and closed by *συνηθεία*.

⁴³ Cf. on allegorical interpretation of biblical expressions 4.13.20; 4.39.11; 4.44-51; 4.72.33; 5.55.8; 5.56.14; 5.58.8; 6.61.32; 7.38.12. To defend this interpretation of the Bible Origen refers sometimes to the fact that allegorical interpretation of Greek literature was generally accepted, and subsequently asks: how can one refuse it to Christians? See 1.15.8; 1.17-18; 3.43; 4.17.7; 4.38; 5.38.25; 8.67. See Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:85-89).

⁴⁴ The subjunctive λέγωσιν after εἰν indicates that the SoA may or may not be realized (contingent occurrence), see Wakker (1994:197-202, 216, 218). The combination of a subjunctive + ἄν in the subordinate clause and a present indicative in the main clause occurs in 'habitual conditions': one repeated or habitual action leads to another (*whenever X, then Y*), see CGCG (2019:556 §49.13). In Rijksbaron (2002:70) this use is called distributive-iterative.

⁴⁵ The same quote in 4.5.7-8 to demonstrate that God is omnipresent and not confined to one place.

⁴⁶ οἰκονομία is used by Origen to denote (for example) God's rescue plan for the world, including his combat against evil and his salvation of the rational beings. In this perspective the addition of καὶ μάλιστα τῶν φαύλων can be understood.

⁴⁷ See also chapter III 3.4.2.

⁴⁸ Cf. 6.57.10; see also on *συνηθεία* Neuschäfer (1987:143-145). Reemts (1998:114) points out that 'common language' has to be distinguished from a 'literary interpretation': some expressions are taken figuratively by everyone in everyday language (cf. τῇ οὕτωςι χρωμένη τῷ ὀνόματι *συνηθεία*, 26).

⁴⁹ Cf. Lampe, s.v. συγκαταβαίνω 3a *accommodate oneself, come down to the level of*; of teachers to pupils, ref. God's dealings with mankind.

⁵⁰ Cf. on education, knowledge and wisdom e.g. 1.11.21; 1.59.12; 2.30; 2.44.33; 2.48.35; 3.31.15; 3.33.12; 3.44.2; 3.59.18, 22-23; 3.81.27; 4.9.5; 4.22.28; 5.51.20; 6.30.31; 6.56.23; 7.21.29; 8.29.7. A concise reflection of the importance the education metaphor has for Origen, is given by Daniélou, who links the image of God as the Teacher (διδάσκαλος) and the world as a vast School (διδασκαλεῖον) to Origen's own teaching practice: 'On peut dire qu' Origène didascale a conçu son Dieu comme un didascale, comme un maître à qui l' éducation d' enfants est confiée, et son univers est un immense Didascalée où sert tout à l' éducation des libertés humaines'. (Daniélou 1948:271).

(4) Without further explanation the scope of the comparison is extended in a final remark: οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἀναβαίνειν (27): ‘this applies to ‘going up’ as well’. This means obviously: the spatial, physical meaning applies to ἀναβαίνειν as well. The comparison with an educative situation however is not appropriate to illustrate this point. This remark is less relevant for the debate with Celsus than for the instruction of Origen’s Christian readers: the profit of the previous explanation is extended to another topic.⁵¹

4.13.1-5

Ἐπεὶ δὲ χλευάζων ὁ Κέλσος φησὶν ἡμᾶς λέγειν τὸν θεὸν δίκην βασανιστοῦ πῦρ φέροντα καταβαίνειν καὶ ἀναγκάζει ἡμᾶς οὐ κατὰ καιρὸν βαθυτέρους ἐξετάζειν λόγους, ὀλίγα εἰπόντες, ὅσον γεῦσαι τοὺς ἀκροατὰς ἀπολογίας καθαιρούσης
5 τὴν καθ’ ἡμῶν τοῦ Κέλσου χλεύην, ἐπὶ τὰ ἐξῆς τραπησόμεθα.

As Celsus says in mockery that we say God comes down bringing fire like a torturer, and compels us to examine profound problems at an inappropriate time, we will make a few observations sufficient for our hearers to get an outline of an answer which deals with Celsus’ mockery against us, and then turn to what follows.

The particle δέ (1) indicates the start of the next discourse unit, in which Origen introduces his response to the final words of Celsus’ quote (δίκην βασανιστοῦ πῦρ φέρον, 2). These words are indirectly reproduced once more and right from the start framed as mockery (χλευάζων, 1).⁵² The complete introductory clause is embraced by this frame: at the end it is resumed again in τὴν καθ’ ἡμῶν τοῦ Κέλσου χλεύην (5). The rhetorical impact of this *pathos* argumentation is clear: the opponent is disqualified (‘he does not take us seriously’) and sympathy is aroused for the victims. The rest of the sentence is used by Origen to show his reluctance to respond: constituents like ἀναγκάζει (2, ‘he compels me’), οὐ κατὰ καιρὸν (3, ‘it is not the right time for it’) and βαθυτέρους ... λόγους (3, ‘more profound arguments (than appropriate now)’), the adjective is emphasized by the hyperbaton).⁵³ Nevertheless Origen wants to show his best side for the sake of his readers (τοὺς ἀκροατὰς, 4),⁵⁴ thus hinting at some goodwill he might deserve from their side. In a few discourse organizational remarks Origen prepares them to the things to come: he announces a short reaction (ὀλίγα εἰπόντες, 3-4)⁵⁵, just enough for a taste of an answer (ὅσον γεῦσαι ... ἀπολογίας, 4), before he will move on to the next subject (ἐπὶ τὰ ἐξῆς τραπησόμεθα, 5). This presentation is not so much about introducing a really short reaction (the chapter is long enough); rather it is part of an *ethos* argumentation: the opponent is negatively characterized and Origen tries to gain credit for the defending party.

Remarkably Origen changes Celsus’ future καταβήσεται (4.11.11) in his reproduction into the present infinitive καταβαίνειν (2), thus changing the meaning of the sentence. Celsus referred obviously to a Jewish-Christian expectation of a *future* descent, Origen’s present refers to God who descends *now*

⁵¹ We can have some doubts as to whether this remark belongs to the original text. It is found only *in margine* in A, as an addition by A². Koetschau (1899), Borret (1968) and Marcovich (2001) included these words in their text, though Marcovich (probably rightly) adds *deleverim*.

⁵² The mockery frame is used by Origen on other occasions as well: e.g. 6.64.20ff. Moreover Origen often responds to this mockery in a serious (as stated explicitly in 2.36) and comprehensive way: for instance he dedicates even seven chapters to the refutation of Celsus’ ironical passage in 4.23.

⁵³ Maybe the participle καθαιρούσης could be added to the list: it may be derived from καθαιρέω (which would mean that the defence ‘destroys’ Celsus’ mockery), but also from καθαίρω (‘to purge away, wash off’ LSJ s.v. II), which would imply that you get dirty hearing this mockery and need to be purged. The last meaning, which is at least not excluded by Origen, is rhetorical more effective.

⁵⁴ The combination of τοὺς ἀκροατὰς (litt. ‘hearers’) and ἀπολογίας evokes a courtroom situation, with persons who *listen* to the *speaker* (instead of ‘read a written defence’).

⁵⁵ The announcement to speak only a quick word is a standard remark of a speaker who wants to please the public.

(or continuously). This meaning is in line with the allegorical interpretation Origen presented in 4.12. In 4.13 Origen continues using present forms.⁵⁶

4.13.6-9

6 Φησὶ δὴ ὁ θεὸς λόγος τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν εἶναι «πῦρ καταναλίσκον», καὶ «ποταμοὺς πυρὸς ἔλκειν ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ», ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸν εἰσπορεύεσθαι «ὡς πῦρ χωνευτηρίου καὶ ὡς ποίαν πλυνόντων», ἵνα χωνεύσῃ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λαόν.

The divine Scripture does indeed say that ‘our God is a consuming fire’, and that He ‘draws forth rivers of fire before him’, and also that He enters ‘like fire of a smelting-furnace, and like a cleaner’s herb’, that He may mould His people.

Here Origen indicates that biblical expressions (Φησὶ δὴ ὁ θεὸς λόγος is a Broad-Focus constituent) will be the basis of his defence (ἀπολογία, 4). With δὴ (6) an interaction moment is created: Origen appeals to the reader to notice as an evident, undeniable fact that these expressions occur in the Scriptures. For Origen and his readers ὁ θεὸς λόγος (6) has an undoubted authority. So the rest of the chapter can only be concerned with the interpretation of these expressions, not with their acceptability.

Origen quotes three fragments from the Old Testament in which God is related to ‘fire’: God is called ‘a consuming fire’ (*Deut.*4.24 and 9.3), there are ‘rivers of fire’ before him (*Dan.*7.10) and⁵⁷ he enters ‘like fire of a smelting-furnace and like a cleaner’s herb’ (*Mal.*3.2).

4.13.9-29

Ἐπὶ 10 οὖν λέγεται «πῦρ» εἶναι «καταναλίσκον», ζητοῦμεν, τίνα πρέπει ὑπὸ θεοῦ καταναλίσκεσθαι, καὶ φαμεν ὅτι τὴν κακίαν καὶ τὰ ἀπ’ αὐτῆς πραττόμενα καὶ τροπικῶς λεγόμενα «ξύλα» εἶναι καὶ «χόρτον» καὶ «καλάμην» καταναλίσκει ὁ θεὸς ὡς πῦρ. «Ἐποικοδομεῖν» γοῦν ὁ φαῦλος λέγεται τῷ 15 προὑποβεβλημένῳ λογικῷ θεμελίῳ «ξύλα» καὶ «χόρτον» καὶ «καλάμην». Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἔχει δεῖξαι ἄλλως νενοῆσθαι ταῦτα τῷ ἀναγράφαντι, καὶ σωματικῶς δύναται τις παραστήσαι ἐποικοδομοῦντα τὸν φαῦλον «ξύλα» ἢ «χόρτον» ἢ «καλάμην», δῆλον ὅτι καὶ τὸ πῦρ ὑλικὸν καὶ αἰσθητὸν 20 νοηθήσεται· εἰ δ’ ἄντικρυς τροπολογεῖται τὰ τοῦ φαύλου ἔργα, λεγόμενα εἶναι «ξύλα» ἢ «χόρτος» ἢ «καλάμη», πῶς οὐκ αὐτόθεν προσπίπτει, ποδαπὸν πῦρ παραλαμβάνεται, ἵνα τὰ τοιαῦτα «ξύλα» ἀναλωθῇ; «Ἐκάστου» γάρ φησι «τὸ ἔργον ὁποῖόν ἐστι, τὸ πῦρ αὐτὸ δοκιμάσει. Εἴ τις τὸ

Well, when He is said to be a consuming fire, we inquire what is fit to be consumed by God; and we say that as fire God consumes evil and the actions resulting from it, which are figuratively described as ‘wood, hay, and stubble’. At any rate, the bad man is said to build upon the spiritual foundation already laid ‘wood, hay, and stubble’. If anyone could show that the writer meant something different, and could prove that the bad man literally builds wood, hay, and stubble, then clearly the fire also is to be taken as material and sensible. But if, on the contrary, the works of the bad man are allegorically called wood, hay, and stubble, does it not become self-evident what kind of fire is used to consume this sort of wood? For he says: ‘The fire itself shall prove each man’s work, of what sort it is. If any man’s work shall abide which he has built thereon, he shall receive a reward; if any man’s work

⁵⁶ A few of these present forms, namely εἰσπορεύεσθαι (8), καταναλίσκει (13) and εἰσπορεύεται (29), can also be interpreted as a continuation of the present in the biblical context (*Mal.*3.2 and *Deut.*4.24 and 9.3). Besides: χωνεύσων (30) and ἐξαφανιούντος (34) are future, but I ignore them here, for these participles can be interpreted as expressing a purpose (CGCG 2019:629 §52.41).

⁵⁷ On the use of ἀλλὰ καὶ in enumerations, see note on 4.11.17 above.

25 ἔργον μένει, ὃ ἐπικυρόμησε, μισθὸν λήψεται· εἴ τις τὸ ἔργον κατακαήσεται, ζημιωθήσεται.» Ἔργον δὲ κατακαίόμενον ποῖον ἂν ἐν τούτοις λέγοιτο ἢ πᾶν τὸ ἀπὸ κακίας πραττόμενον; Οὐκοῦν ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν «πῦρ καταναλίσκον» ἐστίν, ὥς ἀποδεδώκαμεν,

shall be burned, he shall suffer loss.’ What sort of work could here be said to be burned except every action which results from evil? Therefore, ‘our God is a consuming fire’ in the sense in which we have interpreted this.

The text structuring particle οὖν (10) introduces the next step in the discourse: Origen starts his explanation of the three biblical expressions. His interpretation of the first quote is rather long and serves as example for the treatment of the other fragments. This passage offers a specimen of Origen’s allegorical interpretation (cf. τροπολογοῦμεν 4.12.19), which is presented – in all modesty⁵⁸ – as an investigation (ἐξετάζειν, 3; ζητοῦμεν, 10). The approach with clearly defined steps and a question-answer format is almost scientific and didactic: the author takes the reader by the hand to convince him of the plausibility of his interpretation. The author himself moreover seems to withdraw gradually from the discourse: only in the beginning the first person is used (ζητοῦμεν, 10; φαμεν, 11); in the rest of the passage the verbal forms express more distance (impersonal δῆλον, 19; προσπίπτει, 22; passive λέγεται, 14; νενοῆσθαι, 16; νοηθήσεται, 20; τροπολογεῖται, 20; λέγοιτο, 27). All credits should go to the persuasive power of the logical reasoning. The involvement of the reader however is stimulated by the use of rhetorical questions (22-23, 26-28) and of ἡμῶν (28). The passage consists of the following parts: (1) presentation of the question, (2) statement (answer), (3) presentation of an analogous text fragment, (4) examination of two different interpretations of this fragment, (5) conclusion.

(1) The point of departure is the fact that God said to be ‘a consuming fire’. Given this fact Origen raises a question based on a *πρέπον*-argumentation (‘what is appropriate?’). which is presented in a condensed form. An attempt to unravel the reasoning results in the following chain of statements: God cannot do anything that is inappropriate for him; so when a certain action is attributed to God it has to be appropriate. If God (as fire) ‘consumes’ something, it must be appropriate that it is consumed by him. Origen summarizes this in the question: ‘What is appropriate (*πρέπει*, 11) to be consumed by God?’

(2) Origen answers his own question (φαμεν, 11) with a statement: it is ‘evil (*τὴν κακίαν* (11), Focus), that is consumed by God ‘as fire’. By choosing an abstract ‘object of consumption’ Origen has actually taken a decisive step to a symbolical interpretation of πῦρ: an abstract object cannot be consumed by a concrete, literal ‘fire’. Adding the constituent ‘and the actions resulting from it’ (*καὶ τὰ ἀπ’ αὐτῆς πραττόμενα*, 12) makes the issue more concrete and functions as a bridge to the next biblical passage (1 *Cor.* 3.12-15), which is referred to in order to support the interpretation.

(3) Initially Origen embeds parts from this passage in his own text and later on he quotes a longer section in its entirety. The provenance of the passage is not specified and the references are impersonal and anonymous (*λεγόμενα*, 12; *λέγεται*, 14; *τῷ ἀναγράφαντι*, 17; *φησι*, 23). Origen obviously assumes that the reader is able to recognize Paul as author and will accept his authority. The embedded quote is briefly introduced by Origen: he characterizes (and frames) Paul’s words as a figuratively spoken (*τροπικῶς λεγόμενα*, 12, the preposed adverb is marked): ‘wood, hay and stubble’ (*ξύλα, χόρτον, καλάμην*, 13) refer to ‘the actions resulting from evil’.⁵⁹

Origen continues with presentation of elements from the context of Paul’s letter and his interpretation of them.⁶⁰ He zooms in on the word ‘to build’ (wood, hay and stubble): the verb *ἐποικοδομεῖν* (14) is

⁵⁸ Which can be interpreted as part of the *ethos*-strategy, Origen’s self-presentation as a careful researcher who brings forward well-argued proposals rather than making sweeping remarks.

⁵⁹ In 5.15.12 Origen explains the three words from 1 *Cor.* 3.12 *τροπικῶς* as ‘actions, words and thoughts’. See also 6.70; *De principiis* 1.1.2 (*malas mentium cogitationes, ... gesta turpia, ... desideria peccati*) and 2.10.4.

⁶⁰ The words *ἐποικοδομεῖν* and *τῷ θεμελίῳ* are derived from the text of Paul, but *ὁ φαῦλος* is added by Origen. The participle *προϋποβεβλημένῳ* can be considered as an adequate paraphrase of elements from the source text.

placed in the front position and the scope particle γοῦν indicates that at least a minimal proof is provided of the preceding statement.⁶¹ In his paraphrase Origen adds some constituents to control the reception of his interpretation: he presents ὁ φαῦλος (14, Focus) as *Agens* of ἐποικοδομεῖν, thus clarifying explicitly an element that is unexpressed in Paul's text. Besides he adds the adjective λογικῶ (15, 'spiritual')⁶² to θεμελίῳ ('foundation'), thus marking the metaphorical character of the text. So: it is the 'bad man' who 'builds wood, hay and stubble' upon the 'spiritual foundation'.

(4) Then οὖν (16) indicates the transition to the next step: Origen wants to define how these words are meant by the author (νενοῆσθαι ταῦτα τῷ ἀναγράσαντι, 16-17). Two different interpretations are presented, introduced by εἰ μὲν (16) ... εἰ δ' (20), which suggests that these two alternatives are placed side by side in a neutral way. The phraseology however clarifies that the reader is not supposed to consider them to be equivalent.

The first option is: Paul means literally that 'the bad man builds wood, hay and stubble'. Origen seems to dissociate himself from this option (ἔχει (16) is impersonal; in the second part τις) and makes demands: one should be able 'to show' and 'prove' (δεῖξαι, παραστήσαι, 16-17); the suggestion is: this will not be easy! This option moreover is different (ἄλλως, 16) from what was already said by Origen himself. The consequence⁶³ of this option is presented clearly: 'fire' (τὸ πῦρ (19), Topic) has to be taken literally as 'material and sensible' fire (ὕλικόν καὶ αἰσθητόν (19), Focus in the subordinate clause). This interpretation is characterized as σωματικῶς (17, Focus), which here perhaps deliberately can have a double meaning: physically and literally.⁶⁴

The second option, introduced by εἰ δ' (20), is Origen's favorite one: the allegorical interpretation (the verb τροπολογεῖται functions as contrastive Focus). The contrast to the preceding is marked by the adverb ἄντικρυς (20, Setting). This option is presented neutrally, without discouraging demands: 'wood, hay and stubble' are symbolical indications of τὰ τοῦ φαύλου ἔργα (20-21). The consequence of this choice for the meaning of πῦρ is presented in a suggestive rhetorical question: 'does it not become self-evident what kind of fire is used to consume this sort of wood?' The words αὐτόθεν (Focus) and προσπίπτει enhance the suggestive effect. Origen then motivates (γάρ, 23) this interpretation with an integral quote from 1 Cor. 3.13-15: the fire shall be a proof of each man's ἔργον: if it endures the fire, the man will be rewarded; if not, he will be punished. After the quote δέ (26) introduces the final remark of this section, a rhetorical question again: 'what can 'burning work' (Topic) be except 'every action which results from evil (πᾶν τὸ ἀπὸ κακίας πραττομενον, 27-28)?' The repetition of the words from the beginning (12), marks the completion of the reasoning: we have come full circle now.

(5) Origen concludes (οὐκοῦν, 28⁶⁵) the whole section about the interpretation of the expression 'God is a consuming fire'. The conclusion is not explicitly repeated, but only summarized in the words ὡς ἀποδεδώκαμεν (29). The perfect indicates that the result of the explanation is achieved now and available and relevant in the present discussion: it will be used for the interpretation of the next fragments.

⁶¹ Cf. CGCG (2019:692-693 §59.54).

⁶² Perhaps λογικῶ can be interpreted as a reference to the constituent ὃς ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός in Paul's text: Paul speaks of Jesus Christ as the only foundation. Christ is often indicated as ὁ Λόγος; the step to λογικός seems to be understandable.

⁶³ The future νοηθήσεται has an inferential meaning: this statement can be inferred from the preceding assumptions.

⁶⁴ For σωματικός 'physical' see 1.41.7; 2.69.3; 4.12.24; 6.62.15; 6.68.12; 7.34.5. In 2.7.19-20 σωματικός means 'literally'. In *De principiis* 4.2.2-9 Origen uses σωματικός for the 'literally' explanation of the Bible (contrast: ψυχικόν and πνευματικόν, which corresponds with τροπικῶς), see also *Commentarii in Ioannem* 1.7.43.1; 10.5.20.2.

⁶⁵ In statements οὐκοῦν is equivalent to οὖν, CGCG (2019:680 §59.33).

4.13.29-33

<p>καὶ οὕτως «εἰσπορεύεται ὡς πῦρ 30 χωνευτηρίου», χωνεύσων τὴν λογικὴν φύσιν, πεπληρωμένην τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας μολύβδου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀκαθάρτων ύλῶν, τὴν τοῦ χρυσοῦ, ἵν' οὕτως ὀνομάσω, φύσιν τῆς ψυχῆς ἢ τὴν ἀργύρου δολωσάντων.</p>	<p>So also He enters 'like the fire of a smelting-furnace' to mould the rational nature which has been filled by the lead of evil and other impure substances which adulterate the soul's golden or silver nature, so to speak.</p>
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Origen proceeds with his interpretation of the third fragment he quoted (the second quote is dealt with last). With καὶ οὕτως (29, Focus) Origen refers to an analogy: this fragment can be interpreted just like the preceding one. In this quote the picture changes: in *Mal*.3.2 is said that God enters like the fire of a smelting-furnace (χωνευτήριον, 30).⁶⁶ Origen takes up the image in an explanatory participle phrase,⁶⁷ in which he uses terms that are derived from the world of metal smelting. He applies them to the soul, denoted as τὴν λογικὴν φύσιν (30) and τὴν ... φύσιν τῆς ψυχῆς (32), a usual indication of the essence of man, who is originally a logical being, because he received his *logos* as a gift of the *Logos*.⁶⁸ The original pure condition of the soul is referred to by the precious metals 'gold' and 'silver' (χρυσοῦ, ἀργυροῦ, 32-33).⁶⁹ This λογικὴ φύσις 'is full' (πεπληρωμένη (30): the perfect refers to a 'now' existing state) of pollutants, denoted as 'lead of evil' and 'other impure substances': the addition of the constituents τῆς κακίας (31), ἀκαθάρτων (31) and δολωσάντων (33, 'adulterate', associated with tricks and treachery) clarify the moral aspect of the metaphor. In this image Origen interprets God's 'entrance' like fire: he comes 'to smelt' the soul (χωνεύσων (30) – future participle used to denote the purpose; the participle has Focus in its clause), with the additional meaning of 'to purify'. So God's intervention as 'fire' is explained by Origen in the perspective of the fight against evil and the purification of the soul.

4.13.33-35

<p>Οὕτω δὲ καὶ ποταμοὶ «πυρὸς» «ἐμπροσθεν» λέγονται εἶναι τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῦ ἐξαφανιοῦντος 35 τὴν δι' ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνακεκραμένην κακίαν.</p>	<p>In this sense also 'rivers of fire' are said to be before God, since He makes the evil which has permeated the whole soul to disappear.</p>
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Here Origen continues with his next item (δέ, 33): the interpretation of the second quote: 'God draws rivers of fire before him' (*Dan*.7.10). With Οὕτω he connects this interpretation to the previous discussion. The words from *Daniel* are referred to in a free quote: ἔλκειν (7) is replaced by εἶναι (34) and ἐμπροσθεν (34) is given the Focus position now. Moreover, it is separated by λέγονται εἶναι (34) from its genitive τοῦ θεοῦ: the fact that the rivers of fire are *before* God is possibly a salient point because of the contrast with the other biblical passages discussed (in which God was represented as fire) or with Celsus' quote about God who coming down brings fire like a torturer. Origen does not provide an extensive interpretation: just a short participle constituent in which the future participle ἐξαφανιοῦντος (34) is used substantivally and refers to God's intention: 'to destroy the evil'. The perfect participle ἀνακεκραμένην denotes the condition of the soul: evil is permeated in the whole soul (cf. πεπληρωμένη (30): the soul is full of impurity). Origen leaves it to the reader to imagine the exact role of the rivers of

⁶⁶ The same quote is discussed in a similar way in 5.15.

⁶⁷ For a pragmatistical interpretation of the word order in this complex participle phrase see chapter II 6.6.

⁶⁸ Cf. 4.24-25, a passage where the differences between man and animals is discussed; see also 4.58; 4.74.

⁶⁹ The parenthesis ἵν' οὕτως ὀνομάσω reminds the reader of the metaphorical character of the passage.

fire in the destructive process. He contents himself by characterizing God's action in the same positive way as before: it is aimed at the liberation of the soul and the destruction of evil.

4.13.35-37

35

ἀρκεῖ ταῦτα πρὸς τὸ ταῦτ' αὐτοὺς ἐποίησεν ἐσφαλμένη δόξῃ
λέγειν ὅτι ὁ θεὸς καταβήσεται δίκην βασανιστοῦ πῦρ φέρων.

Ἀλλὰ γὰρ

So far on this subject, for this is a sufficient reply to Celsus' assertion: This was responsible for their mistaken opinion that God will come down and bring fire like a torturer.

With Ἀλλά (35) Origen breaks off his discussion and motives this (γάρ, 35) by remarking that enough has been said (ἀρκεῖ ταῦτα, 36)⁷⁰ to comment on Celsus' words, which are once more quoted.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Similar closing formulas in 2.72.24; 3.69.31; 4.56.27; 6.7.16; 7.61.12; 8.23.24.

⁷¹ A similar repetition of the quote to conclude the section ('to close the circle') e.g. in 2.19.15-17; 2.71.17-18; 3.9.22-23; 4.59.19-20; 4.76.30-31; 5.45.53-54; 6.68.33-34.

9. Section 9: *Contra Celsus* 4.14-16

9.1 Strategy

Celsus

In the fragment quoted in 4.14 Celsus continues his presentation of arguments against a divine descent to the earth. The central term in his new argument is ‘change’. Celsus invokes – what he calls – an ancient dogma: the conviction that God is good and happy. He continues by stating that a descent to the earth would necessarily be accompanied by a change for worse. The conclusion is: God would not choose to undergo such a change. Then a second reasoning follows in which Celsus wants to demonstrate that such a change is not even possible for God.

Celsus’ argument has a rational nature: a combination of logical statements ends in two conclusions. The presentation of his argument as ‘nothing new’ functions as an appeal to the emotions of the reader: what is old, is familiar and has proved its worth and solidity; nobody is likely to deny its authority. Further, the rhetorical presentation of the argumentation becomes apparent in the antithesis (10-11) and in the amplification of God’s qualities (a four part enumeration) and of the impact of the change (a series of four oppositions). The first conclusion has the form of a rhetorical question. This seems to be in keeping with the character of the first reasoning: it is based on probability and not on objective factual information. Therefore strictly speaking a conclusion cannot go beyond the level of probability. Celsus seems to recognize this and uses the form of a rhetorical question in order to maximize the persuasive effect.

Moreover, Celsus’ argument based on ‘change’ is continued in the fragment quoted in 4.18.

Origen

In Origen’s defensive strategy several elements can be discerned. In 4.14 he starts with denial (*status coniecturalis*) of Celsus’ statement about the necessity of change. The reference to his authority, the Scriptures, is given a prominent place in this denial: God’s descent as mentioned in the Bible does not imply a change of the type Celsus has described. This statement is further elaborated with regard to God’s providence (4.14) and the incarnation (4.15).

In 4.14 Origen illustrates his denial by arguing that God is ‘unchanged in essence’. In the addition of the words ‘in essence’ he presents a first step in the direction of a more nuanced approach of the theme of ‘unchangeability’. Here elements of the *definitio* defence position can be discerned: a definition of ‘change’ is at stake here. Starting point for Origen is that in essence God is not subject to change. This Christian standpoint is substantiated by a reference to the Bible and then underlined by contrasting it with the theology of Epicurus and the Stoics. The implication of this is that the idea of a not changing God is better safeguarded in the Christian doctrine than in the ideas of Greek philosophers. By doing so Origen separates Celsus from his natural allies and suggests that he could rather attack these philosophers than the Christians.

In 4.15 Origen argues that also Christ’s coming down in the incarnation did not involve the changes indicated by Celsus. This denial of Celsus’ point is illustrated with biblical allusions and an analogy with a physician. Origen closes this section by carefully and tentatively indicating his own view on the meaning of the descent of the Logos: the possible result is that people are lifted up and can (‘so to speak’) look at the absolute form of the Logos.

In 4.16 follows a digression on the different ‘forms’ of the Logos: with reference to the story of the transfiguration from the gospel Origen explains that the Logos can appear to different people in different forms. In this respect speaking about some sort of ‘change’ needs not to be rejected, as Origen wants to

demonstrate.

The defensive moves of Origen are displayed in the following diagram:

Type	Approach	Content
<i>Refutatio</i>	Denial	Change is not necessary.
	Argument 1	In essence God always remains unchanged.
	Contrast	Greek philosophers fail to understand the nature of God.
	Argument 2	The incarnation does not imply the change Celsus describes.
	Analogy	Christ is compared with a physician.
<i>Confirmatio</i>	Explanation	What happens when the Logos becomes 'flesh'?
	Digression	The different 'forms' of the Logos, related to 'change'.

9.2 Structure of the text

Here follows an overview of the structure of this section:

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
Introduction	14.1-2	With some irony: 'great claim'	δέ
Quote	14.2-4	Introduction of Celsus: further proofs and 'nothing new'	ἔτι δέ δέ
	14.4-9	Part 1: Statement: God is good and happy. Statement: Descent means change for worse. Conclusion: God does not choose a change like this.	καί (4x) δή δέ, καί (3x) οὐν
	14.9-12	Part 2: Statement: A mortal being can undergo change, an immortal remains the same. Conclusion: God cannot undergo a change like this.	καὶ μὲν δή μὲν ... δ' οὐν
Reaction a. <i>refutatio</i> 1: in essence unchanged	14.12-19	Denial: descent does not involve change. Explanation: God remains in essence unchanged.	δή γάρ
	14.20-30	Contrast: Christian view vs. the ideas of Epicurus and the Stoics. Explanation: misunderstanding of the philosophers.	μὲν οὐν δέ ἀλλὰ καί, μὲν ... δέ γάρ
b. <i>refutatio</i> 2: incarnation	15.1-3	Descent and humiliation caused by love to men	δέ
	15.3-11	Statement: This involved no change for worse. (4x statement and justification)	δή που δ', γάρ οὐδ', γάρ οὐδέ ... ἀλλ', μὲν ... δ' ἀλλ' οὐδέ, γάρ

	15.11-18	Analogy with a physician Contrast	ἢ καίτοι γε ... δέ
c. <i>confirmatio</i> 1: incarnation	15.18-27	Explanation of the incarnation	δέ μέν ... δ'
d. <i>confirmatio</i> 2: forms of the Logos	16.1-16	Digression Statement: there are different forms of the Logos. Implication: exegesis of the story of the transfiguration Explanation	γάρ ἢ ... ἢ ... ἢ ὁθεν γάρ, ἀλλά
e. end	16.16-19	Closing formula	Καί ... δέ

9.3 Commentary

4.14.1-2

Ἵδωμεν δὲ καὶ ἅπερ ἐξῆς φησιν ὁ Κέλσος μετὰ Let us see also what great claims Celsus makes next when he talks as follows.
μεγάλῃς ἐπαγγελίας τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον·

With Ἵδωμεν δέ (1) Origen starts his introduction of the next quote from Celsus. The subjunctive has an adhortative and text structuring function: Origen indicates that he will start with the next investigation, provokes himself to look at this point and invites the reader to participate in this action.¹ The only remarkable element in the rather short introduction is the phrase μετὰ μεγάλῃς ἐπαγγελίας (1-2, ‘with great claims’), which can be considered as somewhat ironic. The marked position of the adjective reinforces this interpretation. This remark is induced by Celsus’ announcement that he will present ‘further proofs’ (πλείοσιν ἀποδείξεσιν, 3). By this explicit indication of the claims of his opponent Origen moves the attention from the content of the criticism to the pretense of Celsus. This seems to be a deliberate contribution to the creation of a negative *ethos* of Celsus.

4.14.2-12 Celsus:

Ἔτι δέ, φησίν, *Furthermore, he says, let us take up the argument again with further proofs. I have nothing new to say, but only ancient doctrines. God is good and beautiful and happy, and exists in the most beautiful state. If then He comes down to men, He must undergo change, a change from good to bad, from beautiful to shameful, from happiness to misfortune, and from what is best to what is most wicked. So who would choose a change like this? It is the nature only of a mortal being to undergo change and remoulding,*

ἄνωθεν πλείοσιν ἀποδείξεσιν ἀναλάβωμεν τὸν λόγον. Λέγω δὲ οὐδὲν καινὸν ἀλλὰ πάλαι δεδογμένα. Ὁ θεὸς ἀγαθὸς 5 ἐστὶ καὶ καλὸς καὶ εὐδαίμων καὶ ἐν τῷ καλλίστῳ καὶ ἀρίστῳ· εἰ δὴ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων κάτεισι, μεταβολῆς αὐτῷ δεῖ, μεταβολῆς δὲ ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ εἰς κακὸν καὶ ἐκ καλοῦ εἰς αἰσχρὸν καὶ ἐξ εὐδαιμονίας εἰς κακοδαιμονίαν καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀρίστου εἰς τὸ πονηρότατον. Τίς ἂν οὖν ἔλοιτο τοιαύτην μεταβολήν; Καὶ 10 μὲν δὴ τῷ θνητῷ μὲν ἀλλάττεσθαι καὶ μεταπλάττεσθαι

¹ In this sense Ἵδωμεν is used 33x in *Contra Celsum*, 24x to introduce a quote, 7x to introduce the next step in Origen’s response. See on the use of the first person and the interactive character also chapter II 3.2.2.

φύσις, τῷ δ' ἀθανάτῳ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν. *whereas it is the nature of an immortal being to remain the same without alteration. So a god could not at all undergo this change.*
 Οὐκ ἂν οὖν οὐδὲ ταύτην τὴν μεταβολὴν θεὸς δέχοιτο.

This fragment deals with Celsus' criticism of the idea of a divine descent to the earth, as can be deduced from the words εἰ δὴ ἐς ἀνθρώπους κάτεισι (6). Celsus introduces his next argument with two short remarks. The first one (ἔτι δέ ... τὸν λόγον, 2-3) has a text structuring character: Celsus announces that he now returns to the main line of his discourse and makes a new start (ἄνωθεν ἀναλάβωμεν, 3).² In the Focus constituent πλείοσιν ἀποδείξεσιν (3) the adjective is given a marked position before the noun: *more proof* will be provided in the next passage. In the second sentence Celsus comments on his own discourse: it is not new what he offers, but (ἀλλά, 4) just an ancient doctrine. This qualification is intended to recommend Celsus' argument.³ The constituents Λέγω οὐδὲν καινὸν and πάλαι δεδογμένα (3-4) can be interpreted as Broad-Focus. The perfect participle δεδογμένα presents the doctrine as a still existing result of a (long) opinion-forming process.

Then Celsus presents his argument, which concerns God (Ὁ θεός in the front position as new Topic) and consists of two parts connected by καί (9). Both parts end in a conclusion (οὖν 9, 12) in which a potential optative is used (ἔλοιτο, δέχοιτο). The first argument is based on the assertion that coming down to the earth necessarily involves change for God (εἰ δὴ ἐς ἀνθρώπους κάτεισι, μεταβολῆς αὐτῷ δεῖ (6), the constituents ἐς ἀνθρώπους and μεταβολῆς have Focus), a statement that is marked as evident (δῆ) and is not explicitly substantiated by Celsus. Departing from this assertion Celsus presents in a condensed form a reasoning, which in my reconstruction consists of a combination of two syllogisms.

The first syllogism (A) can be reconstructed as follows:

A1	Change involves a step backward for someone who is in the best position.	<i>maior</i>
A2	God is in the best position. ⁴	<i>minor</i>
A3	So for God change (i.e. a descent to the earth) involves a step backward.	<i>conclusion</i>

In Celsus' text the *maior* is left implicit (so we have an enthymeme)⁵ and the *minor* is worked out in an enumeration of five qualifications (connected emphatically by polysyndeton (4x καί). The notion of regression is amplified by Celsus in four antithetic sets of words, polysyndetically connected again (3x καί, 7-8) and depending on the prepositions ἐξ and εἰς to describe the direction of the change ('from ... to'). Celsus formulates the oppositions in absolute terms, leaving no space for nuance or intermediate positions between the extremes. It seems the intended effect of this antithetic approach is to enhance the persuasive power of the argument.

Remarkably A3 is not the conclusion that functions in Celsus' reasoning. He inserts as a new element the notion of 'choosing' (ἔλοιτο, 9) which is at the heart of his conclusion. This conclusion is reached by another syllogistic reasoning (B), in which A3 functions as *minor*. The structure of this syllogism B is as follows:

² Assuming that this fragment in Celsus' text immediately followed the fragment quoted in 4.11 (as is suggested by Origen's words ἅπερ ἐξῆς φησιν ὁ Κέλσος, 1), we can conclude that Celsus considered his remarks about the floods and conflagrations to be a digression. Andresen (1955:91-92) thinks that the digression was even longer (4.6-11): in 4.5 Celsus had presented his first argument (God would have to leave his throne) and here he would proceed with the next one.

³ For a similar use of πάλαι and παλαιός by Celsus, see 1.67.3; 3.16.13; 6.3.1; 6.12.6; 6.81.9; 7.28.5; 8.68.2. The background is Celsus' idea of an ancient true doctrine, transmitted by wise nations and men, but distorted by Jews and Christians. Cf. 1.14-20; see also Andresen (1955:146ff.), Borret, (Vol.5, 1976:38-40), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:24-28). Andresen points also to the Platonic origin of the image of God which Celsus takes for granted (1955:94). Cf. Droge (1989:77): 'For Celsus ... it is self-evident that nothing can be both new and true'.

⁴ Cf. Plato, *Respublica* 381bc; *Phaedrus* 246d.

⁵ See on syllogism and enthymeme chapter III 3.4.2.

B1	It is not probable that anyone would choose to undergo a change for worse.	<i>maior</i>
B2 = A3	For God (who is in the best position) descending to the earth involves a change for worse.	<i>minor</i>
B3	So it is not probable that God would choose such a change and would descend to the earth.	<i>conclusion</i>

The reasoning presented is an enthymeme again: the *maior* (B1) is not expressed by Celsus: did he feel that this was his weak spot? In the conclusion ὁ θεός is replaced by τίς (9). This generalization, the use of the optative and the wording as a rhetorical question enhance the suggestive and persuasive power of the conclusion.

Then Celsus continues with a second reasoning (C), which is connected to the previous one by καί. Special attention of the reader is asked by the interactional particle δῆ: the following statement cannot be denied, for it is generally accepted in the world that Celsus claims to be common to the reader and himself.⁶

Reasoning C also has the form of an enthymeme:

C1	Only a mortal being can undergo change (the nature of immortals is to remain the same without alteration).	<i>maior</i>
C2	God is immortal.	<i>minor</i>
C3	So God cannot undergo change.	<i>conclusion</i>

Statement C2 is left implicit by Celsus. The *maior* is presented as an evident fact (δῆ) and formulated in a well-balanced sentence: the contrastive Topic constituents (τῷ θνητῷ μὲν – τῷ δ' ἀθανάτῳ, 10-11) are followed by the Focus phrases (ἀλλάττεσθαι καὶ μεταπλάττεσθαι – κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν, 10-11). In the conclusion ὁ θεός has Focus: it is *God* who is cannot at all⁷ undergo this change (Topic).⁸

What Celsus wants to demonstrate is clear. Both arguments are complementary: God does not *want* a change (which is necessarily involved in a descent to the earth) nor is he *capable* to undergo it.

4.14.12-19

Δοκεῖ δὴ μοι πρὸς ταῦτα λέλεχθαι τὰ δέοντα διηγησαμένῳ τὴν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς λεγομένην κατάβασιν θεοῦ πρὸς τὰ ἀνθρώπινα·
15 εἰς ἣν οὐ μεταβολῆς αὐτῷ δεῖ, ὥς Κέλσος οἶεται ἡμᾶς λέγειν, οὔτε τροπῆς τῆς ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ εἰς κακὸν ἢ ἐκ καλοῦ εἰς αἰσχρὸν ἢ ἐξ εὐδαιμονίας εἰς κακοδαιμονίαν ἢ ἐκ τοῦ ἀρίστου εἰς τὸ πονηρότατον. Μένων γὰρ τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἄτρεπτος συγκαταβαίνει τῇ προνοίᾳ καὶ τῇ οἰκονομίᾳ τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνους πράγμασιν.

Δοκεῖ I think that I made the necessary reply to this when I discussed what is called in the Bible God's descent to human affairs. In this respect it is not that *He must undergo change*, as Celsus thinks we say; nor must He turn *from good to bad, or from beautiful to shameful, or from happiness to misfortune, or from what is best to what is most wicked*. While remaining unchanged in essence, He comes down in His providence and care over human affairs.

⁶ In fact the sentence begins with a combination of three particles: καὶ μὲν δῆ. See Denniston (1954:395-397); what he calls the 'progressive' use seems to be fit here: Celsus introduces the next point in his argumentation. We may ask: what is corresponding to μὲν? In 4.14 no δέ-sentence is quoted: was it not present in Celsus' text or is it omitted by Origen? I found some other examples of a solitary μὲν: 4.2.11 (μὲν οὖν), 4.84.13 (καὶ μὲν δῆ), 7.40.22 and 8.69.3 (μὲν δῆ).

⁷ The negation is intensified by the use of the two negatives οὐκ and οὐδέ; see CGCG (2019:649 §56.4).

⁸ See chapter II 6.3 for a discussion of the word order of this passage.

Origen begins his response with a reference to his previous treatment of the subject κατάβασις θεοῦ. These previous remarks⁹ are indicated with the perfect λέλεχθαι (13), which underlines that these words are available and relevant in the discourse situation; they belong to the frame of reference of the readers, which is marked also by δῆ. The characterization of these remarks as τὰ δέοντα (13, ‘what is necessary’) can create confidence among the readers: this explanation is adequate and complete. This confidence is enhanced by the reference to the Scriptures as source respected by Origen and his readers.

Immediately following the heart of Origen’s defence is worded in the denial of Celsus’ statement (*coniectura* defence line): there is *no* necessary change involved in the divine descent (εἰς ἣν οὐ μεταβολῆς αὐτῷ δεῖ, 15). The negation is underlined in οὔτε τροπῆς (16), followed by a repetition of Celsus’ four antithetic combinations. By the way: in ὡς Κέλσος οἶεται ἡμᾶς λέγειν (15) Origen attributes to Celsus an opinion that is not explicitly expressed (at least in the text that is available to us): it seems to be rather an implication of Celsus’ remarks than a direct reproduction of them.

Origen continues with an explanatory sentence (introduced by γάρ, 18), in which the issue just denied is presented in a positive way: μένων γάρ τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἄτρεπτος (18, the Focus constituent before συγκαταβαίνει). The present participle is emphatically placed and the addition of τῇ οὐσίᾳ introduces an element that will be important in the further discussion (cf. 4.15.21): in his κατάβασις God *remains unchanged in essence*. This firstly is apparent, according to Origen, in his providence and care for the world (τῇ προνοίᾳ καὶ τῇ οἰκονομίᾳ τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνους πράγμασιν, 19).¹⁰ The present tense of verb συγκαταβαίνει (18) indicates this coming down as an ongoing, not completed action.¹¹

4.14.20-30

20 Ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν καὶ τὰ θεῖα γράμματα παρίσταμεν ἄτρεπτον λέγοντα τὸν θεὸν ἓν τε τῷ «Σὺ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ» καὶ ἐν τῷ «Οὐκ ἡλλοίωμαι»· οἱ δὲ τοῦ Ἐπικούρου θεοί, σύνθετοι ἐξ ἀτόμων τυγχάνοντες καὶ τὸ ὅσον ἐπὶ τῇ συστάσει ἀναλυτοί, πραγματεύονται τὰς φθοροποιούς ἀτόμους ἀποσεῖσθαι.
25 Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ τῶν Στωϊκῶν θεός, ἅτε σῶμα τυγχάνων, ὅτε μὲν ἡγεμονικὸν ἔχει τὴν ὅλην οὐσίαν, ὅταν ἡ ἐκπύρωσις ᾗ· ὅτε δὲ ἐπὶ μέρους γίνεται αὐτῆς, ὅταν ᾗ διακόσμησις. Οὐδὲ γὰρ δεδύνηται οὗτοι τρανῶσαι τὴν φυσικὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἔννοιαν ὡς πάντῃ ἀφθάρτου καὶ ἀπλοῦ καὶ ἀσυνθέτου καὶ
30 ἀδιαιρέτου.

We show that the divine Scriptures also say that God is not subject to change in the words ‘But thou art the same’, and ‘I change not’. But the gods of Epicurus, who are compounded of atoms and, in so far as they are compounded, are liable to dissolution, are at pains to throw off the atoms which may cause their destruction. Furthermore, the god of the Stoics, in that he is corporeal, at one time when the conflagration occurs consists entirely of mind, while at another time, when the new world-order comes, he becomes a part of it. Not even they have been able to perceive clearly the true conception of God’s nature, as being entirely incorruptible, simple, uncompounded, and indivisible.

The transition to the next part of the discourse is indicated by οὖν (20): Origen corroborates his claim that God remains unchanged by contrasting this Christian doctrine with the ideas of Epicurus and the Stoics. The structure of the passage is clarified by the particles μέν ... δέ ... Ἀλλὰ καί, which are connected to the Topic constituents Ἡμεῖς μὲν (20), οἱ δὲ τοῦ Ἐπικούρου θεοί (22) and Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ τῶν

⁹ Origen refers to 4.2.2-13 and perhaps also to 3.28.

¹⁰ The next point ‘incarnation’ is discussed in 4.15.

¹¹ Cf. 4.12.20-21, where the same verb συγκαταβαίνει was used.

Στωϊκῶν θεός (25).

In the first sentence the juxtaposition of ‘we’ (Christians) and the divine Scriptures (Ἡμεῖς ... καὶ τὰ θεῖα γράμματα, 20) functions as a substantiation of Origen’s argument. The readers are expected to agree with Origen, for his view is in accordance with the authoritative books: God is not subject to change (ἄτρεπτος). The quotes from *Ps.* 102.28 (= 101.28 LXX) and *Mal.* 3.6 underline the point. Note that several lines before (13-14) Origen also referred to the Scriptures: he explicitly shares with his readers that κατάβασις as well as ἄτρεπτος are biblical themes which both have to be maintained in the explanation.

Then as a contrast Origen brings the image of gods of Epicurus and the Stoics into the debate. As for Epicurus the most salient point is expressed in the verb *πραγματεύονται* (24). This Focus constituent is preceded by a participle phrase which functions as Setting; within the Setting phrase the Focus is on σύνθετοι ἐξ ἀτόμων (23-24).¹² Origen highlights the issues he can use in the discussion: according to Epicurus the gods are ‘compounded of atoms’ and therefore ‘liable to dissolution’ (enthymeme); and so they ‘are constantly at work’ (the present tense of *πραγματεύονται* denotes that the action is not limited in time): they are at pains to shake off destructive atoms.¹³

As for ‘the god of the Stoics’:¹⁴ Origen begins with a reminder of the corporeal character of the Stoic image of god (ἅτε σῶμα τυγχάνων (25); presented as an objective reason by ἅτε + participle).¹⁵ Then he points at the ambiguous nature of this god: at one time as the leading principle (ἡγεμονικόν, 26) the god comprises the entire substance, whereas at another time he becomes a part of it. The two moments are indicated by *ὅτε μὲν ... ὅτε δέ* (25-27)¹⁶ and explained in two *ὅταν*-clauses in which subject and verb are arranged chiasmatically. The antithesis is dominated by ἡγεμονικόν ... τὴν ὅλην οὐσίαν vs. ἐπὶ μέρος (26-27). Origen contrasts the moment of the conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις, 26), when the divine fire comprises all, and the moment of recreation of the new world-order (διακόσμησις, 27), when the fire is one of the elements of the new world.¹⁷ The unexpressed implication is that the cycle of conflagration and recovery involves that this god is subject to change.

Origen concludes the section with a brief explanatory remark, introduced by γάρ (28). He notes that the philosophers just mentioned have not been able to get a clear conception of the divine nature (Οὐδὲ γὰρ δεδύνηνται starts a Broad-Focus constituent). The perfect *δεδύνηνται* indicates this as a now existing and for the discourse relevant state that results from assumed previous attempts to understand the divine nature. Then Origen enumerates in four negative adjectives what is typical for God: ἀφθάρτου καὶ ἀπλοῦ καὶ ἀσυνθέτου καὶ ἀδιαιρέτου (29-30). The polysyndeton underlines this series of characteristics that are, as Origen wants to imply, totally incompatible with the ideas of Epicurus and the Stoics.

The contribution of this passage to the debate with Celsus is clear: Origen demonstrates that Celsus should attack philosophers instead of Christians: in the theology of Epicurus and the Stoics God is subject to change, whereas the Christians referring to the Bible believe that God remains unchanged.

¹² See chapter II 6.6 for a discussion in the word order.

¹³ The preposed adjective *φθοροποιούς* is marked. Origen means: collisions with other atoms can destroy their own combinations of atoms. In fact a remarkable statement about Epicurus’ theology. Epicurus believed in the existence of gods; in his conception they have a human form; they have no interest in the world and live in *intermundia* where they are supposed to be safe from destruction (Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 3.18-22; 5.1161-1240; Cicero, *De divinatione* 2.17.40; Seneca, *De beneficiis* 4.4). See Chadwick (1948:91-92), who in note 15 refers to Origen’s (as it seems unparalleled) remark. Cf. the comment of Borret *ad loc.*: this remark contains an element of criticism on the epicurean conception.

¹⁴ On *ἀλλὰ καί* see note on 4.11.17 above.

¹⁵ Cf. 1.21.11-15; 3.75.30; 6.71.14-17 where Origen referring to the Stoic image of god also connects ‘corporeal’ and ‘changeable’.

¹⁶ For *ὅτε* as indefinite adverb see LSJ s.v. *ὅτε* C: ‘sometimes ... sometimes’, ‘now ... now’.

¹⁷ According to the Stoics the universe goes through a repetitive cycle in which the world develops from the primordial fire (the divine, basic substance of everything, *Urfeuer*); in this world fire exists as one of the four elements (*Elementarfeuer*); finally the world is absorbed again in the *Urfeuer* and returns to the original state. Cf. 5.20.15-16 about *ἐκπύρωσις* and the subsequent *διακόσμησις*. See also chapter VI 2.3. Origen frequently criticizes the Stoic view that the new world will be an exact copy of the old one, see 4.68 and 6.71. See note Borret *ad loc.* (1968: 218-219 n.1).

4.15.1-3

1 Τὸ δὲ καταβεβηκὸς εἰς ἀνθρώπους «ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ» ὑπῆρχε καὶ διὰ φιланθρωπίαν «ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν», ἵνα χωρηθῇναι ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων δυνηθῇ. What came down to men was originally 'in the form of God' and because of his love to men 'emptied himself' that men might be able to receive him.

Origen marks the start of the second part of his refutation by δέ. In his discussion on the theme 'divine descent' the focus will now be on the 'incarnation', which is indicated in the (new-)Topic constituent Τὸ καταβεβηκὸς εἰς ἀνθρώπους (1). The use of the neuter participle perfect is remarkable: the descent is indicated as an event that happened in the past and is still relevant in the present. The neuter¹⁸ seems to be chosen in order to keep the reference a bit vague initially, although in the rest of the sentence enough hints are given to the well-informed reader. The phrases ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ (1) and ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν (2) will be recognized as quotes from Paul (*Phil.*2.6-7), where these words refer to Jesus Christ.¹⁹ In Origen's text the transition to the masculine is made almost unnoticed by ἐαυτόν (2), which is quoted from Paul.²⁰

The aim of this descent and this action of 'emptying himself' is expressed in ἵνα χωρηθῇναι ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων δυνηθῇ (2-3, 'in order that he may be received by men'), at this moment an unclear phrase which will be explained below (15.22ff and 16.12).²¹

4.15.3-11

Οὐ δὴ που δ' ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ εἰς κακὸν γέγονεν αὐτῷ μεταβολή, «ἀμαρτίαν» γὰρ «οὐκ ἐποίησεν», οὐδ' ἐκ καλοῦ εἰς αἰσχρόν, οὐ γὰρ ἔγνω «ἀμαρτίαν», οὐδὲ ἐξ εὐδαιμονίας ἦλθεν εἰς κακοδαιμονίαν, ἀλλ' «ἐαυτὸν» μὲν «ἐταπείνωσεν» οὐδὲν δ' ἦτον μακάριος ἦν, καὶ ὅτε συμφερόντως τῷ γένει ἡμῶν ἐαυτὸν ἐταπείνου. Ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μεταβολή τις αὐτῷ γέγονεν ἐκ τοῦ **10** ἀρίστου εἰς τὸ πονηρότατον· ποῦ γὰρ πονηρότατον τὸ χρηστὸν καὶ φιλάνθρωπον; But he surely underwent no change from good to bad; for 'he did no sin'; nor from beautiful to shameful, for 'he knew no sin'. Nor did he pass from happiness to misfortune; although 'he humbled himself', nevertheless he was happy, even when he humbled himself in the way expedient for our race. Moreover, he underwent no change from what is best to what is most wicked; for in what way is goodness and love to man most wicked?

Origen repeats his denial: there is no change (μεταβολή, 4) involved in this descent either. The repetition of the negative (οὐ ... οὐδ' ... οὐδέ ... οὐδέν ... Ἀλλ' ... οὐδέ) underlines the denial: Origen repeats the series of changes for worse that Celsus had enumerated: every single one is denied with a short explanation (γάρ, 4,5), the final one with a rhetorical question. With δὴ που (3) Origen appeals to the reader: 'I assume you agree on this undeniable point'.²³ This appeal is based on the common base that

¹⁸ I did not find another neuter participle referring to Christ. A comparable neuter reference is ἐξαίρετόν τι χρῆμα (4.8.6; cf. 4.22.17). In the translations of Borret (Vol.2, 1968:219) and Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.3, 2011:687) the neuter is still recognizable: *l'être descendu* and *Jenes Wesen das ... herabgestiegen ist*. Chadwick (1953:193) transformed the phrase to a personal and masculine form: *He who came down*.

¹⁹ The Setting phrase διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν seems to be derived from Paul's letter to Titus (3.4).

²⁰ Below the masculine μακάριος (8) is used.

²¹ The expression is also used in 6.68.10.

²² For the use of ἀλλά in enumerations see note on 11.17 above.

²³ CGCG (2019:688 §59.47): 'δήπου tentatively suggests that something ought to be as clear or obvious to the addressee as it is to the speaker'. In fact που ('I think') works ironically in combination with an evident utterance (δή): any doubt or reservation

Origen and his readers share: the Scriptures. Origen uses short biblical quotes to justify his statements about Jesus Christ. He points out that Christ's humiliation was beneficial for mankind (συμφερόντως τῷ γένει ἡμῶν, 8).²⁴

The whole series of denied issues has an amplifying effect: Celsus' suggestions of a necessary regression is transformed into a list of positive points: Christ has nothing to do with sin, he is characterized by goodness and love to man; his humble descent to the earth is beneficial for mankind. Moreover, we can ask if Origen's response exactly affects the issue Celsus had raised. The regression Celsus denoted seems to concern the (external) qualities of the 'situation', which is especially apparent in ἐν καλλίστῳ καὶ ἀρίστῳ, 4.14.5), whereas Origen's list is formulated in moral categories (the moral qualities of Christ: he was sinless and full of love). Origen seems to transfer the attention for the benefit of his defence.

4.15.11-18

Ἦ ὥρα λέγειν καὶ τὸν ἱατρὸν
ὁρῶντα δεινὰ καὶ θιγγάνοντα ἀηδῶν, ἵνα τοὺς κάμνοντας
ιάσῃται, ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ εἰς κακὸν ἢ ἐκ καλοῦ εἰς αἰσχρὸν ἢ ἐξ
εὐδαιμονίας εἰς κακοδαιμονίαν ἔρχεσθαι. Καίτοι γε ὁ ἱατρὸς
15 ὁρῶν τὰ δεινὰ καὶ θιγγάνων τῶν ἀηδῶν οὐ πάντως ἐκφεύγει
τὸ τοῖς αὐτοῖς δύνασθαι περιπεσεῖν· ὁ δὲ «τὰ τραύματα»
τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν θεραπεύων διὰ τοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ λόγου θεοῦ
αὐτὸς πάσης κακίας ἀπαράδεκτος ἦν.

The alternative is that it is fitting to say that also a physician, who 'sees terrible things and touches unpleasant wounds' in order to heal the sick, passes from good to bad, or from beautiful to shameful, or from happiness to misfortune, although the physician who sees the terrible things and touches the unpleasant wounds does not wholly avoid the possibility that he may fall into the same plight. But he who heals the wounds of our souls through the divine Logos within him was incapable of any evil.

In this passage Origen presents an analogous argument to substantiate his previous denial: three of the items of Celsus' enumeration are repeated once again and now applied to a physician (τὸν ἱατρὸν (11) as new Topic). Origen introduces his argument with Ἦ as an alternative that should be true if his argument would not be valid (it is A or B; 'The alternative is ...').²⁵ With ὥρα λέγειν (11) he indicates that his alternative is not chosen at random, but fitting to the discussion.²⁶ The analogy between Christ and a physician is clear:²⁷ there is correspondence between patients (τοὺς κάμνοντας, 12) and mankind (ἀνθρώπους, 1; τῷ γένει ἡμῶν, 8), between the nasty things a physician comes across (ὁρῶντα δεινὰ καὶ θιγγάνοντα ἀηδῶν,²⁸ 12) and the humiliation Christ suffered (ἐκένωσεν, 2; ἐταπείνωσεν, 7) and finally between the healing of the physician (ιάσῃται, 13) and the salvation accomplished by Christ (συμφερόντως, 8; τὸ χρηστόν, 11).

The line of Origen's argument is as follows: he had stated that Christ's descent involves no change for worse; if this would be not true, then the alternative would be: we have to state that also a physician

is unnecessary in this case; expression of subjectivity has the effect of reinforcement. Cf. chapter II 5.2. Similar examples of (οὐ) δὴ πού in 2.67.17; 4.18.24; 4.96.8; 6.73.31; 8.9.14; 8.73.20.

²⁴ On the use of the tenses in this specific passage (perfect, aorist and imperfect) see chapter II 4.4.

²⁵ See for this use of ἦ my commentary on 4.3.17 and 4.17.6.

²⁶ Cf. LSJ s.v. ὥρα B3 ὥρα [ἔστιν] c.inf. *it is time* to do a thing; Lampe s.v. ὥρα 4 *fitting time*; ὥρα (ἔστιν) *it is fitting or necessary*. For similar examples see 1.64.2; 5.3.3; 5.35.19; 5.61.9; 8.59.15.

²⁷ The same comparison is found in 2.67 and 3.62. Here ὁ ἱατρὸς and ὁ ... θεραπεύων function as contrastive Topic.

²⁸ This Setting constituent is a quote from Hippocrates, *De flatibus* 1. The phrase is frequently quoted, see further references in Chadwick (1953:193 n.8).

experiences a retrograde process (Focus), when he visits his patients and sees terrible things (Setting). Since the alternative will not be accepted or is not probable,²⁹ the first statement has to be true.

With καίτοι γε Origen introduces his next remark, which is associated with the previous one, but maybe not in the way the reader expects.³⁰ The connection between the two sentences can be paraphrased as follows: it cannot truly be said that a physician at work is subject to a change from good to evil, *albeit* (καίτοι) that he does not wholly avoid (οὐ πάντως ἐκφεύγει, 15) all risks. This caveat of the analogy serves to substantiate Origen's main statement: in this respect there is a difference between the physician and Christ (ὁ ἱατρός (11) and ὁ ... θεραπεύων (16-17) are contrastive Topic). A physician is exposed to health risk, but (δέ, 16) Christ was incapable of any evil (πάσης κακίας ἀπαράδεκτος (18), the Focus constituent),³¹ because of 'the divine Logos within him' (Setting). Corresponding to the domain of the comparison, Christ is denoted here metaphorically as ὁ δὲ τὰ τραύματα τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν θεραπεύων (16-17).³²

4.15.18-27

Εἰ δὲ καὶ σῶμα
θνητὸν καὶ ψυχὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἀναλαβὼν ὁ ἀθάνατος θεὸς
20 λόγος δοκεῖ τῷ Κέλσῳ ἀλλάττεσθαι καὶ μεταπλάττεσθαι,
μανθανέτω ὅτι «ὁ λόγος» τῇ οὐσίᾳ μένων λόγος οὐδὲν
μὲν πάσχει ὧν πάσχει τὸ σῶμα ἢ ἡ ψυχὴ, συγκαταβαίνων δ'
ἔσθ' ὅτε τῷ μὴ δυναμένῳ αὐτοῦ τὰς μαρμαρυγὰς καὶ τὴν
λαμπρότητα τῆς θειότητος βλέπειν οἶονεῖ «σὰρξ» γίνεται,
σωματικῶς λαλούμενος, ἕως ὁ τοιοῦτον αὐτὸν παραδεξάμενος
26 κατὰ βραχὺ ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου μετεωριζόμενος δυνηθῇ αὐτοῦ
καὶ τὴν, ἵν' οὕτως ὀνομάσω, προηγουμένην μορφήν θεάσασθαι.

If the immortal divine Logos assumes both a mortal body and a human soul, and by so doing appears to Celsus to be subject to change and remoulding, let him learn that the Logos remains Logos in essence. He suffers nothing of the experience of the body or the soul. But sometimes he comes down to the level of him who is unable to look upon the radiance and brilliance of the Deity, and becomes as it were flesh, and is spoken of in physical terms, until he who has accepted him in this form is gradually lifted up by the Logos and can look even upon, so to speak, his absolute form.

With δέ (18) Origen introduces the next passage, which has, compared to the previous section, a more confirmative character. Origen specifies his own ideas about the meaning of the 'incarnation' (the term is not used by Origen himself). The section consists of one sentence in three parts: a conditional clause, the main verb μανθανέτω (21, 'he has to learn') and an object clause (introduced by ὅτι) which presents the content of the teaching. By using the imperative μανθανέτω Origen on the one hand points at Celsus' lack of knowledge of the Christian doctrines: he needs instruction. On the other hand Origen creates an imaginative situation with the suggestion that his deceased opponent can be encouraged to learn. This can be interpreted as a disguised incentive addressed to his readers: in an indirect way *they* are instructed by Origen.

²⁹ Sometimes ἢ introduces an alternative that is less acceptable or probable, which corroborates the preceding statement, see e.g. 1.14.14; 1.65.27; 2.11.38; 2.32.17; 3.54.20; 4.4.6; 4.17.6; 4.53.17; 4.59.11.

³⁰ In a similar sense καίτοι γε is used in e.g. 1.47.9; 2.12.28; 3.16.7; 4.2.26; 4.28.30. See on the meaning of καίτοι in classical Greek Jacquindod (1997), Slings (1997a:122-125), CGCG (2019:675 §59.23).

³¹ The first part of the sentence denotes a general situation; therefore the present ἐκφεύγει is used. The second part describes a situation that existed in the past of Jesus' life on earth; therefore the imperfect ἦν is used.

³² Cf. 5.19.50-51 and 8.72.18-19.

In the conditional clause Origen presents the condition for the relevance of his exhortation to learn:³³ it is relevant if Celsus thinks ‘incarnation’ means that the divine Logos is subject to change. The infinitives ἀλλάττεσθαι καὶ μεταπλάττεσθαι are derived from the final part of Celsus’ quote (4.14.10); in the rest of the clause Origen presents his definition of ‘incarnation’: ‘the immortal divine Logos’ (ὁ ἀθάνατος θεὸς λόγος (19-20) is Focus) ‘assumes a mortal body and a human soul’ (καὶ σῶμα θνητὸν καὶ ψυχὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἀναλαβὼν (18-19) functions as Setting in the conditional clause).³⁴ Note the antitheses θνητὸν - ἀθάνατος and ἀνθρωπίνην - θεός; the opposition mortal - immortal was also used in the fragment of Celsus that is the cause for this discussion (4.14.10-11).

The main verb μανθανέτω (21) is followed by the object-clause, in which ὁ λόγος (21) functions as Topic. The utterance is structured by μέν ... δ’ (22); in the first part οὐδέν (21) has Focus: the Logos ‘is not affected by the things the body and the soul experience’ (οὐδέν μὲν πάσχει ὃν πάσχει τὸ σῶμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ, 21-22). This statement is preceded by a participle phrase τῇ οὐσίᾳ μένων λόγος (21), which functions as Setting; within this phrase τῇ οὐσίᾳ has Focus: the Logos does not undergo any essential change: he ‘remains Logos *in essence*’. A similar remark was made above (4.14.18): ‘God remains unchanged in essence when he comes down in his providence and care over the world’.

The second part of the object clause, introduced by δ’ (22), has (οἶονεῖ) σὰρξ (24) as most salient point of information: the Logos becomes ‘(as it were) *flesh*’ (quoted from *John* 1.14); in the following explanation the corporeal aspect is highlighted again: ‘he is spoken of in physical terms’ (σωματικῶς λαλούμενος, 25³⁵). This second core of the object clause is specified by the preceding Setting constituent συγκαταβαίνων ... βλέπειν (22-24). In this participle clause the circumstance is expressed in which ‘the Logos becomes as it were flesh’: ‘when the Logos comes down to the level of a person who is not able to see the brilliance of his deity’. Remarkable in this section is the use of the present (the aorist γένητο from *John*’s text is changed into the present γίνεται, 24) and the addition of the constituents ἔσθ’ ὅτε (23, ‘sometimes’) and οἶονεῖ (24, ‘as is were’). These points can be interpreted as deliberate hints: the reader should know that Origen does not refer to the ‘incarnation’ as a historical event that happened at a certain point in time, but to something that occurs more frequently at several moments.³⁶ With οἶονεῖ Origen indicates that this ‘incarnation’ (σὰρξ γίνεται, 24) should not be taken literally, but in a metaphorical sense.³⁷

The sentence is closed with a subordinate clause in which the purpose³⁸ of the ‘event’ is expressed. The first constituent of the clause functions as Topic: the reader is prepared for the fact that something will be said about ‘the person who has accepted him (i.e. the Logos) in this form’ (ὁ τοιοῦτον αὐτὸν παραδεξάμενος, 25). Then a Setting phrase (κατὰ βραχὺ ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου μετεωριζόμενος, 26) provides background information: the person is ‘gradually³⁹ lifted up by the Logos’. The most salient information is worded in the final words (following the rather colorless main verb δυνήθη, 26): τὴν ... προηγουμένην

³³ The εἰ- clause can be interpreted as an illocutionary conditional; see above in the commentary on 4.5.29.

³⁴ Cf. on the connection of the Logos with body and soul e.g. 1.70.10; 2.9.67-68; 2.23.11-15; 2.31.8; 3.28.43; 3.29.9; 3.41.8; 5.39.23ff; 5.48-28-29; 6.47.18ff.; 6.73.15. Origen’s view of incarnation is discussed by Reemts (1998:168-174) and Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:72).

³⁵ The same expression is used by Origen in a comparable context in 6.68.12.

³⁶ Cf. Reemts (1998:170-171): The incarnation is for Origen the means of revelation, the route that makes contact between God and men possible. Origen does not consider incarnation to be an ‘einmaliges historisches Geschehen’, but also a ‘Bewegung Gottes’, taking place already in the Old Testament (‘the Logos became Scripture’ is a form of incarnation) and continuing in the time of the New Testament and afterwards in the time of the church.

³⁷ οἶονεῖ seems to be synonymous with ἵν’ οὕτως ὀνομάσω used later on. Both constituents are used to nuance the following phrase or word and to draw the attention of the reader to the fact that the following wording is not exact, but has to be taken metaphorically. Both expressions are used together in 4.69.26; for οἶονεῖ in this meaning see 4.81.35; 4.82.1; for ἵν’ οὕτως ὀνομάσω see also e.g. 1.42.29; 2.30.21; 6.44.20.

³⁸ See LSJ s.v. ἕως 4 with subjunctive.

³⁹ So Chadwick; see LSJ s.v. βραχὺς 2 κατὰ β. ‘little by little’ Thuc.1.64. The translations of Borret (‘rapidement’) and Fiedrowicz & Barthold (‘in kurzer Zeit’) are less appropriate given the gradual process implied below in 4.16.3-5.

μορφὴν θεάσασθαι (27):⁴⁰ this person will be able ‘to see the Logos in his essential form’. Summarizing the image that is offered here I note that the ‘incarnation’ described here is an individual event and an intellectual process,⁴¹ that takes place ‘sometimes’. The Logos ‘comes down’ to a person with an inadequate understanding, which is described by Origen in terms derived from Plato’s Allegory of the Cave: βλέπειν, τὰς μαρμαρυγὰς καὶ τὴν λαμπρότητα (23-24) and further on μετεωριζόμενος and θεάσασθαι (25-26).⁴² Three aspects of the intellectual process are mentioned: the person accepts⁴³ the Logos (who becomes ‘flesh’), then is gradually lifted up until he reached the final stage: he obtains insight and is able to ‘see’ the Logos in his ‘essential’ form. This latter term is nuanced by Origen by ἴν’ οὕτως ὀνομάσω (27): an indication that speaking in exact terms about these ‘mysteries’ is impossible.

The use of images and such nuancing formulas can be explained as a sign of the deficiency of human language to express mysterious events and processes. On the other hand this can also be interpreted from the perspective of the communicative situation and the persuasion process. Where words fall short of a precise definition these means can be helpful to stimulate the reader’s imagination and understanding and at the same time to safeguard the author from possible criticism: he can always argue in his defence that he just used an image and did not mean his words literally.

4.16.1-5

Εἰσὶ γὰρ διάφοροι οἰονεὶ τοῦ λόγου μορφαί, καθὼς
ἐκάστῳ τῶν εἰς ἐπιστήμην ἀγομένων φαίνεται ὁ λόγος,
ἀνάλογον τῇ ἔξει τοῦ εἰσαγομένου ἢ ἐπ’ ὀλίγον προκόπτοντος
ἢ ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἢ καὶ ἐγγὺς ἤδη γινομένου τῆς ἀρετῆς ἢ καὶ
5 ἐν ἀρετῇ γεγενημένου.

For there are, as it were, different forms of the Logos, as the Logos appears to each of those who are led to know him in a form corresponding to the state of the individual, whether he is a beginner, or has made a little progress, or is considerably advanced, or has nearly attained to virtue already, or has in fact attained it.

With γάρ (1) a digression is introduced: as a follow-up to the last words of 4.15 (τὴν ... προηγουμένην μορφὴν, 27) Origen explains ‘that there are different ‘forms’ of the Logos’ (διάφοροι οἰονεὶ τοῦ λόγου μορφαί (1), the hyperbaton marks the adjective). With οἰονεὶ Origen indicates that the term μορφαί has to be interpreted metaphorically: ‘what I mean could be called ‘forms’ of the Logos’. These forms are said to ‘appear’⁴⁴ to individuals corresponding to the degree of his progress towards knowledge and virtue. The individual character (cf. ἐκάστῳ, 2) and the relation to the acquisition of knowledge (cf. τῶν εἰς ἐπιστήμην ἀγομένων, 2) are elaborated in the final part of the sentence: five phases of intellectual or spiritual development are enumerated, separated by ἢ (3-4). In the phases 1-3 the focus is on knowledge: the individual is a beginner, makes a little progress or even more; in the last two phases the aspect of a virtuous way of life is added: one is close to this ἀρετῇ or has already reached it.⁴⁵ The use of the tenses

⁴⁰ This phrase works as a stepping stone to the next passage (chapter 16), where Origen discusses the different forms (μορφαί) of the Logos. At the same time μορφὴν refers back to the beginning of chapter 15 (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ quoted from *Phil.* 2.6). The meaning of προηγουμένην seems to be here: ‘essential’ or ‘primary’ (see Lampe, s.v. προηγέομαι 7-8; with reference to *Commentarii in Joannem* 20.18; 20.22); The ‘essential form’ is also denoted in αὐτοῦ τὰς μαρμαρυγὰς καὶ τὴν λαμπρότητα τῆς θεϊότητος. In a comparable sense προηγούμενος is used in 6.55.34-36 (primary works vs. by-products) and 4.49.15 (primary, literal meaning vs. allegorical meaning).

⁴¹ The process is described in similar terms in 6.68.

⁴² See also 6.17.18; Plato, *Respublica* 518a.

⁴³ The aorist participle (‘anterior’ to the main verb, CGCG 2019:607 §52.4) παραδεξάμενος indicates this as a preliminary step: acceptance precedes the upward movement.

⁴⁴ The present φαίνεται indicates the ongoing, repetitive character: the Logos continuously appears to individuals at different times and in different ways.

⁴⁵ Progress in knowledge is also mentioned in 4.12.23; progress in virtue in 4.5.23 and 4.64.10; the combination of both in 3.59.26ff.

of the participles is significant here: the present participles (εἰσαγομένου, προσκόπτοντος, γινομένου, 3-4) indicate that in the first phases the development is still in progress and not completed; the perfect participle γεγενημένου (5) denotes the final phase as a lasting situation of virtue. Origen clarifies that the Logos is involved in this process of individual growth and adapts to the phase each person is in: the Logos appears to each person in a different form.⁴⁶

4.16.5-16

5 Ὅθεν οὐχ, ὥς ὁ Κέλσος καὶ οἱ παραπλήσιοι αὐτῷ βούλονται, «μετεμορφώθη» ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ «εἰς τὸ ὑψηλὸν ὄρος» ἀναβὰς ἄλλην ἔδειξε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μορφήν καὶ πολλῶν κρεῖττονα ἧς οἱ κάτω μένοντες καὶ μὴ δυνάμενοι αὐτῷ εἰς ὕψος ἀκολουθεῖν ἐθεώρουν.
10 Οὐ γὰρ εἶχον οἱ κάτω ὀφθαλμοὺς δυνάμενους βλέπειν τὴν τοῦ λόγου ἐπὶ τὸ ἔνδοξον καὶ θειότερον μεταμόρφωσιν· ἀλλὰ μόγις αὐτὸν ἐδύναντο χωρῆσαι τοιοῦτον, ὥστε λέγεσθαι ἂν περὶ αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ τῶν μὴ δυναμένων τὸ κρεῖττον αὐτοῦ βλέπειν τό· «Εἶδομεν αὐτόν, καὶ οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ
15 κάλλος, ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἄτιμον, ἐκλείπον παρὰ τοῦς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.»

So not in the way Celsus and those like him would say, our God was transformed and showed, when he went up the high mountain, his other form, which was far superior to that which was seen by the people down below, who were unable to follow him to the high place. For the people down below had not eyes capable of seeing the transfiguration of the Logos into something wonderful and more divine. They were hardly able to receive him as he was, so that it was said of him by those not able to see his higher nature, ‘We saw him, and he had no form or beauty, but his form was dishonourable, deserted more than the sons of men.’

The statement just presented is now applied to the explanation of a story from the Gospel. The connection is made by the verb μετεμορφώθη (6) which Origen found in the Transfiguration story (*Matt.* 17.1ff.; *Marc.* 9.2ff.). He infers (Ὅθεν, 5) from this passage that ‘our God’ really was subject of a transformation (‘change of form’), but not in the way Celsus and his soulmates think.⁴⁷ The use of ἡμῶν serves on the one hand to mark the contrast between Christians and Celsus (and his fellows). On the other hand this first person also activates the feeling of involvement of the readers in the writing project of the author. Origen indicates that Celsus’ terms μεταβολή, ἀλλάττεσθαι καὶ μεταπλάττεσθαι (above 4.14.6,10) have to be rejected, at least with the meaning of ‘regression’ as presented by Celsus. In the meantime Origen is not opposed to the term μεταμόρφωσις (11), which he derives from the biblical μεταμορφήθη and explains within the frame of his doctrine about the different forms the Logos can appear in.

The Transfiguration passage is paraphrased by Origen with a view to his own allegorical explanation. Typical for this exegesis is that the historical character of the event is maintained and combined with elements of a metaphorical, spiritual interpretation.⁴⁸ I point at the following elements selected by

⁴⁶ Cf. 2.64; 6.68 and 6.77; *Commentarii in Matthaëum* 12.36.57; See Fiedrowicz & Bartold (Vol.2, 2011:476 n.105-106 on 2.64, with further references).

⁴⁷ I think, the comma between οὐχ and ὥς in the text of Borret (Vol.2, 1968:220) should be deleted. It seems to be improbable that οὐχ can be connected to μετεμορφώθη (as is done by Chadwick): Origen would consider it inappropriate to deny what is explicitly written in the Gospels. It is better to connect οὐχ to ὥς: ‘not as’, as is done in the translations of Borret (‘ce n’est donc pas dans le sens où ...’) and Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.3, 2011:689 ‘Nicht in dem Sinne also, wie ...’).

⁴⁸ The use of the aorist in μετεμορφώθη and ἔδειξε presents the events as completed, historical facts. This approach used here corresponds with Origen’s own account of his exegetical method in *De principiis* 4.2.5-9, where he explains a threefold interpretation (‘corporeal’, ‘according to the soul’ and ‘spiritual’). The deeper, spiritual meaning is present everywhere in the Scriptures, also in stories that are literally (‘in the corporeal sense’) reliable. In *Contra Celsum* allegorical interpretation is mentioned in 4.17; 4.38-39; 4.42; 4.45; 6.42. See on Origen’s interest in historical facts and their function as a medium in the contact between God and men Reemts (1998:73-79).

Origen to substantiate his view:

(1) The ‘high mountain’ (τὸ ὑψηλὸν ὄρος (7), the adjective is marked by the position before its noun, Origen changed the order that is used in *Matt.* and *Marc.*): the mountain functions as an indicator of the high level of knowledge (cf. μετεωριζόμενος, above 4.15.26).

(2) The ‘metamorphosis’: this is firstly indicated by the verb μετεμορφώθη quoted from the biblical account and then presented in an alternative, active formula: ἄλλην ἔδειξε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μορφήν καὶ πολλῶ κρείττονα (7-8). In a subtle way this change marks the active involvement of the Logos in the process of acquisition of knowledge. The hyperbaton highlights the Focus constituent ἄλλην: this passage is meant to illustrate the *different* forms of the Logos. The quality of this ‘other’ form is explained as ‘far superior’ and later on as ‘wonderful and more divine’ and ‘more powerful’ (πολλῶ κρείττονα, 8; τὸ ἔνδοξον καὶ θεϊότερον, 11; τὸ κρεῖτον αὐτοῦ, 13). In 6.77.17-20 the allegorical meaning is made explicit: ‘The doctrine has an even more mysterious meaning since it proclaims that the different forms of Jesus are to be applied to the nature of the divine Logos’. The historical event on the mountain is interpreted as an image of the way the Logos appears in different forms to different people.

(3) The disciples who remained below (οἱ κάτω μένοντες, 8): the focus in the image is on them (the selected happy few that were on the mountain are only implicitly present, as contrast). They are characterized by a three times repeated ‘they were unable’ (μὴ δυνάμενοι, 9; οὐ ... εἶχον ... ὀφθαλμοὺς δυναμένους, 10; μὴ δυναμένων, 13). This element is explicitly added by Origen to the version told in the Gospels: they were, according to Origen, *unable* to follow Jesus up to the mountain (αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ ὄρος ἀκολουθεῖν, 9), because (γάρ, 10) they had no eyes able to see the transfiguration into something wonderful and more divine (βλέπειν τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ ἔνδοξον καὶ θεϊότερον μεταμόρφωσιν, 10-11) and *unable* to see his more powerful nature (τὸ κρεῖτον αὐτοῦ βλέπειν, 13). With ἀλλὰ Origen introduces a contrastive remark, but even here their ability is modified by the focal μόγις: only *hardly* they were able to ‘contain’⁴⁹ him as he is.

(4) ‘To see’: Origen uses several words that are connected to the action of seeing: ἐθεώρουν (9), βλέπειν (10), ὀφθαλμοὺς (10), εἶδομεν (14), which can be interpreted (also) as metaphors of ‘to understand’; then this can apply for ἀκολουθεῖν (9) as well.⁵⁰ According to Origen a part of the disciples remained below, because their level of knowledge was still not high enough. Origen attributes to them words⁵¹ quoted from *Jes.* 53.2-3, by which can be inferred what was their image of Jesus: they do not see any glory or beauty, but a dishonorable appearance. Moreover, note that even these people ‘see’ him (εἶδομεν, 14). This is in accordance with Origen’s view about the different forms of the Logos: he appears not only to the advanced or the perfect men, but also to the ‘beginners’.

4.16.16-19

16 Καὶ ταῦτα δὲ πρὸς τὴν Κέλσου
ὑπόληψιν, μὴ νοήσαντος τὰς ὡς ἐν ἱστορίαις λεγομένας
μεταβολὰς ἢ μεταμορφώσεις τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὸ θνητὸν ἢ
ἀθάνατον αὐτοῦ, λελέχθω.

Let this, then, be our reply to the opinion assumed by Celsus: that he failed to understand the changes or transfigurations of Jesus mentioned in the gospels, and the fact that he had both immortal and mortal nature.

This is a discourse organizing remark: Origen indicates that the discussion is finished now.⁵² Using the perfect λελέχθω (19) he presents his conclusion as definitive and points out that his words are still

⁴⁹ χωρέω in this sense also in 2.16.57; 2.64.7,10.38; 2.65.3,22; 2.67.18; 4.15.3; 5.21.19; 6.68.10; 6.79.25; 8.11.21.

⁵⁰ As in 7.45.1.

⁵¹ Origen formulates somewhat cautiously: λέγεσθαι ἄν here replaces the potential optative. Caution is omitted in the similar context in 6.77.21ff.

⁵² On the combination of the particles καὶ and δέ see chapter II 5.2, with reference to Rijksbaron (1997b); CGCG (2019:697 §59,67).

relevant.⁵³ In this short *peroratio* Origen summarizes his reply to Celsus' criticism and reminds the reader of two main points of his argument. He characterizes Celsus' words as ὑπόληψις (17), an evaluation that can serve to influence the perception of the reader: the importance of Celsus' argument is downplayed a bit ('it is just an assumption'). In μὴ νοήσαντος⁵⁴ (17, Focus in the participle phrase) Origen's criticism is clearer: Celsus lacks the right understanding.

This lack of understanding concerns two major points of Origen's discourse: his explanations of the 'metamorphosis' and the nature of the divine. This first issue is indicated in the phrase τὰς ὡς ἐν ιστορίαις λεγομένας μεταβολὰς ἢ μεταμορφώσεις τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (17-18), where Celsus' term μεταβολή is used in addition to μεταμορφώσεις. Origen can do this without any trouble after his remarks in the first part of 4.16: μεταβολή is now placed in the perspective of the passage from the gospels and Origen's interpretation of it.⁵⁵ The second issue is recalled in τὸ θνητὸν ἢ τὸ ἀθάνατον αὐτοῦ (18-19), again terms used by Celsus. Origen refers to his discussion of the 'incarnation' in 4.15.18-21: the 'immortal divine Logos' 'assumed a human body and a human soul', while remaining 'unchanged in essence'. Moreover, Origen reminds the readers of the final section of 4.14, where he had spoken of the conception of the divine nature confronting Christianity with ideas from the Greek philosophy.

⁵³ In a closing formula λελέχθω is also used in 2.77.21; 4.76.28 (here also combined with καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς ...); 5.48.24. See also Plato, *Leges* 678e; *Timaeus* 54d.

⁵⁴ See comment on 4.2.23 (note) on μὴ in combination with a participle; μὴ νοήσας is found also in: 3.70.10; 4.43.15; 4.71.1; 6.62.4; 6.69.24; 6.71.1; 7.32.8,40.

⁵⁵ The reference to the text of the gospels is made in τὰς ὡς ἐν ιστορίαις λεγομένας. Chadwick (1953:194) has another explanation; he translates '... failed to understand the 'changes' (to use the word common in ordinary literature) or transfigurations of Jesus'; in a note he adds: μεταβολή is common, μεταμόρφωσις late and rare. I prefer a different explanation of the use of these terms: μεταμόρφωσις is derived from *Matt.* and *Marc.* and μεταβολή is added because this term was used by Celsus; ιστορία can refer to the gospel story, like in 1.38.2; 1.40.6; 1.42.25; 1.51.16; 2.47.15.

10. Section 10: *Contra Celsum* 4.17

10.1 Strategy

After the conclusion of the previous discussion in 4.16 Origen inserts an interlude before he introduces the next quote from Celsus. He steps aside for a moment to look at the discussion from a distance. This position enables him to comment on two issues which are related to the present debate and at the same time have a more general and far-reaching character. In the first place Origen points out that an allegorical interpretation of the Bible is justifiable. To demonstrate this Origen refers to mythological stories concerning Dionysos and the Greek interpretation of them. Next he accuses Celsus of not doing justice to his opponents: he does not understand the meaning of the Scriptures, then constructs his own interpretation, which he subsequently attacks. This reproach of the use of the straw man argumentation gives Origen the opportunity to continue his attack by reproaching Celsus that he lacks the right understanding.

10.2 Structure of the tekst

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
Defence	1-10	Defence of allegorization by rhetorical questions: - is this not more august than what happened to Dionysus? - are the Greeks allowed to allegorize and is this denied to Christians?	Ἄρα δέ καί (5x) ἥ μέν ... δέ
Attack & <i>confirmatio</i>	10-22	Statement: Celsus does not understand the meaning of the Scriptures. Consequence: he attacks his own reconstruction. Explanation with counterfactual conditional clauses	οὖν διόπερ Εἰ δέ... ἂν δ' ἂν καί

10.3 Commentary

4.17.1-6

Ἄρα δὲ οὐ πολλῷ ταῦτα, καὶ μάλιστα ὅτε ὄν δεῖ
τρόπον νοεῖται, σεμνότερα φανεῖται Διονύσου ὑπὸ τῶν
Τιτάνων ἀπατωμένου καὶ ἐκπίπτοντος ἀπὸ τοῦ Διὸς θρόνου
καὶ σπαρασσομένου ὑπ' αὐτῶν καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα πάλιν
5 συντιθεμένου καὶ οἶονεῖ ἀναβιώσκοντος καὶ ἀναβαίνοντος εἰς
οὐρανόν;

Isn't it true that these narratives, particularly when properly understood, will appear more impressive than that of Dionysus, that he was deceived by the Titans so that he left the throne of Zeus and was torn in pieces by them, that after this he was put together again and was, as it were, restored to life, and went up to heaven?

With δέ (1) the transition to the next discourse part is marked. The interrogative particle ἄρα combined with οὐ (1) present the sentence as a question to which a positive answer is expected: 'isn't it true that...?' The rhetorical question is a diaphonic element in Origen's text by which the interaction between

author and addressees is activated.¹ By comparing the Christian discourse with the discourse of the Greek mythology Origen suggests with this question that the Christian ‘story’ (referred to by ταῦτα, 1) is ‘far more august’. Remarkable is the prominent position of πολλῶ (1) in the sentence, separated from its comparative σεμνότερα by an inserted clause: the size of the difference is emphasized by this word order. In the inserted clause καὶ μάλιστα ὅτε ὃν δεῖ τρόπον νοεῖται (1-2, ‘particularly when properly understood’) Origen already indicates the theme he is about to discuss in this passage: the interpretation of texts and stories (νοεῖται), more precise the *correct* interpretation (ὃν δεῖ τρόπον) of them. Some lines below this appears to be the allegorical interpretation (τροπολογεῖν, 7). The future φανεῖται has an inferential meaning (‘from the preceding discussion can be inferred that ...’). Focus in the main clause is the adjective σεμνότερα: ταῦτα is far *more respectable*. This ταῦτα functions as Topic and refers to the doctrine of the different forms of the Logos, illustrated by the story of the Transfiguration on the high mountain, as presented by Origen in 4.16.

This narrative is compared to a mythical story about Dionysus. The facts of this myth are indicated in six focal participles, which agree with Διονύσου (2, comparative genitive): Dionysus is deceived by the Titans, fell from the throne of Zeus and was torn in pieces; then he was put together, restored to life and went up to heaven. These six events are presented in two groups of three participles in which a corresponding word order is used: the first participles (ἀπατωμένον, 3; συντιθεμένον, 5) are preceded by a Setting constituent (ὑπὸ τῶν Τιτάνων, 2-3; μετὰ ταῦτα πάλιν, 4), whereas in next clauses the participles are preposed (ἐκτίποντος, 3; σπαρασσομένον, 4; ἀναβιώσκοντος, 5; ἀναβαίνοντος, 5). The first series is concerned with downfall and death, the second with restoration. The tense of the participles is present: the events are presented as facts that are not completed. On the one hand this can be interpreted from the perspective of storytelling, comparable to historical present in narratives which function to visualize events and to generate greater involvement of the audience; on the other hand the present can be explained against the background of the Orphic cult in which this myth was interpreted as a symbolic representation of general, repetitive events.² This allegorical interpretation is referred to by Origen: εἰς τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς ἀνάγειν τὸν λόγον καὶ τροπολογεῖν (6-7, ‘explain and allegorize the story as referring to the soul’). It is precisely this interpretation that caused Origen to mention this myth.³

4.17.6-10

Ἦ Ἑλλησι μὲν ἔξεστι τὰ τοιαῦτα εἰς τὸν περὶ
ψυχῆς ἀνάγειν λόγον καὶ τροπολογεῖν, ἡμῖν δ’ ἀποκέκλεισται
θύρα ἀκολούθου διηγήσεως, καὶ πανταχοῦ συναδούσης καὶ
συμφωνούσης ἐν ταῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ θείου πνεύματος γραφαῖς,
10 γενομένου ἐν καθαραῖς ψυχαῖς;

Or are the Greeks allowed to explain and allegorize this story as referring to the soul, whereas against us the door has been closed so that we may not give any consistent explanation which sounds harmoniously everywhere in the Scriptures inspired by the divine Spirit dwelling in pure souls ?

Following the question concerning the Dionysus myth Origen presents the next (rhetorical) question as an alternative (Ἦ, 6): the myth can only be more respectable if the Greeks are allowed to interpret it allegorically whereas such an interpretation is denied to the Christians. By the use of the rhetorical question and by the addition of argumentative elements in the second part of the sentence Origen

¹ Cf. on ἄρα .. οὐ CGCG (2019:477 §38.7); on diaphony my chapter II 3.1.

² For details of this Orphic myth see Chadwick (1953:194 n.4). The myth was related to general concepts of alternating moves, cyclic metamorphoses, cosmic fall and rebirth, cf. Plutarch, *Moralia* 389A (*De E apud Delphos*); 996C (*De esu carniū* I).

³ In 3.23.10-16 Origen discusses Dionysus myths in a similar sense, also using the qualification σεμνός. In 4.48 and 6.42 Origen presents other examples of ‘damaging’ myths which are allegorized by the Greeks.

suggests that this alternative is not acceptable.⁴ The sentence is structured by μέν .. δέ (6-7). As contrasting Topics Ἑλλήσι (6) and ἡμῖν (7)⁵ are placed in the front position. The contrastive verbs ἔξεστι (6) and ἀποκέκλεισται (7) serve as Focus. Thus the antithesis clearly marked: is it right that is forbidden for Christians what is granted to the Greeks? The ban is expressed visually by the metaphor of the ‘closed door’ (ἀποκέκλεισται θύρα (7-8), the perfect indicates the situation as definitive⁶). In the final section of the sentence Origen inserts some elements to justify a Christian allegorical interpretation: it offers a *consistent* narrative (ἀκολούθου διηγήσεως (8), the preposed adjective is marked), which is in *total* accordance and harmony present in⁷ the Scriptures (πανταχοῦ συναδούσης καὶ συμφωνούσης ἐν ταῖς ... γραφαῖς (8-9), with a focal position of πανταχοῦ). Writing this passage Origen seems to have his Christian readers in his mind: for them (but not for Celsus) the reference to the harmony in the Scriptures can be persuasive. This applies also to the explicit addition of the source of the Scriptures: ἀπὸ τοῦ θείου πνεύματος (9), which inspired the prophets.⁸

4.17.10-12

10

Οὐδαμῶς οὖν ὁ Κέλσος

εἶδε τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἡμετέρων γραμμάτων· διόπερ τὴν
ἑαυτοῦ ἐκδοχὴν καὶ οὐχὶ τὴν τῶν γραφῶν διαβάλλει.

Moreover, Celsus does not understand the meaning of our Scriptures at all. On this account his criticism touches his own interpretation and not that of the Bible.

With the discourse organizing particle οὖν (10) Origen indicates that he moves to the next step: the remaining part of the chapter is used to accuse Celsus of failing to understand the meaning of the Scriptures. This lack of knowledge is indicated in οὐδαμῶς εἶδε (10-11, the verb starts a Broad-Focus constituent) and repeated in the next sections (in the counterfactual clauses εἰ δὲ ἦν ἐννοήσας, 12-13 and εἶδε δ' ἄν, 17). The connection to the previous section is established by the transition from γραφαῖς to γραμμάτων (9 and 11). Besides τὸ βούλημα refers to the necessity of allegorical interpretation as explained in the first part of 4.17: the meaning of the Scriptures is hidden and competent investigation is required.⁹ Celsus did not note this deeper sense, as Origen argues here.¹⁰

Origen proceeds by formulating a next accusation, connected as consequence to the former one (διόπερ, 11): Celsus produces his own interpretation (τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐκδοχὴν, 11-12) of the position of his opponents. His criticism then touches this interpretation and not the exegesis of the Scriptures (τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐκδοχὴν καὶ οὐχὶ τὴν τῶν γραφῶν (11-12) is Focus, the contrast is clearly expressed). Origen formulates here what in modern term is called the fallacy of the straw man: a misrepresentation of the position of the opponent.

⁴ For a similar use of ἤ at the beginning of a question to introduce a not acceptable alternative; in fact this can be interpreted as the second part of a two-part question, in which the first part (πότερον...) is left implicit; see commentary on 4.3.17 and 4.15.11 above. In 2.77.25; 3.23.21; 3.27.17; 3.54.23; 4.4.6; 4.24.4; 5.57.9; 7.56.18,19 ἤ is used also to indicate an ‘unfair’ treatment of the opinions or positions of Christians as compared to those of Greeks (or others).

⁵ On the effect of the use of the first person: see comment on 4.16.7 above.

⁶ The *Agents* of ἀποκέκλεισται is not expressed by Origen, but he seems to suggest that it is Celsus who denies this to the Christians. The accusation of unfairness and unequal treatment from the side of Celsus is implied. Cf. 4.50, where Celsus rejects an allegorical interpretation of Old Testament stories.

⁷ In the translations of Chadwick, Borret and Fiedrowicz & Barthold this is rendered as ‘harmony *with* the Scriptures’. In my opinion the preposition ἐν resists this interpretation; a dative would have been used. It is better to connect ἐν to πανταχοῦ: ‘everywhere in...’. The participle combination συναδούσης καὶ συμφωνούσης has to be taken in an absolute sense: ‘sounding harmoniously’ (*hendiadyoin*).

⁸ For ἐν καθαφαῖς ψυχαῖς as referring to the prophets see 3.3.30; 3.81.20; 4.95.3.

⁹ Cf. 1.18.17; 1.42.29; 3.74.21; 5.55.6; 5.60.10; 7.27.11 for βούλομαι with reference to the hidden meaning, investigation and allegory.

¹⁰ Origen frequently reproaches Celsus because of his deficient understanding, see. e.g. 2.1.13; 2.18.4; 2.32.8. More often than not Origen reminds Celsus of his self-confident statement ‘I know everything’ (1.12.3) by denoting him as ὁ πάντ’ ἐπαγγελλόμενος εἶδέναι (‘the person who claims to know everything’), see e.g. 1.26.2; 1.34.5 (altogether more than 10x).

4.17.12-17

<p>ἤν ἐννοήσας, τί ἀκολουθεῖ ψυχῇ ἐν αἰωνίῳ ἐσομένη ζῶῃ καὶ τί χρὴ φρονεῖν περὶ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτῆς καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀρχῶν 15 αὐτῆς, οὐκ ἂν οὕτως διέσυρε τὸν ἀθάνατον εἰς θνητὸν ἐρχόμενον σῶμα, οὐ κατὰ τὴν Πλάτωνος μετενσωμάτωσιν ἀλλὰ κατ' ἄλλην τινὰ ὑψηλοτέραν θεωρίαν.</p>	<p>Ei δὲ If he had understood what is appropriate for a soul which will have everlasting life, and what is the right view of its essence and origin, he would not have ridiculed in this way the idea of an immortal person entering a mortal body; (our view here does not accept the Platonic doctrine of the transmigration of souls, but a different and more sublime view).</p>
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The next part of this accusatory section is introduced by δέ (12). Origen formulates a counterfactual conditional phrase to elaborate the issue of lack of understanding: ‘if he had understood... he would not have ridiculed ... (εἰ δὲ ἤν ἐννόησας (12-13)¹¹ .. οὐκ ἂν διέσυρε (15)¹²). Origen seems to refer to the suggestive rhetorical questions and the ironical tone used by Celsus in the fragments quoted in 4.14. As Origen points out, Celsus’ deficient knowledge concerns three issues related to the soul: its future everlasting life (attention is drawn to the adjective αἰωνίῳ by its position and the hyperbaton¹³), its essence¹⁴ and its origin. Origen has his doctrine about the soul in mind, which he distinguishes from Plato’s theory of the transmigration of the souls (μετενσωμάτωσις)¹⁵ and indicates as ἄλλην τινὰ ὑψηλοτέραν θεωρίαν (17, ‘a different and more sublime view’¹⁶). In his opinion the soul is a rational being, that is connected to the body for some time, then is liberated from it and finally will live forever in God’s presence.¹⁷ To reach that destination the soul has to grow in knowledge and virtue (cf. 4.16.3-5). Going through various phases the soul is assisted and instructed by the Logos in a way that is appropriate to the situation it is in. This is what Origen means by the κατάβασις of the Logos (18; cf. also 4.15-16) which involves the assumption of a mortal body by the immortal Logos (τὸν ἀθάνατον εἰς θνητὸν ἐρχόμενον σῶμα (15-16), the hyperbaton emphasizes the preposed adjective θνητόν). The present participle ἐρχόμενον indicates the descent as not completed: Origen does not refer to the incarnation as a single historical fact, but to an ‘incarnation’ in metaphorical sense, as described in 4.15.19ff.

4.17.17-22

<p>Εἶδε δ' ἂν καὶ μῖαν ἐξαίρετον ἀπὸ πολλῆς φιланθρωπίας κατάβασιν ὑπὲρ</p>	<p>He would also have understood how because of His great love to man, God made one special descent in order to</p>
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¹¹ Origen combines a form of εἶναι with an aorist participle. Such periphrastic constructions occurs also in a counterfactual context in 2.56.24 (aor.) and 7.56.13 (pres.); in other contexts in 2.34.20 (aor.), 3.45.18 (perf.), 5.50.25 (pres.), 8.54.17 (pres. in a quote from the Bible). On periphrastic constructions with εἶναι and ἔχειν, see Bentein (2016; especially p.166-174 and 293-302 on εἶναι + aorist participle); CGCG (2019:634 §52.51).

¹² διέσυρε can be imperfect or aorist. The former option would mean that Celsus’ ridiculing action is presented as on-going (he still speaks through the words he once wrote); the aorist would indicate that a *past* counterfactual phrase is used: Celsus wrote on this issue what he (ridiculing) wrote in the past; this SoA is completed and therefore the realization of this phrase (‘not ridicule’) is impossible. Both options are defensible; in the first option the accusation seems to have more power: his words can still hurt the readers. Cf. CGCG (2019:442-443 §34.15-16).

¹³ See chapter II 6.7-8.

¹⁴ See on the οὐσία of the soul also 4.18.29 and 6.71.21-26.

¹⁵ Origen criticizes this doctrine mainly because of the possibility that a human soul after a reincarnation can end up in irrational beings, see e.g. 1.20.16; 3.75.38; 8.30.24.

¹⁶ For ὑψηλός in a similar sense see 3.58.31; 6.62.19. The combination with θεωρία can remind the reader of the ‘view’ on the ‘high mountain’ as discussed in 4.16.7ff.

¹⁷ As is particularly explained in *De principiis* (1.5-6; 2.8; 3.4).

τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι τά, ὡς ἡ θεία ὠνόμασε μυστικῶς γραφή,
20 «ἀπολωλότα πρόβατα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ», καὶ καταβάντα
 ἀπὸ τῶν ὄρων πρὸς ᾧ ὁ ποιμὴν ἐν τισὶ παραβολαῖς καταβε-
 βηκέναι λέγεται, καταλιπὼν ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσι τὰ μὴ ἐσφαλμένα.

convert those whom the divine Scripture mystically calls ‘the lost sheep of the house of Israel’, which had strayed down from the mountains; in certain parables the shepherd is said to have come down to them, leaving on the mountains those which had not gone astray.

Origen indicates by δ’ (17) that he proceeds to the next part of the explanation, which is still in the counterfactual mode (Εἶδε ἄν, 17; this verb starts a Broad-Focus constituent). Origen mentions another point which Celsus would also (καί, 17) have understood if his knowledge had been sufficient. The central concept here is the divine descent, which is referred to in κατάβασιν (18) and καταβεβηκέναι (21-22).¹⁸ The κατάβασις is qualified by the preposed constituents μίαν ἐξαίρετον and ἀπὸ πολλῆς φιλανθρωπίας (18).¹⁹ The first phrase emphasizes the special and single character²⁰ and the second indicates its motivation. Here Origen refers to the incarnation in the literal, historical sense: in Jesus the Logos came down to the earth.

Origen denotes the purpose of the divine descent in images derived from two biblical passages (cf. ἡ θεία ... γραφή (19); the divine character is marked by the position of the adjective and by the hyperbaton²¹). The first of these passages is explicitly designated as a mystical indication of a more sublime reality (ὠνόμασε μυστικῶς, 19). Here Origen has a well-educated Christian audience in his mind: his metaphorical phraseology can only be understood by readers who are familiar with the Bible and the allegorical interpretation. In ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι τά... ἀπολωλότα πρόβατα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ (18-20) Origen formulates the first purpose of the special κατάβασις. Against the background of the previous passage about the ψυχή (13) the ‘lost sheep of the house of Israel’²² can be interpreted as an image of the unfaithful souls that abandoned God.

Next Origen uses a second biblical image, derived from *Matt.* 18.12-13 and *Luc.* 15.4-6 (vaguely denoted as ἐν τισὶ παραβολαῖς, 21). He expects his readers to recognize the biblical parable from some minimal hints. The connecting element is καταβάντα ἀπὸ τῶν ὄρων (20-21, which agrees to τὰ πρόβατα: the sheep ‘that came down from the mountains’). The single sheep from the gospel text is changed into the plural and τὸ πλανώμενον (‘lost’) is replaced by καταβάντα (20; a detail that is not mentioned in the gospels). These sheep that ‘came down from the mountains’ are contrasted with τὰ μὴ ἐσφαλμένα (22, ‘those which had not gone astray’), which the shepherd is said to have left in the mountains (καταλιπὼν ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσι, 22); therefore it can be concluded that the ‘lost’ sheep are τὰ ἐσφαλμένα. By his vocabulary and the selection of details Origen inserts a vertical movement in the story, which supports his κατάβασις theme: in order to illustrate the descent of the ‘shepherd’ he draws attention to the sheep that went down (καταβάντα) and lie down after their fall (ἐσφαλμένα).

Origen does not explicitly explain what in his opinion the significance of this passage is, but in ὠνόμασε μυστικῶς (19) he hints at an allegorical interpretation. It seems probable that Origen refers to his ideas about the fall of the souls who were disloyal and abandoned God. The apostasy was not carried out by all rational beings: some (the angels) remained faithful and were left in the celestial sphere, (‘left on the mountains’) when the Logos came down to the earth (καταβεβηκέναι, 21-22). In a creative way Origen models the biblical narrative so that it functions as an illustration of his argument, but he leaves it to the reader to implement the metaphor. The subject of the preexistent soul and its falling away caused

¹⁸ καταβάντα (20) refers to another descent: the descent of the sheep (see below).

¹⁹ φιλανθρωπία as motivation for the incarnation is also mentioned in 4.15.2 and 4.18.33. The biblical source is *Tit.* 3.4.

²⁰ In 1.66.35 Origen calls Christ τὸν ἅπαξ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα. Cf. 1.66.53; 2.33.13; 3.14.13.

²¹ See chapter II 6.7-8.

²² Quoted from *Matt.* 10.6; 15.24. Origen had used this expression also in 4.3.7 to explain the purpose of the divine descent.

by ‘negligence’, was discussed by Origen on several places in his early work *De principiis*,²³ but in *Contra Celsum* he seems to avoid an explicit account, perhaps because of criticism expressed on this point by other Christians. Maybe he thought it was safer just to indicate the subject in expressions quoted from the gospel without filling in the details of an allegorical interpretation. Or maybe in this sentence his intention was no more than clarifying that the descent of the Logos was caused by love for men and intended their conversion and salvation. Anyway, in this passage Origen puts into practice what he announced in the preface of this book:²⁴ he combines the refutation of Celsus’ criticism with a positive explanation of the Christian doctrine and the biblical sources it is based on.

²³ See e.g. *De principiis* I 3.8; 4.1; 5.2; 5.5; 6.2; 8.4; II 1.1; 10.7; IV 2.7; 4.9. See also Scott (2012:49-66).

²⁴ See 4.1.20-28: not only ‘to root out and to destroy’, but also ‘to build up and to plant’.

11. Section 11: *Contra Celsum* 4.18-19

11.1 Strategy

Celsus

In the fragment quoted in 4.18 Celsus presents a next step in his criticism on the subject of a divine descent to the earth. He continues to approach the subject from the perspective of ‘change’, like in the previous passage (quoted in 4.14). He uses a *logos*-argumentation by presenting two alternative options. The first one (1) is immediately rejected by him as impossible. The second option (2) is subsequently discussed and evaluated with again a two option approach: the first option (2.1) consists of a moral disqualification (‘wrong’); the second one (2.2) describes two possible exceptions (2.2.1 and 2.2.2), which both are said to be not applicable to God. The persuasive effect of this form is clear: the audience is dazzled by this series of options, which are presented in high speed and with an apparently inevitable logic. The conclusion Celsus aims at has to be inescapable for the audience (but is left implicit): in all cases the results of these options are unacceptable and therefore the Christian doctrine is untenable on this point.

Origen

Origen’s response is mainly defensive. To deal with the criticism he adopts the method of his opponent: the charges are split up in a number of parts and point by point refuted. He emphasizes that these issues were discussed before and refers to his previous defence, protesting that he is forced to repetition, an approach which causes some damage to the *ethos* of the opponent. Besides refutation there is also confirmation in these chapters: the reader is instructed in the Christian doctrine. Origen divides his discourse into discussions on alternative options. Most attention is given to Celsus’ allegation that God according to the Christian view really changes into a mortal body (4.18). Origen does not deny the issue of change, but interprets it in a metaphorical sense (*status definitivus*). Celsus’ suggestion that this would be only the appearance of change (option 2) is responded by Origen with denial (*status coniecturalis*).¹ This would absolve him from the obligation to react to Celsus’ elaboration of this option. Origen however chooses to respond to these follow-up options as well (4.19), obviously to prevent that the images Celsus evokes will be engraved in the minds of the reader without an answer. Origen does his best to refute them, uses some elements from the Celsus’ images and transforms them a bit in order to illustrate his own view: viz. that the intention of the divine descent is the salvation of humanity.

11.2 Structure of the text

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
Introduction	18.1-4	Misunderstanding and repetition	δ', οὖν
Quote	18.4-12	Statements with two alternatives - related to ‘change’: * real or * in appearance (and thus deceit) - related to ‘deceit’: * wrong * still used sometimes for friends as a medicine	ἦτοι ἦ, μέν ... δέ δέ μέν δέ ἦτοι

¹ See chapter III 3.4.1.

		against enemies in case of danger Comment: both options are excluded when God is concerned.	ἢ οὔτε δέ ... οὔτε
a. Response 1	18.12-14	Introduction of a two-part answer related to the issue of ‘change’ (<i>partitio</i>)	καί πῇ μὲν .. πῇ δέ
<i>refutatio & confirmatio</i>	18.14-26	Part 1: on the nature of the Logos Simile with food for babies or for sick men Application in three parts Conclusion: no deceit	μὲν οὖν ὥσπερ, ἢ οὕτως καὶ μὲν ... δέ ... δέ καὶ οὐ δὴ που
<i>confirmatio</i>	18.27-46	Part 2: on the soul of Jesus Question Two possible answers Explanation of the second answer Reference to biblical accounts Quote from the Bible	δ’ πῶς εἰ μὲν γάρ .. εἰ δ’ ἐπεὶ δ’ δ’
b. Response 2 <i>refutatio</i>	19.1-5	Denial related to the issue of ‘deceit’	μὲν οὖν ... δέ
c. Response 3 <i>refutatio & confirmatio</i>	19.5-17	Defence related to ‘for friends’: ‘not improper’ Explanation with simile Interruption Explanation continued	δ’ οὖν καὶ γάρ, ὥσπερ ἀλλὰ ... μὲν καὶ γάρ, δέ
d. Response 4 <i>refutatio</i>	19.18-22	Defence related to ‘against enemies’: Repetition of Celsus’ words Statement: defence superfluous	δ’ δέ, δέ
e. Response 5 <i>refutatio & confirmatio</i>	19.22-30	Defence related to ‘sick friends’: Repetition of previous defence and correction of Celsus’ image	δ’ γάρ, ἀλλὰ, καὶ γάρ

11.3 Commentary

4.18.1-4

1 Προσδιατρίβων δ’ ὁ Κέλσος οἷς οὐ νενόηκεν αἴτιος ἡμῖν γίνεται ταυτολογίας, οὐ βουλομένοις κἄν τῷ δοκεῖν ἀβασάνιστον τῶν ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ λελεγμένων τι καταλελοιπέναι. Φησὶν οὖν ἐξῆς ὅτι

Although he has not understood these things, Celsus persists in talking about them, and so is responsible for our repetitions, since we do not want even to appear to have left any of his statements unexamined. He next says:

The particle δ’ (1) indicates that Origen proceeds to his next section. To introduce the next quote from Celsus Origen mentions two elements in order to discredit his opponent: Celsus’ lack of understanding (οὐ νενόηκεν, ¹²) and his persisting discussion of the same issue (προσδιατρίβων, 1). By contrast he works on his own *ethos* by remarking that he takes his duty seriously: nothing should be left

² Cf. Nijk (2013:245-246) for the use of the perfect to refer to facts that discredit opponents.

unexamined.³ The point is amplified by adding that he does not even want to create this impression (κᾶν τῷ δοκεῖν, 2). He implicitly apologizes for repeating his argument, but blames Celsus for this (αἴτιος ἡμῖν γίνεται ταυτολογίας, 1-2).⁴ In this metacommunicational remark the dialogical character of the discourse comes to the fore.⁵

Then the next quote is formally introduced by Φησὶν οὖν ἐξῆς ὅτι (4).⁶ The presentational particle οὖν indicates that the main line of the discourse is resumed here after a short digression on repetition.

4.18.4-12 Celsus:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>ἦτοι ὡς ἀληθῶς μεταβάλλει ὁ θεός,</i></p> <p>5 ὥσπερ οὗτοί φασιν, εἰς σῶμα θνητόν, καὶ προεῖρηται τὸ ἀδυνατεῖν· ἡ αὐτὸς μὲν οὐ μεταβάλλει, ποιεῖ δὲ τοὺς ὀρῶντας δοκεῖν καὶ πλανᾷ καὶ ψεύδεται. Ἀπάτη δὲ καὶ ψεῦδος ἄλλως μὲν κακά, μόνως δ' ἂν ὡς ἐν φαρμάκου μοίρα χρῆτό τις ἦτοι πρὸς φίλους νοσοῦντας καὶ μεμηνότας,</p> <p>10 ἰώμενος, ἡ πρὸς ἐχθρούς, κίνδυνον ἐκφυγεῖν προμηθεύμενος. Οὕτε δὲ νοσῶν ἡ μεμηνὼς οὐδεὶς θεῶ φίλος, οὕτε φοβεῖται τινα ὁ θεός, ἵνα πλανήσας κίνδυνον διαφύγῃ.</p>	<p><i>Either God really does change, as they say, into a mortal body; and it has already been said that this is an impossibility. Or He does not change, but makes those who see him think He does so, and leads them astray and tells lies. Deceit and lying are in all other cases wrong except only when one uses them as a medicine for friends who are sick and mad in order to heal them, or with enemies when the intention is to escape danger. But no sick or madman is God's friend, nor is God afraid of anyone so that he has to mislead him to avoid danger.</i></p>
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In this fragment Celsus continues his argument on the theme of ‘change’ (see also 4.14.5-12). He presents two possible options (ἦτοι ... ἡ..., 4-6), the first of which is what he calls the Jewish-Christian view (ὥσπερ οὗτοι φασιν, 5): ‘God *really* does change into a mortal body’. The element ὡς ἀληθῶς (4) is in the Focus position, for in these words the antithesis with the second option is expressed. Even before formulating the second option the first one is excluded by Celsus: ‘it is impossible, as has already been said’ (προεῖρηται τὸ ἀδυνατεῖν, 5-6). Celsus refers to his remarks quoted in 4.14 and indicates with the perfect προεῖρηται that the utterance of the past is still valid and relevant in the present discussion. Then the next option is presented, which, as the reader can infer from the exclusion of the first one, has to be the only acceptable option. Two aspects of this option are presented as two sides of the same coin (μὲν ... δέ, 6): God does not change, but he gives the impression that he does. By the word order the constituents αὐτός and ποιεῖ (6) are highlighted as the most salient points of information. These words present God as the *agens*: he does not change himself, but makes that those who see him think he does change. Celsus ends the sentence with two verbs which contain his judgement on ποιεῖ ... δοκεῖν (6-7): πλανᾷ καὶ ψεύδεται (7, ‘he leads them astray and tells lies’). The present indicates the continuous and general character of these actions.

With δέ Celsus marks the transition to the second part of this passage, in which he focuses on ‘deceit and lying’ (ἀπάτη καὶ ψεῦδος (7-8) serve as Topic). He divides his sentence into two parts (μὲν ... δέ, 8)

³ This argument is used also in 1.28.19; 2.46.10; 5.1.4-5; 5.15.37; 5.53.-3-4; 7.1.2-4. By the way, Origen sometimes remarks explicitly that he refrains from comment on certain issues, e.g. in 2.32.3-4; 6.26.25; 6.39.25-26.

⁴ Cf. 6.10.9-10; 7.13.19; 7.54.9. Moreover, Origen sometimes also refuses repetition, e.g. 4.2.14; 5.63.10.

⁵ See chapter II 3.1.

⁶ In this form this announcement formula appears only here in *Contra Celsum*; comparable formulas are: ἐξῆς (δὲ) τοῦτοις φησι(ν) (1.23.1; 6.19.1; 5.61.1; 8.11.1; 8.55.1), ἐξῆς δὲ τοιαῦτά φησιν (4.41.1), ἐξῆς τοῦτοις τοιαῦτά φησιν (7.18.1), εἴθ' ἐξῆς φησι(ν) (4.60.1; 5.53.30; 5.59.1; 7.67.1; 8.68.1); ἐξῆς δὲ φησι(ν) (3.69.33; 7.57.16) ἐν τοῖς ἐξῆς (δὲ) φησι(ν) (1.24.5; 1.50.15); φησὶν οὖν (7.3.1); the most frequent combination is μετὰ (δὲ) ταῦτά φησι(ν) (1.24.1; 1.67.1 etc. in total 17x).

in which the adverbs ἄλλως and μόνως (8) play the key role to mark both the moral judgement and the only exception: ‘deceit is wrong anyway, but there can be one exception: when it is used as a medicine’ (ἐν φαρμάκου μοίρᾳ (8) has Focus). The use of the optative with ἄν (8) indicates that the exception is not standard, but an option that can possibly be used. Celsus presents two exceptional situations (ἤτοι ... ἤ, 9-10) in which deceit and lies can be used: to heal sick or mad friends or to escape from the danger of enemies. The opposition friends – enemies is highlighted by the prominent position of πρὸς φίλους (9) and πρὸς ἐχθρούς (10) in their clauses. The purpose of the deceit (‘to heal’ and ‘to escape’) is expressed in participles that are placed at the end of the sentence (Remainder): these are constituents without a special importance in Celsus’ reasoning.⁷

In the final sentence of this fragment Celsus continues his discourse with the next unit (marked by δέ, 11), in which he connects the two exceptions to God’s situation. Without further argumentation he comments on the exceptions based on what he considers to be a generally accepted image of God: he states that no sick or mad men is a friend of God and that God is not afraid of anyone, so that he has to deceive him to escape from danger. Celsus leaves it to the reader to draw the conclusion, which has to be that neither of these exceptions is applicable to God. That means that the first option ‘deceit and lying are wrong’ applies in this situation.

Celsus’ intention in this passage is to demonstrate that the Christian view on a μεταβολή of God is untenable. His persuasive strategy has a rational character: reasoning with alternatives, one of which is true if the other one is excluded. In the first part he uses this means to argue that the Christian view ends in an undesirable statement, viz. that God is an imposter and a liar. In the second part he wants to demonstrate that on top of that this deceit can only be wrong. The closed form of the reasoning serves to deprive the opponents of any escape route. As is implied by Celsus, they cannot avoid the conclusion that according to their opinion God has to be a bad deceiver.

4.18.12-14

12

λέγοιτ’ ἂν πῇ μὲν περὶ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου φύσεως, ὄντος
θεοῦ, πῇ δὲ περὶ τῆς Ἰησοῦ ψυχῆς·

Καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο

A reply to this would argue partly from the nature of the divine Logos, who is God, and partly from the soul of Jesus.

Origen starts his response with a sentence in which he announces what will be the two parts of his reaction (*partitio*⁸). The use of the potential optative (λέγοιτ’ ἂν, 13) seems to aim at softening the tone of the discussion or to indicate that this response is a real defence possibility. The use of the third person and the middle-passive voice creates a somewhat impersonal sphere: Origen keeps his own person outside the discussion and suggests that this is not just his own reply: other Christians would speak in the same way.⁹

The two parts of the discussion are marked by πῇ μὲν ... πῇ δέ (13-14): he will speak (1) about the nature of the divine Logos (περὶ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου φύσεως (13); the constituent ὄντος θεοῦ (13-14) is added to emphasize once more the divine character of the Logos,¹⁰ as opposed to the ‘human’ Jesus

⁷ The discussion on deceit and lying and the exceptions in which use of these means is acceptable, goes back to Plato, *Respublica* 382c; 389b; 459cd. See Borret *ad loc.* (Vol.2, 1968:224-5 n.1).

⁸ See chapter III 3.4.4.

⁹ The potential optative is used more often in the introduction of Origen’s reaction to Celsus’ words, see e.g. 2.44.16; 3.78.8 (third person). In first person is used in 1.18.1; 2.12.19; 2.30.11; 8.60.26.

¹⁰ In addition to the preposed (and therefore marked) adjective θεοῦ.

in the second part¹¹) and (2) about the soul of Jesus (περὶ τῆς Ἰησοῦ ψυχῆς, 14).¹² The first theme will be discussed in 14-26, the second in 27-46. The presentation of this division in two parts can be considered as a strategic move in Origen's defence: in order to refute Celsus' words Origen reformulates the issue in his own terms and with his own divisions (*definitio* defence line).¹³

4.18.14-26

περὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς τοῦ
15 λόγου φύσεως ὅτι, ὥσπερ ἡ τῶν τροφῶν ποιότης πρὸς τὴν
 τοῦ νηπίου φύσιν εἰς γάλα μεταβάλλει ἐν τῇ τρεφούσῃ,
 ἢ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἱατροῦ κατασκευάζεται πρὸς τὸ τῆς ὑγείας
 χρειῶδες τῷ κάμνοντι, ἢ τῷ ἰσχυροτέρῳ ὡς δυνατωτέρῳ
 οὕτως ἐντρέπίζεται· οὕτως τὴν τοῦ πεφυκότος τρέφειν
20 ἀνθρωπίνην ψυχὴν λόγου δύνάμιν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις
 ἐκάστῳ κατ' ἀξίαν μεταβάλλει. Καὶ τινὲς μὲν, ὡς ὠνόμασεν
 ἡ γραφή, «λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα» γίνεται, τινὲς δὲ ὡς
 ἀσθενεστέρῳ οἶονεῖ λάχανον, τινὲς δὲ τελείῳ «στερεὰ
 τροφή» παραδίδεται. Καὶ οὐ δὴ πού ψεύδεται τὴν ἑαυτοῦ
25 φύσιν ὁ λόγος, ἐκάστῳ τρόφιμος γινόμενος, ὡς χωρεῖ αὐτὸν
 παραδέξασθαι, καὶ οὐ πλανᾷ οὐδὲ ψεύδεται.

Concerning the nature of the Logos, just as the quality of food changes in a mother into milk suitable for the nature of her infant, or is prepared by a physician with the intention of restoring a sick man to health, whereas it is prepared in a different way for a stronger man, who is more able to digest it in this form; so also God changes for men the power of the Logos, whose nature it is to nourish the human soul, in accordance with the merits of each individual. To one he becomes 'the rational milk which is without guile', as the Bible calls it; to another who is weaker he becomes like a 'herb'; while to another who is perfect, 'solid food' is given. Surely, I suppose, the Logos is not false to his own nature when he becomes nourishment for each man according to his capacity to receive him; in so doing he does not mislead or tell lies.

After the *partitio* Origen starts his discussion here on the first point, the nature of the Logos. This is introduced by οὖν as the next step in the discourse; μὲν points forward to a second part of the discussion that will follow later on (μὲν (14) corresponds with δ' in 27). Origen uses a simile to build up his argument (analogy argumentation), as is indicated by ὥσπερ (15) ... οὕτως (19). In the simile the 'power of the Logos' (τὴν τοῦ ... λόγου δύνάμιν (19-20) serves as Topic)¹⁴ is compared to 'the quality of food' (ἡ τῶν τροφῶν ποιότης (15) serves as (new) Topic in the subordinate clause) and the key word is 'change' (μεταβάλλει, 16), which occurs in both parts of the simile and serves as *tertium comparationis*.¹⁵ Origen obviously responds to Celsus' words μεταβάλλει ὁ θεός, ὥσπερ οὗτοι φασι, εἰς σῶμα θνητόν (4-5). He does not reject the notion of change in advance, but presents a more detailed specification of it: he applies it to 'the power of the Logos' (and not to ὁ θεός) and mentions two aspects

¹¹ A second reason to add the words ὄντος θεοῦ may be that Origen wants to underline the relevance of his approach in his defence to Celsus' words: Celsus had written μεταβάλλει ὁ θεός; when Origen starts to speak about the *Logos*, this may seem to be a different subject, which it is not: the Logos is *God*. So speaking about the Logos is not missing Celsus' point.

¹² On Origen's ideas about the relation between the Logos and the soul and body of Jesus, see 2.9.8ff. and 66ff.; 3.32.1ff.; 5.39.25ff.; 6.47.18ff.; 6.48.8ff.; 7.17.6ff.

¹³ See chapter III 3.4.1.

¹⁴ Mark that Origen replaces φύσις by δύναμις, which seems to be a more specific substance of the more general φύσις.

¹⁵ The first μεταβάλλει is used in an intransitive sense (ἡ ποιότης is subject, see LSJ s.v. μεταβάλλω III *undergo a change*), the second functions as transitive verb (with ὁ θεός as subject).

that are crucial: the change aims at ‘nourishment’ and ‘health’ of the human soul and it is adjusted to the situation and merits of each individual. What Origen wants to say to his readers is: reformulated and specified in this sense the notion of ‘change of God’ can be acceptable of Christians.

In the ὥσπερ-part the change of the food is described in two situations: a mother who breastfeeds her child and a physician who prepares food for his patients. In the first case food really changes into something different (εἰς γάλα, 16), in the second case no change occurs, but different diets are prescribed to different patients (τῷ κάμνοντι, τῷ ἰσχυροτέρῳ, 18). In both situations is worded explicitly that ‘adaptation’ is important in these ‘changes of food’: adaptation to the baby (πρὸς τὴν τοῦ νηπίου φύσιν, 15-16) and to the state of health of the patient (πρὸς τὸ τῆς ὑγείας χρειῶδες, 17-18). In the case of the breastfeeding the change occurs *in* the mother (ἐν τῇ τρεφούσῃ, 16),¹⁶ by which formula is indicated that she has no active role in this change. In the case of the physician his active role is indicated by the preposition ὑπό: the food is prepared (κατασκευάζεται, 17; εὐτρεπίζεται, 19) *by him*. This makes the physician an appropriate image for ὁ θεός (20), who is the *agens* of μεταβάλλει (21).¹⁷ The appropriateness of the feeding mother as image is indicated by Origen by qualifying the Logos as πεφυκὸς τρέφειν ἀνθρωπίνην ψυχὴν (19-20, ‘he who is by nature the one who feeds the human soul’). Remarkable is the three part chiasmus that is used in the second part of the simile:

(a) verb	(b) adverbial constituent	(c) patient (dative)
κατασκευάζεται	πρὸς τὸ τῆς ὑγείας χρειῶδες	τῷ κάμνοντι
(c) patient (dative)	(b) adverb	(a) verb
τῷ ἰσχυροτέρῳ	οὕτως	εὐτρεπίζεται

The οὕτως-part (19) starts with the Topic constituent τὴν τοῦ πεφυκὸς τρέφειν ἀνθρωπίνην ψυχὴν λόγου δύναμιν (19-20). In the final part of the sentence the three parts of the chiasmus occur again, now in the c-b-a order: (c) τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκάστω (b) κατ’ ἁξίαν (a) μεταβάλλει (21-22). In the following diagram the correspondence between the parts of the simile is reproduced:

	Illustration	Item illustrated
Agens	τοῦ ἱατροῦ, 17	ὁ θεός, 20
Patiens	ἢ τῶν τροφῶν ποιότης, 15	τὴν τοῦ ... λόγου δύναμιν, 19-20
Adjustment	πρὸς.... μεταβάλλει, 15-16 κατασκευάζεται πρὸς ..., 17 οὕτως εὐτρεπίζεται, 19	ἐκάστω κατ’ ἁξίαν μεταβάλλει, 21
‘The favoured one’	τοῦ νηπίου, 16 τῷ κάμνοντι, 18 τῷ ἰσχυροτέρῳ, 18	τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, 20 ἀνθρωπίνην ψυχὴν, 20
‘The feeding one’	τῇ τρεφούσῃ, 16	πεφυκὸς τρέφειν ... λόγου, 19-20

Then the simile is supported by the reference to biblical texts in which the nourishment metaphor is also used. These references function not only as illustration, but for the Christian readers also as an authoritative argument: the simile used by Origen is easier accepted by them when it corresponds with words from the Scripture (ὡς ὠνόμασεν ἡ γραφή, 21-22). Origen takes the three fragments from their original context, connects them and modifies them to fit into his exegetic framework: in his representation the three forms of food he mentions apply to different individuals (τινὶ μὲν ... τινὶ δέ ..., τινὶ δέ ... (21-23) function as Topic). The added qualifications ὡς ἀσθενεστέρω and τελείω (23) indicate the different positions they have reached in their process of spiritual growth. The constituents that denote

¹⁶ ‘The mother’ is indicated here as ἡ τρέφουσα, a term related to τῶν τροφῶν: the quality relevant in the context is highlighted.

¹⁷ Origen compares God or the Logos more often to a physician, see e.g. 2.24.32ff.; 2.67.28; 3.62.7; 4.15.14ff.; 6.56.7ff.

the forms of food (γάλα, λάχανον, στερεὰ τροφή, 22-24) have Focus. The subject of γίνεται and παραδίδεται is the Logos, although this is not explicitly indicated by Origen. The first of the three clauses (λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα γίνεται, 22) corresponds with the feeding mother simile: the words are quoted from 1 *Pet.* 2.2, where they are preceded by ‘like newborn babies’ (ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη). The verb γίνεται (22, ‘becomes’) matches the idea of the changing food (εἰς γάλα μεταβάλλει, 16). The second and the third clauses correspond with the physician simile, as is shown by the use of the verb παραδίδεται: the food is *given* (not changed). The λάχανον (23, ‘vegetables’) quote is taken from *Rom.* 14.2, where it is connected with the participle ἀσθενῶν; in context of *Romans* the ‘vegetables’ are meant literally¹⁸. By adding οἶον (23) Origen clarifies that he aims at the metaphorical sense. The words ‘solid food’ (στερεὰ τροφή, 23-24) are quoted from *Hebr.* 5.12,14, where this food is said to be intended for ‘adults’ (τελείοι), whereas ‘milk’ is for ‘infants’. The passage demonstrates that Origen has no problems to use the word μεταβάλλω concerning God/ the Logos, but interprets it in a metaphorical way. Celsus’ first point is not denied, but the idea of change is given a different meaning, an approach that can be characterized as the *definitio*-defence line.¹⁹

Origen concludes this section with a strong denial of Celsus’ charges concerning ‘deceit and lying’ (*status coniecturalis*): the Logos does *not* lead people astray and tells *no* lies (οὐ ... ψεύδεται ... καὶ οὐ πλανᾷ οὐδὲ ψεύδεται (24-26); the verbs function as Focus in their clauses). The first negative οὐ is in the front position and is highlighted by δὴ (24). The interactional particle πού (24, ‘as it seems to me’) brings the writer’s subjectivity into play, here in an ironical way: Origen indicates in a polite way that he is quite sure about this point.²⁰ The notions of change and adaptation are indicated in ἐκάστῳ τρόφιμος γινόμενος and ὡς χωρεῖ αὐτὸν παραδέξασθαι (25-26): the Logos ‘becomes food for everyone’ and more particularly: ‘according to his capacity to receive him’.²¹

4.18.27-46

Εἰ δ’ ἐπὶ τῆς Ἰησοῦ ψυχῆς λαμβάνει τις τὴν μεταβολήν, αὐτῆς εἰς σῶμα ἐλθούσης, πεισόμεθα, πῶς λέγει μεταβολήν. Εἰ μὲν γὰρ τῆς οὐσίας, οὐ δίδεται οὐ μόνον ἐπ’ ἐκείνης 30 ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ περὶ ἄλλου λογικῆς ψυχῆς· εἰ δ’ ὅτι πάσχει τι ὑπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἀνακεκραμένη αὐτῷ καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ τόπου, εἰς ὃν ἐλήλυθε, καὶ τί ἄτοπον ἀπαντᾷ τῷ λόγῳ, ἀπὸ πολλῆς φιλανθρωπίας καταβιβάζοντι σωτήρα τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων; Ἐπεὶ μηδεὶς τῶν πρότερον θεραπεύειν ἐπαγγελαμένων 35 τοσοῦτον ἐδύνατο, ὅσον αὐτὴ ἐπεδείξατο δι’ ὧν πεποίηκε, καὶ ἐκουσίως εἰς τὰς ἀνθρωπίνους κῆρας ὑπὲρ τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν καταβᾶσα. Ταῦτα δ’ ἐπιστάμενος ὁ θεῖος λόγος πολλὰ πολλαχοῦ λέγει τῶν γραφῶν. Ἀρκεῖ δ’ ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος μίαν παραθέσθαι Παύλου λέξιν οὕτως ἔχουσαν· «Τοῦτο 40 φρονείσθω ἐν ὑμῖν, ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὃς ἐν μορφῇ

Concerning Jesus’ soul, if anyone supposes that there was a change when it entered a body, we will ask what he means by a ‘change’. If he means a change of essence, we do not grant this, either of his soul, or of any other rational soul. But if he means that it undergoes something because it has been mixed with the body and because of the place into which it has come, then what difficulty is there if the Logos out of great love to mankind brings down a Saviour to the human race? None of those who had previously claimed to cure men were able to do such a great work as this soul displayed by the miracles which he performed, even descending of his own free will to accept the limitations of humanity on behalf of our race. In reference to this the divine Logos frequently

¹⁸ The chapter is about the Weak and the Strong and the issue is whether or not all sorts of food may be eaten by Christians: ‘One person believes he may eat everything, while the person whose faith is weak eats only vegetables’.

¹⁹ See chapter III 3.4.1.

²⁰ Cf. the note on δὴ πού in my commentary on 4.15.3 above.

²¹ On this adaptation to the receiving capacity see also 2.64.6ff.; 2.67.17-18; 4.16.12; 5.53.21; 6.68.8ff.

θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, ἀλλ' ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσε μορφὴν δούλου λαβών», «καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν, γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. Διὸ καὶ ὁ 45 θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσε καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα.»

speaks in several passages of the Bible. It is enough for the moment to quote one passage of Paul, which reads as follows: 'Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea the death of the cross. Wherefore God also highly exalted him, and gave him a name which is above every name.'

With δ' (27) the transition to the second issue is marked. The εἰ-clause serves as a discourse structuring device: the reader is given information which helps him to switch over to the next unit and prepare for the next section.²² That section will discuss the notion of 'change' (μεταβολήν, 27) related to the soul of Jesus (ἐπὶ τῆς Ἰησοῦ ψυχῆς (27) has Focus in the subordinate clause). By the addition of αὐτῆς εἰς σῶμα ἐλθούσης (28) Origen specifies his subject: he will not speak about the soul in its preexistent phase, but in the period 'when it entered a body'.²³ Origen takes over the constituent εἰς σῶμα (5) from Celsus, but without the connection to μεταβάλλει (4). By doing so Origen implicitly corrects Celsus' presentation: the soul does not *change* into a body, but *comes* into a body. Then Origen asks²⁴ what Celsus means by 'change' (πῶς λέγει μεταβολήν, 28). This approach fits again within the *definitio-defence* line Origen used above.

The next clause is introduced by γάρ (29) as a digression: Origen will answer himself to the question he raised. He adopts the way of reasoning from his opponent by giving two alternative answers (εἰ μὲν ... εἰ δ', 29-30), which he subsequently comments on.

The first option, concerning a change of the οὐσία (εἰ μὲν γὰρ τῆς οὐσίας (29) functions as contrastive Topic), is immediately rejected as unacceptable, because a change of essence cannot occur to this soul nor to the rational soul of anyone else. Origen formulates firmly in this point: no concession is made (οὐ δίδοται (29) has Focus).²⁵ By using the middle-passive voice and not mentioning the *agens* Origen suggests that this is not only his own opinion, but generally accepted. Here again Origen imitates his opponent: Celsus had rejected the first of his options in a similar way (see 5-6).

After the rejection of the first option the second option (εἰ δ', 30) remains as the only one acceptable. It is described as follows: the change of Jesus' soul means that it 'experiences something (πάσχει τι, 30) from the side of the body it is mixed with and from the place where it ended up' (this whole phrase functions as Topic). Origen argues that nothing strange (ἄτοπον (32) has Focus)²⁶ happens to the

²² The same applies for εἰ μὲν and εἰ δέ some lines below (29-30). Cf. Wakker (1994:84ff.) on propositional and illocutionary conditionals.

²³ Origen distinguishes between the immaterial soul and the material body. In his view souls already exist before they were connected to a human body. The material is by its nature changeable, the immaterial is immutable and incorruptible. In the person of Jesus a special soul is connected to a special body. See 1.32-33; 6.71.19ff.; 6.75-77.

²⁴ πεισόμεθα: for the use of the first person plural see chapter II 3.2.2. The future is inferential.

²⁵ For δίδωμι in discussion situations, see LSJ s.v. III 2 *grant, concede*. See also 2.20.85; 2.23.10 (in both cases also combined with εἰ μὲν ... εἰ δέ...) and 2.77.8; 3.4.5; 4.3.41; 4.19.1; 5.7.9; 6.56.2; 7.3.16; 7.59.38.

²⁶ This argument is used more often by Origen, in statements (οὐκ/οὐδὲν ἄτοπον 1.36.27; 1.37.29; 2.2.3; 4.19.13; 6.61.33) or in rhetorical questions (e.g. in 1.48.10; 1.63.29; 2.4.20; 4.19.7; 6.59.17).

Logos.²⁷ The persuasive force of the argument is enhanced by the form of the rhetorical question (καὶ τί ἄτοπον...; (32) expresses an objection not without some (staged) indignation).²⁸ In the next sentence (Ἐπεὶ ...) ²⁹ the special position of Jesus' soul is highlighted by comparing it to other people 'who had previously claimed to cure men' (τῶν πρότερον θεραπεύειν ἐπαγγειλαμένων, 34). This comparison is in favour of the soul of Jesus,³⁰ because nobody³¹ 'was able to do great work as this soul displayed' (τοσοῦτον ἐδύνατο ὅσον αὐτὴ ἐπεδείξατο, 35). In these lines Origen turns the phrase of Celsus (μεταβάλλει ὁ θεὸς ... εἰς σῶμα θνητόν, 4-5) into his own soteriological framework by adding constituents in which the motive of the μεταβολή is worded (ἀπὸ πολλῆς φιλανθρωπίας (32-33), emphatically placed before the participle καταβιβάζοντι, 33), as well as the free will, which caused the descent (ἐκουσίως, 36) and the benefit it provides to mankind (σωτήρα τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 33-34; θεραπεύειν, 34; ὑπὲρ τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν, 36-37). In καταβιβάζοντι (33) and καταβᾶσα (37) the central issue of the debate with Celsus in these chapters is once more indicated.

Origen then attaches (δ' (37) marks the transition) biblical proof to this argument (authoritative argumentation), in which the divine Logos (ὁ θεῖος λόγος, 37) is presented as speaking in the Bible.³² In the sentence ὁ θεῖος λόγος functions as Topic, after the Setting Ταῦτα δ' ἐπιστάμενος. The most salient point is the abundance of proof: πολλὰ πολλαχοῦ (37-38) has Focus and is highlighted by the separation of the partitive genitive τῶν γραφῶν (38, hyperbaton). Then (again δ', 38) Origen announces that only one quote will be enough to illustrate his point, suggesting that other quotes are available and that this passage is significant enough. The hyperbaton μίαν ... λέξιν (39) serves to underline the Focus μίαν.

Looking back at the passage it may be observed that the character is changing gradually. What started as a refutation with a rather rational and distant tone, changes into a more confirmative passage. Origen concentrates more on his Christian readers and focuses on the affective side of the soteriology: the love to mankind and the voluntary humiliation and self-sacrifice of Christ. The quote from Paul's letter to the Philippians (2.5-9) functions not only as an illustration and proof of Origen's argumentation, but gains an added value when the original context is brought into play. Paul uses the attitude of Jesus Christ as an example to urge his audience to imitate their Lord (Τοῦτο φρονεῖσθω ἐν ὑμῖν ὁ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 39-40). Using this quote Origen passes on this appeal to his own readers. Moreover, the doxological way this passage ends serves as a climax in Origen's discourse as well.

²⁷ What is the meaning of τῷ λόγῳ in this context? Does it mean 'expression, utterance' as in 6.59.17 where almost the same words are used (οὐδὲν ἄτοπον ἀπαντᾷ τῷ λόγῳ) and is referred to an expression used previously (ὑπεξάγει τοῦ κόσμου)? This meaning would make sense here too, if not the participle clause (ἀπὸ πολλῆς φιλανθρωπίας καταβιβάζοντι σωτήρα) would follow: the act of 'bringing down a Saviour' and the emotion of 'love for mankind' cannot be attributed without problems to 'an utterance'. It seems therefore to be better to follow Chadwick (1953), Borret (1968) and Fiedrowicz & Barthold (2011) and translate 'the Logos', although this choice may be questioned too: the nature of the Logos was the theme of the previous passage; so why would Origen speak again about the Logos here in the passage about the soul of Jesus? Further: what has to be concluded about the relation between the σωτήρ (Jesus) and the Logos? They seem to be presented here as two different entities ('the Logos brings down the Saviour'), where elsewhere in *Contra Celsum* the two are identified (5.5.7; 6.17.31; 8.15.29). I have not come across another passage where the idea is expressed that the Logos 'brings down' the Saviour to the earth. Origen's usual presentation is that after the incarnation there is a close union between the Logos and Jesus' soul and body (see 2.9.67ff.; 3.41.5-11; 5.39.20-28; 6.47.26-31).

²⁸ For καὶ at the beginning of a question, see LSJ s.v. A II 2 'in questions, to introduce an objection or express surprise'. Some other examples: 4.20.11; 6.56.4 (both with the same combination καὶ τί ἄτοπον), 2.13.25 (in apodosis after an εἰ-clause), further: 2.17.13; 2.65.1; 3.23.25; 3.76.13; 4.48.15; 4.50.22; 5.27.8.

²⁹ The sentence only consists of a subordinated clause beginning with ἐπεὶ, which can be understood by assuming an ellipsis of 'He was a Saviour indeed, for ...'.

³⁰ The feminine αὐτή refers to ἡ Ἰησοῦ ψυχὴ, the subject of this passage.

³¹ On the use of μηδεὶς (instead of οὐδεὶς) see the note on 4.2.23 above.

³² Cf. 4.13.6; 6.2.25; 6.48.5; 7.42.17; 8.50.11, where the phrase ὁ θεῖος λόγος is used as subject of λέγει or φησί as introduction of quotes from the Bible (and develops into a personification of the Bible itself).

4.19.1-5

Ἄλλοι μὲν οὖν διδόντων τῷ Κέλσῳ ὅτι οὐ μεταβάλλει
 μὲν, ποιεῖ δὲ τοὺς ὁρῶντας δοκεῖν αὐτὸν μεταβεβληκέναι·
 ἡμεῖς δὲ πειθόμενοι οὐ δόκησιν ἀλλ' ἀλήθειαν εἶναι καὶ
 ἐνάργειαν κατὰ τὴν Ἰησοῦ εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιδημίαν, οὐχ
 5 ὑποκείμεθα τῇ Κέλσου κατηγορίᾳ.

Others may agree with Celsus that He does not change, but makes those who see Him think that He has changed. But we, who are persuaded that the advent of Jesus to men was not a mere appearance, but a reality and an indisputable fact, are unaffected by Celsus' criticism.

Origen moves to the next step in his discourse, as is indicated by οὖν (1): he continues his response to the words of Celsus quoted in 4.18. The section that is on the agenda now was Celsus' second option: God does not really change, but gives the people who see him the impression he does so. Origen once more quotes these words and adds the object of δοκεῖν which was not expressed by Celsus: αὐτὸν μεταβεβληκέναι (2). Remarkable is the change of the tense: Celsus' present μεταβάλλει (4) is rendered by the perfect infinitive. This entails a change of the significance: what was presented by Celsus as a general fact is now by Origen connected to an event in the past that is relevant to the present. Whereas Celsus in 4.18.6-7 spoke about a rather abstract philosophical issue (God's ability to change), Origen here changes the focus and creates the impression that he refers to a concrete event that happened in a specific historical situation: the incarnation. By doing so Origen places the issue within his own framework, which is even more clarified in his words κατὰ τὴν Ἰησοῦ εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιδημίαν (4).

In Origen's response an antithesis is used to mark the Christian position: Ἄλλοι μὲν ... ἡμεῖς δέ (1-3, contrastive Topic).³³ Combined with the concessive character of the μὲν-clause (evoked by the imperative διδόντων, 1³⁴) the antithesis ἄλλοι - ἡμεῖς accentuates the content of the δέ-clause: 'even though other people agree, we do not'. Here Origen states that Celsus' charge does not affect to Christians (οὐχ ὑποκείμεθα τῇ Κέλσου κατηγορίᾳ, 4-5), a remark fitting within the defence strategy of denial (*coniectura* defence position) by which Celsus' words are cast aside as beside the point. His argument for this statement is formulated in the previous participle clause: the Christian conviction (the preposed participle πειθόμενοι is highlighted), that Jesus' advent to men was not mere appearance, but a reality (antithesis between δόκησιν and ἀλήθειαν καὶ ἐνάργειαν, 3-4).

4.19.5-12

5 Ὅμως δ' ἀπολογησόμεθα
 ὅτι οὐ φῆς, ὦ Κέλσε, ὡς ἐν φαρμάκου μοίρᾳ ποτὲ δίδοται
 χρῆσθαι τῷ πλανᾷ καὶ τῷ ψεύδεσθαι; Τί οὖν ἄτοπον, εἰ
 τοιοῦτόν τι ἔμελλε σφῶζειν, τοιοῦτόν τι γεγονέναι; Καὶ γάρ
 10 λεγόμενοι ἐπιστρέφουσιν, ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν ἱατρῶν ποτε λόγοι
 τοιοῖδε πρὸς τοὺς κάμνοντας, ἥπερ κατὰ τὸ ἀληθές. Ἀλλὰ
 ταῦτα μὲν περὶ ἐτέρων ἀπολελογήσθω ἡμῖν.

Nevertheless we will reply thus: Do you not say, Celsus, that sometimes it is allowable to use deceit and lying as a medicine? Why, then, is it unthinkable that something of this sort occurred with the purpose of bringing salvation? And as a matter of fact some characters are reformed by certain doctrines which are more false than true, just as physicians sometimes use similar words to their patients. This, however, has been our defence on other points.

³³ Probably a reference to docetism and maybe also to Philo, *De somniis* I 323 (οὐ μεταβάλλοντα τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν - ἄτρεπτος γὰρ -, ἀλλὰ δόξαν ἐντίθεντα ταῖς φαντασιουμέναις ἐτερόμορφον - 'not changing his nature, for he is unchangeable, but merely implanting in those who see him an idea of having another form'), cf. *ibidem* 328.

³⁴ For δίδωμι meaning 'to grant, to concede' see note on 4.18.29 above.

By Ὅμως (5) Origen indicates that there is a contrast between the next passage and the previous words: the sequel will be contrary to the expectations of the readers. Origen had just denied that Celsus' accusation applied to the Christians and normally the reader would expect that Origen therefore is discharged of the obligation to respond to the words Celsus added to this accusation. Nevertheless (ὅμως) Origen announces that he will reply (ἀπολογησόμεθα, 5)³⁵ to these passages as well. Origen uses the notions Celsus had provided as an opportunity to clarify aspects of the Christian doctrine. *Refutatio* and *confirmatio* are combined here.

Origen firstly deals with Celsus' recognition that sometimes the use of 'deceit and lying' can be allowed as a medicine. He adds some drama to the scene by using a rhetorical procedure called *apostrophe*: he addresses Celsus directly (see the vocative ὦ Κέλσε, 6)³⁶ and adopts his medical terminology (ἐν φαρμάκου μοίρᾳ, 6) in order to respond to his opponent. This reply, introduced by οὖν as the next step in the discourse, is given the form of a rhetorical question, with the suggestion that Celsus cannot disagree on this point: 'why then is it inappropriate that something of this sort occurred if something of this sort would bring salvation'. The defence strategy Origen chooses here concentrates not on denial, but on justification (*status qualitatis*).³⁷ Remarkably Origen uses two times the combination τοιοῦτόν τι in the Focus position, which refers obviously to τῷ πλανᾶν καὶ τῷ ψεύδεσθαι (7). As it seems, Origen deliberately avoids to use the harsh words πλανᾶν and ψεύδεσθαι himself in relation to the salvation (σώζειν, 8) and replaces them by a mitigated reference (not deceit and lying, but 'something of this sort').

In the next sentence, which is characterized as an (explanatory) specification (καὶ γάρ³⁸, 8), Origen concentrates on 'some verbal utterances': the general rule that ψεύδεσθαι is allowed in medical situations, applies 'to certain words' (τινες τῶν λόγων, 8-9). Origen is more clear about the effect of these words (they 'turn/ converse characters', τὰ ... ἦθη ... ἐπιστρέφουσιν, 9-10)³⁹ than about other elements of the sentence: the means to achieve this change and the situation in which they are used are worded in more vague terms. As for the means: the words are not indicated plainly as lies, but as 'certain words that are more spoken in the manner of a lie' (τινες τῶν λόγων ... κατὰ τὸ ψεῦδος μᾶλλον λεγόμενοι, 9-10; the phrase κατὰ τὸ ψεῦδος μᾶλλον functions as Focus within the participle clause). This periphrasis contains three mitigating constituents (τινες, κατὰ, μᾶλλον), by which the hard edges of 'lie' are softened. As for the situation: these means are used to convert 'certain characters' (τὰ τοιαυτὰ ἦθη, 9).⁴⁰ Their situation is explained by a medical comparison: 'just like words doctors sometimes speak to patients' (ὥσπερ ... κάμνοντας, 10-11). What Origen (more) indicates (than says) here, is that the purpose without doubt is salvation and conversion, but that the means may be unconventional, adapted to individuals and sometimes seem to be more related to lies than to truth if this is beneficial for the persons involved.

Then Origen breaks off this passage: Ἀλλά (11) marks the end of the *apostrophe*-section. He reminds the reader to words that previously have been spoken by him as a defence to other points (περὶ ἑτέρων

³⁵ The future is more often used to announce what Origen will do immediately after these words; especially φήσομεν is often used in this sense (e.g. 1.19.15; 1.34.22; 2.9.11 and elsewhere, more than 50x).

³⁶ See chapter II 3.2.3 for more information and explanation of the pathetic effect of apostrophe. Other vocatives besides ὦ Κέλσε that are used by Origen are: ὦ οὖτος (e.g. 1.17.6; 1.18.2; 1.43.11; 3.58.6; 4.4.2; 5.40.3; 8.9.10) and ὦ γενναῖε (3.19.7). Origen seems to use these vocatives in situations where he points at inconsistencies in Celsus' discourse and at consequences his opponent seems to be not aware of.

³⁷ See chapter III 3.4.1.

³⁸ On καὶ γάρ see CGCG (2019:697 §59.66); Bonifazi & Drummen & De Kreij (2016, Vol.4, 2.4.1 §98-99).

³⁹ The notion of correction of characters is also found in 1.9.29; 1.67.24; 1.68.24-33; 2.51.37; 3.27.26; 3.79.9.

⁴⁰ τοιοῦτός is used sometimes to refer to the preceding ('such' e.g. 4.45.37; 4.50.35; 4.93.27; 5.48.18; 7.59.32,34), but sometimes also denotes an unspecified quality ('certain', e.g. 4.57.18-19; 4.88.36, 5.57.21; 6.25.33).

ἀπολελογήσθω, 12) and indicates by the perfect imperative that these words have to be qualified as his completed defence which is still relevant now.⁴¹

4.19.12-17

Καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἄτοπόν ἐστι τὸν ἰώμενον φίλους νοσοῦντας ἰάσασθαι τὸ φίλον τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος τοῖς τοιοῖσδε, οἷς οὐκ ἂν τις χρήσαιτο
15 προηγουμένως ἀλλ' ἐκ περιστάσεως. Καὶ μεμνηὸς δὲ τὸ γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἔδει θεραπευθῆναι διὰ μεθόδων, ὧν ἑώρα ὁ λόγος χρησίμων τοῖς μεμνηόσιν, ἵνα σωφρονήσωσι.

And indeed, there is nothing wrong if the person who heals sick friends healed the human race which was dear to him with such means as one would not use for choice, but to which he was confined by force of circumstances. Since the human race was also mad, it had to be cured by methods which the Logos saw to be beneficial to lunatics that they might recover their right mind.

Origen continues his reply to Celsus' words and now focuses on Celsus' phrase ἤτοι πρὸς φίλους νοσοῦντας καὶ μεμνηότας ἰώμενος (18.9-10). In these words Celsus had described the first situation in which according to him lying could be acceptable. Origen connects (Καί, 12) this section to his previous passage as an explanation (γὰρ, 12) and chooses again the perspective of οὐκ ἄτοπον (12-13, as above in 7). The elements of illness and madness are turned into metaphors for the bad situation from which mankind has to be saved. Celsus' words about the healing of 'sick friends' are adopted by Origen and applied to the human race which is dear (τὸ φίλον τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος, 13-14) to the healer (τὸν ἰώμενον, 13), by which is referred to the φιλανθρωπία of God and the Logos.⁴² In the next sentence, which is connected to the previous one by δέ (15), Origen adds the element of 'madness' (Καὶ μεμνηός, 15) to the previously mentioned quality of φίλον. The purpose of the 'therapy' (θεραπευθῆναι, 16) is now slightly adjusted and formulated as ἵνα σωφρονήσωσι (17, 'that they may recover their senses').⁴³ In the wording of the means of healing and therapy Origen again opts for rather undetermined formulas: means that would not be preferred (οὐκ ... προηγουμένως, 14-15), but are prompted by the circumstances (ἐκ περιστάσεως, 15) and means that the Logos considered to be beneficial (χρησίμων, 17).

In this passage *refutatio* and *confirmatio* are combined: Origen takes Celsus' critical remarks as an opportunity to explain to his readers an element of the Christian doctrine. He indicates that God's methods of salvation can be unexpected and unconventional, but are adapted to the situation of each individual and aim at healing and conversion.

4.19.18-22

Φησὶ δ' ὅτι καὶ τὰ τοιάδε τις ποιεῖ πρὸς ἐχθρούς, κίνδυνον ἐκφυγεῖν προμηθούμενος. Οὐ φοβεῖται δέ τινας ὁ θεός, ἵνα
20 πλανήσας τοὺς ἐπιβουλεύοντας κίνδυνον διαφύγῃ. Πάντῃ δὲ

Celsus says that one also does this *with enemies when the intention is to escape danger. But God is not afraid of any so that*

⁴¹ To what passage does Origen refer? I did not find a similar passage about lying by physicians in order to cure their patients. Probably the reference has a more general character and concerns the way God proceeds in his salvation plan. Perhaps περὶ ἐτέρων refers to attacks previously formulated on this point. Chadwick, Borret and Fiedrowicz & Barthold (*ad loc.*) refer to 2.24.31ff., where Origen explains that God sometimes uses tough means in order to save people. In this context Origen uses a comparison with words that are 'said by a physician who has cut open bodies and inflicted painful wounds in order to cut out of them the things which are harmful and hinder good health...'. Threats and punishments are explained within the framework of the divine pedagogical approach in which corrections are tailored to the situation of each individual (cf. 3.75; 5.15-16; 4.99.25ff.; 8.40.1-3). In 6.56 Origen explains that even what loosely may be called 'physical evil' (again Origen is careful in the choice of his words) can be used by God in order to heal and to convert. (see also Borret (Vol.1, 1967:350, n.1 *ad* 2.24).

⁴² Mentioned above in 4.17.18; 14.18.33.

⁴³ For σωφροσύνη in combination with conversion and improvement of lifestyle see 1.64.13; 2.79.25; 4.5.32.

περισσὸν καὶ ἄλογον ἀπολογήσασθαι πρὸς τὸ ὑπ' οὐδενὸς *He has to mislead* those who
περὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν λεγόμενον. *conspire against Him in order to*
avoid danger. It is entirely
superfluous and unreasonable to
reply to an assertion which is not
made about our Saviour by
anyone.

With δ' (18) Origen marks the transition to the next section in which he deals with the second situation in which lying can be accepted: 'towards enemies in order to escape from danger' (πρὸς ἐχθροὺς κίνδυνον ἐκφυγεῖν προμηθεύμενος, 18-19). Celsus' comment is immediately connected to this (δέ, 19) by Origen: 'God is not afraid of anyone' and therefore he does not have 'to mislead people who plan an attack'.

The particle δέ (20) introduces the reply of Origen, which consists of one sentence. Celsus' words are characterized as an irrelevant utterance: this is not said 'by anyone about our Saviour' and therefore it is 'entirely superfluous and unreasonable' to reply (περισσὸν καὶ ἄλογον (21) have Focus).⁴⁴

4.19.22-30

Προεῖρηται δ' εἰς τὴν *In making our defence of other points*
περὶ ἐτέρων ἡμῶν ἀπολογίαν πρὸς τὸ οὔτε δὲ νοσῶν ἢ μεμη- *we have already dealt with the*
νῶς οὐδεὶς φίλος τῷ θεῷ. ὁ γὰρ ἀπολογησάμενός φησιν *following remark: But no sick or mad*
man is God's friend. We affirm in
25 οὐχ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἤδη φίλων νοσοῦντων ἢ μεμνηνόντων τὴν *reply that providence has not done*
τοιαύτην οἰκονομίαν γίνεσθαι ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῶν διὰ νόσον τῆς *this for the sake of sick men or*
ψυχῆς καὶ ἔκστασιν τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν λογισμοῦ ἔτι ἐχθρῶν, *lunatics who have already become*
ἵνα γένωνται φίλοι τῷ θεῷ. Καὶ γὰρ σαφῶς ὑπὲρ ἀμαρτωλῶν *friends, but for those who, because*
λέγεται πάντα ἀναδεδέχθαι ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἵν' αὐτοὺς «ἀπαλ- *their soul is diseased and their natural*
30 λάξῃ» τῆς ἀμαρτίας καὶ ποιήσῃ «δικαίους» *reasoning powers distracted, are still*
enemies, so that they may become
friends of God. Moreover, Jesus is
clearly said to have accepted
everything for the sake of sinners, that
he might deliver them from sin and
make them righteous.

The particle δ' (22) again marks the beginning of the discussion of Celsus' next words: 'no sick or mad man is God's friend' (4.18.11). Origen had skipped this remark first and now after the short passage about 'enemies' he replies to it. Perhaps he changed the order, because he saw that the issue of 'friend' would provide more opportunities to end this passage in a positive explanation of an element of the Christian doctrine. Finishing with such an argument is preferable for rhetorical reasons.

Before quoting Celsus' words Origen refers to the previous 'defence concerning other points' (εἰς τὴν περὶ ἐτέρων ἡμῶν ἀπολογίαν, 22-23).⁴⁵ In the following explanation (γάρ, 24) Origen indicates himself as ὁ ἀπολογησάμενος (24):⁴⁶ the aorist participle indicates that this defence is completed before the moment of speak (φησιν, 24). The combination aorist – present suggests that the present reply is in line with the previous one. Starting from words that are derived from Celsus' text Origen corrects the

⁴⁴ A similar reaction in 3.49.9; 4.3.17ff.; 7.27.4ff.

⁴⁵ The use of the article τὴν and the corresponding words περὶ ἐτέρων suggest that Origen refers to the defence he had denoted above (12). Is 2.24 again in his mind here? The link with 2.24 is very thin (only the notion of 'illness'). Or does Origen mean passages as 3.59-64 (on Jesus' advent for sinners), 4.3.25ff. or 4.7.10-14 (on God's plan to correct people and make them his friends)?

⁴⁶ This seems to be a unique example of self-reference in the third person. I have not found another example.

image that is built up by Celsus. He uses the opposition friends - enemies to explain the purpose of the advent of the Logos⁴⁷ more precisely. According to Origen he did not come for the sake of sick or mad men who were already friends, but for people who were still enemies (ἔτι ἐχθρῶν, 27): the intention is that they become φίλοι τῷ θεῷ (28).⁴⁸ The reason for their status of enemy is indicated in terms derived from Celsus' text: 'disease of their soul and disorder of their mind' (διὰ νόσον τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἑκστασιν τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν λογισμοῦ, 26-27). The terms 'illness' and 'madness' as well as 'friends' and 'enemies' are interpreted metaphorically and linked to each other in a creative way by Origen. The words ἤδη (25) and ἔτι (27) mark the difference between a static situation and a dynamic process.

The final sentence is added (καί, 28) as a support (γάρ, 28) to the previous section: Origen explains directly (σαφῶς, 28) what is the significance of the metaphor. The 'illness' refers to 'sin' (τῆς ἁμαρτίας, 30) and by the 'enemies' the 'sinners' (ἁμαρτωλῶν (28), in the Focus position) are denoted, the physician is Jesus: according to the plan of salvation (οἰκονομία, 26) he has 'accepted everything' (πάντα ἀναδεέχθαι, 29). The purpose is worded in ἵν' αὐτοὺς ἀπαλλάξῃ τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ ποιήσῃ δικαίους (29-30). With λέγεται (29) Origen refers to the text of the Scriptures, which is a signal for his Christian reader that this explanation can be accepted without problems. Probably they will be able to recognize the biblical passages that are quoted.⁴⁹

Here Origen concludes his reply to Celsus' fragment quoted in 4.18. In a clever way he reuses Celsus' reference to the medical situation and turns it into his leading metaphor of the healing physician. Not only the defence against Celsus' critical remarks is in his mind, but also the instruction of his fellow Christians. Origen structures his discourse carefully so that it ends in a concise wording of the purpose of Jesus' coming down to the earth. His readers can understand from his text that the debate with Celsus does not concern issues of little impact: it deals with the salvation of the human race, with the deliverance from sin and with friendship with God. Origen wants to clarify that essential values of the Christian faith are at stake when Celsus criticizes the divine descent to the earth.

⁴⁷ For οἰκονομία used relating to the incarnation see also 2.9.67; 6.78.17.

⁴⁸ This purpose is opposite to the ancient moral code 'be a benefactor for your friends, do harm to your enemies'.

⁴⁹ Rom.5.8-10,19; Matt.9.12-13; Wisd.7.27.

12. Section 12: *Contra Celsum* 4.20-22

12.1 Strategy

Celsus

The common thread in the fragments of Celsus quoted in 4.20-22 is the theme of evil in connection to punishment and purification. The words ‘someone sent down from God’ (τοῦ καταπεμπομένου ἀπὸ θεοῦ, 4.20.7) and ‘... that the Son of God has been sent...’ (πεπέμφθαι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, 4.22.3) make clear that these fragments are still linked to the main issue of the divine descent discussed in the previous chapters.¹ In 4.20 words from Celsus’ text are quoted in which he represents an opinion which is attributed to the Jews, whereas in 4.22 Origen quotes words in which Celsus describes an additional ‘Christian’ opinion. In both cases Celsus focuses on the role of evil and sin in the thoughts of his opponents: the Jews assert (in Celsus’ words) that ‘life is full of evil’ and that therefore someone needs to be sent down from God for punishment and purification (4.20); and Christians add, according to him, that it was ‘the sins of the Jews’ that have caused the Son of God to come down (4.22).

The link with the general theme of the divine descent is hard to discover in Celsus’ words quoted in 4.21. These fragments are embedded in Origen’s text, which causes difficulties in defining their exact extent and intention. The words that can be attributed to Celsus with some certainty contain remarks about the stories of the Tower and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. These events are discussed as parallels to the ‘first flood’, mentioned in 4.20 as a means of purification. The focus of Celsus’ criticism here seems to be his disqualification of these biblical stories as corruptions of ancient myths.²

Origen

Origen starts his response in 4.20 with a formal remark: what is attributed by Celsus to the Jews applies apparently to the Christians as well. The defence strategy he chooses subsequently is justification (*status qualitatis*).³ He defends the idea of a divine intervention to purify the world from a ‘flood of wickedness’: this was to be expected and appropriate for God. Then Origen points out that purification is accepted by the Greeks and quotes a passage from Plato to substantiate his statement. Next he plays the card of equal treatment: what is accepted from the Greeks, cannot be rejected if maintained by Christians.

The approach in 4.21 is different: Origen rejects Celsus’ analogy between the Flood and the Tower story as irrelevant: the story of the Tower has nothing to do with purification. His next reaction deals with Celsus’ statement that Moses, writing about the Tower, had distorted a Greek myth. This statement is rejected as false (*coniectura* defence position) with the chronology argument: Moses lived before the Greek storytellers. The same argument is used to protest against Celsus’ comparison of the Sodom and Gomorrah story and the Phaethon myth. Origen concludes this section with a more confirmative passage: he explicitly states that he does not reject the notion of a purifying fire and a destruction of the world, because this is what he had learned from the prophets. Finally he underlines the credibility of the prophets.

In 4.22 Origen responds to Celsus’ words about ‘the sins of the Jews’: for this reason, in Celsus’

¹ Arnold (2016) argues with good reasons that Origen did not always quote Celsus words in the order they had in Celsus’ text. He points at a common theme discussed by Celsus in the fragmented quoted in 4.10 and 4.20-22 (divine punishment), which is absent in the intermediate fragments (4.14-18 concern the topic of change). Are the fragments 4.14-18 to be considered as a digression or did Origen change the text order? Arnold defends the second option; in his reconstruction (‘mit einiger Wahrscheinlichkeit’) the original order in Celsus’ text might have been: fr.4.10 – fr.4.20-22 – fr.4.11-18 (see Arnold 2016:556-560). The hypothesis is a good effort to find more coherence in Celsus’ text, but the transition from fr. 4.22 to 4.11 is still hard to understand. Moreover: it is not clear why Origen would have changed the order of quotation here.

² A similar argumentation is found in 4.11 and 4.41. See Andresen (1955:146ff.).

³ On defence positions see chapter III 3.4.1.

representation, God's Son has been sent down; the Jews drew upon themselves the anger of God because of their punishment of Jesus. Origen recognizes elements of truth in the second statement and does not hesitate to connect the destruction of Jerusalem and the misery of the Jews to 'the sufferings which they inflicted upon Jesus'. In this passage however Origen does not express explicitly an opinion about the exact words Celsus had used ('God' anger' and the cause of 'the sending down of God's Son'): he does not adopt them nor does he deny them. The passage about the calamities of the Jews is concluded by a reference to the new phase in the history of salvation: God's invitation is now transferred to the Christians. Thus Origen reframes the matter discussed and manages to give this passage a positive spin in the eyes of his Christian readers: salvation is no longer limited to one nation, but is open to a worldwide community.

12.2 Structure of the text

Type	Line nrs	Content	Linguistic markers
Introduction	20.1-5	Let us pay attention to Celsus' representation of statements of Jews and Christians.	Εἴτ' μέν ... δέ, δή
Quote 1	20.5-9	Statement of the Jews: Life is full of evil; therefore God had to send someone down for punishment and purification.	μέν ... δέ
Reaction	20.9-11	Formal remark: This view is implicitly ascribed to Christians as well.	Δέ
<i>Refutatio</i>	20.11-18	Defence: why is this absurd? Explanation: God is opposed to evil. Analogy: Greek doctrine	Καί γάρ δὲ καί
	20.18-25	Comment on analogy: - two-part rhetorical question - requirements of a precise analysis	οὖν ἄρ', μέν... δέ καίτοι γε, οὐ μόνον ... ἀλλὰ καί ... καί
Quote 2 (embedded)	21.1-6	Celsus: link between the story of the Flood and the story of the Tower, which contains no hidden truth, but is obvious. Origen: incomprehensible.	δ' γάρ ἀλλ'
Response	21.6-11	Denial: no purification involved. Confusion of tongues as purification? Separate interpretation necessary.	δ' ἄρα καί ... καί
Quote 3 (embedded)	21.11-14	Moses, in his Tower story, corrupted the myth of the sons of Aloeus.	δ'
Response <i>refutatio</i>	21.15-23	Statement: Moses is earlier than Homer. So: who is corrupting? Moses is the most ancient.	μέν ... δέ οὖν, Ἄρα Ἀλλὰ
Quote 4 (embedded)	21.24-27	Statement: the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is comparable to the story of Phaethon (destructive fire).	Καί
Response <i>refutatio</i>	21.27-30	Statement: mistaken chronology. Explanation: the story of Phaethon is	γάρ

		younger than Homer who is younger than Moses.	
<i>confirmatio</i>	21.30-38	Concession: we acknowledge a purifying fire and the destruction of evil; as we learned from the prophets. Digression: credibility of the prophets.	οὐν μέντοι
Quote 5	22.1-5	Christians present an extra argument for the sending of God's son: the sins of the Jews; God's anger because of the punishment of Jesus.	Δέ
Response	22.5-16	Explanation: the destruction of Jewish nation, only shortly after Jesus' death. Never before such a punishment; previous punishment was temporary.	δή γάρ καὶ οὐδέ ποτε γε ἀλλ'
	22.16-23	Elaboration 1: the special status of Jesus. No restoration to be expected, Explanation: impious crime.	οὐν δ' γάρ
	22.23-31	Elaboration 2: destruction of Jerusalem. God's invitation transferred.	οὐν, καί, καί

12.3 Commentary

4.20.1-5

Εἴτ' ἐπεὶ προσωποποιεῖ ἰδίᾳ μὲν Ἰουδαίους αἰτιολο-
γοῦντας τὴν κατ' αὐτοὺς μέλλουσαν Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίαν ἰδίᾳ
δὲ Χριστιανούς λέγοντας περὶ τῆς ἤδη γεγεννημένης ἐπιδημίας
εἰς τὸν βίον τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ· φέρε καὶ
5 ταῦτα, ὥς οἷόν τε ἐστί, διὰ βραχέων κατανοήσωμεν.

He then represents the Jews, on the one hand, as finding reasons for their belief that the advent of the Christ is still in the future, and the Christians, on the other hand, as saying that the advent into human life of the Son of God has already happened. Accordingly, let us give our mind also to this briefly, as far as possible:

With Εἴτ' (1) Origen indicates that he moves to a discussion on the next quote from Celsus. His introduction has two parts. The main clause consists of elements of exhortation (φέρε and the subjunctive κατανοήσωμεν, 4-5⁴) to which the phrases ὥς οἷόν τε ἐστί (5, 'as far as possible') and διὰ βραχέων (5, briefly)⁵ are added as almost obligatory expressions of modesty and pleasing of the audience. This main clause is preceded by a subordinate clause (ἐπεὶ ...) in which Origen announces the content and the character of the passage that will be discussed. He uses this announcement also to frame the discussion in a strategic way. The words of Celsus are technically characterized with the verb

⁴ The combination of φέρε and 1st person plural of an aorist subjunctive to denote an (self)exhortation or in fact an announcement (of a longer investigation) is used also in e.g. 1.28.4; 1.35.5; 1.62.6; 2.56.9; 3.22.17; 3.36.5; 3.55.2; 4.26.4; 4.39.12; 5.4.6; 4.8.2; 7.62.1. In this sense subjunctives without φέρε seem to be less favorite. Only ἴδωμεν is used several times without φέρε (1.32.1; 1.4.1; 1.26.1; 1.58.14; 2.68.1; 4.14.1. 4.61.26 etc.), but mostly in situations in which it merely denotes a quick transition to a next discussion issue.

⁵ Correctly interpreted by Borret (Vol.2, 1968:230-231 n.1) as announcement of the brief character of the refutations and not of an abbreviation of the quotes.

προσωποποιεῖ (1):⁶ he presents his opponents as expressing their own opinions. In the contrastive Topic constituents both the Jews (Ἰουδαίους, 1) and the Christians (Χριστιανούς, 3) are indicated and extra distinguished by ἰδίᾳ μὲν ... ἰδίᾳ δέ (1-3). In the participle phrases (preposed participles αἰτιολογούντας and λέγοντας, 1-3) Origen influences the interpretation of his readers and bends the issue into his own frame: Celsus' rather indeterminate phrases are specified as indications of the 'ἐπιδημία (2) of Christ'. Besides Origen underlines the opposition Jews vs. Christians by stressing their disagreement concerning the advent of Christ (in the participles μέλλουσιν (2) 'still in the future' vs. ἤδη γεγεννημένης (3) 'already happened'). By doing so Origen seems to shift the focus to this disagreement, which is not Celsus' main point in the following quote.⁷

4.20.5-9 Celsus:

<p>5</p> <p>δὴ παρ' αὐτῷ λέγουσι πληρωθέντα τὸν βίον πάσης κακίας δεῖσθαι τοῦ καταπεμπομένου ἀπὸ θεοῦ, ἵν' οἱ μὲν ἄδικοι κολασθῶσι, τὰ δὲ πάντα καθαρῇ ἀνάλογον τῷ πρώτῳ συμβάντι κατακλυσμῷ.</p>	<p><i>Ἰουδαῖοι</i> <i>The Jews say, as Celsus really thinks, that</i> <i>as life is filled with all manner of evil it is</i> <i>necessary for God to send someone down</i> <i>that the wicked may be punished and</i> <i>everything purified, as it was when the</i> <i>first flood occurred.</i></p>
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In this passage⁸ Celsus represents an opinion of the Jews in an indirect speech. The first part of the accusative plus infinitive construction functions as Focus: 'the fact that life is full of all sorts of evil' (πληρωθέντα τὸν βίον πάσης κακίας (6); emphasis is given to πληρωθέντα and πάσης by the word order): because of this fullness of evil it is necessary that 'someone is sent down from God' (δεῖσθαι τοῦ καταπεμπομένου ἀπὸ θεοῦ, 7). In the following purpose clause (ἵν', 7) the constituents οἱ μὲν ἄδικοι (7) and τὰ δὲ πάντα (8) function as contrastive Topic, while the verbs κολασθῶσι (8) and καθαρῇ (8) have Focus function: punishment of unjust people and purification of everything is the aim of the mission of 'someone from God'. This statement attributed to the Jews is illustrated by Celsus with an analogy he puts into their mouth: just like the purification 'by the first flood' (ἀνάλογον τῷ πρώτῳ συμβάντι κατακλυσμῷ, 8-9).

The reason why Celsus represents this statement is not immediately clear in this context. Given his opinion about punishment of evil,⁹ we can understand that he rejects the idea that evil could be the cause for God to intervene and to send 'someone down'. So this, in his view censurable, Jewish notion of the fullness of evil is for him a new argument to criticize the idea of a divine descent.

⁶ Origen hints at the rhetorical term *prosopopoiia* (indicating that a speaker communicates with his audience by representing an imaginary of absent person as speaking). This device is used by Celsus in the fragments quoted in book 1-2, where Celsus introduces a Jew who speaks with Jesus and his fellow Jews and thus formulates the criticism of Celsus himself. Here only short statements of Jews and Christians are represented by Celsus in indirect speech (as far as we can understand from the fragments quoted). So in its full technical sense the rhetorical term seems to be not applicable here.

⁷ This opposition is a main point in the fragment quoted in 4.2.1-4, where the perfect καταβεβηκέναι and the future καταβήσεσθαι are in the Focus position. In 4.20.2-3 Celsus does not hint at this opposition; only in ἤδη πεπύμφθαι (4.22.3) appears that he was aware of it.

⁸ The words δὴ παρ' αὐτῷ (6) do not belong to Celsus' text: Origen inserts them to express that this obviously really (δὴ) is what Celsus says about the Jews.

⁹ That Celsus disagrees with these 'Jewish' ideas on punishment of evil appears more clearly in the fragments quoted in 4.62, 4.65 and 4.69, where he denies the increase and decrease of evil in the world and asserts that God does not need a reformation or correction of the world by a flood or a conflagration. See chapter VI 3.5.

4.20.9-11

Ἐπεὶ δὲ λέγονται καὶ Χριστιανοὶ Since he says that the Christians
 10 τούτοις προστιθέναι ἕτερα, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ τούτοις φησὶ ταῦτα add other ideas to these, he
 λέγεσθαι. obviously thinks that these
 opinions are held by them as well.

The first reaction of Origen is of a formal nature: he remarks that what is represented as the opinion of the Jews is implicitly attributed by Celsus to Christians as well. The scope particle καί (9) indicates that the applicability of the words is extended: ‘by them as well’. Origen argues that this is obvious (δῆλον, 10), because Celsus says (in 4.22.1-2) that ‘Christians add other ideas to these’. The Focus constituents in the subordinate clauses are positioned before the verbs: τούτοις (referring to the ‘Jewish’ statement) before προστιθέναι (10) and καὶ τούτοις (referring to Χριστιανοί) before φησι (10).

For Origen this remark is strategically important: concerning this subject no unnecessary wedge should be driven between Jews and Christians. God’s resistance against evil and the need for purification are essential elements of the *Christian* doctrine too.

4.20.11-18

Καὶ τί ἄτοπον ἐπὶ τῇ χύσει τῆς κακίας ἐπιδημήσειν Now why is it absurd to believe that
 τὸν ἀποκαθαροῦντα τὸν κόσμον καὶ ἐκάστῳ κατ’ ἀξίαν the person who purifies the world
 χρησόμενον; Οὐ γὰρ κατὰ τὸν θεόν ἐστι μὴ στήσαι τὴν τῆς because of the flood of wickedness
 κακίας νομὴν καὶ ἀνακαινῶσαι τὰ πράγματα. Ἰσασι δὲ καὶ will come and deal with each man
 15 Ἕλληνες κατακλυσμῷ ἢ πυρὶ τὴν γῆν κατὰ περιόδους according to his merits? It is not in
 καθαιρομένην, ὥς καὶ Πλάτων που οὕτω λέγει· «Ὅταν accord with God’s character not to
 δ’ οἱ θεοὶ τὴν γῆν ὑδασι καθαίροντες κατακλύζουσιν, οἱ μὲν stop the spread of evil and bring moral
 ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσι» καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς. renewal. The Greeks also have a
 doctrine that the earth is periodically
 purified by a flood or by fire, as Plato
 also says in one place as follows:
 ‘And then the gods flood the earth,
 purifying it with waters, some in the
 mountains.. .’ and so on.

Having established the previous point Origen switches to responding to the content of Celsus’ allegation. His defence position is aimed at justification of the Jewish-Christian standpoint (*status qualitatis*). Firstly he claims that this standpoint is not ‘absurd’, a statement which is formulated as a rhetorical question to enhance its persuasive power (τί ἄτοπον..., 11).¹⁰ In the wording of the standpoint Origen adopts the idea of the fullness of evil, but uses his favorite expression ἡ χύσις τῆς κακίας,¹¹ which functions here as Setting before the focal verb ἐπιδημήσειν (11). Origen uses future forms in three verbs, ἐπιδημήσειν, ἀποκαθαροῦντα and χρησόμενον (1-3), indicating that these events are located *after* the moment of speech. The use of the future in ἐπιδημήσειν indicates that Origen does not intend to speak about the incarnation here, for which he would have used the perfect.¹² He obviously refers to a divine

¹⁰ Arguments with ἄτοπον are often underlined by the use of *litotes*, in combination with a negative or in rhetorical questions, where the negative tendency is suggested. Some other examples: 1.36.27; 1.37.29; 1.48.10,17; 1.63.29; 2.2.3; 2.4.20; 4.48.32; 4.19.7,13; 4.43.11; 4.47.6; 6.45.13.

¹¹ See with some minor variations e.g. 1.9.27; 1.26.34; 1.32.26; 1.47.25; 2.29.12; 2.44.11; 3.71.20; 4.69.11; 5.55.14; 5.57.31; 6.45.27; 8.31.35; 8.42.31. Sometimes he uses also χύσις τῆς ἀμαρτίας e.g. in 1.4.15; 2.8.6; 5.15.29.

¹² Cf. the use of the perfect in this context some lines above (τῆς ἤδη γεγενημένης ἐπιδημίας, 4.20.3) and in 1.9.37; 1.60.26; 2.57.9; 2.75.29; 4.2.17; 4.8.6; 4.28.34; 5.38.19; 5.53.20. For the use of ἐπιδημία and ἐπιδημέω referring to the incarnation, see note on 4.1.34 above.

advent that will happen in the future.¹³ The element of ‘purification of the world’ (τὸν ἀποκαθαροῦντα τὸν κόσμον, 12) is derived from Celsus’ text¹⁴ and combined with the thought that all will be treated according to their merits (ἐκάστῳ κατ’ ἀξίαν χρησόμενον, 12-13).¹⁵ These two actions are attributed to ‘someone’ who will come: the identity of the personal *agens* is not expressed in the substantively used participles.

Origen continues with an explanation (γάρ, 13) of his statement that ‘it is not absurd’. He argues from what he believes to be not according God’s character (οὐ ... κατὰ τὸν θεόν, 13, Focus): viz. not to stop the spread of evil and not to bring renewal (στῆσαι and ἀνακαινῶσαι, 13-14). Subsequently (δέ, 14) he puts forward an analogy as an additional underlining of his statement. The scope of the purification idea is extended to the Greeks (καὶ Ἕλληνας, 14-15): a periodical purification of the earth by a flood or a conflagration is accepted by Celsus’ natural comrades. To prove this Origen quotes a fragment from Plato, an author whose authority is unquestioned by Celsus (*argumentum ad verecundiam*).¹⁶

4.20.18-25

Λεκτέον οὖν ὅτι ἄρ’ ἐὰν μὲν
ἐκεῖνοι ταῦτα φάσκωσι, σεμνά ἐστι καὶ λόγου ἄξια τὰ
20 ἀπαγγελλόμενα, ἐὰν δ’ ἡμεῖς τάδε τινὰ ὑπὸ Ἑλλήνων
ἐπαινούμενα καὶ αὐτοὶ κατασκευάζωμεν, οὐκέτι καλὰ ἐστι
ταῦτα δόγματα; Καίτοι γε οἷς μέλει τῆς πάντων γεγραμ-
μένων διαρθρώσεως καὶ ἀκριβείας πειράσσονται δεικνύναι οὐ
μόνον τὴν ἀρχαιότητα τῶν ταῦτα γραψάντων ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν
25 σεμνότητα τῶν λελεγμένων καὶ τὸ ἀκόλουθον αὐτοῖς.

Should it be said that if they say this
the opinions put forward are
impressive and significant, whereas if
we also maintain doctrines similar to
those approved by the Greeks then
they are good no longer? And yet,
those who are interested in the
exactness and accuracy of everything
in the Bible will try to show not only
the antiquity of the men who wrote
these things, but also the importance
of what they say and the consistency
of their teaching.

In this passage, which is marked by οὖν (18) as a separate part of the discourse, Origen comments on the analogy argument he just presented. The comment is worded as a rhetorical question introduced by ἄρ’ (18) and syntactically subordinated to Λεκτέον ὅτι (18).¹⁷ The question is divided into two parts (ἐὰν μὲν ... ἐὰν δέ (18-20), the subjunctive in the conditional clause refers to a generic/ habitual SoA), in which ἐκεῖνοι and ἡμεῖς (19-20)¹⁸ function as contrastive Topics. The Focus constituents are positioned at the head of the main clauses: σεμνά (19) and οὐκέτι καλὰ (21). Origen’s question touches the issue of what he presents as unequal treatment: if an opinion is put forward by Greeks it is praised, whereas the same opinion is disapproved if maintained by the Christians.¹⁹ The suggestion of unfairness is extra underlined by the form of the rhetorical question.

With Καίτοι γε (22)²⁰ Origen introduces a correction of what the reader might think after the

¹³ Cf. 2.38.14ff. where Origen explicitly speaks about the first advent of Christ (obviously silently opposing it to a second advent?): the purpose of his first advent was not to judge or punish, but ‘to sow the seed of his message’. A combination of the future of ἐπιδημέω (subject: God) with the idea of purification is found in 5.15.14ff.

¹⁴ Cf. 4.64.21 where the range of the purification by floods and conflagrations is tentatively expanded by Origen from the earth to the cosmos.

¹⁵ Similar descriptions of the divine judgement in 1.7.7-8; 3.31.19-20; 4.99.29-33; 5.16.20-25; 6.55.18-23.

¹⁶ *Timaeus* 22d, also quoted in 4.64.14 and 6.58.23; cf. 1.1.19; 4.11. Similar analogy with Greek opinions in 1.37.22ff.; 2.35.4ff.; 3.38.10; 4.3.50ff.; 4.45.16ff.; 5.15.1ff.; 6.58.21ff.; 7.3.13ff.

¹⁷ cf. LSJ s.v. ὅτι II: inserted as a pleonasm in introducing a quotation. Other examples of a similar combination of ὅτι ἄρα in 2.12.14; 2.76.56; 4.4.2; 6.50.18.

¹⁸ On the use of the first person see note on 4.3.1-4; 4.6.25-26 above, and chapter II 3.2.2.

¹⁹ For a similar argumentation see e.g. 4.17.6ff.; 4.30.21ff.; 4.38.65ff.; 7.59.5ff. See Reemts (1998: 63).

²⁰ Cf. CGCG (2019:675 §59.23): ‘introducing objections [...]; the καίτοι-segment shows that (an element of) the preceding context is to be rejected.’

preceding remarks. His intention is not only to achieve an equal treatment for Christian opinions, but rather to call for respect for the Scriptures. This call is addressed to Origen's fellows, who are characterized by him in such a way that no well-educated Christian is enabled to evade the feeling being talked to: 'those who are interested in the well-articulated and exact analysis of the complete text (of the Bible)' (οἷς μέλει τῆς πάντων γεγραμμένων διαρθρώσεως καὶ ἀκριβείας, 22-23). It sounds almost as a description of Origen's own position. In the main clause Origen formulates what goal will be pursued by people with these interests. The future *πειράσονται* (23) is inferential:²¹ the goal can be inferred from their interest. Origen mentions three qualities of the Scriptures to focus on: the antiquity of the biblical authors (τὴν ἀρχαιότητα τῶν ταῦτα γραψάντων, 24),²² the dignity of the words (τὴν σεμνότητα τῶν λελεγμένων, 24-25²³) and the coherency of the message (τὸ ἀκόλουθον αὐτοῖς, 25). The use of οὐ μόνον ... ἀλλὰ καὶ (23-24) marks the significance of the three-part enumeration and contributes to the laudatory nature of the final clause of this chapter.

4.21.1-3 Celsus (embedded):

1 Οὐκ οἶδα δ' ὅπως παραπλησίως τῷ κατακλυσμῷ καθήραντι τὴν γῆν, ὡς ὁ Ἰουδαίων καὶ Χριστιανῶν βούλεται λόγος, οἶεται καὶ τὴν τοῦ πύργου κατάρριψιν γεγονέναι.

For some unknown reason he thinks that *the overthrow of the tower had a similar purpose to that of the flood which*, according to the doctrine of Jews and Christians, *purified the earth*.

In the next passage (introduced by δ') we encounter fragments from Celsus' book which are integrated in Origen's own text. The first utterance is embedded in words in which Origen expresses that he does not understand the logic of Celsus' statement (οὐκ οἶδα ὅπως, 1; οἶεται, 3). In this fragment Celsus seems to continue his discourse by picking up the word 'flood' (κατακλυσμῷ, 1) from the previous fragment (quoted in 4.20). He puts two Genesis stories side by side: the destruction of the Tower of Babel would have happened 'in a way nearly resembling the Flood that purified the earth' (παραπλησίως τῷ κατακλυσμῷ καθήραντι τὴν γῆν, 1-2). This participle clause is determined by a subordinate clause (ὡς ὁ Ἰουδαίων καὶ Χριστιανῶν βούλεται λόγος, 2-3), in which the verb βούλεται causes hyperbaton in the noun phrase. This word order marks the Focus constituent Ἰουδαίων καὶ Χριστιανῶν: here the salient point of information has to be sought.

We may ask whether this subordinate clause has to be considered as part of Celsus' text or as an inserted comment made by Origen.²⁴ Borret chooses the latter option: he does not print it in italics.²⁵ But I see no evident reason for Origen to insert these words. It seems to me that it might be better to attribute (a part of) the clause to Celsus. In the previous quote (4.20.8-9) Celsus had ascribed to the *Jews* the opinion about the purifying effect of the first flood, obviously without consenting himself. So it fits in Celsus' discourse to show that he represents the opinion of his opponents here. The use of the verb βούλεται underlines this desire to keep his distance, for which is, as it seems, no reason when these words are considered to be Origen's inserted comment.²⁶ The only words in this phrase I would possibly attribute to Origen are καὶ Χριστιανῶν (2): in the previous words of Celsus the Jews were mentioned,

²¹ See chapter II 4.5.

²² Cf. on the antiquity of Moses and the prophets 1.16; 4.11.14ff.; 4.21; 4.36.21-27; 6.10.10; 6.15.10; 6.43.4; 7.28.28-29; see on the chronology argument Reemts (1998: 183-192).

²³ Note the tense difference in the participles γραψάντων and λελεγμένων. In the first participle the aorist indicates that the activity of the writers is completed, whereas the perfect of λελεγμένων refers to the text of the Scriptures as an available and still relevant result of the 'speaking' in the past (as in γεγραμμένων, 22-23).

²⁴ For a general discussion on the reconstruction of Celsus' text and the delineation of quotes see Arnold (2016:5-12).

²⁵ Borret (Vol.2, 1968: 232, printed above). So do Chadwick (1953:197) and Fiedrowicz & Bartold (Vol.3, 2011:696).

²⁶ In this context βούλεται means 'wants to assert/ to defend' and indicates that the author rejects the opinion or distances himself from it. Other examples of this use without infinitive in 2.13.13; 2.36.5; 2.42.1; 5.51.12; 7.41.1,11,19; 8.26.8.

not the Christians. Moreover, it was Origen who defended in 4.20 that the Christians concerning this issue stand side by side with the Jews. So it is in line with his remarks to add the Christians in this phrase.²⁷ However a final answer to this attribution problem is hard to achieve given that fact that Origen integrated this fragment in his own comment.

4.21.4-11

ἵνα γὰρ μηδὲν αἰνίσσεται ἡ κατὰ τὸν πύργον ἱστορία
5 κειμένη ἐν τῇ Γενέσει ἀλλ' ὥς οἶται Κέλσος, σαφὲς
 τυγχάνη, οὐ δ' οὕτως φαίνεται ἐπὶ καθαρσίῳ τῆς γῆς
 τοῦτο συμβεβηκέναι· εἰ μὴ ἄρα καθάρσιον τῆς γῆς οἶται
 τὴν καλουμένην τῶν γλωσσῶν «σύγχυσιν»· περὶ ἧς ὁ
10 δυνάμενος εὐκαιρότερον διηγήσεται, ἐπὶ τὸ προκειμένον ἢ
 παραστῆσαι καὶ τὰ τῆς κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἱστορίας, τίνα ἔχοι
 λόγον, καὶ τὰ τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ ἀναγωγῆς.

Supposing that *the story about the tower in Genesis contains no hidden truth* but, as Celsus thinks, *is obvious*, even so its overthrow does not seem to have happened for the purification of the earth – unless perhaps he imagines that the so-called confusion of tongues was a purification of the earth. A competent student would explain this at a more opportune moment when it is his task to show both the literal sense of the passage and its mystical interpretation.

The next fragment from Celsus – embedded again in Origen's text – contains Celsus' opinion that the story about the Tower has no hidden truth (μηδὲν αἰνίσσεται, 4²⁸), but is obvious (σαφὲς, 5). This fragment is introduced as an explanation (γὰρ, 4) of Origen's οὐκ οἶδα ὅπως (1). Origen quotes Celsus' words within a subordinate clause introduced by ἵνα (4),²⁹ in which he indicates that he is willing to accept for now the statement of Celsus, just for the sake of the discussion, without giving his ultimate consent. By this means Origen succeeds in raising doubts concerning Celsus' statement without really dealing with it. Besides he underplays the importance of this issue: the real argument in this case is a different one. This is presented in the main clause: the destruction of the Tower 'seems not to have happened for the purification of the earth' (οὐ ... φαίνεται ἐπὶ καθαρσίῳ τῆς γῆς τοῦτο συμβεβηκέναι, 6-7). This rejection of Celsus' comparison is followed by the presentation of an exception (εἰ μὴ, 7) which is modified by the attitudinal particle ἄρα (7, 'surprisingly'):³⁰ Celsus' statement can only be true if he considers the 'confusion of tongues' (τὴν καλουμένην τῶν γλωσσῶν σύγχυσιν, 8) to be a purification of the earth. It seems to me that Origen's remark can have a double meaning: on the one hand he suggests that it is not probable that Celsus really meant that the confusion of the tongues is 'the purification of the earth' and that his comparison stories of the Flood and the Tower is therefore without foundation. On the other hand he offers to his Christian readers a hint of an exegesis of the Tower story that contains an element of purification and which – to his own surprise (ἄρα, 7) – could be related to Celsus' mistake.

Origen concludes his response to this fragment with a remark about a separate exegesis of the story of the Tower and the confusion of tongues. He explains to the reader why this exegesis is not given now:

²⁷ In 4.12.16 and 4.64.21-24 Origen himself defends the idea of purification by floods.

²⁸ For αἰνίσσομαι in this sense see 1.38.5; 3.43.6; 4.34.9; 6.21.13; 6.23.8; 6.25.4; 6.42.19,40,54 (Celsus). On Celsus protest against the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament see Cook (2000: 70-71).

²⁹ See Lampe s.v. ἵνα 3 'supposing that'; other examples in 1.21.3; 4.5.19; 7.13.15.

³⁰ On ἄρα in conditional clauses see Wakker (1994:343-350). Ἄρα functions as a modal particle by which the speaker expresses his surprise. The combination εἰ μὴ ἄρα is used to introduce an exception; in some cases the speaker indicates that he is positive (or neutral) about the surprisingly occurring exception (e.g. 2.10.9; 3.16.3; 7.68.35), but often there is a connotation of bad surprise: 'unexpectedly and also unwished for'. Origen uses this combination to denote an ironical exception: the previous rejection of a statement of the opponent is seemingly suspended by the presentation of an exception (a possible escape for the opponent), which however is so improbable or unacceptable that the rejection is even more justified. Examples: 3.57.3; 3.80.23; 4.83.37; 5.55.28; 6.57.6; 8.35.13.

this is not the right moment³¹ and a competent person is required (ὁ δυνάμενος (8-9): with this participle Origen indicates that this is a major task and suggests with a sense of modesty that he perhaps is not the right person to perform it³²). Yet he makes clear what are the requirements of such an exegesis: to account for both its literal (τίνα ἔχει λόγον, 10-11) and spiritual meaning (τὰ τῆς ... ἀναγωγῆς, 11³³). In fact later on in the book such an explanation of the story is offered by Origen himself in response to other words of Celsus.³⁴

4.21.11-23

Ἐπεὶ δ' οἶται Μωϋσέα, τὸν ἀναγράψαντα τὰ περὶ τοῦ πύργου καὶ τῆς τῶν διαλέκτων συγχύσεως, παραφθείροντα τὰ περὶ τῶν Ἀλωέως υἱῶν ἱστορούμενα τοιαῦτα περὶ τοῦ πύργου ἀναγεγραφέναι, 15 λεκτέον ὅτι τὰ μὲν περὶ τῶν Ἀλωέως υἱῶν οὐκ οἶμαι πρὸ Ὀμήρου τινὰ εἰρηκέναι, τὰ δὲ περὶ τοῦ πύργου, πολλῶ πρεσβύτερα Ὀμήρου ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς τῶν ἐλληνικῶν γραμμάτων εὐρέσεως ὄντα, τὸν Μωϋσέα ἀναγεγραφέναι πείθομαι. Τίνες οὖν μᾶλλον τὰ τίνων παραφθείρουσιν; Ἄρα τὰ περὶ 20 τοῦ πύργου οἱ περὶ Ἀλωέως υἱῶν ἱστοροῦντες, ἢ τὰ τῶν Ἀλωειδῶν ὁ τὰ περὶ τοῦ πύργου καὶ τῆς συγχύσεως τῶν διαλέκτων γράψας; Ἀλλὰ φαίνεται τοῖς ἀδεκάστοις ἀκροαταῖς ἀρχαιότερος Μωϋσῆς ὢν Ὀμήρου.

He thinks, however, that *Moses* who wrote about the tower and the confusion of languages corrupted the story about the sons of Aloeus when he composed the narrative about the tower. I reply that no one before Homer, I think, tells the story of the sons of Aloeus; whereas I am convinced that the story about the tower recorded by Moses is much earlier than Homer and even than the invention of the Greek alphabet. Who, then, is more likely to have corrupted the stories of the other? Is it that those who tell the story of the sons of Aloeus are corrupting that of the tower, or that those who wrote of the tower and the confusion of languages are corrupting that of the Aloadae? For unprejudiced hearers, however, Moses was evidently more ancient than Homer.

Origen continues with his next section (δ', 11) in which he quotes, embedded again in his own text, the next passage from Celsus' book: 'in his text about the Tower Moses corrupted the myth about the sons of Aloeus'.³⁵ This approach matches with Celsus' view that Christianity is a corruption of the ancient truths that are handed over in a better form by Homer and Greek philosophers.³⁶ The focus in the quote from Celsus is on the participle παραφθείροντα (13), which is placed in the front position in its clause. Borret (Vol.2, 1968:232) is right in interpreting the words καὶ τῆς τῶν διαλέκτων συγχύσεως (12-13) as

³¹ εὐκαιρότερον: it will be given at 'a more appropriate moment';

³² Similar use of ὁ δυνάμενος (combined with a future or a third person imperative) in 5.19.12; 5.31.10; 6.9.22; 6.39.9; 8.32.7. Origen himself, moreover, had published a commentary on *Genesis* (only fragments are known to us). So how real is the 'modesty'?

³³ See Lampe s.v. ἀναγωγή B *anagogical sense of scripture*.

³⁴ See 5.29-32 where he presents an allegorical explanation of the Tower story combined with the theme of the 'division of the peoples' (*Deut.* 32.8-9). The stories are related to the mysterious way in which 'souls became bound to a body' (5.29.45-47; cf. *De principiis* 1.5.2). The division to different regions, with different languages and different supervising angels is a penalty for the boldness of the souls that did not pay attention to the divine light of wisdom. The penalty is different for each of the sinners ('in proportion to the amount of bricks made into stones and of clay into asphalt and to the size of the building made out of them', 5.30.20-23). In this passage Origen presents an outline of the spiritual history of the salvation of pagans, Jews and Christians in which two movements can be discerned: one of separation ending in a multitude of people and one of restoration leading to a united community. Purification as the aim of punishment is not explicitly mentioned in this passage, but elsewhere Origen connects the two, e.g. in 5.16.21-24; 6.25.24-25; *De principiis* 2.9.8.

³⁵ See Homer, *Ilias* 5.385-387; *Odyssea* 11.305-320: Otos and Ephialtes, the sons of Aloeus, wanted to pile up three mountains (Ossa, Pelion, Olympus) to reach the heaven. See Andresen (1955:149-150) who refers to Philo, *De confusione linguarum* 4.

³⁶ Cf. 1.14; 1.16; 1.21.

an addition by Origen: this notion plays a role in Origen's discourse, but was not present in Celsus' text, as far as we can see. Moreover, the myth of the sons of Aloeus piling mountains corresponds with the construction of the tower, not with the confusion of the tongues; so it is improbable that Celsus would have mentioned this element.

Origen presents the statement about the corruption right from the start as Celsus' opinion ('Επεὶ δ' οἶται, 11). With λεκτέον ὅτι (15) Origen introduces his reply, in which his own subjectivity is expressed in the verbs (οἶμαι (15) – 'I think'; πείθομαι (18) – 'I believe'). The first verb is related to the date of the myth of the sons of Aloeus (not before Homer), the second to Moses, who wrote his story about the Tower long before Homer and even before the invention of the Greek alphabet. The clause is divided into two parts by μέν ... δέ (15-16). In the first part τὰ μὲν περὶ τῶν Ἀλωέως υἱῶν (15) is Topic and πρὸ Ὁμήρου τινά is in the Focus position. The second part the contrasting constituents function as Topic (τὰ δὲ περὶ τοῦ πύργου, 16) and Focus (τὸν Μωϋσέα, 18).

The conclusion (οὖν, 19) from this is worded as a rhetorical question: 'Who is more likely to corrupt the stories of whom?' The two possible answers are subsequently explicitly worded by Origen, again in a question form (Ἄρα, 19). These questions are used as instruments to involve the addressees in the discourse (diaphony). The constituents referring to the stories function Topic here (τὰ περὶ τοῦ πύργου, τὰ τῶν Ἀλωειδῶν, 19-21), the phrases referring to the authors as Focus (οἱ ... ἱστοροῦντες, ὁ ... γράψας, 20-22). The different tenses of the participles correspond to the difference between the oral myth tradition and the written character of the biblical stories: the present ἱστοροῦντες represents the story telling as a continuous, not completed action; the aorist γράψας indicates that Moses writing action is completed.³⁷

This question section is interrupted by Origen (Ἀλλά, 22) who formulates the obvious answer: 'for the unprejudiced hearer it is apparent³⁸ that Moses (Focus) is more ancient than Homer.'³⁹ The adjective ἀδεκάστοις (22) is marked by its position before the noun: it contains the subtle suggestion that Celsus is not unprejudiced.

4.21.24-30

Καὶ τὰ περὶ Σοδόμων δὲ καὶ Γομόρρων ὑπὸ Μωϋσέως
25 ἱστορούμενα ἐν τῇ Γενέσει, ὥς διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν πυρὶ
 ἐξαφανισθέντων, παραβάλλει ὁ Κέλσος τῇ κατὰ τὸν Φαέθοντα
 ἱστορίᾳ, ἐνὶ σφάλματι, τῷ περὶ τοῦ μὴ τετηρηκέναι τὰ τῆς
 Μωϋσέως ἀρχαιότητος, ἀκολούθως πάντα ποιήσας. Οἱ γὰρ
 τὰ περὶ Φαέθοντος ἱστοροῦντες εἰκότασι καὶ Ὁμήρου νεώτεροι,
30 τοῦ πολλῷ Μωϋσέως νεωτέρου.

Celsus also compares *with the story of Phaethon the narrative told by Moses in Genesis about Sodom and Gomorrah, that they were destroyed by fire on account of their sins*. All that he has done is the consequence of one mistake: he failed to notice the evidence of Moses' antiquity. For those who relate the story of Phaethon seem to have been even more recent than Homer, who was far more recent than Moses.

Origen proceeds to a section in which fragments from Celsus' text are quoted, integrated again in Origen's sentence. With καί (24) this section about a *Genesis* story is connected to the preceding remarks

³⁷ Notice that some lines below (4.21.25) the story about Sodom and Gomorrah is indicated by the present participle τὰ ... ἱστορούμενα. Here however it is Celsus' text: his representation of the 'status' of the story seems to differ from Origen's.

³⁸ φαίνομαι + participle denotes what can be seen, what is evident, apparent; see e.g. 1.54.9; 1.70.9; 2.12.26; 2.63.5. Cf. LSJ s.v. φαίνω B II; Lampe s.v. φαίνω 3; CGCG (2019:613 §52.10).

³⁹ See Borret (Vol.2, 1968:232-233 n.3), Droge (1989:157-167), Feldman (1990:120-121), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:78) on the theme of the priority of Moses (and the prophets) which was a *locus communis* in ancient Christian apology (other references in *Contra Celsum*: 4.11.12-25; 6.7.1-5; 6.19.8-10,23-26; 6.43.3-6; 7.28.27-29). In 4.39 Origen discusses correspondences between elements in Plato's text and biblical stories: coincidence or did Plato knew these stories? See Reemts (1998:186-187).

on a story from the same book, whereas δέ (24) serves to mark the contrast: after a discussion about the Tower Celsus now introduces the tale of two cities.⁴⁰ I agree with Borret's attribution of the words to Celsus respectively Origen. Celsus' remark contains two elements: 'The story about Sodom and Gomorrah, destroyed by fire because of their sin', and 'the story of Phaethon'.⁴¹ The connecting element is obviously that in Celsus' view this *Genesis* story, just like the previous one mentioned above, is a corrupted version⁴² of the Greek myth. An additional link to the fragment quoted in 4.20 is the notion of 'sin' (διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν (25), the constituent that functions as Setting in the ὡς-clause) and the destruction by fire (πυρὶ ἐξαφανισθέντων, 25-26): Celsus is currently enumerating stories that illustrate what he presents as the 'opinion of the Jews': it was the spread of *evil* that caused divine intervention.

Origen prepares his defence by adding ὑπὸ Μωϋσέως (24, in the Focus position before the participle ἱστορούμενα, 25) and ἐν τῇ Γενέσει (25) to Celsus' text: he frames the story about Sodom and Gomorrah as a part of the *Scriptures* (and not just an oral transmitted tale), written by no one other than *Moses*, whose antiquity will be Origen's main argument (see τὰ τῆς Μωϋσέως ἀρχαιότητα, 27-28).

Origen's evaluation of Celsus' statement follows immediately after its presentation in a participle clause. The antithesis ἐνί - πάντα (27-28) underlines the failure Origen attributes to his opponent: *all* is based on *one* mistake. The perfect τετηρηκέναι (27) refers to the permanent consequences of 'not having noticed' Moses' antiquity: it caused a fundamental misunderstanding which still is apparent from Celsus' views.⁴³

Origen explains his argument in the next sentence introduced by γάρ (28). He uses a two-stage formula to underline Celsus' misunderstanding: the story of Phaethon is younger than Homer, who is younger than Moses. As Topic functions Οἱ ... ἱστοροῦντες (28-29). This is followed by a Broad-Focus phrase, in which Ὀμήρου is extra marked by the scope particle καί (29, 'even'): 'the people that tell the Phaethon story seem⁴⁴ to have been *even* more recent than *Homer*'. In the second stage Moses functions as central point: 'Homer is far more recent than Moses'.

4.21.30-38

30

Οὐκ ἄρνούμεθα οὖν τὸ καθάρσιον πῦρ καὶ τὴν τοῦ κόσμου φθορὰν ἐπὶ καθαιρέσει τῆς κακίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ παντός, λέγοντες παρὰ τῶν προφητῶν ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶν βιβλίων μεμαθηκέναι. Ἐπὶ μὲντοι, ὡς ἐν τοῖς ἀνωτέρω εἰρήκαμεν, πολλὰ περὶ μελλόντων οἱ 35 προφηται λέγοντες ἀποδεικνύονται περὶ πολλῶν παρεληλυθότων ἡληθευκέναι καὶ δεῖγμα διδόναι τοῦ θεῖου πνεύματος ἐν αὐτοῖς γεγονέναι, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ περὶ τῶν μελλόντων πιστευτέον αὐτοῖς, μᾶλλον δὲ τῷ ἐν αὐτοῖς θεῷ πνεύματι.

Accordingly, we do not deny the reality of the purifying fire and the destruction of the world to destroy evil and renew the universe, since we say that we have learnt these things from the prophets out of the sacred books. However, since, as we have said above, the prophets who made many predictions of the future are proved to have spoken the truth concerning many events which have come to pass, and give proof that there was a divine Spirit in them, obviously we also ought to believe them, or rather the

⁴⁰ On καὶ ... δέ see chapter II 5.2 note *sub* δέ and my commentary on 4.3.24 above.

⁴¹ Cf. 1.19.14. Phaethon was the son of Helios, the sun. He got permission to drive the chariot of the sun for one day, but caused disasters on the earth, so that Zeus eventually killed him. (See Euripides, *Hippolytus* 735-741, Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.750-2.400).

⁴² Origen seems to weaken this notion here using the more neutral term παραβάλλει: Celsus 'compares' the two stories.

⁴³ The perfect is typically used by orators to present negative characteristics of the opponents, see Nijk (2013:245-246).

⁴⁴ Using εἰκοτα Origen formulates strictly spoken with some reserve ('as it seems'), but mostly he uses this formula not without some irony in a context where he shows little doubts (cf. φαίνεται ... ὡς above in 4.21.22-23). See e.g. 1.6.4; 1.16.14; 1.18.18; 2.33.18; 4.2.9; 4.71.9; 5.36.29; 5.54.16.

divine Spirit in them, concerning events which are still future.

The particle οὖν (30) indicates the start of the next step in the discourse: Origen picks up the notion of the ‘purifying fire’ and uses it as an opportunity for a constructive passage about restoration and prophecy. The section is introduced by the litotes Οὐκ ἄρνούμεθα (30, ‘we do not deny’):⁴⁵ the idea of the purifying fire and the destruction of the cosmos is adopted⁴⁶ and connected to two aims: the demolition of evil and the restoration of the universe.⁴⁷ The sentence is concluded with a participle clause in which Origen refers to the origin of his view: it is based on the teachings of the prophets from the holy Bible,⁴⁸ an authoritative argumentation that is typically Christian and will be accepted by the Christian readers. The perfect infinitive μεμαθηκέναι (33) refers to the permanent effect the education of the past has on Origen’s belief of today.

The final sentence of 4.21 is characterized by μέντοι as a digression.⁴⁹ Origen emphasizes the credibility of the prophets, a passage which sounds as an appeal, although nobody is addressed literally. Origen uses impersonal forms (δῆλον, πιστευτέον, 37-38), maybe to avoid embarrassment that might be caused by a too direct appeal. At the same time these forms extend the possible addressees: this remark is not just addressed to Celsus, but to all the Christian readers. The subordinate clause that precedes this appeal, is introduced by Ἐπὶ (33) followed by a subjunctive: Origen formulates a presupposition (‘given’, ‘since’), which is used here in a habitual/ generic context (as is indicated by the subjunctive).⁵⁰ The presupposition is worded in a nominative plus infinitive construction (οἱ προφηταὶ ... ἀποδεικνύονται ... ἠληθεύκοντες, 34-36⁵¹). The main line can be rendered as follows: the prophets are proved to have spoken the truth concerning the past (and to show that a divine spirit was in them). The proof for this presupposition is not given here: Origen refers to a previous discussion on this subject (ὡς ἐν τοῖς ἀνωτέρω εἰρήκαμεν, 34).⁵² Origen’s focus here however is not on what prophets said about the past, but on their sayings concerning the future: the constituent πολλὰ περὶ μελλόντων (34), which is given a prominent place in the subordinated clause, is marked by the separation from its participle λέγοντες (35). This constituent foreshadows the focus element of the final section in the sentence: καὶ περὶ τῶν μελλόντων (37, placed before the verbal element πιστευτέον, 38): we have to trust⁵³ prophets also in their utterances concerning the future, since they are proved to have spoken the truth concerning the past, an argument based on analogy. Origen presents this statement as ‘obvious’ (δῆλον ὅτι, 37), a persuasive approach often used to save oneself the necessity of arguments. The only background Origen offers here is pointing – in both parts of the sentence – at the divine spirit (θεῖον πνεῦμα, 36), who is ‘in them’ (ἐν αὐτοῖς, 37). The self-correction μᾶλλον δέ (38) emphasizes this point: we have to believe not just the prophets, but rather the divine Spirit in them.⁵⁴

⁴⁵ Who are ‘we’? Origen certainly refers to himself, but seems to imply that the opinion is shared by all Christians, thus involving his readers also. This is not the case in εἰρήκαμεν (34), which in the discourse organizing remark refers to the author only.

⁴⁶ Cf. the discussion on the nature of the soul and the world (material? immortal? destruction?) in 4.57-61. See also 6.58.17ff.; 6.71.15ff.

⁴⁷ Cf. a similar combination in 4.20.13-14.

⁴⁸ Cf. 4.13; 5.15-17; 6.25.32ff.; 6.70-72 where Origen discusses the effect of fire with reference to passages from the prophets Daniel, Malachi and Isaiah.

⁴⁹ See on the PUSH function of μέντοι my commentary on 4.2.29 (note) above.

⁵⁰ See Wakker (1994:197-202) on the difference between conditionals (as εἰ), which refer to disjunctive situations, and temporal conjunctions (as ἐπει): the latter are ‘so-called *presupposition triggers*, i.e. the use of a temporal conjunction presupposes the realization of the SoA designated by the temporal clause’. In habitual contexts an ἐπεὶ-clause (with subjunctive) is interpreted as indicating that the SoA in the ἐπεὶ-clause *always* obtains in the situation in question (Wakker 1994:198).

⁵¹ Notice the perfect here and in γεγονέναι. On the use of the perfect in connection to prophecy see chapter II 4.4.

⁵² On prophets see 1.36-37; 3.2-4. The perfect εἰρήκαμεν denotes the permanent relevance of Origen’s previous remarks.

⁵³ On Origen’s opinion on the role of πίστις (trust/ belief/ confidence) in persuasive situations see chapter III 5.

⁵⁴ Similar use of μᾶλλον δέ in 3.14.6; 3.68.20. For the divine Spirit working in the prophets see 1.35.31; 1.36.1-2; 3.3.20; 3.28.23; 6.19.15-16; 6.81.6; 7.4.2-3; 7.10.13-15; 7.18.25.

4.22.1-5 Celsus:

Καὶ Χριστιανοὶ δὲ κατὰ τὸν Κέλσον προστιθέντες
 τινὰς λόγους τοῖς ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων λεγομένοις φασὶ διὰ τὰς
 τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀμαρτίας ἤδη πεπέμφθαι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ,
 καὶ ὅτι Ἰουδαῖοι κολάσαντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ χολὴν ποτίσαντες
 5 ἐπὶ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐκ θεοῦ χόλον ἐπεσπάσαντο.

According to Celsus: *Christians also add certain doctrines to those maintained by the Jews, and assert that the Son of God has already come on account of the sins of the Jews, and that because the Jews punished Jesus and gave him gall to drink they drew down upon themselves the bitter anger of God.*

Here a quote from Celsus is reproduced, with a minimal interruption from Origen (κατὰ τὸν Κέλσον, 1). Celsus presents a second reason for a divine descent that in his view is used by the Christians in addition to the reason put forward by the Jews (quoted in 4.20). The additional status of the argument is emphasized by the prominent position of the participle προστιθέντας (1) in the Setting constituent.

In the wording of ‘Christian’ reason two parts can be discerned: an accusative plus infinitive is connected by καὶ to a ὅτι-clause (4). In the first part the perfect is used to demonstrate the Christian conviction that the advent of the ‘son of God’ is a fact of the past: he ‘already has been sent’ (ἤδη πεπέμφθαι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, 3). The focus is in this phrase however on the first constituent: ‘because of the sins of the Jews’ (διὰ τὰς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀμαρτίας (2-3), corresponding with the parallel words πληρωθέντα τὸν βίον ἀσπης κακίας in 4.20.6): Celsus shows that to the general ‘Jewish’ reason (the ubiquity of evil) is added the ‘Christian’ specific reason (the sins of the Jews).

The second part of the sentence contains an additional element: the Jews (Topic) drew upon them God’s anger (Focus), ‘because they punished Jesus and gave him gall⁵⁵ to drink’ (κολάσαντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ χολὴν ποτίσαντες (4), Setting).⁵⁶ The Greek text contains a play on words (χολήν – χόλον, 4-5).⁵⁷

4.22.5-10

5 Ἐλεγχέτω
 δὴ τὸ λεγόμενον ὡς ψεῦδος ὁ βουλόμενος, εἰ μὴ ἀνάστατον τὸ
 πάντων Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος γεγένηται οὐδὲ μετὰ γενεὰν ὅλην
 μίαν τοῦ ταῦτα πεπονθέναι ὑπ’ αὐτῶν τὸν Ἰησοῦν· τεσσα-
 ράκοντα γὰρ ἔτη καὶ δύο οἶμαι ἀφ’ οὗ ἐσταύρωσαν τὸν
 10 Ἰησοῦν γεγονέναι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἱεροσολύμων καθαίρεσιν.

I definitely challenge anyone to prove this statement untrue if the entire Jewish nation was not driven away from its country even less than one whole generation after Jesus had suffered these things from them. For it was, I believe, forty-two years from the time when they crucified Jesus to the destruction of Jerusalem.

In his response Origen seems to opt for a justification of the ‘Christian’ view Celsus presented: his initial words contain a challenge to anyone to prove that ‘the utterance’ is a lie. We may ask what Origen

⁵⁵ Celsus refers also to this detail in 2.37.2 and 7.13.13.

⁵⁶ Are these facts, the punishing of Jesus and the providing of gall, to be considered as a specification of the ‘sins of the Jews’ mentioned in the first part? This seems to be an attractive interpretation, but how is then the chronology? If it is accepted that ‘the son of God’ is identical with ‘Jesus’, then this ‘son’ has already been sent down (perfect) because of sins that would be committed at the end of his life, which is improbable. What did Celsus mean (the Christians meant) by διὰ τὰς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀμαρτίας (2-3)? Sins committed by the Jews before Jesus came to the earth? Origen does not explicitly express his opinion on this issue.

⁵⁷ ‘Paronomasia’ (or *annominatio*): connection of two words, in which a (little) difference in the sound of the words causes a surprising (or paradoxal) change in meaning. See Lausberg (1976:90-91).

means by τὸ λεγόμενον (6): the content of Celsus' quote as a whole or only the last part of it?⁵⁸ As far as can be deduced from the rest of the chapter the second option seems to be the most probable one: he agrees with the last remark especially, discusses the reality of the 'Jewish sins' and finally changes the focus into the issue of the globalization of the salvation. Celsus' real point ('God's Son has been sent because of the sins of the Jews') is not discussed by Origen. Reframing the debate seems to be Origen's strategy in this chapter.

In this passage Origen's first phrase is marked by the interactional particle δὴ (6): by asking special attention the appeal to the reader is reinforced. By using a third person imperative (Ἐλεγχέτω, 5) in combination with the nominalized participle ὁ βουλόμενος (6) the invitation or challenge is given a general character, which in fact underlines the force of his statement.⁵⁹ However, the character of this invitation is modified by the following εἰ μή-clause. The conditional can be interpreted as an illocutionary conditional,⁶⁰ which specifies the condition for the appropriateness of the invitation: the challenge to prove that τὸ λεγόμενον is a lie is (only) relevant 'if the Jewish nation is not driven away from its country' (εἰ μὴ ἀνάστατον ... γεγένηται (6-7), in which ἀνάστατον is given the Focus position), even within a generation after Jesus' sufferings⁶¹. In the next sentence Origen explains (γάρ, 9) that this did happen to the Jews: Jerusalem was destroyed forty-two years⁶² after Jesus' crucifixion.⁶³ The implication of Origen's remarks is, worded in a positive and more explicit way: 'since it is evident that the Jews were driven away and Jerusalem is destroyed shortly after Jesus' sufferings, the invitation to prove the mendacity is irrelevant and unnecessary (for it cannot be denied that the Jews obviously drew God's anger upon them).⁶⁴ In this context the invitation Ἐλεγχέτω (5) can be interpreted as ironical.

4.22.10-16

10

οὐδέ ποτε γὰρ ἱστορήται, ἐξ οὗ Ἰουδαῖοι εἰσι, τοσοῦτον αὐτοὺς χρόνον ἐκβεβλήσθαι τῆς σεμνῆς ἀγιστείας καὶ λατρείας, κρατηθέντας ὑπὸ δυνατωτέρων· ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ ποτε ἔδοξαν δι' ἁμαρτίας καταλείπεσθαι, οὐδὲν ἦττον ἐπεσκοπή-
15 θησαν καὶ ἐπανελθόντες τὰ ἴδια ἀπειλήφασιν, ἀκωλύτως ποιοῦντες τὰ νενομισμένα.

Καὶ

Indeed, ever since the Jews existed, it has not been recorded in history that they were ejected for so long a time from their sacred ritual and worship, after they had been conquered by some more powerful people. Even if sometimes they did seem to have been deserted on account of their sins, nevertheless they were under God's care and returned to resume their own property and to perform the customary ritual without hindrance.

By καὶ οὐδέ ποτε γὰρ (10-11) the next section is introduced, in which the special nature of the historical facts mentioned before is even more highlighted by contrasting them with accounts of the previous

⁵⁸ The interpretation of Chadwick (1953: 198) seems to be improbable: in his view τὸ λεγόμενον announces Origen's own statement which follows in εἰ μή ... (in his translation 'my statement ... if I say that ...'; but how can εἰ μή be translated in this way?).

⁵⁹ Similar combinations (with ὁ βουλόμενος or ὁ δυνάμενος) in 2.16.49; 2.71.12; 3.81.10; 4.53.25; 5.31.10; 8.18.19; 8.19.5; 8.32.7.

⁶⁰ See Wakker (1994:236ff.) and note on 4.5.29 above.

⁶¹ The constituent οὐδὲ μετὰ γενεὰν ὅλην μίαν τοῦ ταῦτα πεπονθέναι ὑπ' αὐτῶν τὸν Ἰησοῦν (7-8) can be rendered as 'even not after one whole generation (was over) (in which) Jesus has suffered these things from them'. The genitive τοῦ ... πεπονθέναι formulates a qualification of γενεάν (the generation of the suffering ...).

⁶² On this number see Chadwick (1953:199 n.1).

⁶³ Mark the prominent position of the time markers μετὰ γενεὰν ὅλην μίαν (7-8) and τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη καὶ δύο (8-9): the relative short period is Origen's argument to connect the disastrous events of the Jews and the sufferings of Jesus. The use of the perfect in γεγένηται (7) and γεγονέναι (10) helps to indicate that these events, although completed in the past, are still relevant in the present discussion.

⁶⁴ Similar εἰ μή-clauses can be found in 4.26.6 and 8.47.13. After an incitement to further investigate a certain issue, the εἰ μή-clauses contain circumstances that make the investigation superfluous.

history of the Jews (ιστόρηται, 11). The impact of the contrast is enhanced by firm expressions: Origen refers to the *complete* Jewish history (ἐξ οὗ Ἰουδαῖοί εἰσι, 11), in which *never* (οὐδέ ποτε is emphasized by γε) for *so long* a time (Focus; τοσοῦτον (11) is marked by hyperbaton) were *excluded* from their venerable rituals, when they were conquered by more powerful people. By combining the verb ἐκβεβλήσθαι (12)⁶⁵ with ἀγιστείας καὶ λατρείας (12-13, intensified even more by a preposed adjective σεμνῆς, 12)⁶⁶ Origen amplifies the significance: this is not just a political or social drama, but it is basically a matter of religion and worship; ‘exclusion’ then sounds like ‘excommunication’. This is – and that is Origen’s point here – the bad situation of the Jews since the time of Jesus’ sufferings till the days of Origen; their situation has never been more miserable. The description of their situation serves in Origen’s discourse as an argument to defend the probability of the ‘Christian’ view attacked by Celsus in the quote discussed.

Then this section is interrupted (ἀλλ’, 13) by another consideration of the position of Jews in the past. It is introduced by a concessive conditional clause (εἰ καί, 13):⁶⁷ ‘even if sometimes they did seem to have been deserted because of their sins’. The urgency of the concession is weakened by the verb ἔδοξαν (14): it is just the appearance, not a fact. That they were not really abandoned is stated in the main clause: ‘nevertheless they were cared for’ (οὐδὲν ἤττον (14) has Focus before the verb ἐπεσκοπήθησαν, 14-15) ‘and they returned, resumed their property and performed the rituals without hindrance’ (Focus position: τὰ ἴδια and ἀκωλύτως, 15).⁶⁸ In other words: a previous period of desertion was only temporary and even then the Jews were not really deserted, a strong contrast again with the current situation of the Jews.

Remarkably Origen does not express the involvement of God in the historical events explicitly in this passage. In the quote from Celsus this is mentioned in ἐκ θεοῦ (χόλον ἐπεσπάσαντο, 5), but Origen uses neutral indicators (γεγέννηται, 7; γεγονέναι, 10) or passive forms without explicitly indicating the *Agents* (ἐκβεβλήσθαι, 12; καταλείπεσθαι, 14; ἐπεσκοπήθησαν, 14-15). He presents the events from the perspective of the Jews. Moreover Origen seems to choose his words consciously when he speaks about a *temporal* link between Jesus’ sufferings and the Jewish expulsion (μετά, 7; ἀφ’ οὗ, 9); a causal link is not expressed, only suggested.⁶⁹ A soterio-historical dimension of these events is elaborated in the final section of the chapter (see below).

4.22.16-23

Ἐν οὖν τῶν παριστάντων θεῖον
τι καὶ ἱερὸν χρῆμα γεγονέναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ Ἰουδαίοις
ἐπ’ αὐτῷ τοσαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτα πολλῶ ἤδη συμβεβηκέναι
χρόνῳ. Θαρροῦντες δ’ ἐροῦμεν ὅτι οὐδ’ ἀποκατασταθήσονται.
20 Ἄγος γὰρ ἔπραξαν τὸ πάντων ἀνοσιώτατον, τῷ σωτῆρι τοῦ
γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιβουλεύσαντες ἐν τῇ πόλει, ἔνθα

Accordingly, one of the facts which show that Jesus was some divine and sacred person is just that on his account such great and fearful calamities have now for a long time befallen the Jews. We will go so far as to say that they will not be restored again. For they committed the most impious crime of all, when they conspired against the Saviour of mankind, in the city

⁶⁵ The perfect indicates the permanent status of expulsion which is current in Origen’s time and relevant in Origen’s discourse.

⁶⁶ Cf. 2.78.16; 5.41.1; similar respectful words on the Jewish rituals and way of life in 4.31 and 6.80.19ff.

⁶⁷ See Wakker (1994: 317,329-339). These clauses present a situation which is not favourable for the realization of the SoA of the main clause. They can help to enhance the force of the main clause.

⁶⁸ With the indefinite temporal adverb ποτε Origen apparently refers to the period of exile in Babylonia. After the return of the Jews the temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt and the worship was resumed.

⁶⁹ A similar approach in 2.8.32ff. and 2.78.10-12 (τὴν ἐν βίῳ κόλασιν Ἰουδαῖοι μετὰ τὸ διαθεῖναι αὐτὸν διέθηκαν ἐκολάσθησαν – ‘the Jews received their punishments in this life after having treated (Jesus) as they did’: again μετὰ and a passive without *Agents*; moreover the punishment of the Jews is limited by the words ἐν βίῳ (‘in this life’); cf. 4.32.43-46; in 8.42.20ff. Origen is more explicit about God’s judgement.

τὰ νενομισμένα σύμβολα μεγάλων μυστηρίων ἐποίουν τῷ θεῷ. where they performed to God the customary rites which were symbols of profound mysteries.

With οὖν (16) Origen indicates that he makes a next step in his discourse: he once more emphasizes the special and intense (τοσαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτα, 18) character of the disastrous situation that applies to the Jews for so long. The perfect συμβεβηκέναι (18) indicates the permanent consequences of the events and the relevance for the present discussion. The hyperbaton πολλῷ ... χρόνῳ (18-19) underlines the length of the period. Origen uses this point in a clever way as an argument in his debate with Celsus and with the Jews: he characterizes the disastrous situation as one of the facts that show how great Jesus was (θεῖόν τι καὶ ἱερὸν χρῆμα⁷⁰ γεγονέναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, 16-17), a fact that was denied by Celsus and the Jews. Here a link between Jesus' sufferings and the Jewish fate is indicated in ἐπ' αὐτῷ (18), which seems to imply a causal connection: 'on his account'.⁷¹

In the next sentence Origen takes a further step (δ', 19), in which a verb in the first person is used (ἐροῦμεν, 19): speaking for himself Origen adds the next remark. The future is inferential: from observations related to the past Origen infers his prognosis for the future: they will not be restored (οὐδ' ἀποκατασταθήσονται, 19). By introducing it with the participle θαρροῦντες (19) he offers an indication of his own attitude and involvement in the discussion: he shows awareness of the fact that some confidence is needed for this rather radical remark.⁷²

As a motivation (γάρ, 20) Origen characterizes the Jewish 'deed' (indicated as a completed fact by the aorist ἔπραξαν, 20) as 'a religious crime': the clause starts with the Focus ἄγος (20), a definition which is aggravated by the addition of 'the most impious of all' (τὸ πάντων ἀνοσιώτατον, 20). The *pathos*-argumentation is continued in the participle clause: their conduct is qualified as a treacherous plot (ἐπιβουλεύσαντες, 21) and the sacrilegious nature of it is evoked in the qualification of the 'victim' as 'the Saviour of mankind' (Focus in the participle phrase). Finally the passage is completed with a characterization of the 'crime scene': not neutrally as 'Jerusalem', but as 'the city where they performed their traditional rituals full of profound mysteries' (Focus in the subordinate clause): the antithesis between the impious deeds and the holy city creates an emotional climax. The intention of Origen's pathetic words is to create incomprehension and indignity for Jewish actions in the hearts of the reader in order to explain the miserable situation the Jews are in. This approach corresponds with the *status qualitatis*:⁷³ the charge is not denied, but justified, although I would rather call it a suggestion of justification: Origen refrains from using personal evaluative terms as 'rightly' and leaves the judgement to the readers.

4.22.23-31

Ἐχρῆν οὖν ἐκείνην τὴν πόλιν, ὅπου ταῦτα πέπονθεν Ἰησοῦς, ἄρδην ἀπολωλέναι καὶ τὸ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος ἀνάστατον
25 γεγονέναι καὶ ἐπ' ἄλλους τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μακαριότητα
 κλήσιν μεταβεβηκέναι, τοὺς Χριστιανοὺς λέγω, ἐφ' οὓς
 ἐλήλυθεν ἡ περὶ τῆς εἰλικρινοῦς καὶ καθαρᾶς θεοσεβείας Therefore that city where Jesus suffered these indignities had to be utterly destroyed. The Jewish nation had to be driven away from its country, and God's invitation to blessedness had to be transferred to others, I mean the Christians, to whom came the teaching about the

⁷⁰ See LSJ s.v. χρῆμα II 3: it is often used to express something strange or extraordinary; in this sense it can be applied to persons as well, as in 4.8.6 where Jesus is indicated as ἐξαιρετόν τι χρῆμα. Cf. Herodotus, *Historiae* 1.36, where the huge boar in Mysia is indicated as ὕδς χρῆμα μέγιστον (I thank G.C. Wakker for suggesting this parallel).

⁷¹ ἐπί + dative can denote several connections, among others an occasion or cause (LSJ s.v. ἐπί B III). Cf. 2.8.41-42: διὰ τὴν εἰς Ἰησοῦν ἀπιστίαν.

⁷² Cf. chapter II 3.1 on diaphonic elements.

⁷³ Cf. chapter III 3.4.1.

διδασκαλία, παραλαβόντας νόμους καινούς καὶ ἀρμόζοντας
τῇ πανταχοῦ καθεστῶσῃ πολιτείᾳ· ἐπεὶ μὴ οἱ πρότερον
30 δοθέντες ὡς ἐνὶ ἔθνει, ὑπὸ οἰκείων καὶ ὁμοίων βασιλευ-
μένων, οἳ τε ἦσαν πάντες νῦν ἐπιτελεῖσθαι.

simple and pure worship of God.
And they received new laws which
fit in with the order established
everywhere. Those which had
previously been given were
intended for a single nation ruled by
men of the same nationality and
customs, so that it would be
impossible for everyone to keep
them now.

The particle οὖν (23) marks a next step in Origen's discourse, which can partly be regarded as the conclusion of the preceding argumentation, but also contains a new element. In the initial verb ἐχρῆν (23) the tone of the passage has been set: 'is was necessary', 'had to': Origen alludes to God's providence, the divine plan of salvation.⁷⁴ Three items are presented as parts of this providence: the total destruction of Jerusalem, the expulsion of the Jews and the transfer of God's invitation to blessedness 'to others'. The word order in this enumeration is parallel: ἐκείνην τὴν πόλιν (23), τὸ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος (24) and ἐπ' ἄλλους (25) are Topic constituents; ἄρδην (24), ἀνάστατον (24) and τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μακαριότητα κλήσιν (25-26) function as Focus. The three perfect infinitives ἀπολωλέναι (24), γεγονέναι (25) and μεταβεβηκέναι (26) indicate that the result of these actions is still visible and relevant in the discussion. The remarkable choice for ἐπ' ἄλλους (25), which is immediately explained by 'I mean⁷⁵ the Christians', can be interpreted as a reference to *Matthew* 21.41,⁷⁶ a verse from the parable of the Tenants,⁷⁷ in which is told that the vineyard ('the kingdom of God') is taken away from the bad tenants and given to 'other' tenants. This transition from the Jews to the Christians, as it is interpreted by Origen, 'had to' take place as a part of the divine plan (ἐχρῆν, 23).⁷⁸

In the final section of the chapter Origen comments on this transition to the Christians in a relative clause (ἐφ' οὗς ..., 26) and a participle clause (παραλαβόντας ..., 28). In the first clause Origen states that the Christians have learned⁷⁹ the doctrine of the simple and true worship of God. The intention of this description seems to be putting the Christians in line with the Jews: in the previous passage Origen had emphasized the traditional Jewish worship of God in Jerusalem. Here he presents the Christian worship as a worthy successor of the former Jewish rituals: by preposing the adjectives εἰλικρινοῦς καὶ καθαρᾶς (27)⁸⁰ he marks the pure character of the 'new' worship. The juxtaposition of Jews and Christians is continued in the participle clause: the Christians have 'received new laws' (an allusion to the 'old' law Moses gave to the Jews) 'which are accommodated to the society established everywhere'.⁸¹ The concept of the Jewish nation with its own laws evokes a political metaphor to indicate the Christian community which has 'new laws' and is spread 'all over the world' (πανταχοῦ, 29).⁸² This notion is further elaborated in the subordinate clause (ἐπεὶ ..., 29), in which the antithesis

⁷⁴ ἐχρῆν related to divine providence is also used in 1.46.38; 1.66.20; 3.5.12; 6.44.12; 6.78.23.

⁷⁵ Mark the rare use of the first person *singular*; see λέγω in the sense of 'I mean' in e.g., 1.45.6; 2.1.58; 2.9.13; 2.60.1; 2.65.1; 3.21.1; 3.36.2; cf. chapter II 3.2.2.

⁷⁶ A reference that can only be picked up by people who are trained in reading the Bible. An indication that Origen's intended audience consisted of educated Christians.

⁷⁷ The parable is also referred to and interpreted in a similar way in 2.5.8; 4.3.10 and 5.58.39.

⁷⁸ See Borret (Vol.2, 1968:236-237 n.1) on this 'ordre de l' économie salubre', as the background for Origen's thoughts about Jews here and in other contexts: 'Nulle haine des Juifs chez Origène, nul mépris'. Cf. Origen's own reference of 'talks' between Jews and Christians on the prophecies, 4.2.18-19. On this subject also Reemts (1998:85)

⁷⁹ The perfect ἐλήλυθεν indicates the state of the SoA and its relevance. On Jesus' διδασκαλία see also e.g. 1.26.24; 1.29.18; 1.31.10; 1.46.28; 2.11.37; 2.27.14; 2.44.33; 4.9.5; 5.33.42; 5.35.5; 7.26.3.

⁸⁰ The combination of (one of) these adjectives with διδασκαλία, εὐσεβεία and θεοσεβεία also in 2.44.30; 3.81.7; 4.92.14; 5.3.18; 5.53.26; 6.5.30; 7.46.9; 7.46.45; 8.29.8; 8.59.19.

⁸¹ Cf. the comparison of the Jewish πολιτεία based on the laws of Moses and the new Christian way of life based of Jesus' teachings in 2.52.18-22; 4.32.1ff.; 7.26.1ff.

⁸² See also 3.9.5ff; 3.29.19ff. 3.30.10; 4.9.7; 6.79.8ff. on the spread of the Christian faith.

between the past and the present illustrates Origen's point: the old laws: (οἱ) πρότερον (δοθέντες) versus 'now' (νῦν) and 'one nation' (ἐνὶ ἔθνει) versus 'everyone' (πάντες) (29-31).

Thus Origen concludes this chapter which started with Jewish disasters and God's anger in a positive mode: this is a move to the next stage of the salvation plan, in which the invitation to blessedness no longer is addressed to one nation in one cultural setting (cf. οἰκείων καὶ ὁμοήθων, 30), but is expanded to 'everyone' and combined with a pure worship of God and a new way of life that is in accordance with the global spread of Christianity.

V. RETROSPECTIVE AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis comments on *Contra Celsum* 4.1-22, a passage in which the author Origen responds to Celsus' criticism on the Christian belief in a divine descent to the earth. The chapters of my corpus are approached from three different perspectives: linguistics, rhetoric and theology. So far theology has not yet been dealt with. This chapter provides a retrospective on the linguistic and rhetorical parts and the first concentration point of my study, the commentary chapter (IV), in which the linguistic and rhetorical lines converge.

The main line of my thesis is presented in the introductory chapter I. This outline is followed by a brief introduction of Celsus and Origen. Whereas few things can be said about Celsus' life and his book, we are better informed about Origen: a relevant selection of biographical facts is presented in order to provide elementary background information about the author. The next section deals with Origen's work *Contra Celsum* and discusses the apologetic character of the work, its aims, structure and readers. An impression of the content of the work is given in a catalogue of the topics discussed in the eight books. Chapter I is concluded by a number of technical details about the Greek text, editions and translations and by a brief presentation of the attention paid to *Contra Celsum* in recent scholarly discussions.

Chapter II and III together form the 'methodological' part of this thesis. These chapters contain an introduction of the linguistic and rhetorical approach that is applied in the commentary chapter IV.

In chapter II the focus is on the discourse analysis, which, though increasingly applied in the domain of the Classics, is relatively new in the study of patristic texts. It aims at an analysis of language utterances in the communicative situations they function in. In order to present typical aspects of this approach attention has been paid firstly to the discourse situation in *Contra Celsum* and the position that is given to the participants in this discourse (3). In general *Contra Celsum* can be characterized as a dialogical monological text. The analysis of the use of the second person in verbs and pronouns leads to the conclusion that there is a difference between the addressee (Ambrose) and the target reader group. The first person is used in text structuring elements and also to indicate the position of the author (and his fellow Christians in general) in the discussion. Not surprisingly, given the communicative situation in the work, Celsus is commonly indicated by the third person, a situation that corresponds to defensive speeches in ancient courts, in which the judge or the jury is addressed and not the accuser. Sometimes Origen uses *apostrophe* to empower his discourse, but even then these passages contain a message for the readers.

Next section 4 is dedicated to the use of the tenses in relation with communicational functions. In this context three layers of the text are discerned: the core consists of Origen's confrontation with Celsus' ideas and is surrounded by metacommunicational utterances, which organize and evaluate the discussion; the outer layer concerns utterances in the setting of Origen's communication with Ambrose and his readers. The discussion about the tenses includes special attention to the inferential use of the future in hypothetical sections of the discourse and to the pragmatic dimension of the perfect: by using the perfect a speaker can somehow link the past state of affairs in the text to the 'moment of speech' and indicate its relevance for the situation of the speaker and his audience. It appears that these uses of future and perfect tenses function not only in classical texts, but also in *Contra Celsum*.

Also in the next section (5) on particles the pragmatic approach is leading. The meaning of 13 particles is described using the differentiation between the representational, presentational and interactional level particles function on. From a systematical overview and some statistics is deduced that presentational particles prevail in Origen's text: this category not only forms the largest group, but is also by far the most frequently used one. Origen obviously is focused on the organization of his

discourse and shows less personal involvement in the text.

The final section (6) of the chapter on linguistics deals with the word order, a subject that is discussed again from the communicational perspective. The basic assumption is that the choice for a particular word order in sentences is determined by the author's intention to guide his addressees through the text and to influence the reading of it. An introduction of technical terms as Topic, Focus and Setting is followed by the presentation of the word order formula Helma Dik (1995; 2007) proposed as the basic clause pattern in classical Greek. A prominent position in this pattern is given to the words that provide an orientation to the reader (Topic) and those that present the most salient piece of information (Focus). Typically these pragmatically marked constituents are positioned before the verb. Special attention is given to complex sentences which contain a participle clause. In such sentences a two level analysis can be performed: within the sentence as a whole a participle phrase often functions as Setting, whereas such a participle clause on its own level can have its own pattern with an own Focus. Section 6 ends with discussions on the order within noun phrases and on hyperbaton. The elements of the word order theories are illustrated by discussions of several passages from *Contra Celsum*. These discussions demonstrate that Dik's formula still works in Origen's text written centuries after the classical age. The conclusion can be that looking closely to the order in which the constituents are presented can be very rewarding for fine tuning the text interpretation. The theories presented suggest that it is recommendable to look carefully at the preverbal position in Greek clauses: that is the place where the most salient information is to be expected. Perhaps this can influence the way and the speed of reading of a Greek text. H. Dik (2007:250) concludes 'that it is always a good idea to slow down, so to speak, as one approaches the verb in a Greek clause'.

Subsequently in chapter III the focus is on persuasion: several elements of ancient rhetoric are discussed and related to *Contra Celsum*. The courtroom frame Origen uses to characterize the setting of his confrontation with Celsus suggests that the rhetorical theory can provide appropriate tools to analyze the text of my corpus. A brief introduction of the development of rhetoric in the Greco-Roman world (2) is followed by a systematic discussion of rhetorical terms, distinctions and techniques (3).

The attribution of *Contra Celsum* to one of the three standard 'branches of oratory' (3.2) proves to be not easy: the rhetorical setting of the text, which is of course not a speech in the literal sense, contains various aspects. Given the courtroom frame the classification of the work as corresponding with a *genus iudiciale* type of speech seems to be obvious. Yet the other two standard genres are not completely out of the picture: in the confirmative parts, where elements of the Christian doctrine are explained, the juridical character makes way for a more deliberative setting. Epideictic passages can be identified as well. The prominence of the juridical presentation of the discourse can be interpreted as a part of Origen's persuasive strategy.

The conclusion of the discussion on the three 'persuasive means' (3.3) is clear: persuasion in *Contra Celsum* is dominated by a rational approach (*logos*). But amidst of all the analytic and argumentative passages Origen keeps in mind that also *ethos* can be an effective means of persuasion: the creation of a sympathetic self-image is combined with a negative presentation of the opponent. Strong emotional passages (*pathos*) are avoided by Origen.

In 3.4.1-3 various issues related to *inventio* are discussed, including the *stasis*-theory, which can be used to describe Origen's defensive strategies. In fact Origen often opts for denial of the point of accusation (*status coniecturalis*) and combines this with the observation (accusation) that Celsus is not properly informed. On other occasions Origen's defence is based on the *status definitionis* and *qualitatis*. Part of the content-related task of *inventio* was also the choice of the most effective argumentation in a certain passage. Different types of arguments described in the rhetorical theories can be discerned in Origen's text. As for 'incorrect arguments' the modern pragma-dialectical analysis of fallacies can provide a useful instrument in the analysis of the quality and reasonableness of Origen's argumentation,

albeit that the discourse situation in *Contra Celsum* is different from the model that is presented in this modern approach of debates.

Next (3.4.4) the focus is on the *dispositio* and on the analysis of the structure of Origen's text. In the prefaces the standard *exordium*-elements are easy to discern (*captatio benevolentiae*), whereas on the contrary the *pathos* that is advised for *perorationes* is absent in Origen's text: most of the closing formulas are short and neutral. The argumentative sections usually have a three-part structure: introduction, quote, response. As for the *elocutio* (wording, style): it can be said that Origen's interest seems to be more on clarity (*perspicuitas*) than on decoration of his language (*ornatus*).

Section 4 then deals with the question whether we can presume that Origen was familiar with rhetoric and consciously applied its advices. The answer can be affirmative. His education in Alexandria in the 'grammar' school included basic lessons in rhetoric, though he was never taught by a *rhetor*. As a grammar school teacher in Alexandria and Caesarea the basics of rhetoric must have been part of his education program. Origen's books show his familiarity with the system and terminology of rhetorical theories. His student Gregory testifies that he was enchanted by Origen's personal persuasive power. The only speeches Origen delivered in public were, as far as we know, his sermons. The style of these sermons can be characterized as plain and analytical, adapted to his audience, who he wanted to convince by biblical arguments rather than by a sophisticated style. Origen himself connected rhetoric with verbosity and calling him a 'rhetorical author' would neither be in line with his own intentions nor with his low style and the absence of *pathos* in his work. But considering that *logos*-persuasion, the determination of defence lines, the use of adequate arguments and effectively structuring the discourse also are part of the rhetorical theories, it cannot be denied that Origen applies what is described and advised by these theories and in this respect operates more rhetorically than he himself probably would have admitted.

Sophistry and verbosity are explicitly rejected by Origen in *Contra Celsum* and related to the deceptive character of rhetoric. In fact, as is demonstrated in section 5, rhetoric is in *Contra Celsum* mainly presented in a negative way and sharply contrasted with the unsophisticated presentation of the truth by Jesus and the uneducated apostles. This rejection of rhetoric as deceiving and not focused on truth reminds of Platonic criticism and can be considered to be part of the persuasive strategy of Origen, who in the same discourse uses some devices of rhetoric himself. For Christian teachers Origen sees two reasons to keep distance from rhetoric. In the first place: faith should not rest in 'wisdom of men, but in the power of God' and secondly: it is their task to benefit as many people as they can and therefore they have to use plain language.

The section is closed with a discussion on Origen's thoughts on proof and the nature of persuasion. While Origen agrees with Celsus in his preference for rational proof, he shows at the same time that this is an idealistic standpoint: in real life people often base their decisions on 'unreasoning impulses'. So *πίστις* (faith, trust) has more influence than rational people would admit. And as regards the nature of persuasion: it takes two to persuade. Even for 'masters in speech' success in persuasion is not guaranteed: the free will of the audience to listen and to accept their words is a decisive factor in the process of persuasion.

In chapter IV the linguistic and rhetorical approach is applied in a commentary on the text of my corpus. The chapter comprises detailed discussions on the level of words, clauses and larger text units. As a regular component of the discussions the structure of the text of the sections is clarified in an overview. The commentary focuses both on the impact of the word order and on the use of diaphonic elements, tenses and linguistic markers. Moreover systematic attention is given to the defence strategy applied in each of the sections, to the types of arguments and the use of other persuasive means.

What can be said, in conclusion, about the results that are generated by the approach I assumed? I will give an impression of them by briefly presenting some general observations. They concern matters that

became apparent in the searchlight of the approach chosen.

(1) In general it can be concluded that the approach produced a differentiated map of the landscape of the discourse. The focus on the aforementioned issues contributed to the production of a nuanced picture of the communication between author and readers and of the way the process of persuasion is implemented. The really interesting results, though, are achieved on the microlevel of words and sentences. Because they are too detailed to allow an appropriate summary here, I refer to chapter IV for a closer look at the varying relief of the text landscape.

(2) Introductory passages not only serve to announce the start of a discussion, but typically are the moments in which attention is paid to the communicative situation: the writer wants to gain the reader's attention and benevolence by using *ethos*-based persuasion techniques. Moreover he can use the opportunity to influence the reader's reception of the new topic. This can – not unexpectedly – been noticed in the *exordium* of the forth book (4.1), where Origen explicitly addresses Ambrose, reflects on the aims of his book and works on the image of himself and his opponent. But also in the recurring introductions of quotes from Celsus similar *exordium*-related elements appear. Some examples: Origen involves his readers (4.3.1) and frames the discussion right from the outset (4.1.30-36; 4.20.1-5). He paints a negative picture of Celsus by the use of irony (4.5.1; 4.14.1) and by pointing at his incompetence (4.18.1) or the usual lack of proof (4.10.1). Negative evaluations of Celsus' argument (4.5.1-4; 4.6.1; 4.7.1; 4.13.1,5) influence the reader's perception of the following quote in advance. A rhetorical analysis demonstrates that such introductions, however brief, are part of the persuasion process and can provide information about the intentions of the author.

(3) By the use of tenses Origen can involve his readers in past events and also make almost unnoticed moves in his argumentation. For instance the first effect is pursued by Origen's use of the perfect in sentences that refer to statements made previously that are still relevant for the reader (e.g. 4.2.31; 4.3.54; 4.13.29; 4.14.13; 4.19.22). This can also be noticed in perfect forms in clauses about prophets and the Scripture (4.1.5,26,32,35; 4.2.11; 4.20.22-23): the perfect serves as a bridge between on the one hand the past of the prophets and the writing of the biblical text and on the other hand the readers of Origen's book. An example of a subtle change of tenses with considerable impact on Origen's argument can be found in 4.5.14-19: whereas Celsus, using the aorist, had spoken about a single completed moment in which God left his throne, Origen uses present forms in the corresponding part of his reply. This change of the tense makes clear – implicitly – that he does not indicate a historical fact (the incarnation), but to a continuous series of events: the permanent interference of God (and the Logos) in the life of men and the 'dwelling' of Christ in the hearts of believers. While seemingly replying to Celsus' statement, Origen, using present forms, in fact reframes the issue and puts his own spin on the discussion. A corresponding example related to the incarnation as well is discussed in the commentary on 4.15.24. Precise attention to the use of tenses can make the interpreter sensitive to such subtle shifts in the argumentation.

(4) The communicative character of *Contra Celsum* can be determined by examining the dialogical aspects of the monological text: are there any indications of an interaction between author and readers? The conclusion is that such indications are present in the text, albeit in a variable degree. Relatively many diaphonic elements can be noticed in Origen's introductory and discourse organizational passages. In argumentative text parts more interactional passages are alternated with discourse parts that seem to proceed on their own, independently of author and readers. Origen's personal involvement can appear in the use of interactional particles to show his indignation (4.2.14; 4.3.47) and to underscore his denial of Celsus' allegations (4.15.3-11; 4.18.24). Rhetorical questions appealing to the participation of the

readers are found when Origen discusses issues that are crucial for him (e.g. 3x in 4.3.34-46; 4.15.10-11; 2x in 4.17.1-10; 4.18.32-34; 4.20.18-22).

Examples of the second type of discourse units in which minimal or no interaction occurs, are discussed in the commentary on 4.8-9 and 4.13.9-29. Also in 4.18.12-46 the author seems to withdraw from the discourse and even the debate with Celsus seems to be out of the picture. In these passages passive verbs and impersonal expressions are more frequently used, which provide a greater degree of distance and objectivity. I suggest that this tendency to impersonalize the discourse can be connected to its content and a selected group of readers Origen may have had in mind. The three passages just mentioned have a confirmative character and comprise rather technical distinctions and discussions. In 4.8-9 and 4.13 (a draft of) an exegesis of biblical texts is presented with allegorical interpretations. In 4.8.8-10 this passage is announced as containing ‘something rather mysterious and profound ... quite beyond the capacity of the common people’. It is not unlikely, I think, that the more objective style of communication was motivated by the demanding character of the content and by the target group of readers who are expected to be able to handle it. In Origen’s view such an approach might be appropriate for the advanced level group, whose task he describes as follows: ‘anyone who constructs a Christian philosophy will need to argue the truth of his doctrines with proofs of all kinds, taken both from the divine Scriptures and from rational arguments’ (4.9.10-13). If my observation is right, it can be concluded that Origen’s accommodation to his readers not only concerns the topics he discusses, as is demonstrated by Scott (2012:151-158), but also the style of his writing.

(5) The vast majority of the particles used by Origen belongs to the presentational type, used to structure the text. Obviously Origen wants to clarify the text structure by indicating topic shifts, explanations, digressions and conclusions to the reader. Moreover the text structure is demonstrated by frequently appearing discourse organizational remarks (in which often the first person is used to indicate Origen as author). This pursuit of clarity corresponds with – in general – a low stylistic level and the dominance of persuasion based on *logos*. The small number of stylistic means that are used with a certain frequency (antithesis, chiasm, rhetorical questions) are chosen to support the argumentation and serve the *logos*-character of the discourse. This text type, in which rationality and transparency prevail, is in line with Origen’s pronounced preference for a plain presentation of the truth and his rejection of verbose and deceptive ‘rhetoric’.

(6) As far as can be inferred from the fragments quoted by Origen, Celsus employs various kinds of offensive strategies. In general his tone tends to be fierce and incriminating. Sometimes his argument is *logos*-based and consists of analytical passages and reasonings (4.2; 4.14; 4.18). His use of the *argumentum ad consequentiam* (4.5; 4.7) can be regarded as in line with this approach. Rhetorical questions are used several times to add suggestive power to his persuasion (4.3; 4.14). Occasionally he discredits his opponents (*ethos*-argumentation) by creating a negative image of their opinions or by refuting self-invented ideas of them (4.3; 4.6). Some of his evaluations of the opinions of his opponents are expressed in short, straightforward statements, not without *pathos* (4.2; 4.10) or scornful irony (4.6; 4.7). Celsus’ intention though, is not just polemical: after all he wants to present his ‘true doctrine’ in a positive way and to persuade his opponents to recognize its value, albeit that this intention is made more explicit in the final parts of his work than in the passages of my corpus.

(7) As for Origen’s defence strategies: Origen most frequently chooses for a denial of Celsus’ criticism, corresponding to the *coniectura*-position of the *stasis*-theory (e.g. 4.3.18-19; 4.5.4-10; 4.6 (4x); 4.7.8-16; 4.11.12-25; 4.14.12-19; 4.18.24-26; 4.19.1-5; 4.21.6-11). In principle this defence position is the most powerful one for the defendant: if the allegation of the accuser can be denied successfully, the defendant wins the trial. The second and the third defence position (*definitio* and *qualitas*) are more

difficult: if the accusation cannot be denied, redefinition or justification should lead to acquittal. Origen also opts for these weaker defence positions, sometimes because it is appropriate to the issue discussed. For example: Celsus' criticism concerning divine punishments cannot be denied, for Origen thinks God really can punish people; therefore Origen chooses the *qualitas* position in 4.10 and 4.20 to justify his standpoint. In other situations Origen's motives to choose for *definitio* or *qualitas* seem to be different, as I will try to demonstrate on the basis of two examples.

The first one is found in 4.14, where Origen responds to Celsus' statement that descending to the earth would imply change for God. Origen denies and uses the rest of the chapter to claim that God's essential unchangeability is better maintained by Christians than by Epicurus and the Stoics. So far a *coniectura*-position, as it seems, but the subtle addition of the element 'in essence' Origen in fact moves to a *definitio*-position. By a redefinition of the notion of change Origen opens the way for education and a nuanced discussion on the issue: on the one hand God's unchangeability (in essence) is defended (4.14), whereas Origen on the other hand creates the opportunity to deal with the relation between change and 'incarnation' (4.15) and with the different forms of the Logos (4.16). In a clever way he directs his discourse towards these topics, because this discussion allows him to edify his readers by explaining the significance of the divine descent for the salvation and moral improvement of men.

My second example concerns 4.19: this chapter starts with a short denial of Celsus' point of criticism ('God did not really change, but made people think he changed'). In principle this denial would be enough to end this item and move on to the next. Origen however does not finish here, but adds a passage in which he explains and justifies God's actions: in fact a hypothesis Celsus had offered and which was rejected already, is used by Origen as an opportunity to explain essential elements of his conceptions of God. The importance the issue has for Origen is underlined by the use of *apostrophe* which adds power and pathos to his discourse. A similar use of the *definitio* and *qualitas* approach can be indicated in other passages which all discuss topics that Origen considers to be core aspects of his theology: 4.3.34-55 (on free will), 4.4.2-11 (on God's continuous care of human correction), 4.5.16-24 (on moral improvement), 4.12.13-27 (on God's descent), 4.13 (on God's destruction of evil), 4.18.27-46 (on the salvation as effect of the incarnation) and 4.22.23-31 (on the worldwide expansion of salvation). From the choice of defence strategies can be concluded that Origen is not satisfied when he has refuted Celsus' criticism by denial, but also takes the opportunity of other defence positions to confirm and educate his readers, in agreement indeed with his announcement in 4.1. The amount of space he dedicates to the confirmative passages seems to suggest that his focus is on education: he is eager to explain the significance of the divine descent to the earth and to convince his readers of his conception of God. Here the rhetorical analysis touches on the theological discussions of chapter VI.

VI. PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY

1. Introduction

The previous parts of this book contained – what may be called – the more linguistic part of my analysis of Origen’s *Contra Celsum* 4.1-22. An explanation of key elements of my linguistic and rhetorical approach was followed by a rather detailed commentary on the chapters of my corpus in which I focused on communicational and persuasive aspects of the discourses of Celsus and Origen. So far the opinions they held on the theme ‘divine descent’ have been described especially in the context of an examination of its communicative and rhetorical function. Substantive attention to the views they attacked or defended and to a possible cohesion in their doctrines and to links with ideas of other thinkers has not been given yet. In this chapter the focus will be on the content of these arguments, a topic that is of course related to the task of the *inventio* in the rhetorical theories. I will search here for leading connections in the rather divergent discourses in my corpus: what were Celsus’ and Origen’s convictions that formed the backdrop and the basis of their criticism and defence? For what reason did they both so fiercely resist the ideas of their opponents?

My claim is: at the root of their disagreement is a different notion of god (‘God’) and his relation to the world. Therefore in this chapter I will investigate the ‘theology’ of Celsus and Origen, their ideas about the divine and about providence.¹ I will examine what issues are involved in the discussion on this theme and what opinions on these issues are defended by Celsus and Origen. Answering these questions will not only pave the way for a comparison between the two opponents, but will also allow us to position them in the contemporary theological discussions. Important questions to determine this position are: how is their relation to other thinkers and to philosophical schools? Did they derive some of their ideas from others? Did they implicitly or explicitly oppose to certain philosophical approaches?

As a preliminary remark I would like to underline once more that for Celsus’ ideas we have no other sources than the text of Origen’s *Contra Celsum*. This situation creates both opportunities (without Origen’s work we would not know of any of Celsus’ opinions) and limitations: it is impossible for us to assess how exactly Celsus’ discourse looked like in its original form. Although Origen did quote large parts from it, sometimes words of Celsus are paraphrased, abbreviated, embedded in Origen’s own text or even skipped. Our knowledge of Celsus’ theology is inevitably determined by the filter of Origen’s representation of it. Moreover we have to be aware of the communicative aim the books of Celsus and Origen had. The intention of Celsus’ *Alethes Logos* seems not to present a coherent system of doctrines,² but rather to criticize various aspects of Christianity. Given the character of the work a relatively high level of rhetorical means can be expected which are used to persuade the audience and to undermine the

¹ I take ‘theology’ here in a limited sense, referring to that part of philosophy which is concerned with God or the divine. Θεολογία in this sense seems to be used for the first time by Plato (*Respublica* 379a; see Van Riel 2013:30) in a passage which contains criticism of the traditional conception of gods in the literary texts of Homer, Hesiod and other Greek poets: according to Socrates in his dialogue with Adimantos, in the ideal Republic these texts should not be part of the education any more. Then what might be ‘the models for theology’ (οἱ τύποι περὶ θεολογίας)? The answer is: to present the god as he really is: as good; and as the cause of good things, and not of bad things (379a-c); as being without change and deceit (381b-383a). In Aristotle’s work the φιλοσοφία θεολογική is given a position within the system of philosophy. He discerns three theoretical disciplines of philosophy (τρεῖς ... φιλοσοφίαι θεωρητικαί): mathematics, physics and theology (*Metaphysica* 6.1026a). In *Metaphysica* 11.1064b he indicates these three as the highest classes of science, of which theology is the summit because it deals with the most honourable parts of reality (περὶ τὸ τιμιώτατον γὰρ ἐστὶ τῶν ὄντων). See also Mansfeld (1999:452).

² Frede, M. (1999:146-155) argues that one of Origen’s reasons to be hesitant to write an apology against Celsus was the lack of logical or argumentative structure in *Alethes Logos*. Frede’s doubts about the level of Celsus’ work are not confined to the structure of his argumentation: after an investigation about Celsus’ philosophical ideas Frede concludes that ‘there is no reason to suppose that he was a philosopher of any significance’ (154).

position of the opponents. His reflections on god and his relation to the world are never provided in a comprehensive way, but scattered in fragments all over the text. These fragments are always part of an argumentative setting and Celsus does not discuss on all occasions all the aspects of a (theological) question, simply because he does not always need an overall discussion in his current argumentation. For a reconstruction of Celsus' theology passages have to be gathered from diverse contexts and in combining them it will be important to take into account the text situation in a careful way and to evaluate the communicative value of the elements involved.

This applies in a similar way to Origen's work: *Contra Celsum* is not conceived as a dogmatic handbook, but aims at the defence against a series of critical points issued by Celsus. Origen intended to provide his fellow Christians with weapons in their struggle against similar attacks on their belief as were executed by Celsus. From 1.28 onwards Origen gave up his plan to answer Celsus in a whole coherent account and changed over to a point-by-point response, roughly in the order he found them in *Alethes Logos*. The consequence of this change is that nowhere in *Contra Celsum* something like a comprehensive theology is presented. Elements of Origen's theological views have to be collected from different parts of the work and here also the context determines the perspective. The attempt to achieve a synthesis based on elements presented in different passages bears the risk of losing contextual nuances and creating a somewhat too polished result.

This chapter will start with a sketch of the philosophical landscape which constitutes the background of the 'debate' between Origen and Celsus in my corpus. In this review of the theological views of the seminal philosophical schools in the age of the Roman Empire special attention will be given to Platonism. Then a survey follows of the theology of Celsus, illustrated by quotes from several parts of his work. As a conclusion of the section about Celsus I will try to determine his relationship to other thinkers. Having thus discussed Celsus' views I proceed with an investigation of Origen's theology. The main elements of his theology will be outlined and illustrated by quotes from his book. Subsequently his views will be compared to thoughts of Celsus and other philosophers.

As a whole this chapter provides a preparatory investigation for the comment in chapter VII. In that chapter the text of my corpus will be discussed once more, now in order to examine how the whole of theological ideas and their philosophical background can be used to interpret Celsus' criticism of the belief in a divine descent as well as Origen's defence of it.

2. The philosophical landscape

2.1 Introduction

For a proper understanding of the theologies of Celsus and Origen it is important to realise that they did not develop their views in complete isolation. In order to gain a clear picture of the context of their discussions it is helpful to get an idea of what may be called the philosophical landscape of their days. It would be a huge task to draw a map of this landscape with a detailed description of its regions, the locations of the communities, the natural barriers, the domiciles of the individual thinkers and the road connections between them. Although not overcrowded the landscape in the time of the Roman Empire is filled with different types of philosophers with various interests and divergent approaches. Some of them were more focused on theoretical issues and system building, some devoted themselves to the interpretation of the works of illustrious predecessors, others were teachers, sometimes in their own public schools, sometimes they even had a position at imperial courts as advisers or personal coaches. Philosophy was not an isolated cultural phenomenon, but related to other 'scientific' disciplines as

VI. Philosophical theology

rhetoric, mathematics, medicine astronomy and even astrology. Most of the inhabitants of the philosophical landscape are unknown to us, some of them are known just by name and only of a few of them texts or fragments have been handed down to us. Even this collection of ancient philosophical texts is rather extensive and it is inevitable to make a selection in my attempt to draw a general outline of the landscape.

Before I begin with such an outline some preliminary remarks are appropriate. The first one is related to the landscape metaphor I introduced in this section. This metaphor carries the danger of presenting a static situation and implying exclusiveness, whereas in the reality individuals often change opinions, are influenced by people of other regions and can also keep a distance from ideas of people of their own region. Living in a certain region does not always mean that you are happy with all the acts and thoughts of your neighbours. In the philosophical landscape an individual thinker will obviously be comfortable with some of the leading opinions, while he may feel like an outsider when regarding other points. Moreover, the situation is even more complicated when the historical dimension is involved: opinions can change during one's lifetime and in the regions there can be different developments over time. Mapping an individual's position at a given moment would require a complicated diagram, in which, divided by the several issues involved, all the agreements and disagreements with people (both contemporaries and predecessors) of the same region and other regions are expressed.

Secondly, in ancient times the area of philosophy is commonly divided into three branches: physics (how about the world?), epistemology and logic (how about knowledge and reasoning?) and ethics (how about doing the right thing?). In the following subsections I will confine myself to one of these branches, physics, and within this branch³ I will concentrate on the thoughts about god and his relation to the world. It will be a presentation of key elements only, for a discussion on details would exceed the limits of this chapter. Discussions on ethics, epistemology and logic will mostly be left aside.

In my rough map of the philosophical landscape the regional subdivision will be made according to the traditional philosophical schools.⁴ Within each region individual inhabitants can have their own position, in the heart of the region or more close to its borders. In some cases attention will be given to intra- and interregional connections and hostilities.

In 176 AD, during the lifetime of Celsus, the emperor Marcus Aurelius showed his involvement in philosophy by taking an administrative measure: he provided funds to establish four Chairs of Philosophy in Athens, to be occupied by the leaders of the chief schools in his time, Stoicism, Epicureanism, Aristotelianism and Platonism.⁵ This event is an indication that these schools were regarded as the main regions in the landscape of philosophy in the second part of the second century. That these chairs were located in Athens is not surprising of course, given its long-term association with philosophy since the days of Socrates,⁶ but in the meantime Athens was certainly not the only place where philosophy flourished in the Roman Empire: also Rome and Alexandria can be named as centers of education and philosophy. Both Greek and Latin were used to discuss philosophical issues.

Two of the chief schools that were given imperial recognition, Epicureanism and Stoicism, originated in the Hellenistic period, the other two in the preceding era.

I will introduce each of them briefly, while always keeping my intention in mind to clarify the opinions of Celsus and Origen. My introduction will start with the two Hellenistic schools, to which I

³ 'Theology' is classified in the branch of physics because of the thoughts on creation and divine providential care for the world.

⁴ My overview will be based on handbooks and reviews of specialists. It will have a (too) condensed form and I mostly refrain from referring to ancient source texts to substantiate the ideas of the philosophers discussed.

⁵ See Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 72.31; Dillon (1977:233).

⁶ In 86 BC however Athens was sacked by the army of the Roman general Sulla and the schools of philosophy were badly disrupted. But the city apparently soon recovered: a few years later it was possible for Cicero to study rhetoric and philosophy in Athens.

add the school of the Sceptics.⁷ Finally I will deal with the region in which the legacy of the great classical philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, was honored and developed by their followers. A more detailed description will be given to the Platonist part of the map, because this will prove to be the region with landmarks that are most promising to position Celsus and Origen in the landscape.

2.2 Epicureanism

Epicurus (342-271) founded his school in a garden outside the city walls of Athens, where he could withdraw happily from political engagement. Three of his letters have been preserved, in which his thoughts are expressed.⁸ For now I ignore his theory on human knowledge and his ideas on how to live, although ethics is at the core of his philosophy (in his view happiness is found in pleasure and the avoidance of disturbance). As announced earlier I will concentrate on physics.

Epicurus adopted the atomism of Democritus (with some alterations): in his view the world consists of nothing more than void and bodies, which are made of atoms, physically indivisible parts. Atoms are constantly moving in the infinite void, collide to each other and form bodies, which exist for some time before they disintegrate. The materialist conception applies to the soul as well: souls are made of special fine atoms and cease to exist in the moment of dying. Fear of death is unnecessary, for after death we do not exist anymore and any (bad) sensory experience is excluded. The whole world functions without any interference of gods. Epicurus did not deny the existence of the gods,⁹ but conceives of them as living in remote, blessed places, untroubled by human actions. Paying attention to the world would reduce their blessedness: we must not expect them to be happy with our prayers and sacrifices. Epicurus clearly disagrees with Platonism and Stoicism in his rejection of divine creation and providence. Theology functions in Epicurus' philosophy to expel human fears of the gods and simultaneously the gods provide a clear example of an ideal epicurean life: pursuing pleasure in a remote place, without any fear or disturbance.

Epicureanism had a firm base in the Roman society.¹⁰ Epicurus' philosophy found an admirable missionary rendition in Latin in the didactic poem *De rerum natura* ('On the nature of things') by the Roman poet Lucretius (first century BC). In the philosophical writings of his contemporary Cicero Epicurean thought is often discussed. Epicurean texts are found in two unexpected situations: in Herculaneum, covered by the ash from Mount Vesuvius, papyrus rolls have been excavated, presumably collected by the Epicurean Philodemus; in Asia Minor texts of the philosopher Diogenes of Oinoanda were discovered in a monumental inscription. Epicureans had enormous regard for the founder of their movement and maintained his doctrines without many changes. An interesting element to the Epicurean physics is found in Lucretius' poem (though it may originate from Epicurus himself as a modification of Democritus' doctrine): the *clinamen* ('swerve'). Atoms just do not always fall in straight lines, but sometimes one of them changes its course. Such a swerve causes collision and, more important for the theory, it removes the idea of necessity and determinism. Here Epicurus seems to be the first philosopher who hints at the issue of freedom of will.¹¹

Epicureanism was certainly not the most favorite philosophy during the Roman Empire. It was often attacked for its hedonistic ethics, its materialistic physics and its rejection of divine providence. Yet

⁷ I leave out the fourth Hellenistic school, the Cynics, which had minor importance in the times of Celsus.

⁸ See Armstrong (1963:130-138), Adamson (2015:24-51); the ancient source texts are collected and commented on in Long (1987:25ff.).

⁹ Scholars disagree about the interpretation of this issue: 'realists' argue that the Epicurean gods were really existing beings; 'idealists' defend a more psychological position: 'gods are our own graphic idealization of the life we inspire'. The first position is held by Konstan (2011), the second by Sedley (2011 - my quote is taken from p.29). See also O'Keefe (2010:155-162).

¹⁰ See Erler (2009).

¹¹ See on free will Long (1987:102-112).

indications of the existence of communities of adherents are found in many places.¹² Its practical ethics was welcomed in circles of upper class citizens in the Roman society. The Stoic Seneca felt comfortable enough to quote several wise words from Epicurus in his letters to Lucilius, linking them to Stoic doctrines. The Platonist Plutarch on the contrary often criticized Epicurean ideas, e.g. in his work against Colotes. Later on in my chapter Epicureanism will feature in my discussions on Origen's reactions to Celsus.

2.3 Stoicism

The school of the Stoics is founded in the *Stoa poikile* ('painted portico') in Athens by Zeno of Citium (344-262). The school evolved in the period in which Epicurus was teaching in his garden and the disciples of Plato and Aristotle were active in the Academy and the Lyceum. After Zeno's death the school was headed by Cleanthes and then by Chrysippus, the systematic organizer of the Stoic doctrine. In the Hellenistic period Stoicism spread throughout the Greek cities, reached the Roman world and was an influential school during the Roman Empire, as is reflected in the works for Seneca, Epictetus (both first century AD) and the emperor Marcus Aurelius (second century AD). The Stoics developed logic as a separate part of philosophy and also had an elaborate and influential ethic part; I will refrain from discussing them and focus on physics, which can be regarded as the base for ethics.¹³

The Stoics discern two principles of the world: the passive principle ('that which is acted upon'), which is matter; and the active principle ('that which acts'), which is reason (λόγος), nature or god. When speaking of Stoic physics theology is on stage from the beginning. God is a material being that moves matter and pervades it; god and matter are always together and together they form the body of the universe. God is 'in' all things (at least during the existence of the cosmos), but in different 'degrees': he causes cohesion (e.g. in stones), the capacity to grow, to move, to sense or even to think (in humans). As Algra¹⁴ points out, the basically pantheistic conception of the Stoic god can take different forms in Stoic discourses depending on the issue at stake in a given context: a monistic character can be highlighted insofar it is claimed that there is only one cosmos and that matter and divine form are inextricably linked and transcendent reality is denied. On the other hand, in distinguishing between god and matter and in treating god as the highest principle, that governs the world, authors express a dualistic side of the conception. Sometimes the immanent god is pictured in personal traits as the 'craftsman' who starts from himself the creative process of the universe. This aspect is balanced with more polytheistic approaches when celestial bodies and other elements are also qualified as divine. Polytheistic myths are allegorized and explained in accordance with the Stoic philosophy of nature, a practice based on the conviction that myths retain in some way fragments of a primitive wisdom and insight in the working of nature.¹⁵

Another aspect of the Stoic theology is linked to the view on time and history. The Stoic god is described as fire that is interwoven in everything. The fire is indicated as a 'designing fire': by a process of condensation it changes into the other elements of which our world consists (air, water, earth); this transformation takes place as a cyclic process: after a condensation all things return to the original fiery state: in the 'conflagration' all will be reduced to fire again: the elements pass away, but the two eternal

¹² Not just in Athens, where Paul met Epicurean (and Stoic) philosophers (*Acts* 17.18) and where Marcus Aurelius granted them a chair.

¹³ See for a general introduction Armstrong (1963:118-129), Adamson (2015:66-72); the ancient source texts are collected and commented on in Long (1987:266ff.).

¹⁴ Algra (2003:165-170).

¹⁵ A more comprehensive discussion on the Stoic view on myths as related to ancient wisdom is given in Boys-Stones (2001:28-43). Algra (2003:177-178) points at the often rather moderate attitude of the Stoics towards traditional cults: though strictly speaking reluctant to less rational practices, in daily life they were respectful towards religious conventions, which could be seen as approximations of the truth: 'a religious tradition that encompasses at least *some* elements of the right preconception of the gods could be thought to be better than nothing.'

principles remain. Then the cosmic cycle starts again, which will be exactly like the preceding one: we can expect the god to make the same perfect choices again.¹⁶

This seemingly mechanic process is in fact considered to be the expression of divine, rational government. The immanent god orders all things rationally and in the best possible way. Divine providence concerns both the perfectly harmonized system of the world as a whole and the special care for humankind. The idea of divine governance contains a strong teleological element: everything has its purpose. The ultimate purpose is to serve the use and benefit of the most rational being: the world is said to be ordered to benefit mankind and even individual persons are included in the divine providence.¹⁷ All events and actions are caused by previous events and actions: fate is characterized as ‘chain of causes’. Not only materialism, pantheism and providential care are typical for the Stoic view of the world and its history, but it also has a deterministic side.¹⁸

During the Roman period there was much interaction between Platonists, Aristotelians and Stoics, the three schools that saw themselves as a continuation of the Socratic tradition. This is illustrated in the attempt made by the Platonist Antiochus of Ascalon, the teacher of Cicero, to integrate Stoic and Peripatetic elements in Platonism. A more oppositional approach is found in the works of the Platonist Plutarch of Chaeronea and the Aristotelian Alexander of Aphrodisias. Both of them attacked elements of the Stoic philosophy from their own perspective. Platonic ideas as the incorporeal soul, the separate existence of immaterial forms and the transcendence of the divine were rejected by the materialist Stoics, whereas they largely agreed with Platonists on the all-inclusiveness of divine providence. The latter issue was a point of disagreement between Stoics and Aristotelians, just like Aristotelian concepts as the Unmoved Mover and the eternity and indestructability of the universe. Meanwhile both the Stoic and the Aristotelian schools were united in their rejection of Platonic ideas as the pre-existence of the soul and the separate forms existing in a transcendent reality. In the end only Platonism survived: the most dominant pagan philosophy of late antiquity is set up by the Platonist Plotinus, who incorporated Stoic and Peripatetic elements in his system.¹⁹

2.4 Scepticism

Next I add a brief introduction of a school whose influence was gradually fading away in the second century CE: Scepticism.²⁰ Its last important representative, the doctor Sextus Empiricus, probably lived in that age. This school can be traced back to Pyrrho of Elis (ca. 360-270 BC) and got a second start within the Academy, the school that was founded by Plato in Athens. Almost eighty years after Plato’s death in 347 BC, the leadership of the Academy passed to Arcesilaus. From this time on the Academy turned into a center of scepticism, adopted the technique of arguing both for and against a thesis and promoted the doctrine of suspension of judgement (ἐποχή). Their approach is used initially to counter the Stoic theory of knowledge and can be connected with the discussions described in the early dialogues of Plato, in which Socrates is reported as questioning the knowledge his interlocutors thought they had.

The possibility of defending both sides of an issue with equal probability was shown in Rome by Carneades, the successor of Arcesilaos. Visiting Rome as a member of an embassy in 155 BC Carneades argued in favor of justice, but in his speech of the next day he overturned his argument and subverted justice, causing great consternation among the Roman leaders.²¹ In the first century BC the sceptic Philo

¹⁶ See also Bergjan (2002:56-63) on the Stoic conception of conflagration in relation to πρόνοια (providence).

¹⁷ In this section on providence I followed the more detailed account on providential care in Stoicism (based mainly on Cicero’s *De natura deorum* 2-3) given by Frede, D. (2002:95-115). More on πρόνοια in the context of Stoic terminology in Bergjan (2002:56-80). On ‘freedom of choice’ in Stoic philosophy see Benjamins (1994:12ff.).

¹⁸ Related questions about fate, necessity and responsibility are discussed in Brennan (2005:235-269).

¹⁹ See Inwood (2011) for more details on Stoicism in the Hellenistic and Roman period.

²⁰ On Scepticism and the New Academy see Bett (2010); Lévy (2011); Adamson (2015:101-128); a collection of source texts is provided in Long (1987:13-24; 438-488).

²¹ See Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* 5.14.

of Larissa had Cicero among his students and made him an adherent of a rather mild form of scepticism. He defended that, whereas true and absolutely certain knowledge is out of our reach, we might follow plausibility.

As can be deduced from the previous words scepticism focused on epistemology, although in the thought of Pyrrho there was a link to ethics: in his view the suspension of judgement is the only way to an undisturbed state of mind (*ἀταραξία*) and happiness. Physics or theology were no points of attention in scepticism, which does not mean that the sceptical approach was not used as a tool for analysing theological discussions. An example of this is provided in the debate on divine providence, anthropocentrism and the existence of gods in Cicero's *De natura deorum*.²²

2.5 Aristotelianism

I continue my description of the landscape with the region of the Peripatetics, the adherents of the philosophy of Aristotle (384-322), who had studied in Plato's Academy, disagreed with his teacher and founded his own school, the Lyceum. He was an all-round scholar and published numerous works including treatises on logic, physics, metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, psychology and political philosophy. It is impossible to do justice to his philosophy in a brief introduction.²³ I will focus on the elements of it that seem to be relevant for the subject of this chapter.

His disagreement with Plato basically concerned the latter's distinction between the real, intelligible world of the unchanging eternal immaterial Forms and the ever changing, material world we perceive by our senses. Aristotle denied the existence of a separate transcendent world and located the unchanging *in* the visible world. Basic terms in his conception of reality and his explanation of change and movement are Form and Matter, Actual and Potential being. Well-known are the four causes or reasons he distinguishes to explain why a particular thing exists and that it is what it is. He assumes a systematically ordered universe in which is no void. The universe has the spherical earth in its center, inside the sphere of the moon, this being the region of on-going generation and destruction of individual substances. Around this center lies the eternal and indestructible region in which the heavenly bodies make their circular movements.

To explain all these movements (for every motion there has to be an external mover) we have to pass from the physics to Aristotle's metaphysics, the 'first philosophy', which deals with the primary forms of being. Because these beings are considered to be divine, we may also speak of 'theology'. As the ultimate cause of all motion exists in Aristotle's view necessarily an Unmoved Mover (or Movers), which is pure actuality without potentiality – thus it is immaterial, for matter is potentiality – and cannot change or move himself. It causes motion just by being the object of desire or love for other beings. The immaterial Mover is considered to be a mind that is completely self-sufficient: it has its object of thinking within itself, because thinking of other objects would mean a reduction of its perfect state. The First Mover, or god, is not the creator of the cosmos – the cosmos is eternal – but is part of the cosmos.²⁴

After Aristotle's death the interest in his works got a revival in the first century BC. There was editorial activity and disciples of Aristotle wrote commentaries and explained difficult passages. In discussions with Stoic and Platonic positions the peripatetic standpoint was developed.²⁵ One of the

²² In Cicero's *De natura deorum* we can see where his sceptical approach leads: the scene is a debate between three men, the Epicurean Velleius, the Stoic Balbus and the Academic Cotta. After the first two got ample opportunity to make their point, both positions are criticized by Cotta and in the end the reader is left in a doubtful position, although in the final sentence the author confesses prudently that the speech of Balbus seems to be more plausible (*mihi Balbi [disputatio] ad veritatis similitudinem videretur esse propensior*, *De natura deorum* 3.95). See also Lévy (2011:61).

²³ A more satisfying introduction to Aristotle is given in Armstrong (1947:66-113), the pages on which my description mainly is based; see also Adamson (2014:207ff.).

²⁴ See Sedley (2007:167ff.) on Aristotle's cosmology.

²⁵ On Aristotelianism after Aristotle see Sharples (2011:140ff.); Adamson (2015:174ff.).

issues concerned the question of divine providence.²⁶ In the second century BC the Peripatetic Critolaus²⁷ had asserted that divine providence governs the heavenly regions, but not the sublunary domain (so not, as the Stoics said, the entire world).²⁸ Boys-Stones (2018:325-326) describes in a schematic way the exercise of the Aristotelian ‘impersonal’ god as the causing of movement: the First Mover is the cause of movement for the first sphere of the fixed stars (a movement that is eternal and orderly and therefore considered to be beneficial); then this movement of the first sphere is passed on to the second sphere and so on till we arrive at the sublunary area; there the system of providential movements passed on by intermediate entities changes: the movement of the earth is not determined just by the surrounding sphere, but by all the heavenly spheres; because of this confluence of causes not providence, but chance rules in the sublunary area: ‘providence stops at the moon’.

In the Peripatetic work *De mundo* (‘On the universe’; end first century BC or beginning first century AD?²⁹) god in his providential role was compared to the king of Persia, ruling from a distance and by delegates.³⁰ The Platonist Atticus attacked this semi-Epicurean position, as he called it: was providence if confined to the heavens, of any significance for *us*?³¹ Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl.ca. 200 AD, Origen seems to be his younger contemporary),³² answered the question explaining that divine providence was not confined to the region beyond the moon, but also concerns the earth: it takes care of the regular movements of celestial bodies and effects the maintenance of the corruptible, by ensuring the conservation of the species and the continuous renewal of generations. Providence functions as a force of nature, as caring without thinking, as benefaction without intention to provide assistance to individuals. It is not related to individuals, but to the preservation of the human species as a whole. Alexander’s idea of providence differs from the Stoic and Platonist one. It is marked by distance and amounts to an impersonal safeguarding of the regularities of nature: ‘Alexander’s divine providence is not of the sort that will intervene in the course of events’.³³

2.6 Platonism

After Plato’s death in 347 BC his school, the Academy, was led for some years by his nephew Speusippus. He was succeeded by Xenocrates, who was the first to systematize what he understood of Plato’s doctrines, probably in response to criticism from Aristotle’s newly founded Lyceum. Nearly fifty years after Xenocrates’ death the Academy, now headed by Arcesilaus, changed direction and became the sceptical ‘new’ Academy (see above).

In the 80s of the first century BC Antiochus of Ascalon broke with this sceptical approach and initiated a return to the old Academy and the orientation on Plato’s texts. Since this turn Platonists looked to Plato’s philosophy as their authoritative starting point.³⁴ In their interpretation of elements of

²⁶ Cf. Origen’s description of the position of ‘the Peripatetics who deny that providence has any care for us and that there is any relationship between God and men’ (*Contra Celsum* 3.75.22-24).

²⁷ He had accompanied the Sceptic Carneades in Rome as one of the Athenian philosopher envoys visiting Rome in 155 BC (see above).

²⁸ See Sharples (2011:142).

²⁹ References to the discussion on the authorship and date of *De mundo* in Bergjan (2002:67 n.122) and Bos (2004:216-217).

³⁰ The passage is quoted in Chadwick (1953:XVIII), who suggests Stoic influences here.

³¹ Atticus’ argument against Aristotelian ideas about providence is discussed in Boys-Stones (2016:319-324); for a translation of Atticus’ fragment 3 see Boys-Stones (2018:334-336).

³² In the text of an inscription found in the ancient city of Aphrodisias he is denoted as διάδοχος (‘successor’ (of Aristotle)), which indicates, according to Adamson (2015:181), that he held one of the philosophers chairs set up by Marcus Aurelius. He was a precise and the most authoritative commentator of Aristotle’s works.

³³ More on Alexander’s conception of providence in Bergjan (2001:202-203); Bergjan (2002:227-238); Adamson (2015:184); Sharples (2011:155-157), the quote is from Sharples (p.156).

³⁴ See for the term ‘Platonist’ Tarrant (2011:63-66), Fowler (2016:8-9), Boys-Stones (2018:2-10,14-15). In Boys-Stones (2001:102ff.) the author emphasizes the dogmatic and authoritative position of Plato: for Platonists certain doctrines were true on the ground that Plato had said it. Interpretation of Plato’s text was therefore essential among Platonists. Referring to Celsus and Plutarch Boys-Stones demonstrates that Platonists linked Plato’s philosophy to the true doctrine handed down from old

Plato's heritage they often combined their Platonism with an open mind towards Pythagoreans, Peripatetics and Stoics. This phase of Platonism from the middle of the first century BC up to Plotinus (205-270) is commonly indicated as 'Middle-Platonism', the rather unsatisfactory indication of a 'family' group which included different authors as Philo of Alexandria (ca.25 BC – 45 AD), Plutarch of Chaironea (ca.50-120), Atticus, Apuleius, Albinus and Alcinous (all second century AD) to mention no more.³⁵ In Philo we encounter a Hellenized Jew who in his interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures connected Jewish thought with Platonic input. Plutarch, a priest at Delphi, who is well-known as the author of biographies of Greek and Roman great men, also produced a wide range of philosophical works. Atticus of Athens,³⁶ a contemporary of Celsus, contributed to the debate between the schools by his attacks on the Peripatetics. In handbooks written by Apuleius, Albinus and Alcinous³⁷ an overview is given of doctrines of Platonism as it was interpreted in the second century.

Despite the fact that all these authors wrote in different periods, had different intentions and were participants in different debates, there are at least two things that unite them: in the first place a shared admiration for Plato as their authority. A second point Platonists have in common, concerns their view on the principle causes of the nature of the world: the belief in transcendent, non-material causes of the cosmos, a belief which separates them from materialists as Epicureans and Stoics. Platonists make a distinction between the visible, material world and the intelligible world of the eternal, non-material entities. This crucial distinction is discussed by Plato on several occasions, inter alia in his account of the creation of the world in his dialogue *Timaeus*, a text which is of high importance for Platonists in their discourses on cosmology. In these discourses the debate on the primary causes of things, the 'first principles' (ἀρχαί) is fundamental. Here we enter the area of metaphysics or theology.³⁸

2.6.1 Platonist theology: introduction

In the next section I will provide a more comprehensive review on theological issues in Platonism³⁹ in order to compare them eventually to the ideas of Celsus and Origen. The description of issues that could be relevant for such a comparison will be based mainly on two texts of authors who are, roughly speaking, (probably) contemporaries of Celsus, Apuleius' *De Platone et eius dogmate* ('On Plato and his doctrine') and Alcinous' *Didaskalikos* ('Instruction').⁴⁰ Both texts can be characterized as handbooks on Platonic philosophy and discuss several of the main doctrines of Platonism in a systematic way. Whereas Apuleius offers a more basic and factual exposition of Platonic doctrines, Alcinous' work contains more argumentation and seems to presuppose readers who already are rather acquainted with

times and maintained by the wisest nations and men: 'Plato's philosophy, they thought, was effectively a textbook of the ancient wisdom, reconstructed, compiled and explained. And, since the ancient wisdom (...) was validated by its origins, Plato's philosophy was likewise bound to be true.' (115).

³⁵ See Dillon (1977:139ff.), Armstrong (1947:147ff.), Tarrant (2011:63-99), Adamson (2015:153-173), Fowler (2016:12-21). Boys-Stones (2018:593-617) contains a 'Catalogue of Platonists' with short introductions and references.

³⁶ Dillon (1977:248) suggests that it is possible that he was the first incumbent of the Chair of Platonic Philosophy established by Marcus Aurelius.

³⁷ In the manuscript the author of the handbook entitled *Didaskalikos* is called 'Alcinous' (Ἀλκίνοος). Yet no Platonist with this name is known to us from another source. In 1879 the German scholar J. Freundenthal suggested that this author name might be caused by a scribal error: as the real author he identified the well-known philosopher Albinus (Ἀλβίνοος). The idea was widely accepted and for almost a century the work was commonly ascribed to Albinus, as is done for instance in Dillon (1977). In the 1970s Freundenthal's suggestion was proved to be untenable and now the work is attributed to Alcinous. For a discussion on this issue see the introduction in Dillon's translation, in which the author writes about his own 'conversion' at this point (Dillon 1993:IX-XIII).

³⁸ Alcinous indicates his account of the first principles as 'theological' and distinguishes it from 'physics' (*Didaskalikos* 11.3; cf. 8.1).

³⁹ I leave aside theology of Plato himself and refer to the discussion provided in Van Riel (2013), who argues for an interpretation of Plato's theology without often applied Aristotelian patterns: 'Plato's gods are not metaphysical principles' (3).

⁴⁰ I rely on Dillon (1993) and Fowler (2016); the translations I use are quoted from these editions. Apuleius was born in the 120s AD and died between 170 and 200 (Fowler 2016:135). Almost everything about the person and lifetime of Alcinous is unknown to us. According to Dillon (1993:xiii) his work would fit best somewhere in the second century CE.

technical terms and Plato's thoughts, perhaps teachers in philosophy. In the theological section parallels can be established between the two books, although the order in which the three first principles are discussed is different. My discussion will focus on the sections about 'god' (*Didaskalikos* 10 and *De Platone* 1.5), but other passages will be quoted as well. In addition to these texts I will refer to fragments of Atticus (end second century AD) and Numenius (second century AD), to one of the *Dissertationes* of Maximus of Tyre (second century AD) and to passages from *De E apud Delphos* ('On the E at Delphi'), written by Plutarch (ca.50-120 AD).⁴¹

My own discussion on Platonism will be more detailed than the sketch of the other philosophical schools, because here the connection with the ideas of Celsus and Origen will prove to be stronger than elsewhere. Yet, although rather extensive compared to the sections on the other schools, my discussion will be necessarily brief considering the multitude of the issues and authors involved. I do not claim to be complete or exhaustive; in notes some comments, references and additions from and differences with other authors will be indicated. The discussion will be organized under the following themes: existence, knowledge and qualities of god, his relation to the world, providence and daemons.

2.6.2 Platonist theology: existence

Apuleius and Alcinous discuss the subject 'god' in the section on physics in which they distinguish three⁴² principal causes, three first principles that are named by Plato, as they say: matter (ὕλη, *materia*), form (ἰδέα/ εἶδος, *forma*) and god (θεός, *deus*).⁴³ Matter, the 'all-receiver', the receptacle of the form,⁴⁴ has no shape, quality or form of its own. Matter has to be distinguished from 'body': matter is the unqualified substrate out of which bodies are made.⁴⁵ Forms, one of the non-material primary causes of things, are the transcendent paradigms in reference to which the world is generated, or in Alcinous' words: 'Form is defined as an eternal model of things that are in accordance with nature' (*Didaskalikos* 9.2).⁴⁶ Previously he had described forms as paradigms or models of all things in the sensible world,⁴⁷ as measure of matter and as eternal and perfect thoughts of god⁴⁸ (*Didaskalikos* 9.1).

In the *Didaskalikos* the sections on these two principles are followed by a somewhat larger chapter on 'god', the third principle. Alcinous starts by commenting on the issue of the ineffability. The adjective ἄρρητος ('ineffable') however is now nuanced by the addition of μικροῦ δεῖν καὶ ('all but, nearly'), a nuanced statement that is explicitly attributed to Plato. This small window of opportunity is used by

⁴¹ Very helpful for my research was the collection of Middle-Platonist sources in translation, provided with introductions, notes and suggestions for further reading in Boys-Stones (2018).

⁴² Not all Platonists assume three causes; other numbers also occur: four (the world soul as extra), two (form and god) or one. See Boys-Stones (2018:90).

⁴³ These three causes correspond with prepositional phrases often used in this context, respectively: the cause *from which* (ἐξ), the cause *in reference to which* (κατά) and the cause *by which* (ὑπό) ... the cosmos was created. Seneca (*Epistula* 65.8-10) adds two more causes: the cause *in which* and the cause *because of which*. In order to illustrate the five causes Seneca refers to the cosmos: 'This cosmos, as Plato says, also has them all: a maker: this is god; that *from which*: this is matter; form: that is the shape and structure of the cosmos we see; paradigm: obviously that in reference to which god made this vast and beautiful work; purpose: the reason he made it.' (translation quoted from Boys-Stones 2018:92-93).

⁴⁴ 'Pure Receptivity' is only one of the definitions of matter given by Platonists; two others are indicated by Boys-Stones as 'Something and Nothing' and 'Raw Mobility' (2018:103-107).

⁴⁵ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 51a; Alcinous (*Didaskalikos* 8.3) adds: 'And being such, it will be neither body nor incorporeal, but potentially body, just as we understand the bronze to be potentially a statue, because once it has received the form it will be a statue'. In the words 'potentially body' (δυνάμει σῶμα) Aristotelian influence seems to be noticeable. See Dillon (1993:92); Fowler (2016:156, n.62).

⁴⁶ Is this including artificial objects and abstractions? For a discussion of opinions of Platonists on what things have forms I refer to Dillon (1993:96-98).

⁴⁷ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 29b; 48e.

⁴⁸ Alcinous presents four arguments for the existence of forms. The first one runs as follows: 'Whether God is an intellect or is possessed of intellect, he has thoughts, and these are eternal and unchanging; and if this is the case, forms exist' (*Didaskalikos* 9.3). 'Ideas as thoughts of god' is not an element explicitly expressed in Plato's work, but probably derived from Xenocrates and also found in Philo (Dillon 1993:94-95). See also Boys-Stones (2018:135).

Alcinous to arrive at some notion of the divine by inductive reasoning:⁴⁹ he presents two arguments in succession to establish the existence of the first god. The first one is organized as an analogy between sense-perception and intellection: if there are sense-impressions (αἰσθητά), there must be primary objects of sense-perception (πρῶτα αἰσθητά); and if there exist objects of intellection (νοητά), there exist primary objects of intellection in an absolute sense (πρῶτα νοητὰ ἀπλᾶ).⁵⁰ The second reasoning is based on an ascending order in the following way: intellect is superior to soul, actualizing intellect is superior to potential intellect and prior to actualizing intellect is its cause (ὁ αἷτιος τούτου). This leads to the following conclusion and final observations:

(1) Οὗτος ἂν εἴη ὁ πρῶτος θεός, αἷτιος ὑπάρχων τοῦ ἀεὶ ἐνεργεῖν τῷ νῷ τοῦ σύμπαντος οὐρανοῦ. Ἐνεργεῖ δὲ ἀκίνητος, αὐτὸς ὢν εἰς τοῦτον, ὡς καὶ ὁ ἥλιος εἰς τὴν ὄρασιν, ὅταν αὐτῷ προσβλέπη, καὶ ὡς τὸ ὀρεκτὸν κινεῖ τὴν ὀρεξιν ἀκίνητον ὑπάρχον· οὕτω γε δὴ καὶ οὗτος ὁ νοῦς κινήσει τὸν νοῦν τοῦ σύμπαντος οὐρανοῦ. (<i>Didaskalikos</i> 10.2)	This is it that would be the first god, being the cause of the eternal activity of the intellect of the whole heaven. It acts on this while remaining itself unmoved, as does the sun on vision, when this is directed towards it, and as the object of desire moves desire, while remaining motionless itself. In just this way will this intellect move the intellect of the whole heaven.⁵¹

I point at the use of the optative at the start of these final observations: ‘this would be the first god’ (οὗτος ἂν εἴη ὁ πρῶτος θεός), expressing the possible status of the conclusion. The optative seems to be used here as a cautious variant of the indicative.⁵² The reasoning character of this passage appears in κινήσει, which can be interpreted as an inferential future.⁵³ Alcinous is aware of the risk of bold declarations on a subject that is almost beyond description, as he said in his introduction. It is clear that Alcinous’ arguments for the existence of god are based on the distinction between the visible world and the intelligible world and on the idea that also in the latter domain there has to exist a hierarchy. In this approach there has to be something on the summit as ‘the primary intellect’, the cause of all the heavenly intellect, which is called ‘the first god’.⁵⁴ Remarkable, moreover, besides the Platonic comparison with the sun (*Respublica* 508b-509b), is the Aristotelian flavour in the final statements.⁵⁵

Another interesting passage on the existence of god is offered by Plutarch in *De E apud Delphos*, one of his philosophical works. Here the author reports a discussion on the meaning of the mysterious letter E that was present at the sanctuary at Delphi. In the final section Plutarch gives the floor to his teacher Ammonius, who uses basic elements of Platonic philosophy in his explanation. Ammonius explains the letter E as a form of the verb ‘to be’: εἶ (‘you are’) is addressed to the god Apollo.⁵⁶ His starting point is ‘god exists’ (ἔστιν ὁ θεός) and this is explained in the following passage:

(2) Ἀλλ’ ἔστιν ὁ θεός, εἰ χρὴ φάναι, καὶ ἔστι κατ’ οὐδένα χρόνον ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τὸν ἀκίνητον καὶ ἄχρονον καὶ ἀνέγκλιτον καὶ οὐ πρότερον οὐδὲν ἔστιν οὐδ’ ὕστερον οὐδὲ μέλλον οὐδὲ παρωχημένον οὐδὲ πρεσβύτερον	But, if it is necessary to say it, god exists; and he does not exist in time, but for eternity – which does not admit of movement or time or deviation, and to which nothing is prior or posterior, or future or past, or older or

⁴⁹ On induction (ἐπαγωγή; in the text of 10.1 we encounter the equivalent verbal form ἐπαχθείμεν) see Boys-Stones (2018:406-407,410), who explains that in Alcinous induction refers to the transition ‘from like to like’; in Aristotle induction denotes a type of argumentation which generalizes from individual cases.

⁵⁰ For more details see Dillon (1993:101-102). Cf. also my glossary on words related to intellect given in 2.6.3 below n.69.

⁵¹ Translation Dillon (1993), with small modifications, as in the following quotes from Alcinous.

⁵² Cf. Rijksbaron (2002:41); CGCG (2019:441 §34.13).

⁵³ Cf. chapter II 4.5 and S.J. Bakker (2002).

⁵⁴ On god as intellect see Boys-Stones (2018:149-150).

⁵⁵ I mean the distinction potential-actual, the characterization of the primal god as ‘unmoved’ and ‘object of desire’. For further references see Dillon (1993:102-103).

⁵⁶ As Dillon (1977:199) asserts, these words may be taken to represent Plutarch’s views.

οὐδὲ νεώτερον· ἀλλ' εἷς ὢν ἐνὶ τῷ νῦν τὸ αἰεὶ
πεπλήρωκε, καὶ μόνον ἐστὶ τὸ κατὰ ταῦτόν
ὄντως ὄν, οὐ γεγονὸς οὐδ' ἐσόμενον οὐδ'
ἀρξάμενον οὐδὲ παυσόμενον. Οὕτως οὖν
αὐτὸ δεῖ σεβομένους ἀσπάζεσθαι [καὶ]
προσεθίζειν, 'εἶ', καὶ νῆ Δία, ὡς ἔνιοι τῶν
παλαιῶν, 'εἶ ἔν'. οὐ γὰρ πολλὰ τὸ θεῖον
ἐστίν... (*De E apud Delphos* 393AB)

younger. He is one and fills eternity in a single moment; he alone really exists and does not change. He has not come to be, he is not going to be, he does not begin or end. So we should worship him and gladly call him 'You are'. Indeed, by Zeus, we should call him as some of the ancients did 'You are One'. For the divine is not plurality ... (translation Boys-Stones 2018:171)

I point at the transition from the masculine (ὁ θεός ... εἷς ὢν) to the neuter (τὸ ... ὄν, ἔν, τὸ θεῖον):⁵⁷ in this passage the more person-like indication 'god' is almost unnoticedly superseded by more abstract, philosophical expressions ('what really is'; 'the divine'). Moreover, the existence of 'god' is connected with the notions of eternity, timelessness, unity and immutability.⁵⁸ Especially the latter point is elaborated in the text, inter alia by an interesting explanation of the name of Apollo: denial (ἀ) of plurality (τὰ πολλά). The One is pure (εἰλικρινὲς καὶ καθαρὸν – neuter again), for 'pollution is what happens when one thing is mixed with another' (393C).⁵⁹

This passage of Plutarch in which the unity of god is underlined, can be seen in the light of ongoing discussions among Platonists about unity and plurality, being and becoming. The problem to be solved was: how to account for the relation between a god representing unity and the forms in their multiplicity? Boys-Stones⁶⁰ comments on several positions in this discussion, one of which is: the forms are contained in god (represented by e.g. Alcinoüs, who talks of forms as the thoughts of god or as god's act of thinking itself, see text (6) below). Others (Plutarch, Atticus) state that forms derive their existence and goodness from god and therefore are posterior to god.

An interesting contribution in this debate is given by Numenius of Apamea (second century AD).⁶¹ The fragments of his works, handed over to us by other authors, show the thoughts of a fascinating philosopher who believed in the truth originated in ancient nations, articulated by several philosophers, including especially Pythagoras, and expressed in Plato's writings. In this appreciation of ancient truth Numenius resembles the ideas of Celsus, although he differs from him by explicitly showing respect for the Jewish wisdom.⁶² I quote the following fragment in which Numenius explicitly distinguishes between a first god and a second god, a passage that, when compared to texts (1) and (2), bears witness to the diversity of approaches and opinions within the group of Platonists.

- (3) Εἰσὶ δ' οὗτοι βίοι ὁ μὲν πρώτου, ὁ δὲ δευτέρου θεοῦ. Δηλονότι ὁ μὲν πρῶτος θεὸς ἔσται ἐστώς, ὁ δὲ δεύτερος ἔμπαλιν ἐστὶ κινούμενος· ὁ μὲν οὖν πρῶτος περὶ τὰ νοητά, ὁ δὲ δεύτερος περὶ τὰ νοητὰ καὶ αἰσθητά. Μὴ θαυμάσης δ' εἰ τοῦτ' ἔφη· πολὺ γὰρ ἔτι θαυμαστότερον ἀκούσῃ. Ἀντὶ γὰρ τῆς προσούσης τῷ δευτέρῳ κινήσεως τὴν προσοῦσαν τῷ πρώτῳ στάσιν φημὶ εἶναι κίνησιν σύμφυτον, ἀφ' ἧς ἢ τε τάξις τοῦ κόσμου

This is how the first and second god live. Obviously the first god will be fixed, while the second, conversely, will be in motion. The first is concerned with intelligible objects, but the second with intelligible and sensible objects. Don't be surprised that I say this – you will hear more surprising things yet. For instead of the motion which belongs to the second god, I maintain that the natural motion of the first is stillness, and

⁵⁷ In translation quoted from Boys-Stones the masculine indications are maintained longer than in the Greek text. Whittaker (1969a:189) thinks such changes need not have particular significance.

⁵⁸ I refer to 2.6.4 below for a further discussion on the theme 'change'.

⁵⁹ Cf. De Vogel (1983:284-286) for a discussion of the passage from the perspective of the transcendence in Plutarch's theology. (2018:150-157): for more details I refer to these pages.

⁶⁰ He is characterized by Boys-Stones (2018:608) as: 'A Pythagorean, but one with unusually close engagement with the Platonist movement'. See also his p.9 for reasons to include Numenius (and Philo) in the Platonist 'family'.

⁶² Cf. his well-known question: 'What is Plato but Moses speaking Attic Greek?' (fragment 8). Origen appreciated his views as is clear in the references he made to Numenius in *Contra Celsum* 1.15; 4.51; 5.38; 5.57.

καὶ ἡ μονὴ ἢ αἰδίοις καὶ ἡ σωτηρία ἀναχεῖται εἰς τὰ ὅλα. (Numenius, fragment 15) from it pours out into the universe the order of the cosmos and its sempiternal permanence and stability and safety.⁶³

Numenius marks the distinction between the first and the second god by ἔμπαλιν ('conversely') and the repeated use of μέν ... δέ. The first god, elsewhere also denoted by him as 'the Father' and 'the Good',⁶⁴ is described here in words that resemble Plutarch's characterization in text (2): 'fixed', 'stillness', no movement, 'concerned with intelligible objects' only. Numenius himself realizes the paradoxical character of his combination of στάσις ('stillness') and κίνησις ('movement'): he uses the second person to address his audience in order to prepare them for his special wording (μὴ θαυμάσης - 'Don't be surprised'⁶⁵). Real motion can only be attributed to beings outside the first god. His 'stationary motion' seems to be an energy which enables order and stability to the universe: in the Greek passive wording (ἀφ' ἧς... ἀναχεῖται - 'from which is poured out ...') the *Agens* is left unexpressed, possibly to prevent the thought of an outward-looking activity of the first god. The passage is reminiscent of the notion of Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, which is the cause of movement of all things without changing or moving itself. But, and this is different from Aristotle's picture, besides (below?) the first god Numenius places a second being which is attributed divine status ('second god') and which has the role of a bridge between the intelligible and the sensible world. The relation between the second god and the world will be further discussed below (2.6.5).

2.6.3 Platonist theology: knowledge of god

The question whether or not knowledge of god is possible for us⁶⁶ is not really on the agenda in Apuleius' *De Platone*. Among the adjectives he quotes as Plato's qualifications are, admittedly, 'ineffable' (*indictum*), 'unnamable' (*innominabilem*) and 'invisible' (ἀόρατον), epithets that make clear that god cannot be seen and that no word or name is capable to denote him adequately,⁶⁷ but in Apuleius' text these thoughts are not further elaborated. The short passage ends with a paraphrased quotation from Plato's *Timaeus* 28c: 'It is no small task to discover God, and having discovered him, to describe him to the many is impossible'.⁶⁸

Alcinous' text (*Didaskalikos* 10) provides more on this subject. In fact the argument he establishes in his first section on the third principle is presented with the intention to 'arrive by induction at some notion of it'. So the passages discussed and quoted above have indirect relevance to the issue of god's knowability, at least as far as his existence is concerned. Alcinous continues his theological section with a list of epithets that will be quoted below in text (7). This list might suggest that god's nature can be somehow defined, but Alcinous repeats that god is ineffable: words fall short, for god can only be grasped by the intellect (νῶ μόνῳ ληπτός, *Didaskalikos* 10.4).⁶⁹ Then three methods of conceiving

⁶³ Fragment 15 is taken from Numenius' book *De Bono* and quoted by Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 11.18.20-21 (translation Boys-Stones 2018:180).

⁶⁴ See Dillon (1977:367-368).

⁶⁵ For εἰ following θαυμάζω see LSJ s.v. 6: 'θ. εἰ .. I wonder if...', as a more polite way of saying I wonder that ...', Plato, *Phaedo* 97a; *Symposium* 215a.

⁶⁶ See for an overview of (middle)-Platonic statements on this topic Hensels (2002:87-94).

⁶⁷ Similar negative theology in Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 11.9-11 (Fowler 2016:100-105).

⁶⁸ For a discussion of similar passages from Plato in which his hesitation to speak about the gods is expressed, see Van Riel (2013:30-34).

⁶⁹ In this context of Alcinous (as in similar text of other philosophers) the notion of 'mind' (νοῦς) frequently appears. For the convenience of the reader I offer a short glossary of associated terms, that are used e.g. in texts (1), (4) and (18). For more details I refer to LSJ and Lampe.

The basic verb is νοέω = perceive (by eyes, by mind), apprehend (by thought); hence:

νοεῖσθαι = to be perceived, to be apprehended by thought, to be understood;

τὸ νοούμενον = that what is perceived; object of intellection;

ὁ νοῦς = mind, intellect (that which performs the action of νοέω);

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(νοήσις) him are demonstrated. The first one is indicated as κατὰ ἀφαίρεσιν ('by abstraction'): this negative approach consists of denying that qualities apply for god: god is beyond these qualities. Alcinous lists a number of qualities in opposed pairs: god is e.g. neither bad ('an improper thought'), nor good ('for he would be thus by participation in something, to wit, goodness')⁷⁰ nor indifferent.⁷¹

The second way to get an intellectual grasp of god is analogy, a passage which offers an interesting parallel with Celsus' approach of the topic. Therefore I quote the passage in full length:

- (4) Δευτέρα δέ ἐστιν αὐτοῦ νόησις ἢ κατὰ ἀναλογίαν οὕτω πως· ὃν γὰρ ἔχει λόγον ὁ ἥλιος πρὸς τὴν ὄρασιν καὶ τὰ ὁρώμενα, οὐκ ὦν αὐτὸς ὄψις, παρέχων δὲ τῇ μὲν τὸ ὁρᾶν, τοῖς δὲ τὸ ὁρᾶσθαι, τοῦτον ἔχει τὸν λόγον ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς πρὸς τὴν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ νόησιν καὶ τὰ νοούμενα· οὐ γὰρ ὦν ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἡ νόησις, παρέχει αὐτῇ τὸ νοεῖν καὶ τοῖς νοητοῖς τὸ νοεῖσθαι, φωτίζων τὴν περὶ αὐτὰ ἀλήθειαν. (*Didaskalikos* 10.5)
- The second way of conceiving him is that of analogy, as follows: the sun is to vision and to visible objects (it is not itself sight, but provides vision to sight and visibility to its objects) as the primal intellect is to the action of understanding in the soul and to the objects of intellection; for it is not the action of understanding itself, but provides intellection to this action and intelligibility to its objects, illuminating the truth contained in them.

Alcinous illustrates his method of analogy by elaborating a comparison with the sun, the source of which is undoubtedly Plato's Sun Simile of *Republica* 508b-509b again.⁷² Here the analogy is used to clarify the similarity between god and the soul (and objects in the world), or more precisely: between the first intellect and the intellectual power in the soul (and its objects). The parallels can be made visible in the following table:

Analogy between:	the sun (ὁ ἥλιος)	the primal intellect (ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς)
Relation to:	1. vision (πρὸς τὴν ὄρασιν)	1. the action of understanding in the soul (πρὸς τὴν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ νόησιν)
	2. visible objects (τὰ ὁρώμενα)	2. objects of intellection (τὰ νοούμενα)
What it is <i>not</i> :	It is not itself sight (οὐκ ὦν αὐτὸς ὄψις)	It is not what the action of understanding is (οὐ γὰρ ὦν ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἡ νόησις)
What it does:	provides (παρέχων) 1. vision to sight (τῇ μὲν τὸ ὁρᾶν) 2. visibility to its objects (τοῖς δὲ τὸ ὁρᾶσθαι)	provides (παρέχει) 1. intellection to the action of understanding (αὐτῇ τὸ νοεῖν) 2. intelligibility to its objects (τοῖς νοητοῖς τὸ νοεῖσθαι)
Method:		bringing light to the truth they contain (φωτίζων τὴν περὶ αὐτὰ ἀλήθειαν)

τὸ νόημα = thought, perception, notion (that which is perceived);

ἡ νόησις = the (action of process of) understanding, insight; also: way to understand; ability to understand;

νοητός = intelligible, falling within the sphere of νοῦς, apprehended by the intellect (frequently opposed to αἰσθητός = perceived by senses).

⁷⁰ Mark that here 'good' is denied as quality (οὔτε ἀγαθόν), whereas in text (7) below god is called ἀγαθόν. The latter epithet denotes him as Goodness itself, the source of the goodness in all good things, which just are good (possess goodness) by participation.

⁷¹ The other opposed pairs of the list are: qualified – unqualified; part – whole; same – different; move – being moved. See Dillon (1993:107-109) for a discussion.

⁷² Other passage in Plato's work in which the division being vs. becoming, intellect vs. senses, knowledge vs. opinion is discussed are: *Republica* 475-480; *Timaeus* 28a-c; 51a-e; *Politicus* 269d.

What god, the primal intellect, works out can be grasped by looking at the similarity of the relation of the sun to vision and visible things on the one hand and the primal intellect to the souls' intelligence and the things it understands on the other hand. Important in both cases is what is *provided*: thanks to the sun/ god the appropriate results are achieved, viz. the action of seeing/understanding results in actual sight/ understanding and the visible/ intelligible things are really seen/ understood. To highlight these positive statements Alcinous uses contrasting phrases indicating what the sun and the primal intellect are *not*: sight, or the action of understanding. In the final participle phrase which is only present on the 'intellect-side' of the comparison, elements of both sides are brought together: the term ἀλήθεια ('truth') belongs to the intellectual domain, whereas φωτίζων ('bringing light') in its literary sense has its place in the realm of vision and visibility: the conventional metaphorical sense of φῶς ('light') brings both sides elegantly together.

Then Alcinous closes the section on the knowability of god in 10.6 by presenting a third way of conceiving him: a method indicated by Dillon (1993:109) as the *via eminentiae*, a Latin term from later scholasticism. The method comprises contemplation of objects in an ascending order of abstraction and beauty, as presented by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* 210a ff.: firstly one contemplates (θεωρῶν) beauty in bodies, then in the soul, then in customs and laws to arrive ultimately at the 'great sea of beauty' and gain an intuition of the good itself (αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν νοεῖ).⁷³ Just like the second method the third contemplative approach is presented as an exclusively intellectual activity: only by the intellect we can grasp god, as Alcinous had said in 10.4.

2.6.4 Platonist theology: qualities

Apuleius starts his discussion on god, the third principle cause, with the following words in which he represents the thoughts of Plato:

(5) Sed haec de Deo sentit, quod sit incorporeus. Is unus, αἰτ, ἀπερίμετρος, genitor rerumque omnium exstructor, beatus et beatificus, optimus, nihil indigens, ipse conferens cuncta. Quem quidem caelestem pronuntiat, indictum, innominabilem, et ut ait ipse, ἀόρατον, ἀδάμαστον; cuius naturam invenire difficile est; si inventa sit, in multos eam enuntiari non posse. Platonis haec verba sunt: θεὸν εὐρεῖν τε ἔργον, εὐρόντα τε εἰς πολλοὺς ἐκφέρειν ἀδύνατον. (<i>De Platone</i> 1.5)	He thinks this about God: that he is incorporeal. He is one, he says, unmeasurable, the father and builder of all things, blessed and provider of blessings, the very best, lacking nothing, he himself bestowing all things. Indeed, Plato asserts that he is heavenly, ineffable, unnamable and as he himself says 'invisible' and 'unconquerable'. His nature is difficult to discover; if it is discovered, it cannot be described to the many. Plato says in his own words: 'It is no small task to discover God, and, having discovered him, to describe him to the many is impossible.' (translation Fowler)

Apuleius claims to represent Plato's view (cf. *haec ... sentit* and the 'reporting' verbs as *ait* and *pronuntiat*). Indeed most of his indications can be traced back to Plato, but Fowler demonstrates that Apuleius' terms can be placed in a wider context and that he sometimes uses expressions that were not exclusively Platonic.⁷⁴ The theological presentation Apuleius provides in this passage consists mainly

⁷³ Cf. the description of the ascension of the soul and the flight of the mind towards god, the source of all beauty in Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 11.10-11 (Fowler 2016:102-105).

⁷⁴ For a detailed discussion on all of the qualifications, their possible sources and parallels I refer to Fowler in his commentary (2016:152-154).

of an enumeration of qualifications attributed to god, without any reasoning or explanation of them.⁷⁵ Part of the qualifications are worded in positive adjectives or phrases, mainly those that describe god's relation with the world (*genitor ... exstructor, beatificus, ipse conferens cuncta*): he has made all things and blesses them. For the greater part negative adjectives are used (*incorporeus, nihil indigens, indictum, innominabilem* and the Greek qualifications ἀπερίμετρος, ἄορατος, ἀδάμαστος⁷⁶): in these terms the author does not affirm what god is, but rather expresses what he is not. This 'negative theology' largely concerns the difficulty to get knowledge of god, which is also worded at the end of the passage in a paraphrase of words from Plato's *Timaeus* 28c.⁷⁷

The parallel section in Alcinous' *Didaskalikos* is far more comprehensive. My discussion of the headlines will consist both of quotes with comment and of passages in my own paraphrase. Alcinous presents his discussion on the third principle cause (τρίτη ἀρχή) as the culmination of the series of ἀρχαί. Having argued for the existence of god Alcinous continues with his discourse in the same reasoning style. This is how he arrives to statements about god, denoted as 'the primary intellect', and divine thoughts:

(6) Ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς κάλλιστος, δεῖ καὶ κάλλιστον αὐτῷ νοητὸν ὑποκεῖσθαι, οὐδὲν δὲ αὐτοῦ κάλλιον· ἐαυτὸν ἂν οὖν καὶ τὰ ἐαυτοῦ νοήματα ἀεὶ νοοίη, καὶ αὕτη ἡ ἐνέργεια αὐτοῦ ἰδέα ὑπάρχει. (<i>Didaskalikos</i> 10.3)	Since the primary intellect is the finest of things, it follows that the object of its intelligizing must also be supremely fine. But there is nothing finer than this intellect. Therefore it must be everlastingly engaged in thinking of itself and its own thoughts, and this activity of it is Form.

In line with the preceding passage (10.1-2) god is characterized here as the first intellect (ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς), which is supremely beautiful and takes itself as object of its thinking, for other objects would not meet the high standards which are appropriate for this high god. In the final phrase of this passage Alcinous links this conception of the thinking god to the forms he had discussed earlier, by adding that this activity of thinking 'is Form'. In the previous chapter Alcinous had characterized the forms as the eternal and unchanging thoughts of god (9.3).⁷⁸

In the next passage, immediately following text (6), Alcinous lists the following qualifications of the first god:

(7) Καὶ μὴν ὁ πρῶτος θεὸς αἰδιός ἐστιν, ἄρρητος, αὐτοτελής τουτέστιν ἀπροσδεής, ἀειτελής τουτέστιν ἀεὶ τέλειος, παντελής τουτέστι πάντη τέλειος· θεϊότης, οὐσιότης, ἀλήθεια, συμμετρία, ἀγαθόν. Λέγω δὲ οὐχ ὥς χωρίζων ταῦτα, ἀλλ' ὥς κατὰ πάντα ἐνὸς νοουμένου. Καὶ ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἐστι, διότι πάντα εἰς δύναμιν εὐεργετεῖ, παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ αἴτιος ὢν· καλὸν δέ, ὅτι αὐτὸς τῇ αὐτοῦ φύσει τέλεόν ἐστι καὶ σύμμετρον· ἀλήθεια δέ, διότι πάσης ἀληθείας	The first god, then, is eternal, ineffable, 'self-perfect' (that is deficient in no respect), 'ever-perfect' (that is, always perfect), and 'all-perfect' (that is, perfect in all respects); divinity, essentiality, truth, commensurability, good. I am not listing these terms as being distinct from one other, but on the assumption that one single thing is being denoted by all of them. He is the Good, because he benefits all things according to their capacities, being the cause of all good. He is the Beautiful, because

⁷⁵ Any structure in the enumeration seems to be solely present in the combination *beatus et beatificus* and the antithetic phrases *nihil indigens, ipse conferens cuncta*. A comparable enumeration is given by Apuleius in his *Apologia* (64-65) and, in more colourful language, in *De deo Socratis* (123-124).

⁷⁶ The Greek might suggest that these terms are directly quoted from Plato, but only for ἄορατος can be traced back to Plato; the other two are rarely used words. See Fowler (2016:153-154).

⁷⁷ Plato's words seem to mean that the nature of god is not completely inaccessible, but only can be communicated to a few (and not to all people). Yet the concept of the ineffability of god was defended by several Platonists; an echo can be heard in Apuleius' *indictum* here; see in this issue Dillon (1993:101).

⁷⁸ See above 2.6.2.

ἀρχὴ ὑπάρχει, ὥς ὁ ἥλιος παντὸς φωτός· πατὴρ δέ ἐστι τῷ αἴτιος εἶναι πάντων καὶ κοσμεῖν τὸν οὐράνιον νοῦν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ κόσμου πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἑαυτοῦ νοήσεις. Κατὰ γὰρ τὴν αὐτοῦ βούλησιν ἐμπέπληκε πάντα ἑαυτοῦ, τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ κόσμου ἐπεγείρας καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐπιστρέψας, τοῦ νοῦ αὐτῆς αἴτιος ὑπάρχων· ὃς κοσμηθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς διακοσμεῖ σύμπασαν φύσιν ἐν τῷδε τῷ κόσμῳ. (*Didaskalikos* 10.3)

he himself by his own nature is perfect and commensurable; Truth, because he is the origin of all truth, as the sun is of all light; he is the Father through being the cause of all things and bestowing order in the heavenly Intellect and the soul of the world in accordance with himself and his own thoughts. By his own will he has filled all things with himself, as being the cause of its intellect. It is this latter that, set in order by the Father, itself imposes order on all of nature in this world.

Remarkably Alcinous mixes attributes that are derived from Plato's *Timaeus* and *Respublica* (αἰδῖος, ἄρρητος, ἀγαθόν) with elements from other sources.⁷⁹ Moreover he uses both adjectives (eternal, ineffable, self-, ever- and all-perfect) and abstract substantives (divinity, essentiality, truth, commensurability, goodness⁸⁰) to characterize the supreme god. After a warning to the reader (these attributes are not 'distinct from one other'!) Alcinous continues with an explanation of the terms ἀγαθόν, καλόν (including σύμμετρον), ἀλήθεια and πατήρ,⁸¹ which is focused on the notions of 'cause' and 'origin': god is the origin of all truth and the cause of all things, of all good, of order, of intellect. Thus attention is given to both what may be called 'individual' or 'absolute' qualities of god (beautiful, perfect and commensurable) and his relation to the world outside him. The illustrative comparison to the sun (again!) underlines these aspects. In the final sentence the causality is explained in a graded model of organizing: god gives order to the heavenly intellect and the world-soul;⁸² then the world-soul in turn gives order to the physical world.

In the final part of his theological section Alcinous again uses a negative approach in his discussion on three more divine qualities: god is partless, incorporeal and without change. I confine myself by quoting only the words in which he explains the latter issue, because this is a topic in Celsus' argumentation as well. In his discourse Alcinous connects the passages on 'parts' and 'change':

- (8) Μέρη γε μὴν οὐκ ἔχων ἀκίνητος ἂν εἴη κατὰ τόπον καὶ ἀλλοιώσιν. Εἰ γὰρ ἀλλοιωθήσεται, ἢ ὑφ' αὐτοῦ ἢ ὑφ' ἑτέρου· εἰ μὲν οὖν ὑφ' ἑτέρου, ἐκείνο αὐτοῦ ἰσχυρότερον ἔσται, εἰ δὲ ὑφ' αὐτοῦ, ἦτοι ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ἀλλοιωθεῖη ἂν ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον· ἄμφω δὲ ἄτοπα. (*Didaskalikos* 10.7)

Having no parts, it follows that he is motionless in respect of both locomotion and qualitative change. For if he were subject to change, this would have to be by his own agency or that of another. If at the hands of another, that one would be stronger than him; if by his own agency, either he would be altered for the worse or for the better; but both alternatives are absurd.

Alcinous combines in the passage the 'change' in the spatial sense (κατὰ τόπον) with qualitative change.

⁷⁹ See Dillon (1993:103-107) for references and a detailed commentary. He suggests a Pythagorean background for the three adjectives ending in -τελής. Notice that ἀπροσδεής as interpretation of αὐτοτελής resembles Apuleius' *nihil indigens* ('lacking nothing').

⁸⁰ Dillon (1993:105) refers to Plato's *Philebus* 65a where the substantives κάλλος, συμμετρία and ἀλήθεια are used to qualify the Good (τὸ ἀγαθόν). It is remarkable that Alcinous does not include κάλλος ('beauty') in his list here, whereas further on in text (7) he connects καλόν to σύμμετρον, as if he had mentioned 'beauty' as well. Dillon proposes to assume that κάλλος 'has simply dropped out of the text'.

⁸¹ These terms are discussed in the reversed order of (the last part of) the previous list of substantives: a 'mirror quotation', as Dillon calls it (more examples in his introduction, 1993:XXX). Maybe the first part can be included in the mirror if we interpret πατήρ is equivalent of θεϊότης (and οὐσιότης). Cf. Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 11.9 πατέρα καὶ γεννητὴν τοῦ ξύμπαντος ('father and creator of everything'), derived from Plato, *Timaeus* 28c and 41a; see Fowler (2016:101-102).

⁸² Or, as Dillon (1993:106) suggests, to the intellect of the world-soul.

The latter item is explained in a rational reasoning of two alternatives (ἢ ... ἢ) that are both excluded (εἰ μὲν ... εἰ δέ) based on the implied principle that change inevitably has a cause (indicated by the preposition ὑπό – ‘by the agency of’). This cause can neither be external (for no other can be stronger⁸³) nor can it be internal (that would entail a change for the worse or the better, which both are excluded as inappropriate).⁸⁴

The opposition being-change is also discussed by Plutarch in a passage preceding and following text (2). I will quote a fragment in which the topic of ‘change’ is used to express implicit criticism of Stoic ideas. But let me start with a short introduction of the context. In *De E apud Delphos* 18-21 Plutarch’s spokesman Ammonius explains the meaning of the E as a reference to the being of god. In this context he talks of the difference between god and humans (‘we’), saying in ch.18: ‘The fact is that we really have no part nor parcel in being, but everything of a mortal nature is at some stage between coming into existence and passing away.’ In the mortal world nothing is ‘abiding and really existent’, he continues, referring to the well-known quote of Heraclitus ‘It is impossible to step twice in the same river’. Whatever is born of mortal substance ‘never attains unto being because of the unceasing and unstaying process of generation, which, ever bringing change, produces from the seed an embryo, then a babe, then a child, in due course a boy, a young man, a mature man, an elderly man, an old man, causing the first generations and ages to pass away by those which succeed them.’ Men, moreover, pass through different shapes, experiences and emotions. In these changes ‘he is not the same person; and if he is not the same person, he has no permanent being, but changes his very nature as one personally in him succeeds to another.’ And then, in contrast to this ever changing and not-being mortal world, he explains what really being is: ‘It is that which is eternal, without beginning and without end, to which no length of time brings change.’⁸⁵ After a digression on the topic ‘time’ (ch.19) he comes to his statement about god (ch.20, see text (2) above): ‘God is’ (ἔστιν ὁ θεός); therefore ‘we ought, as we pay him reverence, to greet him and address him with the words ‘Thou art’ (εἶ), and even, I vow, as did some of the men of old, ‘Thou art One’ (εἶ ἓν)’.

Then, in ch.21, Ammonius expresses some reservations about the traditional image of god (here Apollo) as the sun: it is better ‘to proceed to loftier heights’ and to contemplate ... what he truly is (τὴν οὐσίαν). The image of the sun is perceived by senses, but there are restricted possibilities to gain an image ‘of the intelligible by sense-perception’ (αἰσθητῷ νοητοῦ), and to gain an image ‘of what changes not by that which is ever in motion’ (φερομένῳ μένοντος). Here Ammonius is back at the topic of change. He continues as follows:

- (9) Ἐκστάσεις δ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ μεταβολὰς πῦρ ἀφίεντος ἑαυτὸν ἅμα σπάσαν, ὡς λέγουσιν, αὐθὶς τε καταθλίβοντος ἐνταῦθα καὶ κατατείνοντος εἰς γῆν καὶ θάλατταν καὶ ἀνέμους καὶ ζῶα, καὶ τὰ δεινὰ παθήματα καὶ ζῶων καὶ φυτῶν, οὐδ’ ἀκούειν ὅσιον ἢ τοῦ ποιητικοῦ παιδὸς ἔσται φαυλότερος, ἢν ἐκεῖνος ἐν τινὶ ψαμάθῳ συντιθεμένη καὶ διαχαιομένη πάλιν ὑφ’ αὐτοῦ παίζει παιδιάν,

And as for his vagaries and transformations when he sends forth fire that sweeps his own self along with it, as they say, and again when he forces it down here and directs it upon the earth and sea and winds and living creatures, and, besides, the terrible things done both to living creatures and to growing vegetation—to such tales it is irreverent even to listen; else will the god be more futile than the Poet’s fancied child, playing a game amid the sand that is heaped together and then scattered again by

⁸³ The future forms ἀλλοιωθήσεται and ἔσται can be interpreted as inferential; see chapter II 4.5.

⁸⁴ These discussions on ‘change’ can be traced back to Plato’s *Respublica* 2, where the possibility to change is denied for gods: a god never would deliberately make himself worse (381bc); and moreover: a god would never be willing to be false by presenting an illusion (382ab). The structure of the argument in these passage closely resembles Celsus’ words in 4.14 and 4.18. See for a discussion my chapter VII 8. This issue is reflected also in fragment 5 of Atticus, quoted by Eusebius in his *Praeparatio evangelica* 15.7.6, which can be found in Boys-Stones 2018:39-40.

⁸⁵ Quotes (as the next in this passage) from Plutarch, *De E apud Delphos* 18, 392a-e (translation, with small modifications, F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitake, Loeb-edition).

ταύτη περὶ τὰ ὅλα χρώμενος αἰεὶ, καὶ τὸν κόσμον οὐκ ὄντα πλάττων εἶτ' ἀπολλύων γενόμενον. Τούναντίον γὰρ ὅσον ἀμωσγέπως ἐγγέγονε τῷ κόσμῳ, τούτῳ συνδεῖ τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ κρατεῖ τῆς περὶ τὸ σωματικὸν ἀσθενείας ἐπὶ φθορὰν φερομένης. Καὶ μοι δοκεῖ μάλιστα πρὸς τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἀντιταττόμενον τὸ ῥῆμα καὶ μαρτυρόμενον 'εἶ' φάναι πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ὡς οὐδέποτε γιγνομένης περὶ αὐτὸν ἐκστάσεως καὶ μεταβολῆς, ἀλλ' ἑτέρῳ τινὶ θεῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ δαίμονι τεταγμένῳ περὶ τὴν ἐν φθορᾷ καὶ γενέσει φύσιν, τοῦτο ποιεῖν καὶ πάσχειν προσήκον. (*De E apud Delphos*, 393e-394a)

him, if the god indulges in this game with the universe constantly, fashioning the world that does not exist, and destroying it again when it has been created. For, on the contrary, so far as he is in some way present in the world, by this his presence does he bind together its substance and prevail over its corporeal weakness, which tends toward dissolution. And it seems to me right to address to the god the words 'Thou art,' which are most opposed to this account, and testify against it, believing that never does any vagary or transformation take place near him, but that such acts and experiences are related to some other god, or rather to some demigod, whose office is concerned with Nature in dissolution and generation.

Here any tales about 'change and transformation' (ἐκστάσις and μεταβολή) of god relating to creative and destructive processes in the world (the fire diffusing itself in different forms and making everything fire again) are strongly rejected: it is irreverent even to listen to such tales. The comparison (from Homer, *Ilias* 15.362) is clear enough; god is not like a child playing in the sand and destroying what he had just built. Without saying it explicitly Plutarch obviously refers to the Stoic ideas of conflagration and a cyclic world order. In this criticism of Stoic thought the same notion of transformation (μεταβολή) plays a key role that also has a prominent place in Celsus' rejection of Christian theology, as we shall see later (see chapter VII 7). Positively and in opposition of the Stoic conception Ammonius says that god is in some way present in the world, binds together its substance and hinders dissolution. Change and transformation can only be associated with a lower god or a *daemon*.⁸⁶ Ammonius illustrates his point by listing contrasting names of deities, in which several epithets of Apollo and Hades feature: Apollo (ἄ-πολλων - 'not many') is opposed by Pluto (πλούτων - 'abundant'), Delios (Δήλιος 'clear', litt. 'of Delos') by Aidoneus (ἄ-ιδωνεύς - 'unseen') and Phoebus (Φοῖβος - 'bright') by Skotios (Σκότιος - 'dark'). The contrast between the supreme god, the One, and the other divine beings is marked as a contrast between oneness and multiplicity, brilliancy and darkness.⁸⁷

The passage is closed with the final remark of the book in which the E (εἶ) is linked to the other well-known phrases from Delphi 'Know thyself', a link that underlines once more the opposition between divine being and mortal volatility: 'the one is an utterance addressed in awe and reverence to the god as existent through all eternity; the other is a reminder to mortal man of his own nature and the weaknesses that beset him.'

2.6.5 Platonist theology: god's relation to the world

When dealing with the creation of the cosmos and related issues of physics the basic text for Platonists

⁸⁶ In *De communibus notitiis* Plutarch's criticism of the Stoics even goes a step further: Stoics say gods not only change, but also can be destroyed. The Stoics, he writes, filled the heaven, earth, air and sea with gods, but 'have held that none of all these many is indestructible or everlasting except Zeus alone, in whom they consume all the rest. The result is that he also has the attribute of destruction, which is not more fitting than that of being destroyed, for some weakness is the reason both why that what changes into a different thing is destroyed and why that is preserved which is nourished on the destruction of others that it absorbs.' (1075b). This idea of destruction of divine beings has to be rejected, in Plutarch's view, because it contradicts a 'common conception' (cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.45) shared by all people: 'not a single man has there been who having a conception of god did not conceive him to be indestructible and everlasting' (1075a, translation Harold Cherniss, Loeb-edition). Cf. *De Stoicorum repugnantiis* 1051e-f.

⁸⁷ The passage is discussed in Thum (2013:296ff.).

in the age of the Roman empire was Plato's *Timaeus*. One of the main issues in this dialogue has to do with the characteristic Platonic distinction between the eternal world of being and the ever changing physical world of becoming. In a myth-like account the creation of the changing, visible world is discussed with a leading role for the demiurge, the divine craftsman, who is presented as the cause of these changes (28a). This 'father and maker of the universe', who is good himself, wanted to do a good job and when he created the world he looked at the eternal and perfect forms and used them as paradigms (30-31). In this way he brought order in matter, which previously moved randomly in disorder. Thus the material world was created as an imitation of the unchanging forms. The demiurge made the world as a kind of living organism with a body and a soul, the 'world soul' (34-37). Then he created the lower gods and ordered these gods to create the mortal living beings: 'He himself acts as the demiurge of the divine things, but the creation of the mortal things he commanded his own creatures to execute' (69c). So far my representation of the headlines of Plato's creation story in which I focused on the divine demiurge and his creative actions.⁸⁸

After Plato's death the *Timaeus* story became the authoritative account for Platonists who wrote on cosmology. The text was often referred to, sometimes loyally paraphrased and summarized, sometimes the text gave rise to discussion on several issues. A rather loyal representation is given by Alcinoüs in his section on physics (*Didaskalikos* 12-22).⁸⁹ Here he explains the role of the forms as models (the world is fashioned by the creator by assimilation to the 'form of World', 12.1) and the formation of the elements as constituents of the visible side of the world (bodies) (13). Then he turns to the composition of the invisible part of it: God endowed the world with a soul and an intellect (14). Next follows an account on the 'other divinities, the daemons, whom one could also term 'created gods'' (15) and their creation of mortal beings (16). Alcinoüs explains why the creation of birds, fishes, land animals and man was necessarily different from the work God had done before. I quote the passage because of the relevance for my subject in this section:

(10) Ἐπεὶ δὲ διεκεκόσμητο αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, τρία δὲ τὰ λοιπὰ γένη ζῶων ἔλειπεν, ἅπερ ἔμελλε θνητὰ ἔσεσθαι, τό τε πτηνὸν καὶ τὸ ἐνυδρὸν καὶ τὸ πεζόν, τοῖς ἐκγόνοις αὐτοῦ θεοῖς ἐπέταξε τὴν τούτων ποίησιν, ὅπως μὴ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πλασθέντα ἀθάνατα γένοιτο. (<i>Didaskalikos</i> 16.1)	When God had imposed order upon the universe as a whole, there were still left (uncreated) the three classes of living beings which were going to be mortal, the winged, the aquatic, and those that go on land. The creation of these he now entrusted to the gods who were his offspring, to avoid the consequence that, if they were made by him, they would be immortal.

Mortality of human and other terrestrial beings is connected here explicitly to their creation by the lower gods.⁹⁰ The distance between the supreme god and the mortal world is underlined in this passage, although in the lines immediately following the special position of mankind is expressed: humans are most akin to the gods; showing his special concern for them 'the creator of the cosmos sent down to earth the souls' of the human race and made it – under certain conditions – possible for these embodied souls to return to 'their proper state' (16.2). Alcinoüs concludes his section about creation with a discussion on several aspects of the human body (17-22).

⁸⁸ In my necessarily short representation of the *Timaeus* story I deliberately ignore elements that are less relevant for my discourse, e.g. passages about the planets and time, the four elements and the geometric shapes they are connected to, the creation and composition of human bodies and souls. More about Plato's theology in the *Timaeus* (and other dialogues) can be found in Van Riel (2013:82ff. and 105ff.). For a general discussion see Sedley (2007:95-113).

⁸⁹ Dillon suggests that Alcinoüs maybe did not use the *Timaeus* at first hand, but derived his information from selections of the text made by predecessors, among which probably was Arius Didymus, Augustus' court philosopher. (1993:114). In addition to the observation that Alcinoüs largely follows the account of the *Timaeus*, Dillon in his commentary on *Didaskalikos* 12-22 refers to several expressions and thoughts that are not found in Plato, but seem to be of different (often Aristotelian) provenance.

⁹⁰ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 41c2-3.

As I said above, Platonists also took the *Timaeus* as a starting point for new discussions. As an illustration of this I will now touch briefly on two of these discussions. The first one concerns the question whether or not Plato's demiurge is identical with the supreme god. As it seems Alcinoüs in his chapters on physics does not explicitly comment on this issue.⁹¹

Some other Platonists however distinguish between a first and second god. The first god then would be completely transcendent and turned in upon itself, the second one an active god like the demiurge of the *Timaeus*.⁹² As an exponent of this approach I already referred above to Numenius of Apamea (second century CE). In the fragment quoted above he speaks about the first god, who is at rest and in his own place, and the second god, who is in motion (see text (3)). In the next passage the difference between the first and the second god is further developed:

- (11) Εἰ δ' ἔστι μὲν νοητὸν ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἡ ἰδέα, ταύτης δ' ὡμολογήθη πρᾶτον καὶ αἷτιον εἶναι τὸ νοῦς, αὐτὸς οὗτος μόνος εὑρηται ὢν τὸ ἀγαθόν. Καὶ γὰρ εἰ ὁ μὲν δημιουργὸς θεὸς ἔστι γενέσεως, ἀρκεῖ τὸ ἀγαθὸν οὐσίας εἶναι ἀρχή. Ἀνάλογον δὲ τούτῳ μὲν ὁ δημιουργὸς θεός, ὢν αὐτοῦ μιμητής, τῇ δὲ οὐσία ἡ γένεσις, <ἡ> εἰκὼν αὐτῆς ἔστι καὶ μίμημα. Εἵπερ δὲ ὁ δημιουργὸς ὁ τῆς γενέσεως ἔστιν ἀγαθός, ἡ ποὺ ἔσται καὶ ὁ τῆς οὐσίας δημιουργὸς αὐτοάγαθον, σύμφυτον τῇ οὐσίᾳ. Ὁ γὰρ δεῦτερος διττός ὢν αὐτοποιεῖ τὴν τε ἰδέαν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὸν κόσμον, δημιουργὸς ὢν, ἔπειτα θεωρητικὸς ὅλως. (Numenius, fragment 16)

Leading in this fragment is the Platonic distinction between the intelligible world of being and form (ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἡ ἰδέα) and the sensible world of becoming (ἡ γένεσις), that is qualified as an ‘image and imitation’ (εἰκόν, μίμημα) of the intelligible world. In this passage full of parallelisms Numenius combines elements from Plato’s *Timaeus* (the demiurge) and *Respublica* (the Good). The first god is called ‘the Good’ (τὸ ἀγαθόν), even ‘the Good itself’ (αὐτάγαθον) and ‘the intellect’ (ὁ νοῦς), and he is connected with the intelligible world. Within this world ‘the Good’ has priority: it is the principle (ἀρχή) of substance. The second god (ὁ δημιουργός) is imitator of the Good; he is good (ἀγαθός) only by participation in the Good; he is not only the creator of the cosmos, but also described as completely contemplative. The latter characteristic is consistent with what is said in text (3): the second god is concerned both with intelligible and sensible objects.⁹⁴ And maybe the most remarkable statement for a

⁹¹ See Dillon (1993:114-115). From *Didaskalikos* 27 Dillon concludes that Alcinoüs there, speaking about Plato's ethical doctrines, identifies the demiurge of the *Timaeus* with the Good of the *Republica* (1993:166; see also p.106 *ad* 10.3).

⁹² See Dillon (1977:45-46), who assumes influence from Stoicism here. This approach can be noticed in Eudorus of Alexandria (first century BCE), who following Pythagoreans postulates a supreme principle, the One, above the Monad (form) and Dyad (matter) (see Dillon 1977:126-128, who thinks this picture is not unlikely the account of the supreme god in the *Didaskalikos*). Comparable is also the distinction Philo of Alexandria (Dillon 1977:155-160) makes between the God, the One (the personal God from the Hebrew Bible) and his Logos, 'the active element of God's creative thought' (Dillon 1977:159).

⁹³ Fragment 16 is taken from Numenius' book *De bono* and quoted by Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 11.22.3-5 (translation Boys-Stones 2018:181).

⁹⁴ In fragment 11 remarkably Numenius even speaks about a third god, which appears to be the 'lower' side of the second one. By contact with the multiplicity the creator-god splits into two: the intellect that continuously contemplates the forms and the creative 'side' which orders matter by imposing form on it. In fragment 13 Numenius compares the first god with a farmer, who sows the seed, and the second god with the workman who does the planting and the distribution of what has been sown

Platonist: the second god is denoted as ‘the god of becoming’ (θεός ... γενέσεως). In this qualification two worlds are connected: the divine status (albeit second-rate) is attributed to a being that is directly related to the unstable world of becoming.

Another issue debated on among Platonists was the question whether or not the cosmos started to exist at any point in time: do we have to think that there was a time when the cosmos did not exist? The account of the *Timaeus* seems to suggest that the cosmos had a beginning, but do we have to interpret the story according to the literal meaning or is, given its mythical character, an allegorical interpretation more appropriate? Moreover, a commonly accepted philosophical idea is involved in this discussion: when the world has a beginning this implies that it can have an end as well.⁹⁵ Aristotle, criticizing Plato on this point, asserts that the world is eternal, without beginning and end.⁹⁶ Most of the Platonists followed Speusippus and Xenocrates in denying that Plato meant a temporal creation.⁹⁷ As an example of this position I refer to Alcinoüs who hints at the issue in his interpretation of the key verb γέγονεν Plato used in *Timaeus* 28b: (the world) ‘is generated’: ‘When he says that the world is ‘generated’, one must not understand him to assert that there ever was a time when the world did not exist; but rather that the world is perpetually in a state of becoming, and reveals a more principle cause of its own existence’ (*Didaskalikos* 14.3).⁹⁸ Here the world is characterized as a place of everlasting becoming.⁹⁹

A different approach is found in a fragment from Celsus’ contemporary Atticus, who opts for a not-metaphorical interpretation of the *Timaeus*. In his text much attention is paid to elements in Plato’s philosophy that concern God’s relation to the cosmos. Because of the presence of these theological elements I quote two fragments of this passage:¹⁰⁰

(12) Πρῶτον δὲ περὶ γενέσεως κόσμου σκοπῶν καὶ τὸ τῆς προνοίας τὸ μέγα τοῦτο καὶ πολυωφελὲς δόγμα πάντα ζητεῖν ἀναγκαῖον ἡγούμενος καὶ λογισάμενος, ὅτι τῷ μὴ γενομένῳ οὔτε τινὸς ποιητοῦ οὔτε τινὸς κηδεμόνος πρὸς τὸ γενέσθαι καλῶς χρεῖα, ἵνα μὴ ἀποστερήσῃ τὸν κόσμον τῆς προνοίας ἀφεῖλε τὸ ἀγέννητον αὐτοῦ. [...] Κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἡμετέραν ἀκοὴν ἀξιοῦντος Πλάτωνος τὸν κόσμον γεγονέναι κάλλιστον ἔργον ὑπὸ τοῦ καλλίστου τῶν δημιουργῶν

First of all, when Plato was looking into the question of the generation of the cosmos, he also had in mind that this great and beneficial doctrine of providence needed thorough investigation. He realized that for something that did not come into being there was no need to posit an agent of creation or preservation for the purpose of being in good order; so, to ensure that he did not deprive the cosmos of providence, he did away with the idea that it was ungenerated. [...] But the way we understand it, Plato reckoned that the cosmos came to be as the most beautiful work by the most beautiful of

(i.e. the souls). In fragment 18 the second god is compared to a helmsman on deck of a ship on the sea (= matter) who by night looks towards the heaven (cf. the contemplation mentioned in fragment 16): his route comes down from above. In fragment 17 Numenius talks about the knowledge of the gods: ‘Plato realized that only the creator was acknowledged by men, but the first intellect ... was completely unrecognized by them’. See for the texts and comment Dillon (1977:367-372), Boys-Stones (2018:179-181).

⁹⁵ Cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.20.

⁹⁶ A standpoint that is in turn criticized by Philo: ‘Some admire the cosmos instead of its maker: they assert that it is ungenerated and eternal, and falsely ascribe great idleness to god in their impiety’ (*De opificio mundi* 7, translation Boys-Stones 2018:205).

⁹⁷ See Dillon (1977:7). According to Boys-Stones (2018:187) the only Platonists who certainly subscribed to the idea of a temporal creation were Atticus, Harpocration, Plutarch and Philo.

⁹⁸ Cf. Apuleius, *De Platone* 1.8: ‘And Plato says at one moment that this world is without beginning and elsewhere that it has an origin and was created. Yet it has no commencement and no beginning, because it has always been; but it *seems* to be created because its substance and nature consist of those things that have the quality of being created. And so it is touched, seen, and confronted by the body’s senses. But since God gave it a principle of creation, for this reason it will always exist with an eternal perseverance.’ (translation Fowler 2016:164-165, see also his comment in n.93). In addition I refer to a text of the Platonist Calvenus Taurus (second century CE): after quoting the phrase from Plato’s *Timaeus* 28b he distinguishes four meanings the word γενητός can have, see fragment 23F quoted by Dillon (1993:124) and Boys-Stones (2018:198-199).

⁹⁹ In the following section Alcinoüs adds that (in Plato’s view) the world is created to be a living thing, possessing intellect; therefore god ‘endowed it with both a soul and an intellect’ (*Didaskalikos* 14.4). In accounts of Platonists this world soul acts as an instrument of god in the organization and preservation of the world. See on the world soul Boys-Stones (2018:212ff.).

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 15.6.

καὶ περιθέντος τῷ τοῦ παντός ποιητῇ
 δύναμιν, δι' ἧς καὶ οὐκ ὄντα πρότερον
 ἐποίησε τὸν κόσμον καὶ ποιήσας εἰσαεῖ
 βουλόμενός γε σῶον διαφυλάξει, καὶ ταύτη
 δὴ γεννητοῦ καὶ ἀφθάρτου κατ' αὐτὸν
 ὑποκειμένου τοῦ κόσμου. (Atticus,
 fragment 4)

creators, and attributed to the maker of all a
 power through which he made a cosmos which
 did not previously exist and as its maker,
 preserves it forever, if he wishes. The cosmos in
 this way is established by Plato as something
 both generated and unperishing. (translation
 Boys-Stones 2018:202, slightly altered)

The construction of the first sentence seems to be well-considered. A series of participles (σκοπῶν, ἡγούμενος, λογισάμενος) and a final clause (ἵνα μὴ ἀποστερήσῃ ...) are used to enable the reader to look, so to speak, into Plato's mind, take part in the process of conceptualization and arrive finally in the main clause at the conclusion the considerations led to: Plato removed the term 'ungenerated' from his cosmology. Interestingly in Atticus' representation of Plato's considerations the notion of creation (περὶ γενέσεως κόσμου) and the doctrine of providence (τὸ τῆς προνοίας ... δόγμα) are connected, with a key role for the latter doctrine (see the amplifying phrase τὸ μέγα τοῦτο καὶ πολυωφελές) and the idea that the cosmos should be beautiful and well-ordered (πρὸς τὸ γενέσθαι καλῶς). The assumption that the cosmos never came into being (indicated in the phrase τῷ μὴ γενομένῳ) would imply that no creator or preserver would be needed: what is without beginning does not need a creative and conserving power from outside. Establishing a conception in which there is no place for providence, is represented almost as an unfair act: the cosmos would be 'deprived'. Plato, in Atticus' view, did not opt for such an approach, retained the notions of creation and providence and did away with the word ἀγενητός with regard to the cosmos.¹⁰¹ In the final sentence of (12), where Plato's considerations are represented in a long genitive absolute, elements from the beginning of the passage are repeated: the creation, the cosmos as a work of beauty and the non-existence of the cosmos before its creation (οὐκ ὄντα πρότερον). New is the assertion that the cosmos will be preserved forever by its maker (εἰσαεῖ βουλόμενός γε σῶον διαφυλάξει), 'if he wishes'. That the fulfilment of this condition is not really questioned can be concluded from the unconditional juxtaposition of γεννητοῦ and ἀφθάρτου in the final clause: according to Plato the cosmos is both generated and *de facto* will not perish.¹⁰² In this conclusion Atticus responds to the Aristotelian conviction that whatever is generated must be destructible.

2.6.6 Platonist theology: providence and daemones

In the Platonist conception the notion of providence, divine care coming from the transcendent realm of god to the sensible world, was commonly accepted.¹⁰³ This can be illustrated by a passage from Atticus (fragment 3), handed down to us by Eusebius.¹⁰⁴ The author appears to be a passionate advocate of the doctrine of divine providence, by which he means the care of god for human beings in particular.¹⁰⁵ At

¹⁰¹ The passage is discussed also in Dillon (1977:252-253).

¹⁰² It seems probable that Boys-Stones is right in his conditional interpretation of βουλόμενός, followed by γε. However, a causal interpretation would fit here also (but I have not found yet an obvious example of a participle with γε with a causal meaning; in the fragments of Atticus this is the only instance of participle + γε). A causal interpretation would match the opinion found in the two following passages of Alcinous and Philo. Alcinous points at the will of god guaranteeing the preservation of the cosmos: 'God is in fact himself the creator of the universe, and of the gods and daemons, and by his will this universe admits of no dissolution'. (*Didaskalikos* 15.2). A similar approach in Philo, *De opificio mundi* 10 'Reason understands that the 'father and maker' cares for what has come to be: a father aims for the preservation of his children, as a craftsman does for his handiworks: both with all their might repel whatever might compromise or harm them, and desire to procure whatever will help and benefit them in any possible way'. (translation Boys-Stones 2018:205).

¹⁰³ See the discussion in Plato's *Leges* 899d-905d.

¹⁰⁴ Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 15.5, quoted and commented on in Boys-Stones (2018:323-328 and 334-336); see also Boys-Stones (2016).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Epictetus, *Disserationes* 1,12,1-3, a passage in which Epictetus describes five positions people take with regard to gods and divine providence: (1) Some deny the existence of gods; (2) other people acknowledge their existence, but assert that they

this point he attacks the position of the Aristotelians: Aristotle's god, as we saw earlier in 2.5, 'cares' for celestial regions only, but his care 'stops at the moon': just the higher celestial spheres up to the moon sphere participate in the beneficiaries of the providence of the first Unmoved Mover; human beings below the moon are outside its scope.¹⁰⁶ For Atticus, who thinks that god cares for everything, the Aristotelian position is in fact equal to the Epicurean one: 'Both alike think the gods have no concern for humans, and provide the unjust with the same freedom from fear of the gods.'¹⁰⁷

As for the implementation of providence Platonists assign an important role to the soul the world has been endowed with by its creator. This world soul, as Apuleius says, 'serves the divine craftsman', and 'is present for all that he fashions'.¹⁰⁸ It causes movement to the matter of the world and preserves harmony in the world. The creator-god rules the world and cares for human beings through and in the providential activity of the world soul.¹⁰⁹

A similar representation of the transfer of providence¹¹⁰ is offered by Apuleius in a chapter on fate, festiny and chance. There he discusses the way divine providence works and introduces the term 'secondary providence', executed by intermediary 'agents', the (lower) gods and *daemones*. In the introduction of this passage Apuleius explicitly states that the guardianship of providence concerns 'all things that are conducted naturally – and for that reason rightly (*naturaliter et propterea recte*)'. And therefore: 'we cannot ascribe the cause of any evil to god'.¹¹¹ Having indicated this limit he describes how divine providence in his view is organized:

(13) Et primam quidem providentiam esse summi exsuperantissimique deorum omnium, qui non solum deos caelicolas ordinavit, quos ad tutelam et decus per omnia mundi membra dispersit, sed natura etiam mortales eos, qui praestarent sapientia ceteris terrenis animantibus, ad aevitatem temporis [s]edidit fundatisque legibus reliquarum dispositionem ac tutelam rerum, quas cotidie fieri necesse est, diis ceteris tradidit. Unde susceptam providentiam dii secundae providentiae ita naviter retinent, ut omnia, etiam quae caelitus

And the primary providence is of the highest and most transcendent of all the gods: he not only organized the heaven-dwelling gods, whom he dispersed for the protection and honor of all parts of the world; but he also gave everlasting time to those mortal by nature, who are superior in wisdom to the other living 'terrene' beings. He then established laws for them, and gave to the rest of the gods the management and guardianship of the remaining affairs that must be done daily. Hence, the gods of the secondary providence so diligently maintain their allotted duty, that all things shown to

do not care for anything; (3) the third group believes gods exist and do care, but only for higher, celestial things; (4) the fourth group holds that divine providence extends to the earth and human life as well, but only in a general sense; (5) the fifth group thinks that also individual people are involved. The first three positions are ascribed respectively to atheists, Epicureans and Aristotelians; the fourth position is defended by Alexander of Aphrodisias, see Bergjan (2002:227-228,261-263).

¹⁰⁶ In fact the beneficiary 'care' that starts from the first Mover consists in no more than the orderly movement that is imparted to the heavenly bodies. The first Mover 'is *also* the ultimate explanation for the existence of movement below the moon, but he is *not* responsible for the particular movements that there are... What happens below the moon is explained by the combined influence (not even of any sphere or spheres but) of the *heavenly bodies*' (Boys-Stones 2016:323-324, his emphasis): the movements of the celestial bodies e.g. account for the changes of the weather and seasons and so for the yearly cycle of growth and decay.

¹⁰⁷ Atticus, fragment 3.8 (translation Boys-Stones 2018:335).

¹⁰⁸ *De Platone* 1.9 (Fowler 2016:165). Cf. Atticus, fragment 8: 'For if there is not a single animate power pervading all and binding everything and keeping it together, the universe could not be arranged in a reasonable or beautiful way.' (quoted in Boys-Stones (2018:336) Cf. also Plutarch, *Septem sapientium convivium* 163D-F, quoted in Boys-Stones (2018:237-238).

¹⁰⁹ Boys-Stones (2016:327-330) speaks of the 'transitivity of providence': 'the providence of the demiurge is *immanent* in the activity of the world soul' (328).

¹¹⁰ But now without explicit reference to the world soul. Boys-Stones explains that for the Platonists 'the heavens *as a whole* constitute a *single* intermediary between god and the ultimate object of his providence' [...] 'Platonists can talk as if the spheres and their divine inhabitants are providential agents; but strictly speaking, they are so only insofar as they form part of the operational structure of the world soul: it is this that is the true agent of divine providence' (2018:327).

¹¹¹ For Platonists the problem of evil is connected with matter, which provides a limitation to the good forces produced by the good forms. See Boys-Stones (2018:107-109).

VI. Philosophical theology

mortalibus exhibentur, inmutabilem ordinationis paternae statum teneant. Daemonas vero, quos Genios et Lares possumus nuncupare, ministros deorum arbitratur custodesque hominum et interpretes, si quid a diis velint. (<i>De Platone</i> 1.12)	mortals to be from the heavens, preserve the immutable condition of their paternal ordering. But daemones, whom we can call Genii and Lares, he thinks are subordinates of the gods, and protectors and interpreters for men whenever they want anything from them. (translation Fowler 2016:173-174)
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Here Apuleius seems to describe a three-stage system:¹¹² the *prima providentia*, executed by the transcendent first god, concerns the appointment of the lower gods and the transmission of ever living souls to human beings.¹¹³ The second level of care is provided by these gods: protection and management of the things in the world, in accordance with the laws established for them. Subordinate to these gods are the *daemones*, to whom the care for humans and human affairs is allotted and who function as intermediaries between humans and the higher gods. The last duties are not explicitly called providence, but for the Roman readers the reference to *Genii et Lares* reminded them of caring protection of persons, families and their homes.

As regards these intermediary beings: according to Platonists the whole cosmos is full of creatures which have their own souls. Among them are besides humans and other terrestrial beings also the celestial gods and the *daemones*. The different groups are connected to different elements: the celestial god (stars) to fire and the *daemones* to air.¹¹⁴ According to Dillon (1977:47) the ‘host of intermediaries’ between god and man functioned as a buffer zone, ‘that God may not be contaminated or disturbed by a too close involvement with Matter’.¹¹⁵ In the section prior to text (13) Apuleius¹¹⁶ had presented a tripartite division of the divine which he ascribes to Plato: (1) the highest god, beyond the world, incorporeal, ‘the father and architect of the divine world; (2) the celestial gods, the stars and planets; (3) the ‘middle-gods’, who have a mediating position between the higher gods and human beings.¹¹⁷ Alcinoüs in a parallel passage (*Didaskalikos* 14.6-7) dwells on a description of the seven spheres in which the stars and planets make their perfect circular movements, thus creating time for the world, ‘as an image of eternity, which is the measure of the stability of the eternal world’. Further on the *daemones* are called ‘generated gods’ and the administration of the sublunary and terrestrial sphere is said to be attributed to them (*Didaskalikos* 15.1).¹¹⁸ These *daemones* can get the task to carry out punishments, a task with an ultimately beneficent purpose.¹¹⁹

I conclude this section with the presentation of a text of Maximus of Tyre, a rhetor-philosopher who lived in the second century AD. He was a typical representative of the Second Sophistic, which appears in the literary and rhetorical style of his philosophical *Dissertationes*, forty-one short lectures designed to show several aspects of Platonic philosophy to a large audience.¹²⁰ In the following text he uses a

¹¹² Fowler (2016:172-174) offers detailed explanation; see also Boys-Stones (2016:331-332).

¹¹³ If this is what is meant by *natura ... ad aevitatem temporis [s]edidit*. Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 41cd.

¹¹⁴ See Apuleius, *De Platone* 1.11; *De deo Socratis* 8; Alcinoüs, *Didaskalikos* 15.1; Philo, *De Gigantibus* 6-11.

¹¹⁵ The idea goes back to Plato’s *Symposium* 202e-203a, where the function of *daemones* (τὸ δαιμόνιον) as intermediaries between divine and mortal is explained: they interpret and transport human things to the gods and vice versa. Their position is necessary because god with man does not mingle (θεὸς δὲ ἀνθρώπῳ οὐ μίγνυται).

¹¹⁶ *De Platone* 1.11; see for comment Fowler (2016:171).

¹¹⁷ An more elaborated demonology is given by Apuleius in *De deo Socratis* 6-16.

¹¹⁸ Philo speaking on the intermediary beings that fly in the air considers them to be different types of souls: some of them stay away from the earth and are used by God as his ‘servants and ministers in caring for mortals’; other souls descend into bodies as in a river, some of which are swallowed (men who paid no regard to wisdom), whereas others can escape from the water (souls of philosophers). Souls, daemons and angels are different words for the same beings (see *De gigantibus* 12-16, quoted in Boys-Stones 2018:308). See also Dillon (1977:171-174). A similar picture of souls traveling up or down in Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 9.6.

¹¹⁹ Whether or not there are intrinsically evil daemons is a point of discussion among Platonists. At least Philo seems to recognize evil daemons, but his position is not entirely clear, see Boys-Stones (2018:291-292,297). See also the discussion on Plutarch’s view on daemons in Dillon (1977:216-219).

¹²⁰ See Benjamins (1994:46-49) about Maximus’ views on divination and ‘freedom of decision’.

simile to illustrate his view on the relationship between the first god ('the father and demiurge') and lower gods who account for the providential governance of the universe. In a less systematic, but more literary approach Maximus sketches a hierarchy or rule that corresponds with the picture given by Apuleius. Maximus exhorts the reader to think of 'a great empire and mighty kingdom'.

- (14) Ἐννόει <μοι> μεγάλην ἀρχὴν καὶ βασιλείαν ἐρρωμένην, πρὸς μίαν ψυχὴν βασιλέως τοῦ ἀρίστου καὶ πρεσβυτάτου συμπάντων νενευκότων ἐκόντων· [...] βασιλέα δὲ αὐτὸν δὴ τὸν μέγαν ἀτρεμοῦντα ὥσπερ νόμον, παρέχοντα τοῖς πειθομένοις σωτηρίαν ὑπάρχουσαν ἐν αὐτῷ· καὶ κοινωνοὺς τῆς ἀρχῆς πολλοὺς μὲν ὁρατοὺς θεοὺς, πολλοὺς δὲ ἀφανεῖς, τοὺς μὲν περὶ τὰ πρόθυρα αὐτὰ εἰλουμένους, οἷον εἰσαγγελέας τινὰς καὶ βασιλεῖ συγγενεστάτους, ὁμοτραπέζους αὐτοῦ καὶ συνεστίους, τοὺς δὲ ὑπηρέτας, τοὺς δὲ ἔτι τούτων καταδεεστέρους. Διαδοχὴν ὁρᾷ καὶ τάξιν ἀρχῆς καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ θεοῦ μέχρι γῆς. (*Dissertationes* 11.12)
- Think of a great empire and mighty kingdom, one in which everyone willingly bows together toward one soul, a most virtuous and most venerable king; [...] The great King himself sits motionless, like the law, providing to those who obey him the protection that exists within him. And he has many companions in rule: some are visible gods, many are invisible; some are gathered around the portico, like some messengers and very close relatives to the king, who share his table and his hearth, others are subordinate to them, and others more subordinate even to these. You would see a succession and hierarchy of rule descending from God himself all the way down to the earth below. (translation Fowler 2016:106-107)

In this passage Maximus shows the vivid approach of a capable rhetorician, exploiting the possibilities of language, communicating with his audience (mark the second person verbs ἐννόει and ὁρᾷ and the use of the interactional particle δὴ) and using a simile¹²¹ to persuade them. A detailed picture is evoked of the court of a mighty king (probably the Persian king, who is commonly denoted as ὁ μέγας βασιλεύς): the reader is made to envisage servants of different ranks and functions, abiding in the portico, some close to the king ('sharing his table and hearth') others subordinates of subordinates. And all these servants are united in their obedience to the 'virtuous and most venerable king'. The superlatives mark the distance between the king and his servants. Remarkably the king is portrayed as 'sitting motionless' and – a comparison within a simile – compared to the law. The picture combines two elements: the king is inward-looking and at the same time beneficent, protecting those who obey him. The simile shows a picture of a well-organized structure and of great harmony – the Platonic-Aristotelian image of the perfectly ordered universe reigned by a motionless protector. By short references in the middle and the end of the similes Maximus reminds his audience of the intention of his simile: the 'visible and invisible gods' were shortly before this passage denoted as 'the planets in heaven' and 'the daimonic beings in the aether'. These are the agents by which divine providence according to Maximus is executed. All in all the simile provides a characteristic picture of the ideas Platonists (with Aristotelian input) had about the organization divine rule of the universe: god himself rules the world, but stays in his supreme position without personal involvement with the world: he is as little involved as a law can be.¹²²

Finally I point at one element of Maximus' text that interestingly can remind us of a key element in the argumentation of Celsus in my corpus. In his attack on the Jewish-Christian idea of a divine descent to earth the verb καταβαίνω ('to descend') is used several times. Mark that Maximus in the final phrase of text (14) uses the very same verb (in the form of the participle καταβαίνουσιν) to denote the 'ruling system that comes down from god to the earth' (τάξιν ἀρχῆς καταβαίνουσιν ἐκ θεοῦ μέχρι γῆς).

¹²¹ Though not a very original one; see Fowler (2016:106, n.123) for a reference to similar comparisons used by other authors.

¹²² The nice thing of similes is that they are employable to illustrate different opinions. Celsus uses the simile of the great king and his servants to exhort the Christians not to elude the traditional religious practices: even satraps and lower governors can do serious harm if they were offended (Celsus in 8.35). Philo in the contrary uses the same simile to show how unwise and reckless it is to pay the same tribute to the creatures as to their creator, *De decalogo* 61.

Maximus and Celsus seem to agree at this point: god himself does not descend; the only thing that descends to the earth is a hierarchical system of rulers.

2.6.7 Platonist theology: conclusion

As a conclusion of this section I will now briefly summarize the previous review in order to provide an outline of main elements that are characteristic of Platonist theology.¹²³ ‘God’ is mentioned by Platonists in the context of physics as one of the principle causes of the universe (together with form and matter). To establish the existence of god often arguments are presented that are based on hierarchy and causality: the lower, visible world is caused by a higher intelligible world; in the same way a hierarchy is assumed to exist within the higher world, a reasoning that eventually leads to the assumption that there is a first god, the cause of all intelligibility. God’s existence is connected to eternity (absence of time), unity and changelessness. This picture is complicated by the ideas of Numenius, who introduces a second god besides the first one. Moreover, whereas there are no doubts about his existence, god is generally indicated as ineffable. The only way to achieve some knowledge of him is by the intellect: intellectual activities such as abstraction, analogy and contemplation are used to grasp some notion of divinity. Qualifications attributed to god mainly have a negative character: invisible, unmeasurable, incorporeal and without change. This negative theology is balanced however by positive attributes: good, true, beautiful, perfect. God is characterized as the primary intellect, that is – and here Aristotelian influence becomes apparent – everlastingly engaged in thinking of itself and its own thoughts.

Despite this inward orientation god is also related to the world outside him by being its cause and by providing order. Here Platonist theology seems to comprise an element of tension: how can it be understood that the inward looking god has any relation to the world that never can comply with the standards of the highest being? Yet among Platonists the notions of creation and providence are not in question. As for creation: they accept the account of the *Timaeus*, including elements as the actions of the demiurge, the paradigmatic use of forms, the world soul and the lower gods. In the picture of Platonists a distinction is made: god (the demiurge) himself creates the heavenly area with the world soul, the daemons and the lower gods; these created gods then create the mortal beings. In Numenius’ theology the situation is different: whereas his first god is at rest and only concerned with the intelligible world, the second god functions as the creator, ‘the god of becoming’. As for providence: similar efforts to prevent a direct involvement of the supreme god with the mortal world can be seen in the Platonic view on providence: god’s care does not ‘stop at the moon’ (the Aristotelian idea), but concerns this world and human beings as well. The way this providence is carried out however guarantees a separation as well as a connection of the divine realm and the mortal world: the area between them is filled with a multitude of lower gods and daemons who in a system of hierarchy act as agents of the divine providence.

3. Celsus’ theology

3.1 Introduction

To get a good picture of Celsus’ theology relevant fragments quoted in *Contra Celsum* will have to be collected and carefully interpreted, as has been said in the introduction above. The rhetorical and argumentative function of his statements and other utterances has to be established and evaluated: sometimes an utterance or comment is given directly and openly, but other opinions are only present in

¹²³ Without forgetting that there was much debate on issues and details among Platonists.

a hidden and more implicit way. We need to be alert to Celsus' use of irony and rhetorical questions. In this context, moreover, it is important to make a clear distinction between passages in which Celsus formulates his own opinions as a starting point for criticism of Christian views and on the other hand passages in which he adopts the position of his opponents and argues from their point of view in order to deliver immanent criticism. An example of the first type is 4.14.4-5, where Celsus' plain statement 'god is good and beautiful and happy and exists in the most beautiful way' functions as the basis for an argument about immutability. The other type can be found in 1.66.6-8, where Celsus asks questions in connection with the Christian story of the angel who soon after Jesus' birth was sent from heaven to order the family to flee to Egypt. Celsus (in the person of the Jew he had introduced) asks Jesus: '... And could not the great God ... guard you, his own son, at that very place?' For the sake of argument Celsus for a moment adopts the Christian idea that Jesus is God's son – an idea definitely rejected by him¹²⁴ – while in fact his rhetorical question of course is meant to suggest that Christians present their God as powerless.¹²⁵

It is now my intention to collect data, which explicitly or implicitly give indications of Celsus' theological views.¹²⁶ In this section I want to create a 'clean' picture of his theology, without now determining if he belongs to a certain philosophical school or discussing any connections with or dependency on thoughts or concepts of other philosophers (such questions will be discussed later on in section 4 of this chapter). In this picture attention will be given to Celsus' opinions about the existence of ('the great') god and the possibility of human knowledge of him. Thereafter I will go into questions as to what (if any) qualities could, according to Celsus, be attributed to him and what could be said about the relation this god has to the world (in creation, providence and a possible involvement in evil).

3.2 Existence

As regards the existence of god: it is clear that Celsus is not an atheist. He seems to take for granted that god (indicated by him as ὁ θεός) exists; there is no sign that he considers this as an issue of doubt or dispute. All the time we find statements in which ὁ θεός functions as *agens*;¹²⁷ mostly Celsus uses the substantive without any qualification, but sometimes he adds adjectives (in combinations as ὁ μέγας θεός¹²⁸, ὁ μέγιστος θεός¹²⁹, ὁ πρῶτος θεός or ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ μέγιστος¹³⁰). We may doubt whether all these adjectives really reflect an element of Celsus' philosophical belief. At least some (maybe all?) of them can be understood as markers of a contrast¹³¹ or an underlining of the argument.¹³² Nevertheless the words ὁ πρῶτος (καὶ ὁ μέγιστος) θεός seems to suggest the existence of a second (and a third) god

¹²⁴ See e.g. 2.6 ('we ought not to believe in him as son of God'), 2.9; 2.30-31; 2.33; 2.35, 2.79 (conclusion of several passages quoted in book 2: 'he was a mere man...'), 6.78 ('ludicrous to make the son of God to be sent to the Jews').

¹²⁵ As a second example I refer to the questions Celsus asks in 4.3. to deliver immanent criticism on the Christian idea of a divine descent to the earth.

¹²⁶ See also Frede, M. (1994:5206-5208) and the introductions in Chadwick (1955:XVI-XXII) and Fiedrowicz & Bartold (Vol.1, 2011:66ff.).

¹²⁷ Some examples: 3.71.4; 4.14.4-5; 4.18.11-12; 4.52.11; 4.69.9-11; 4.80.14; 4.99.7-10; 5.14.14-24; 6.63.14; 6.64.14; 6.65.15-16.

¹²⁸ See 1.66.7; 5.41.26; 6.51.18-19; 6.52.9; 7.14.3; 8.15.11, 8.66.12.

¹²⁹ In 4.73.4-5; 6.42.7.

¹³⁰ Respectively 6.61.19 and 6.60.9. Additionally I point out that three times the phrase ὁ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεός is used in passages attributed to Celsus (1.24.6; 6.52.6; 7.15.2), but there is reason to doubt whether the words ἐπὶ πᾶσι are written by Celsus or have to be regarded as insertions of Origen: it is one of his favorite combinations (88x in *Contra Celsum*) and perhaps we have here a paraphrase rather than a literary quote; see comment of Borret (1969) on 6.52 (Vol.3, 308, n.2) and 6.60 (Vol.4, 46-47, n.1).

¹³¹ E.g. 6.51.18-19 and 6.52.6 (a creator-god opposing the 'great god'); 8.15.11 (contrast between the Son and the 'great' God; Celsus speaks for a moment from a Christian perspective).

¹³² E.g. 1.66.7 (to underline the probability that 'the great god' would have sufficient power to save his son without a flight to Egypt); 6.42.7 (to underline the blasphemous thought that power of 'the greatest god' would be minimized by an opposing force as the devil); 7.14.3 (to illustrate the absurdity that the 'great god' would serve as a slave, or be sick and die).

in Celsus' conception, but there are no texts in *Contra Celsum* in which Celsus uses this term.¹³³

At least two times Celsus contrasts within the system of his own theology the position of his supreme god with other lower gods: in 7.68.7-9 (text (28) below), where remarkably no contrasting adjectives are used, and 8.66.9-13, where 'the great god' is opposed to the traditional gods Helios and Athena. Celsus criticizes Christians because of their 'superstitious worship' of Christ: 'dividing the kingdom of God' they act 'impiously' and cause discord 'as if there was one party on one side and another one at variance with it' (8.11.1-4). He continues: 'If these men worshipped no other God but one, perhaps they would have had a valid argument against others. But in fact they worship to an extravagant degree this man who appeared recently, and yet think it is not inconsistent with monotheism if they also worship His servant' (8.12.2-6). In Celsus' view Christians worship Christ to such an extent that he is given the position of a competitor or even opponent of the 'super-celestial God':¹³⁴ they called him 'son of God' not because 'they are paying very great reverence to God, but because they are exalting Jesus greatly' (8.14.1-6; see also 8.15).¹³⁵

3.3 Knowledge

How do we, in Celsus' view, have to imagine god and how can we know him? In the fragments quoted in 7.36-45 Celsus goes into these questions. It is rewarding to follow his discourse here in detail. Celsus takes the role of a teacher (rather than a critic) who gives education about the way to get some conception of God, whom he indicates as 'the nameless and first' (see text (17) below: τοῦ ἀκατονομάστου καὶ πρώτου ... ἐπίνοιαν). Celsus is clear in his rejection of the way of sense-perception and his recommendation of the way of the mind:

<p>(15) ἐὰν αἰσθήσῃ μύσαντες ἀναβλέψῃτε νῶ καὶ
σαρκὸς ἀποστραφέντες ψυχῆς ὀφθαλμοὺς
ἐγείρητε, μόνως οὕτως τὸν θεὸν ὄψεσθε.
(7.36.7-9)</p> | <p>If you shut your eyes to the world of the sense
and look up with the mind, if you turn away
from the flesh and raise the eyes of the soul,
only so will you see god.</p> |
|---|---|

The use of antitheses (αἰσθήσῃ – νῶ; σαρκὸς – ψυχῆς; μύσαντες – ἀναβλέψῃτε) and chiasm (αἰσθήσῃ μύσαντες – ἀναβλέψῃτε νῶ) as well as the conventional visual metaphor (ἀναβλέψῃτε, ὀφθαλμοὺς and ὄψεσθε) add weight to the advice Celsus gives here.¹³⁶

Celsus continues by recommending 'inspired poets, wise men and philosophers' (7.41.3-4)¹³⁷ as guides on the way.¹³⁸ From one of these philosophers, Plato, introduced by Celsus as 'a more effective

¹³³ Unless Celsus' quote from the Second Letter of Plato in 6.18 is interpreted as such. There is much discussion among scholars on the meaning of this passage and Celsus' reason for quoting it; see Arnold (2016:443-444, n.117, 119). Frede, M. (1994:5207-5208) thinks that there are some indications that Celsus believed in a plurality of divine hypostases: possibly Celsus made a distinction between the first god and 'the Divine Intellect'. Frede's reconstruction is firmly based on knowledge of texts of other Platonists who speak of a hierarchy of divine beings. I wonder if he had come to the same conclusion on a reading of Celsus' texts without that knowledge. The relation between Celsus and Platonists will be discussed below (4.5).

¹³⁴ Cf. Celsus in 6.19.2.

¹³⁵ Here Celsus attributes ideas of Marcionite origin to all Christians, see note *ad loc.* Fiedrowicz & Bartold (Vol.5, 2012:1348, n.147).

¹³⁶ See for a discussion of the passage Dörrie (1967; p.237ff. in the 1976 edition).

¹³⁷ Cf. 6.3.1; 7.28.5 and 7.58.22-23. In his reaction Origen protests against the anonymity of the list and suggests that these guides are blind and lost the way of truth themselves. Better than the guidance of poets like Orpheus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Homer and Hesiod is the teaching of Jesus Christ: 'through the Logos of God we look up (ἀναβλέποντας – Origen quotes Celsus' term) to God alone, the Father of the Logos'. Better than wise men and philosophers are Moses, the prophets and Jesus, who could give 'a conception of God (θεολογίαν) which could raise their soul from earthy things ...' (7.41.17-18 resp. 26-27).

¹³⁸ Andresen (1955:133-135 and 347-349) points at the fact that not only philosophers are mentioned as guides: Celsus looks beyond the philosophical schools to the old tradition of Wisdom, 'the ancient doctrine which existed from the beginning, which has always been maintained by the wisest nations and cities and wise men' (Celsus in 1.14.27-29).

teacher in matters of theology,¹³⁹ is given a quote that can hardly be regarded as encouraging for travelers on ‘the way of truth’:

(16) Τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ πάντος εὐρεῖν τε ἔργον καὶ εὐρόντα εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν (Plato, <i>Timaeus</i> 28c, quoted in 7.42.4-5)	To find the maker and father of this universe is difficult, and after finding him it is impossible to declare him to all men.

In his comment on this passage – a classic passage quoted by several authors – Celsus points out that, while it is impossible for everyone to proceed on the way and gain knowledge of God, wise men found methods to provide us at least ‘some conception of the nameless¹⁴⁰ and the first’:

(17) Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τούτου χάριν ἐξηγῆται σοφοῖς ἀνδράσιν, ὥς ἂν τοῦ ἀκατονομάστου καὶ πρώτου λάβοιμέν τινα ἐπίνοιαν, διαδηλοῦσαν αὐτὸν ἢ τῇ συνθέσει τῇ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἢ ἀναλύσει ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἢ ἀναλογίᾳ, τὸ ἄλλως ἄρρητον θέλω <μὲν> διδάξαι θαυμάσαιμι δ’ ἂν εἰ ἀκολουθῆσαι δυνήσεσθε, παντελῶς τῇ σαρκὶ ἐνδεδεμένοι καὶ μηδὲν καθαρὸν βλέποντες. (7.42.8-14)	Since it is discovered by wise men so that we might get some conception of the nameless and first, which manifests him either by synthesis with other things, or by analytical distinction from them, or by analogy, I would like to teach about that which is otherwise indescribable, but I would be amazed if you were able to follow, as you are completely bound to the flesh and see nothing pure.

Two elements in this passage are remarkable: firstly the threefold method that is presented here by Celsus: σύνθεσις, ἀνάλυσις and ἀναλογία. What is meant by the last method is absolutely clear: this method is based on comparison. In the next quote, text (18), Celsus provides an illustration of it. The exact interpretation of the other two terms is a matter of dispute among scholars.¹⁴¹ Moreover, these methods will, according to Celsus, not lead to full knowledge of god, but possibly we can reach some idea which makes him manifest. Secondly I point at Celsus’ emphasis on his role as teacher who is ready to tackle hard topics, which is combined with the expression of low expectations of his ‘students’, the Christians, because they are ‘bound to the flesh’ (cf. the opposition σὰρξ – νοῦς in text (15) above). Here Celsus mixes his didactical approach with elements of *ethos*-argumentation: the communicative situation and the critical character of his work never vanish completely from sight. Celsus uses the opportunity to create a positive image of himself and a very negative of his opponents.

The expression of his expectation that his audience will not be able to understand his lessons does not prevent Celsus from presenting a relatively long passage full of philosophical clues. To illustrate the special structure of the text I opt for a colometric presentation of the first part:¹⁴²

<p>(18) Οὐσία καὶ γένεσις
νοητόν, ὁρατόν·
μετὰ οὐσίας μὲν ἀλήθεια,
μετὰ δὲ γενέσεως πλάνη.
Περὶ ἀλήθειαν μὲν οὖν ἐπιστήμη,
περὶ δὲ θάτερον δόξα·
καὶ νοητοῦ μὲν ἐστὶ νόησις,</p> | <p>Being and becoming:
what is intelligible and what is visible.
To being belongs truth
to becoming error.
Knowledge is related to truth,
opinion to the other.
Insight concerns what is intelligible</p> |
|--|---|

¹³⁹ Andresen (1955:17) explicitly defends the attribution of the words τῶν θεολογίας πραγμάτων to Celsus.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Whittaker (1983) on the qualification ‘nameless’.

¹⁴¹ Because the issue has no direct relevance for my argument, I only refer to discussions in Chadwick (1953:429 n.4), Andresen (1955:293-294), Borret (Vol.4, 1969:112-113, n.1), Frede, M. (1994:5206-5207) and Arnold (2016:443-451).

¹⁴² Characterized by M. Frede as ‘the center of Celsus’ philosophy’ (1994:5204).

ὄρατοῦ δὲ ὄψις.
Γινώσκει δὲ νοητὸν μὲν νοῦς,
ὄρατὸν δὲ ὀφθαλμός.
Ὅπερ οὖν ἐν τοῖς ὄρατοῖς ἥλιος,
οὐτ' ὀφθαλμός ὢν οὐτ' ὄψις
ἀλλ' ὀφθαλμῷ τε τοῦ ὁρᾶν αἴτιος
καὶ ὄψει τοῦ δι' αὐτὸν συνίστασθαι
καὶ ὄρατοῖς τοῦ ὁρᾶσθαι,
πᾶσιν αἰσθητοῖς τοῦ γίνεσθαι,
καὶ μὴν αὐτὸς αὐτῷ τοῦ βλέπεσθαι,
τοῦτο ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς ἐκεῖνος, ὅσπερ
οὔτε νοῦς οὔτε νόησις οὐτ' ἐπιστήμη,
ἀλλὰ νῶ τε τοῦ νοεῖν αἴτιος
καὶ νοήσει τοῦ δι' αὐτὸν εἶναι
καὶ ἐπιστήμῃ τοῦ δι' αὐτὸν γινώσκειν
καὶ νοητοῖς ἅπανσι
καὶ αὐτῇ ἀληθείᾳ
καὶ αὐτῇ οὐσίᾳ τοῦ εἶναι,
πάντων ἐπέκεινα ὢν,
ἀρρήτῳ τινὶ δυνάμει νοητός.

sight what is visible.
Mind knows what is intelligible
the eye what is visible.
What the sun is to the visible things
being neither the eye nor sight
but for the eye the cause of seeing
and for sight the cause of its existence
and for the visible the cause of being seen,
for all what is sensible the cause of becoming
and in fact for itself the cause of being seen,
that is He to the intelligible things, who
is neither mind nor insight nor knowledge,
but for mind the cause of understanding
and for insight the cause of its existence
and for knowledge the cause of knowing
and for all the intelligible things
and for truth itself
and for being itself the cause of existence,
transcending all things,
intelligible by a certain indescribable power.

Ταῦτ' εἴρηται μὲν ἀνθρώποις νοῦν ἔχουσιν·
εἰ δὲ τι αὐτῶν καὶ ὑμεῖς συνίετε, εἴ ὑμῖν
ἔχει. Καὶ πνεῦμα εἴ τι οἴεσθε κατίον ἐκ
θεοῦ προαγγέλλειν τὰ θεῖα, τοῦτ' ἂν εἴῃ τὸ
πνεῦμα τὸ ταῦτα κηρύττον, οὗ δὴ
πληθέντες ἄνδρες παλαιοὶ πολλὰ κάγαθὰ
ἡγειλλαν [...] (7.45.12-30)

These words have been spoken to prudent
people. If you understand any of them as well,
you are doing well. And if you think that some
spirit came down from God to foretell the
divine truths, this may be the spirit which
announces these things. Ancient men, indeed
full of this spirit, proclaimed many good
doctrines [...]

This passage¹⁴³ starts with a careful structured text, which is built up as a sort of hymn, rather different from the text type otherwise used by Celsus.¹⁴⁴ The reader can feel the contrast when in 'These words have been spoken ...' (Ταῦτ' εἴρηται ...) Celsus returns to his 'normal', more prosaic sentences. Is Celsus quoting a text from a philosophical handbook? The perfect εἴρηται ('have been spoken') seems to confirm that the text already existed and is quoted here by Celsus because of its relevance for his audience.¹⁴⁵ In the prosaic epilogue he uses the second person to address his readers,¹⁴⁶ the educated Christians as it seems,¹⁴⁷ and his reference to the spirit descending from God and announcing divine truths, can be interpreted as an attempt to accommodate to something that might be well known to them. However, Celsus tells them that the core of the message of this spirit overlaps with the ancient wisdom

¹⁴³ It is discussed in Dörrie (1967=1976:244ff.). See also De Vogel (1983:291-292).

¹⁴⁴ Arnold (2016:446) characterizes these words as spoken 'in ebenso prägnanter wie "geheimnisvoller" Diktion'.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. the use of the perfect by Origen to refer to texts from the Bible; see chapter II 4.4.

¹⁴⁶ Such an *apostrophe* is rather rare in Celsus' text. This use of the second person seems to be limited to the fragments originating from last sections of his work: 7.36-53, 8.39-41, 48 (second person singular, introduced by the vocative ὦ βέλτιστε – these passages have a reproaching and argumentative character) and 8.66-71 (both second person singular and plural, in a passage in which Christians are summoned to participate in the traditional religious practices and public services; alternation of argumentation and appeal).

¹⁴⁷ I am inclined to agree with Arnold (2016:403ff.) who argues that Celsus in the last part of his work focuses on 'the more educated Christians' (5.65.12-13). The turning point would be 5.41, where he 'sends away' the *χόρος* of the Jews. In the second part (quoted in book 6-8) Celsus' education proceeds on a higher level and more is expected from the addressees.

that is proclaimed by ‘ancient men’ (ἄνδρες παλαιοί).

The substance of divine truths can be found in the ‘hymn’ lines Celsus quoted above, in which in a series of antitheses a division of the cosmos is presented: being vs. becoming, intelligible vs. visible, truth vs. error, knowledge vs. opinion, insight vs. sight, mind vs. eye. These pairs are enumerated in short constituents full of parallelisms and remind of the similar antitheses in text (15), where they are explicitly presented in a context of requirements necessary for the knowledge of god:¹⁴⁸ the first ones of the pairs could bring us to god, the second ones should be neglected. The list of six oppositions in text (18) serves as an introduction of the elements that are elaborated in the second part of the ‘hymn’. In the introduction the terms that refer to the material world (‘becoming’, ‘visible’ etc.) were added mainly as contrast to highlight the terms that really matter for Celsus. It is therefore not surprising that Celsus concentrates now on the ‘intelligible’ notions: all six of them are mentioned.

The second part of text (18) consists of a well elaborated analogy – remember that analogy was one of the methods mentioned in text (17) that can give some conception of god. The analogy of the sun can illustrate what ἐκεῖνος (‘He’) is like:¹⁴⁹ the cause of existence and functioning of all the intelligible abstract terms mentioned above.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, he transcends all things¹⁵¹ and is only intelligible by an indescribable power. Elsewhere Celsus states that this power is certainly not the *logos*:¹⁵² although the intelligible is caused by god and is recommended as a way to ‘see god’, he is beyond all intelligence and words do not suffice to describe him. This is in line with a passage from Plato quoted by Celsus in 6.3.4-7: ‘... the highest good cannot at all be expressed in words, but comes to us by long familiarity and suddenly like a light in the soul kindled by a leaping spark’.¹⁵³ Celsus’ use of an analogy can be considered as consistent with this idea: in a situation in which a direct, intellectual, ‘logical’ statement in words is not possible, a phrase based on comparison is the highest achievable method to say something at least, whereas an analogy is at the same time a rhetorical and almost poetic way to indicate and to suggest more than could be confirmed.

Let me summarize the theological elements that are presented in 7.36-45. Celsus states that god can be characterized as the cause of all things that function in the better, intelligible part of reality; he is beyond all things (see text (18)). It is difficult to find him and impossible declare him to all men (text (16)). Who wants to know (‘see’) him, should reject what belongs to the visible, material world and concentrate on the intellect (text (15)), but even then god is intelligible only by ‘a certain indescribable power’ and even then we can reach only *some* conception of the ‘first and nameless’, which can make him manifest by synthesis, analysis and analogy (text (17)).

3.4 Qualities

In this light it is not surprising that Celsus is somewhat reluctant to mention any qualities of his god: he cannot be expressed in words and whoever says that god is such or so, seems to attribute some sort of being to him. Celsus prefers saying what god is *not* to stating what he is. Yet some statements can be found in which divine qualities are indicated in a positive way. An example is the next fragment:

¹⁴⁸ Cf. the glossary on words related to intellect given in 2.6.3 n.69.

¹⁴⁹ The indication of the highest principle (god) by a simple demonstrative pronoun is remarkable. I did not find a parallel in Celsus’ text. It seems to be appropriate more in a hymnal (religious) context than in a philosophical one. Moreover, in Celsus’ view he cannot be named (6.65); Celsus states that it makes no difference whether the supreme god is called Adonai or Zeus or Sabaoth etc. (1.24; 5.41).

¹⁵⁰ Mark the careful parallel structure: one negative statement regarding the identity of the sun is followed by five positive statements (αἴτιος of ...); this corresponds with similar phrases in the intelligible part.

¹⁵¹ Cf. 6.64.14 ‘God does not even participate in being’ (οὐδὲ οὐσίας μετέχει ὁ θεός).

¹⁵² See 6.65.15.16: ‘Neither is God attainable by reason (οὐδὲ λόγῳ ἐφικτός ἐστιν ὁ θεός).

¹⁵³ Plato, *Epistula* 7.341c; the quote offers another example of analogy.

VI. Philosophical theology

- (19) Ὁ θεὸς ἀγαθὸς ἔστι καὶ καλὸς καὶ εὐδαίμων καὶ ἐν τῷ καλλίστῳ καὶ ἀρίστῳ. (4.14.4-5) God is good and beautiful and happy and exists in the most beautiful and best situation.

A similar statement is found in the next fragment, although here the positive qualifications are limited to the first part:

- (20) Ὁ γε μὴν θεὸς ἅπασιν κοινός, ἀγαθός τε καὶ ἀπροσδεὴς καὶ ἔξω φθόνου. (8.21.6-7) God is surely common to all men. He is both good and in need of nothing, and without envy.

Both statements sound like parts of a creed and they can indeed be considered to be indicative of Celsus' belief: text (19) refers to the optimal, fortunate circumstances god is in and text (20) adds to this that he does not need anything.¹⁵⁴ In their context these statements also (or: mainly) have an argumentative function: text (20) functions as argument to participate in the traditional religious practices and the public feasts (which is declined by Christians). Text (19) is the beginning of an argument against the thought of a divine descent: this would infer change,¹⁵⁵ which is, as Celsus wants to demonstrate, unlikely and impossible because of the goodness and happiness of God. Celsus presents this conclusion (2x οὖν) in two rhetorical questions, the first one in a general formula, the second one explicitly related to 'a god':¹⁵⁶

- (21) Τίς ἂν οὖν ἔλοιτο τοιαύτην μεταβολήν; [...] So who would choose a change like this? [...]
Οὐκ ἂν οὖν οὐδὲ ταύτην τὴν μεταβολὴν So a god could not at all undergo this change.
θεὸς δέχοιτο. (4.14.9 and 12)

In the next fragment Celsus presents an interesting mixture of positive and negative statements. The context is Celsus' protest against the idea (attributed here to the Jews) that God will roast mankind by fire ('like a cook', as Celsus says), while the living Jews will survive and the deceased ones will rise up and get new bodies. Celsus cannot imagine that any soul should wish this and says it is impossible that entirely corrupted bodies could be restored to their original states. Appealing to the phrase 'anything is possible to God' is not acceptable, he states. The reason for this is explained in the next fragment:

- (22) Ἀλλ' οὐτὶ γε τὰ αἰσχρὰ ὁ θεὸς δύναται οὐδὲ τὰ παρὰ φύσιν βούλεται· οὐδ' ἂν σύ τι ἐπιθυμήσῃς κατὰ τὴν σαυτοῦ μοχθηρίαν βδελυρόν, ὁ θεὸς τοῦτο δυνήσεται, καὶ χρὴ πιστεύειν εὐθὺς ὅτι ἔσται. Οὐ γὰρ τῆς πλημμελοῦς ὀρέξεως οὐδὲ τῆς πεπλανημένης ἀκοσμίας ἀλλὰ τῆς ὀρθῆς καὶ δικαίας φύσεως ὁ θεὸς ἐστὶν ἀρχηγέτης. Καὶ ψυχῆς μὲν αἰώνιον βίωσιν δύναται· ἂν παρασχεῖν· «Νέκυες δέ» φησὶν Ἡράκλειτος, «κοπρίων ἐκβλητότεροι». Σάρκα δὲ, μεστήν ὣν οὐδὲ εἰπεῖν καλόν, αἰώνιον ἀποφῆναι παραλόγως οὔτε βουλήσεται ὁ θεὸς οὔτε δυνήσεται. Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ πάντων τῶν ὄντων λόγος· οὐδὲν οὖν οἷός τε But, indeed, neither can god do what is shameful nor does he desire what is contrary to nature. If you were to desire something abominable in your wickedness, not even god would be able to do this and you ought not to believe at all that your desire will be fulfilled. For god is not the author of sinful desire or of disorderly confusion, but of what is naturally just and right. For the soul he might be able to provide an everlasting life. But as Heraclitus says, 'corpses ought to be thrown down as worse than dung'. As for the flesh, which is full of things which it is not even nice to mention, god would neither desire nor be able to make it everlasting contrary to reason. For he himself is the reason of everything that exists; therefore he is not able to do anything contrary to reason or to his own character.

¹⁵⁴ See also 6.53.20: δεῖται δὲ οὐδένο·ς ὁ θεός ('God is in need of nothing').

¹⁵⁵ Cf. 7.18 where Celsus opposes to the idea that God could change his mind.

¹⁵⁶ Mark the absence of the article in 4.14.12: θεός (not ὁ θεός) sounds like a generic indication.

παράλογον οὐδὲ παρ' ἑαυτὸν ἐργάσασθαι.
(5.14.14-25)

In this passage Celsus mentions the issues of moral, reason and nature in relation to his god. In positive terms this god is presented not only as the author of what is naturally right and just, but also as himself the reason of all existing things. This principle imposes limits to his ability and wishes (δύναται, δυνήσεται, βούλεται, βουλήσεται), which is expressed in negative qualifications: he cannot be connected to bad things, actions or desires (τὰ αἰσχρά, τι ... βδελυρόν, τῆς πλημμελοῦς ὀρέξεως, τῆς πεπλανημένης ἀκοσμίας, μεστήν ὧν οὐδὲ εἰπεῖν καλόν). God neither desires nor can do anything contrary to nature¹⁵⁷ and reason (τὰ παρὰ φύσιν, παραλόγως, παράλογον).¹⁵⁸ Mark the distinction between soul and body (flesh):¹⁵⁹ Celsus presents it as possible or probable (optative δύναιτ' ἄν) that god would benefit the soul, but indicates as evident¹⁶⁰ that this does not apply for the body.

Next in this section on divine qualities I proceed to fragments in which Celsus criticizes conceptions of the divine which he ascribes to his opponents. The criticism in these passages is mostly implicitly based on certain opinions held by Celsus; sometimes these opinions are formulated explicitly. Given the general critical setting these passages are part of, it may be expected that negative statements (god is not [what you, my opponents, think]...) prevail in this section.

A major part of these fragments is related to Celsus' polemic against anthropomorphic notions of god. Let me mention a few examples: in 4.6 the fragment is quoted in which he criticizes the idea that 'God' thought himself to be underrated and therefore came down to earth to make himself known: 'a very mortal ambition', according to Celsus. In 4.14.4 he asserts that mortal beings can change, whereas 'the nature of an immortal being is to remain the same without alteration'. In 6.61-66 he discusses a series of anthropomorphic ideas he derives from the creation story in the Bible: it is not right that the first god is tired, works with his hands or gives orders (6.61.19-20). 'He has neither mouth nor voice ... nor something other that we know' (6.62.6,13-14). He is not like man nor does he resemble any form at all (6.63.13-14).¹⁶¹ He does not participate in shape, color or movement (6.64.3-4), or even in being (6.64.14). He is outside of any emotional experience (πάθος; 6.65.30-31).¹⁶²

A similar approach can be noticed in multiple passages quoted in book 1 and 2, where Celsus uses the figure of *prosopopoiia*: he puts his words into the mouth of a Jew, who addresses Jesus (book 1) and the Christians (book 2). The purpose of this rather complex discourse situation is clear: Celsus uses this form to reproach the Christians because they consider Jesus to be God. His arguments generally run as follows: Jesus cannot be divine ('Son of God'), because a god would not do (or undergo) what Jesus does (or undergoes), nor would a god have the qualities Jesus has. The logical form of the argument goes back to the enthymeme or syllogism.¹⁶³ For my research in this section concerning the theology of Celsus the *maior* of these reasonings is the most interesting element, for it usually consists of a statement that concerns theology. Common points of the *maiores* in book 1-2 are the connection with anthropomorphism and the negative form of the statements. This will be apparent in the next catalogue of actions and qualities, in which Celsus refers to several aspects of human life (physical, mental,

¹⁵⁷ Cf. the quote from Plato's *Leges* 715e in Celsus' passage quoted in 6.15.5-7: 'god ... advances in straight course and goes about according to nature' (κατὰ φύσιν).

¹⁵⁸ Arnold (2016:450) denotes this passage as an example of σύνθεσις (as mentioned in text (17) above), a method he defines as 'connection' ('Zusammenstellung', 'Verbindung'): 'Celsus behandelt also das Verhältnis Gottes zu dem, was nicht Gott ist. Speziell untersucht wird, inwiefern dieses Andere sich dem Willen und Wirken des höchsten Gottes verdankt. Auf diese Weise lassen sich – συνθέσει τῇ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄλλα – Erkenntnisse über Gott gewinnen.'

¹⁵⁹ The front position of these words highlights the antithesis.

¹⁶⁰ Note the pragmatical function of the interactional particle δὴ (see chapter II 5.2). The use of δὴ can be explained by the fact that σάρκα δὴ picks up the preceding Νέκυες δέ (which corresponds to ψυχῆς μέν) from the Heraclitus quote: following the statement of Heraclitus about corpses, the remark about the flesh is presented as obvious.

¹⁶¹ And therefore: He did not make man his image.

¹⁶² Cf. 4.6 (no ambition), 4.18 (no fear); 4.71; 4.99 (no anger), 8.21.7 (no envy).

¹⁶³ See chapter III 3.4.2.

emotional, communicative, relational, moral).

Here follows an (incomplete) overview of these *maiores*, in which I sometimes quote or paraphrase Celsus' text and sometimes summarize the implied basic argument in my own words: a god would not 'go around begging' (1.62.32-35). 'A god would not have a body as yours' (1.69.2-3)¹⁶⁴. A god would 'not eat such food' (1.70.1). A god would not have fear and show weakness (1.66.2-4; 2.9.1-11). A god would 'not use that method of persuasion' (1.70.11-12). No friend would conspire against a god (2.21.5). Involved in a shameful situation of disaster and pain a god would act with dignity, deliver himself and take revenge (2.33.1-3; 2.35.1-4). A god would not be punished and endure shame (2.39.2-4). A god would be free from evil and blame (2.41.2; 2.42.1-2). A god would have shown his divine power (2.63.2-4; 2.68.2-3). A god, when coming to men, would not have encountered disbelief (2.75.5-7; 2.78.1-2). A god would not made empty threats (2.76.5-8).

The conclusion of this section can be that Celsus seems to be hesitant to make positive statements about qualities of his god. Indeed, he asserts that god lives in a good, beautiful, happy situation without any need and that he is the *logos* of all beings. But most of the theological statements have a negative character: change is not possible for god; he does not act against reason or nature; he cannot be connected with fear, weakness, evil, emotions, shameful situations and lack of recognition. Moreover, anthropomorphic images are to be rejected. God has no form, body, mouth or voice and does not participate in shape, colour, movement and even being.¹⁶⁵

As is said before, we have to keep in mind that all these data are not presented in an orderly organized report, but scattered all across the work. This fact is in line with the character of Celsus' book: his aim was not to write a systematic theological treatise, but to demonstrate how reprehensible the thoughts of Christians (and Jews) were in his view. His claims about god and the theological assertions that are implied in his discourse are for polemical use and are meant to persuade, not just to describe.

3.5 God and the world

In the fragment quoted in 4.52 Celsus announces the start of a new chapter in his discourse: after a critical passage concerning the origin of the Jews and the allegorical interpretation of genesis stories he stops his refutations and explicitly announces the start of a didactical section¹⁶⁶ about nature. The passage provides a nice introduction to Celsus' view on the relation between his god and the world. I quote the following lines:

(23) Ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο μᾶλλον ἐθέλω διδάξαι τὴν φύσιν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς οὐδὲν θνητὸν ἐποίησεν· ἀλλὰ θεοῦ μὲν ἔργα ὅσα ἀθάνατα, θνητὰ δ' ἐκείνων. Καὶ ψυχὴ μὲν θεοῦ ἔργον, σώματος δὲ ἄλλη φύσις. Καὶ ταύτῃ γε οὐδὲν διοίσει νυκτερίδος ἢ εὐλῆς ἢ βατράχου ἢ ἀνθρώπου σῶμα· ὕλη γὰρ ἢ αὐτῇ, καὶ τὸ φθαρτὸν αὐτῶν ὅμοιον. (4.52.10-15)

But I would prefer to present this teaching about nature, that god made nothing mortal. No, whatever works are immortal are works of god, and mortal works are made by them. The soul is god's work, but the nature of the body is different. In this respect there will be no difference between the body of a bat or a worm or a frog or a man. For they are made of the same matter and are equally liable to corruption.

Celsus makes a clear distinction between the two categories of creatures: immortal creatures (ὅσα

¹⁶⁴ See also 6.75; 7.27.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Celsus' reproaches in 7.13-14; 7.36; 7.53; 8.41 and his protest against the ('blasphemous') idea that there would be a devil, a power opposed to him (6.42) and the idea that 'a creator' acted against the will of the God (6.51-53).

¹⁶⁶ Arnold (2016:260-264) points at the use of the verb διδάξαι both in 4.52 and 7.42. In his analysis of the structure of *Alethes Logos* he assumes a correspondence between the two didactic passages: Belehrung über die Natur (4.52-99) and Belehrung über den Weg zu einer Gottesvorstellung (7.36-45).

ἀθάνατα, ψυχή) and mortal ones (θνητά, σῶμα, ὕλη, τὸ φθαρτόν):¹⁶⁷ the first category is made by god, the last category by ‘his creatures’.¹⁶⁸ The main element of Celsus’ teaching is worded in the ὅτι-clause, which is given more emphasis by the announcing ἐκεῖνο in the front position: god made nothing mortal (οὐδὲν θνητόν in the Focus position). This is in line with the picture given in passages discussed above: there is a distance between god and the material, visible, corruptible world; from this passage can be deduced that there is at best an indirect connection between them.

A less nuanced (as it seems) statement concerning this topic can be found in 6.65.1: ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὰ πάντα (‘all things are derived from him’). In his reaction Origen signals tension between these words and the statement quoted in text (23),¹⁶⁹ but, as I think, two remarks can be made here. Firstly: the preposition formula ἐξ αὐτοῦ suggests a relationship that is different from the words we encounter in text (23): the words ἐποίησεν (‘made’) and ἔργα (‘works’) point at the metaphor of a craftsman who creates something which is to be discerned from its maker,¹⁷⁰ while ἐξ αὐτοῦ suggests the image of a source from which something is derived.¹⁷¹ Secondly, the different context can make the statement of 6.65.1 better understandable: this phrase may only function as a stepping stone to the following words: ἐξ οὐδενὸς ὁ θεός (‘God is derived from nothing’, 6.65.7). The preceding constituent is added perhaps mainly to mark the contrast and to emphasize the second clause. Given the context, this second clause is the one that matters: it is an item in the list of negative statements concerning god Celsus is drawing up in order to denounce anthropomorphisms (some of them are mentioned above). With the combination of statements quoted in 6.65 Celsus claims that god is the source of everything and that there is no question of an inverse relationship: nothing is the source of god.¹⁷²

To highlight a special detail of Celsus’ opinion concerning the existence of the world I refer to the discussion he starts in the next fragment:

- (24) Οὐδὲν μᾶλλον ἀνθρώπων ἢ τῶν ἀλόγων Everything has come to its being not more for
ζῶων ἔνεκεν γέγονε τὰ πάντα. (4.74.4-5) men than for the irrational animals

From here to the end of the book passages are quoted in which anthropocentrism is rejected with numerous arguments.¹⁷³ The conclusion of this section contains elements that are worth looking at for the present discussion:

¹⁶⁷ In 6.61.1 the connection between matter and mortality is underlined by Celsus: καὶ ὕλης ἔκγονον οὐδὲν ἀθάνατον (‘No product of matter is immortal’).

¹⁶⁸ The demonstrative pronoun ἐκεῖνων refers to ὅσα ἀθάνατα, or more precise: ἐκεῖνοι are one type of ὅσα ἀθάνατα, immortal creatures who in their turn create mortal things. Celsus is not very specific here, but in his response Origen concludes that Celsus means that bodies are created by (lower) gods (θεοὺς ἐποίει δημιουργοὺς πάντων σωμάτων, 4.54.23).

¹⁶⁹ Saying: ἀπολύσας οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅπως τὰ πάντα αὐτοῦ (‘although for some unknown reason he had separated all things from him (= God)’). Was Origen eager to find contradictions in Celsus’ words or was he happy to get an opportunity to demonstrate his contrasting view? Anyway, before he quotes Celsus’ following phrase he inserts a quote from Paul (‘from him and through him and unto him are all things’, *Rom.* 11,36) with some explanation, which seems to match better with 6.65.1 than with 4.52.

¹⁷⁰ The metaphor seems to imply that the matter used by the craftsman already existed and that the verb ποιέω in text (23) means ‘to form things from existing material’. Is this what Celsus thought? In 6.52.1-4 he refuses to say anything ‘about the beginning and the destruction of the world, whether it is uncreated and indestructible, or created and destructible, or vice versa’. Origen thinks Celsus considers the world to be ἀγέννητος (1,19.5-9; cf. 4.79.14-16). See for a discussion Andresen (1955:80ff.).

¹⁷¹ The preposition combination that corresponds with the craftsman metaphor would be ὑφ’ οὗ, (cf. the use of ὑπό in similar contexts in 1.5.4; 1.23.20; 4.30.42; 4.54.38; 8.17.36). LSJ s.v. ἐκ III 5 limits the use of ἐκ referring to the agent after passive verbs to poets and early prose-authors. See on prepositions and metaphysics Dörrie (1969) and Dillon (1977:138). A short comment on ‘prepositional metaphysics’ is given by Boys-Stones (2018:89), with reference to several relevant texts of Platonists.

¹⁷² In addition I refer to another fragment, quoted in 6.47, in which the preposition ἐκ features: Celsus starts a passage on cosmology and tells that ancient wise men called ‘this cosmos god’s child and a demigod on the ground that it originated from Him’ (τὸνδε τὸν κόσμον ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ γενόμενον παῖδά τε αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡμίθεον). Here the dependency of that world on god is expressed by the generation metaphor (the cosmos as παῖς θεοῦ).

¹⁷³ See the fragments quoted in 4.74-4.88. These texts give insight in Celsus’ thoughts about god’s providence and the focus in this divine care for the cosmos. I summarize some of his arguments: the weather phenomena are made no more for men than for plants, trees, grass and thorns (4.75); animals are favoured above men, because they get their food without any agricultural

- (25) Οὐκ οὐκ ἀνθρώπων πεποιήται τὰ πάντα, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ λέοντι οὐδὲ ἀετῷ οὐδὲ δελφίνι, ἀλλ' ὅπως ὅδε ὁ κόσμος ὡς ἂν θεοῦ ἔργον ὁλόκληρον καὶ τέλειον ἐξ ἀπάντων γένηται· τούτου χάριν μεμέτρηται τὰ πάντα, οὐκ ἀλλήλων, ἀλλ' εἰ μὴ πάρεργον, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ὅλου. Καὶ μέλει τῷ θεῷ τοῦ ὅλου, καὶ τοῦτ' οὐ ποτ' ἀπολείπει πρόνοια, οὐδὲ κάκιον γίνεται, οὐδὲ διὰ χρόνου πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ὁ θεὸς ἐπιστρέφει, οὐδ' ἀνθρώπων ἕνεκα ὀργίζεται, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ πιθήκων οὐδὲ μυῶν· οὐδὲ τούτοις ἀπειλεῖ, ὧν ἕκαστον ἐν τῷ μέρει τὴν αὐτοῦ μοῖραν εἴληφε. (4.99.2-11)
- So all things have not been made for man any more than for the lion or the eagle or the dolphin, but so that this world, as god's work, may be made complete and perfect in all its parts. For this purpose all things have been proportioned not for one another except incidentally, but for the universe as a whole. And god takes care of the universe, and providence never abandons it, nor does it become more evil; nor does god turn it back to himself after a time, nor is he angry because of men any more than he is because of monkeys or mice; nor does he threaten them. For each of them has received his destiny in his turn.

Here Celsus repeats his statement in which a special place for mankind is denied: all things are made for man just as well as for animals.¹⁷⁴ What matters is not the interest of man, but the well-ordered total of the perfect universe in which all things have been proportioned for the universe as a whole.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, Celsus shows himself here evidently as an adherent of the idea of divine providence:¹⁷⁶ albeit that he defines it (and limits it) to a universal πρόνοια: 'God takes care of the universe' ('as a whole', τοῦ ὅλου) and will do this forever.¹⁷⁷ This divine care does not entail that god would act as a judge, who saves good men and punishes bad behaviour: the image of a threatening god who shows his anger is rejected by Celsus. The allegation that god does not 'turn it back to himself after a time' seems to imply Celsus' denial of a total destruction of the universe.¹⁷⁸

In the words οὐδὲ κάκιον γίνεται ('nor does it become more evil') in text (25) we can hear an echo of reflections Celsus had presented in the lines quoted in 4.65, where he discusses the origin of evil:¹⁷⁹

- (26) Τίς ἢ τῶν κακῶν γένεσις, οὐ ῥάδιον μὲν γινῶναι τῷ μὴ φιλοσοφῆσαντι, ἐξαρκεῖ δ' εἰς It is not easy for one who has not practiced philosophy to know what is the origin of evils.

troubles (4.76); men hunt beast with artificial weapons, while they hunt men with their natural powers (4.78); there are several examples from which can be deduced that animals use reason (4.81-86); animals have notions of the divine and are near in communion with god, which becomes apparent in their knowledge of the future (4.88).

¹⁷⁴ I point at the correspondence between the statement in text (24) and text (25) and an issue previously discussed in book 4: the claim that is attributed by Celsus to 'Jews and Christians' in the fragment quoted in 4.23.15 (a *prosopopoiia* passage: Celsus stages his opponents as speakers in his text): ἡμῶν ἕνεκα πάντα καὶ ἡμῖν δουλεύειν τέτακται ('all things exist for our benefit and have been appointed to serve us'). Celsus rejects this claim of 'Jews/Christians-first' in an vivid passage; in the light of the words of text (24) and text (25) it can be understood that he regards claiming a preferential position for one's own group as an extreme form of anthropocentrism.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. 4.5.28-29 where Celsus points at the danger for damage and destruction of everything that can be caused by the change of one quite insignificant element.

¹⁷⁶ And therefore not as an Epicurean (who denied πρόνοια, cf. 1.21.10); Origen seems to think in the first part of his work that Celsus was an Epicurean (see 1.8.11; 1.20.24); later on he suggested that he disguised his epicurean belief (3.80.14-16). But in 4.4.3-4.8 Origen concludes from Celsus' treatise that he thinks that 'God and providence exist'. Cf. 4.63.1-2. See Chadwick's introduction (1953:XXVI), Frede, M. (1994:5191), Bergjan (2002: 249-263). The issue is further discussed in 4.3 below.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Celsus in 7.68.6-8 in a rhetorical question: 'Are not all things administered according to god's will and is not all providence derived from him?'. See Bergjan (2001: 189-193); Bergjan (2002:211-218,235-237) on Celsus' conception of πρόνοια. As is explained by Chadwick (1947:36-38) Celsus' standpoint here corresponds to what is said in Plato's *Leges* 903c ('all partial generation is for the sake of the whole; things are not generated for you, but you for its sake'). His discussions and illustrations resemble what can be found in works of authors as Philo, Sextus Empiricus and Plutarch. While Celsus draws his argument from Platonic sources in this debate, Origen in his response follows Stoic argumentation in his defence of the contrary position: the irrational beings are created for the sake of the rational.

¹⁷⁸ See also Andresen (1955:87-88): 'Nie aber kehrt die Welt des Werdens und der Geschichte in Gottes unveränderliches Sein zurück'. The phrase πρὸς ἑαυτὸν could be interpreted as a reference to (and a rejection of) a world view (in fact the Stoic one, see 2.3 above) in which the cosmos is regarded as flowing from its divine source and after a period of time returns again to that same source. Cf. Dörrie (1967=1976:125).

¹⁷⁹ Marked by the words Τίς ἢ τῶν κακῶν γένεσις ('What is the origin of evils') in the Topic position.

πλήθος εἰρῆσθαι ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ μὲν οὐκ ἔστι κακά, ὕλη δὲ πρόσκειται καὶ τοῖς θνητοῖς ἐμπολιτεύεται· ὁμοία δ' ἀπ' ἀρχῆς εἰς τέλος ἡ τῶν θνητῶν περίοδος, καὶ κατὰ τὰς τεταγμένας ἀνακυκλήσεις ἀνάγκη τὰ αὐτὰ ἀεὶ καὶ γεγονέναι καὶ εἶναι καὶ ἔσεσθαι. (4.65.1-7)

However, it is enough for the masses to be told that evils are not caused by god, but inhere in matter and dwell among mortals; and the period of mortal life is similar from beginning to end, and it is inevitable that according to the determined cycles the same things always have happened, are now happening, and will happen.

I pick up the following elements from this passage. Firstly: Celsus presents his statements on this issue explicitly as an outline suitable for a wide public, whereas the philosophers know how complex this problem is. This remark indicates that at this moment Celsus is not writing a philosophical handbook in which he can thoroughly deal with the problem of evil. His aim and communicative situation is different; the character of his approach is rather didactic than philosophic.¹⁸⁰

Then: as main point which is 'enough for the masses' Celsus states that evil is not derived from god: 'it is attached to matter and dwells among mortals'. Here an element is added to the distinction between the mortal and the immortal domain discussed above: evil is located in and limited to the mortal world of matter.¹⁸¹ Typical for this world of mortal life, moreover, is on the one hand its cyclic character (περίοδος, ἀνακυκλήσεις) and on the other hand the similarity of the things that happen: the same things always (τὰ αὐτὰ ἀεὶ) occur in the past, the present and the future. This is a matter of necessity (ἀνάγκη) and determination (τεταγμένα). This recalls a previous statement on the material world: 'All bodies ... have a single common nature which passes through changes into many forms and returns again to what it was' (4.60.1-3).¹⁸² The constantly changing particular elements are subsidiary to the whole: they come into existence and perish 'for the sake of the whole' (τῆς τοῦ ὅλου σωτηρίας εἵνεκα, 4.69.2).¹⁸³ The notion of change distinguishes the material world from the divine world, in which all is good and change is not possible.¹⁸⁴ The nature of the cosmos in which change and constancy are combined is, according to Celsus, also reflected in the presence of evil in the world: '... there can be no decrease or increase of evils either in the past or in the present or in the future. For the nature of the universe is one and the same, and the origin of evils is always the same' (4.62.4-6).¹⁸⁵

What has Celsus' 'great god' to do with this mortal world in which change and evil are constant factors? In the next quote from Celsus the distance between his god and the world with its evil is illustrated:

(27) Οὐτε τῷ θεῷ καινότερας δεῖ διορθώσεως. [...] οὐδ' ὡς ἄνθρωπος τεκτηνόμενος τι ἐνδεῶς καὶ ἀτεχνότερον δημιουργήσας ὁ θεὸς προσάγει διόρθωσιν τῷ κόσμῳ, καθαίρων αὐτὸν κατακλυσμῷ ἢ ἐκπυρώσει. (4.69.8-11)

God has no need to have a new correction. [...] God does not inflict correction on the world like a man who has built something defectively and created it unskillfully, when he purifies it by a flood or a conflagration.

Celsus uses the image of the craftsman (in the participles τεκτηνόμενος and δημιουργήσας - 'who has built ... created') to contrast his god with human artisans who do a bad job, deliver defective products

¹⁸⁰ This address to an audience without philosophical education is among the passages presented by Arnold (2016:427ff.) to illustrate his thesis of a growing expectation Celsus has of his readers: in the first part of his work Celsus does not offer the deeper and more demanding discussions he presents in the second part in which he addresses only Christian readers (in the fragment quoted in 5.41 the Jewish χόρος is sent away).

¹⁸¹ See Celsus in 8.55.9-11: evil is inevitable in the world and has nowhere else to exist.

¹⁸² In the Greek text the words κοινή and μία ('single common') are highlighted by their initial position.

¹⁸³ Cf. Celsus in 4.5.28-29 and 4.99.5-6 about the prevalence of τὰ πάντα ('all things').

¹⁸⁴ Cf. in a different context 4.14.2-12.

¹⁸⁵ Repeated in 4.69.6-7: Οὐτε δὲ τὰ ἀγαθὰ οὐτε τὰ κακὰ ἐν τοῖς θνητοῖς ἐλάττω ἢ πλείω γένοιντ' ἄν ('Neither good nor bad can increase or diminish among mortals').

and need correction. But, as Celsus says, god has no need of correction. Great disasters as a flood and a conflagration therefore cannot be regarded as events by which god corrects the world.¹⁸⁶ As is stated in text (25), god takes care of the universe as a whole, but he shows no anger and does not issue threats.¹⁸⁷ The level of evil in the universe is constant: it does not become more evil. ‘Thunder and lightning and rainstorms are not god’s work’ (4.75.1). God does not intervene in this world in order to correct a lost balance or to punish bad people.¹⁸⁸ At this point in Celsus’ didactic passage his polemical spirit emerges, though implicitly: his remarks in text (27) are directed to the Jewish-Christian view in which punishment and correction from the side of God have an important place.¹⁸⁹

Let me repeat the main points in this section on god’s relation to the world. Typical for Celsus’ view is that he creates a great distance between his god and the mortal creatures. God is not directly involved in the creation of whatever is mortal: only immortal creatures are god’s work; what is mortal is created by god’s creatures. Next: a special position for mankind in the world is rejected by Celsus: all things are made for man just as well as for animals. Also with regard to divine governance anthropocentrism is rejected: god’s providence is defined as a care for the universe as a whole. God does not act as a judge of human good or bad actions, he does not show his anger nor does he make any threats. He is not in any way the source of evil: evil is connected to matter and, while change is characteristic of the material world, the total amount of evil will be constant. The idea that god would aim at some correction of the world is alien for Celsus’ theology.

Here we have a number of the key convictions that form the basis for Celsus’ argumentation in his section on ‘divine descent’ (4.2-22, my corpus), as will be demonstrated later on.

3.6 Providence, daemons and worship

As is said above there is in Celsus’ view a big gap between his god and the material world. Although he asserts that all things are derived from god, he only calls the ἀθάνατα (‘immortal things’) god’s work, whereas the mortal world is made by these ἀθάνατα (see text (23) above). Although he believes in a divine providence, this care is restricted to the universe *as a whole* (text (25) above). The next passage explains more how this divine providence is executed and how intermediary beings, daemons, bridge the gap between god and matter. The quote is taken from a passage (fragments in 7.62-8.33) in which Celsus criticizes the Christian attitude to the traditional pagan religion (temples, altars, images): the opponents refuse to worship the gods or the daemons.¹⁹⁰ Then he continues:

(28) Πρότερον δὲ ἐρήσομαι, διὰ τί δαίμονας οὐ θεραπεύτεον; Οὐ πάντα μέντοι κατὰ γνώμην διοικεῖται τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ πᾶσα ἐξ ἐκείνου πρόνοια; Καὶ ὅ τι περ ἂν <ῆ> ἐν τοῖς ὅλοις, εἴτε θεοῦ ἔργον εἴτ’ ἀγγέλων εἴτ’ ἄλλων δαιμόνων εἴτε ἡρώων, πάντα ταῦτα ἔχει νόμον ἐκ τοῦ μεγίστου θεοῦ, τέτακται δὲ ἐφ’ ἐκάστῳ δυνάμιν λαχὼν ὅστις ἡξίωται; Τοῦτον οὖν τὸν ἐκεῖθεν ἐξουσίας τετυχηκότα

First I would ask: Why should we not worship daemons? Are not all things administered according to god’s will and is not all providence derived from him? And whatever there may be in the universe, whether the work of a god, or of angels, or of other daemons, or heroes, do not all these things keep a law given by the greatest god? And has there not been appointed over each particular thing a being who has been thought worthy to be allotted power? Would not a man, therefore, who

¹⁸⁶ From Celsus’ words quoted in 1.19 and 4.11 we can deduce that Celsus accepted floods and conflagrations as the periodically returning catastrophes, but denies that these events are caused by a punishing god. See also Arnold (2016:366).

¹⁸⁷ Cf. also 4.73.2-6.

¹⁸⁸ This does not mean that Celsus denies that evil deed will be punished. On the contrary, in the fragment quoted in 8.49 he underlines the importance of eternal punishments (see also 3.16). Cf. May (1998).

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Celsus in 4.20.5-9.

¹⁹⁰ Celsus adds ‘but do worship a corpse’, referring to Christ who died on the cross (7.68.3-4; cf. 7.36.15).

οὐ θεραπεύσει δικαίως ὁ σέβων τὸν θεόν; worships god rightly worship the being who
(7.68.5-13) has obtained authority from him?

This passage shows Celsus' view on the divine administration of all things and the assignment of power and authority (δύναμις, ἐξουσία) to intermediate rulers: subordinated to the greatest god's overall providence there is a multitude of powerful beings (gods, angels, daemons, heroes), which are at god's disposal in his administration and indirectly exercise his power in the material world.¹⁹¹ In a series of rhetorical questions Celsus suggests that his remarks on this 'ruling system' are obvious: undoubtedly his addressees will agree.

I point at the role Celsus attributes to a ‘law’ (νόμος) in the graduated system of administration: this is the instrument by which the greatest god (ὁ μέγιστος θεός) cares for the conservation of the whole universe. This law rules over all things in the universe, which are indicated as ‘works’ of an (inferior) god, of angels,¹⁹² daemons or heroes. Each individual thing and person has a powerful being set above him.¹⁹³ These powerful beings ought to be worshiped: anyone who does not recognize them and refuses to worship them is guilty of rebellion (στάσις, 8.2.7).¹⁹⁴ And on the other hand: ‘The man who worships several gods, because he worships some one of those which belong to the great god, even by this very action does what is loved by him.’ (8.2.20-22). Therefore partaking in public religious feasts, singing hymns to subordinate gods as Helios and Athena is recommended as a way to perfect the worship of the great god, who himself is in need of nothing and is free of envy (8.21.6-9; 8.66.9-13).

In the fragments quoted in 8.28-35 and 8.53-60 Celsus discusses the functioning of daemons and the influence they have in the life of individual people: they function as ‘officers in charge of the prison’ (the body or the world men are bound to, either for punishment or for purification) and are related to marriage, childbirth, the food we eat, the wine and water we drink, the air we breathe and so on.¹⁹⁵

So in addition to what has been said in the previous section about Celsus' idea of divine providence, we can point at the key role given to daemons: these function as intermediary beings between the great god and the world. According to Celsus the world is administrated by numerous powerful rulers, who are functioning in a hierarchical system and deserve public worship.¹⁹⁶

4. Celsus' position in the philosophical landscape

4.1 Introduction

Now it is time to combine the results of section 2 (the picture of the philosophical landscape in the Greco-Roman world in the second century AD) and 3 (Celsus' theology). The aim of the present section

¹⁹¹ Cf. Celsus in 8.33 and 8.35 (comparison with the Persian king with his satraps and the Roman emperor with his subordinate officers). Celsus thinks it is blasphemous to say that some power ("Satan") would exist which is opposed to the greatest god (6.42.6-8).

¹⁹² For the use of the Jewish-Christian term 'angel' see Chadwick (1953:451, n.2).

¹⁹³ Here Celsus does not only refer to superhuman beings but also to human rulers and emperors: according to Celsus they hold their position not without the might of the daemons (8.63; 8.67–68). Celsus' presentation of his doctrine of rulers ends in an exhortation to help the Roman emperor and to fight for him (8.73).

¹⁹⁴ The reproach of *στώσις* is expressed by Celsus also in 3.5.3ff.; 3.8.36ff.; 3.14.4; 8.14.4; 8.11.3; 8.15.15; 8.49.8; see Andresen (1955: 221–224); Arnold (2016:267–270,311,420–421).

¹⁹⁵ In the fragment quoted in 5.25 Celso explains the existence of cultural differences between nations on two levels. On the human level: different traditional customs (*vóμοι*) exist because different people invented different customs and preserved them; and on what may be called the level of the *daemones* ('overseers'): 'it is probable that from the beginning the different parts of the earth were allotted to different overseers and are governed in this way by having been divided between certain authorities'. Cultural differences are endorsed by Celso: 'the practices done by each nation are right when they are done in a way that pleases the overseers'. (5.25.7-14).

¹⁹⁶ On Celsus' demonology see also Frede, M. (1994:5208-5210).

is to define what could be regarded as Celsus' position on the map: what was his homeland? I remind of the preliminary remark made above in 2.1: the landscape metaphor should not lead to ideas of exclusiveness, as if the attribution of a thinker to a certain region implies that he agrees in all issues with all his fellow citizens and never adopts ideas from abroad. In the next pages I will try to take a nuanced approach and examine questions like: why did Celsus feel at home there and why not in other regions? Did he follow his fellow residents in all respects? And did he borrow thoughts and perspectives from neighbouring regions?¹⁹⁷ To answer these questions not all aspects of the landscape will be paid attention to. As in the previous sections ethics, logic and epistemology will be left out of the discussion and I will continue to concentrate on landscape features related to theology. In the next paragraphs we will travel through the different regions and ask whether or not it could be Celsus' residence. During the journey frequently fragments of Celsus and other authors quoted in the previous sections will be referred to.

4.2 *Scepticism and Stoicism*

For two regions the answer is rather easy: Celsus' thoughts do not fit with the most of the current ideas in the communities of Sceptics and Stoics.

As for Scepticism: a comparison is complicated by the fact that there is little overlap, for this school was not much engaged in theological issues. And there is no sign that Celsus was attracted to the habit of suspension of judgement which was promoted in this school: Celsus demonstrates quite clearly that he is absolutely convinced of his own views. In his texts we do not see any reservation in criticism of the thoughts of his opponents and no effort to conceal his firm condemnation of them.

Also in the Stoic region the situation is a bit more complicated, but generally Celsus would not feel at home there: he would have despised the Stoic materialism and the pantheistic conception of god. The idea that god is material, is always connected to matter and pervades all things,¹⁹⁸ is incompatible with his own belief in a transcendent god who has no direct relationship with the material world (Celsus in 7.45; 4.52, texts (18) and (23) above). A description of god as fire is completely alien to him. The aspect of divine providence in Stoic theology he would have recognized to some degree (Celsus in 7.68, text (28) above), but he would disagree when the Stoics say that this care is concerned to all individual things (Celsus in 4.99, text (25) above). He would certainly resist their conviction that human (rational) beings have a special position in this divine care (Celsus in 4.74, text (24) above).¹⁹⁹

Yet some of his opinions he seems to share with the Stoics, e.g. the thought of a determined world order, which would be destroyed when 'god' would leave his throne and even when any quite insignificant thing would change on earth (Celsus in 4.5.2-4 and 28-29). Moreover the use of the preposition ἐξ in the expression ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὰ πάντα ('all things are derived from him', 6.65.1-2) suggests the image of god as a source (as opposed to the Platonic image of a craftsman). If this rather solitary phrase has to be interpreted so strictly (but above I suggested an alternative reading, see 3.5), agreement with a Stoic representation could be noticed. Other points that Celsus and the Stoics share are: the idea of the maintenance of the *whole* (4.69.2-3) and the doctrine of the world cycles (4.65.5-7; 8.53.6). I characterize these issues as points of agreement: whether or not Stoic *influence* is reflected here, is difficult to determine, I think.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ See also Frede, M. (1994:5192); Villani (2018:109 n.1).

¹⁹⁸ In the fragment quoted in 6.71 Celsus is explicitly critical of the Stoic idea that god is a spirit that has permeated all things and contains all things within itself.

¹⁹⁹ In *Contra Celsum* this issue is at stake in the texts quoted in the last part of book 4 (4.74-4.99). Chadwick (1947:36-37) points out that Origen in his response used traditional Stoic arguments to refute Celsus' Academic statements. See also Chadwick (1953:X-XI).

²⁰⁰ Andresen is less cautious: in the issue I mentioned first (the destruction of the world order) he assumes Stoic influence 'without any doubt' (1955:92-93); see also the commentary in Fiedrowicz & Barthold *ad.loc.* (Vol.3, 2011:668, n.9). According

4.3 Epicureanism

When we investigate Celsus' possible relation to the school of Epicurus, we find the situation complicated by Origen's presentation of his opponent as an Epicurean.²⁰¹ In the first four books of *Contra Celsum* Origen repeatedly links Celsus to this school, often as a part of his argumentation. The background seems to be Origen's attempt to identify his opponent with someone who was already known as a philosopher.²⁰² In 1.8.24-26 he writes that he had heard there were two Epicureans called Celsus, the earlier one a contemporary of Nero, while the other ('our') Celsus lived in Hadrian's time and later. Later on he has doubts as to whether his Celsus is the same as the man who wrote several books against magic (1.68.20-22).²⁰³ In 4.36.54 Origen mentions a Celsus who had written two other books against the Christians and wonders whether the author of *Alethes Logos* would be the same Celsus, but he is not sure. In the meantime he seems to assume that his Celsus is an Epicurean, although this cannot clearly be deduced from *Alethes Logos* (only 'from other writings', 1.8.11-12). Origen mentions Celsus and Epicurus side by side (1.10.20; 1.20.24), presents Celsus as an Epicurean (ὡς ἀληθῶς) ἐπικούρειος, 2.60.3; 4.75.6; 4.86.16; ἐπικούρειος ὢν, 3.35.10; 3.49.26-27) and remarks that he shows an Epicurean standpoint (ἐπικουρίζων, 4.75.3). Most of these indications are related to the denial of providence, but this characterization is not limited to this issue.

Origen uses, as long as he sticks to his assumption that Celsus is an Epicurean, this presentation as part of his argumentation. I think there are two aspects in this approach. Firstly it is part of an *ethos*-argumentation: the indication 'Epicureanism' worked in theological debates as a disqualification of the opponent (it sounds like 'atheist'); it seems to me that Origen had no problem to take advantage of this connotation.²⁰⁴

Moreover Origen uses the Epicurean argument to point at the inconsistency of his opponent, or even less fair discussion methods. Here are some examples: in 1.8.9ff. he indicates that Celsus contradicts himself, apparently by speaking as a Platonist (about the soul being related to god) while being an Epicurean. Origen suggests that Celsus deliberately hides his Epicurean conviction: 'he knew that if he admitted he was an Epicurean, he would not be worthy of credit in his criticisms of those who in some way introduce a doctrine of providence and who set a God over the universe'. In 3.35.1-14 Origen responds to a remark Celsus made (3.34) and concludes that this remark implies that Celsus does not recognize the power and value of heroes, gods and religious places honoured by the Greeks; then Origen exhorts Celsus to frankly admit this opinion, confess that he is an Epicurean and does not hold the same

to Andresen the Platonist Celsus 'allows the Stoics to participate in the great phalanx which he organizes against Christianity, irrespective of the conflicts between the philosophical school in his age' (1955:77).

²⁰¹ There has been much scholarly discussion on this theme, see Chadwick (1953:XXV-XXVI), Borret (Vol.5, 1976: 129-133), Frede, M. (1994:5191-5192), Frede, M. (1997:222-227), Cook (2000:18-19) Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:13-15), Arruzza (2012:62-63), Arnold (2016:2).

²⁰² I follow M. Frede's plausible explanation (1997:226-227): When Origen received Celsus' treatise, he had no other information about its author than his name, and therefore he obviously tried to find out more about him. From his investigation on 'a certain philosopher Celsus' can be deduced that the text of Celsus' work was Origen's only source of information on the author.

²⁰³ Chadwick mentions an Epicurean Celsus to whom Lucian of Samosata dedicated his work *Alexander the False Prophet*, who was the author of a book against magicians (the book Origen refers to in 1.68, as it seems), but because Origen's Celsus shows no affinities at all with Epicureanism, Chadwick thinks that he is not identical with Lucian's Celsus (1953:XXIV-XXV). Hoffmann (1987:32) argues that Lucian and Origen possibly addressed the same Celsus, despite the preference for middle Platonism that is shown by Origen's Celsus. See Cook (2000:18-19, n.4) for references to more discussions on this issue.

²⁰⁴ M. Frede concludes that Origen is not using the term 'Epicurean' just as a way to discredit and to malign Celsus (1994:5191). I agree when he writes '... just as a way ...': I do not think Origen is deliberately cheating (by calling Celsus an Epicurean while knowing that he is not; I reject this suggestion in Bergjan's interpretation (2002:250-255, see further in a note below). The absence of this qualification in the second part of *Contra Celsum* is best explained by assuming that Origen understood that he had been wrong at this point: Celsus was not the Epicurean he had thought. In the meantime we must not be too naive in respect of the rhetorical aspects of this issue: I point at the fact that it is Origen himself who in the first books chooses to mention repeatedly this connection Celsus-Epicureanism, knowing the discrediting effect this qualification could have. He could have omitted this point entirely in his argumentation; it is *his* choice to use this element several times.

views as the Greeks. Origen accuses Celsus of evasiveness and lack of honesty, and at the same time separates his opponent from the Greeks, whose religious culture he claims to defend.²⁰⁵ In 4.4.8 the notion of providence is involved: in an *apostrophe* passage Origen suggests that Celsus only *pretends* to believe in providence: ‘you do not appear from your treatise to be an Epicurean at all’. Finally the element of inconsistency appears in 5.3.1-3: Celsus had asserted that ‘no god or child of god either has come down or would come down to the earth’ (quoted in 5.2.2-3; further on he suggests that his opponents speaking about descending beings mean ‘the daemons’, who indeed do come down according to Platonic doctrine). Origen starts with responding to the first sentence only. He points at the fact that in this statement Celsus differs from common Greek beliefs and that ‘he who throughout all his treatise has not admitted that he is an Epicurean is convicted of changing to Epicurus’ opinions’. This is the last time the Epicurean connection is used by Origen and I think at this point of his writing he has already understood that Celsus is not an Epicurean: yet here he takes the opportunity of accusing him of Epicureanism, whereas in the previous contexts the issue was more the *hiding* of his Epicureanism.

The moment Origen began to realize that Celsus was not what he had thought so far,²⁰⁶ seems to be indicated in 4.54: here he had just quoted a passage in which Celsus says: ‘The soul is god’s work, whereas the nature of the body is different.’ Origen understood that this is Platonic language and did not match with the materialism of Epicurus (nor with Stoicism, as Origen points out later). Then he presents three options: he repeats his suggestion that Celsus pretended not to hold his Epicurean opinion; next he raises the possibility that Celsus has undergone a conversion for the better²⁰⁷ and finally says that he might be only a namesake of the Epicurean. From now on Celsus is no longer directly indicated as Epicurean: Origen tends to consider his opponent as a Platonist.²⁰⁸

Anyway, whatever might be the explanation of this complicated issue, all scholars agree that Celsus indeed does not belong to the Epicurean region of the philosophical map. His division of the universe in a material and an immaterial part (7.45, text (18) above) is incompatible with the materialism of Epicurus. His belief in *daemones* as intermediate beings between the divine and the visible world does not correspond to anything in the Epicurean world view. The Epicureans denied any involvement of gods in this world, neither in the creation nor in any ruling of it. But in Celsus’ view it is god who has made whatever is immortal, and the mortal world is the work of immortal creatures (4.52, text (23) above); moreover he assumes that there is divine providence, which in his opinion concerns the universe

²⁰⁵ A similar argumentation is developed in 3.80.

²⁰⁶ Why had Origen initially considered Celsus to be an Epicurean? Here are some suggestions offered by Borret (1976:131-132): maybe Origen had been badly informed on this point by his friend Ambrose, who asked him to comment on Celsus’ book. Or maybe Origen was affected by the heaviness of the attacks of his opponent and ascribed them to the school which was most hostile to all religion; such an attribution would possibly minimize the destructive effect of the attack which could have been easier achieved if the attack was performed by a Platonist. These suggestions sound attractive, but are hard to prove. Bergjan (2002:249-260) argues that it was part of Origen’s deliberate argumentation strategy; she uses two rhetorical questions to suggest that it is improbable that Origen would make a mistake as to the school affiliation of a Platonist and that he, who could have read Celsus’ complete text, would not have recognized Celsus as Platonist (250). As she thinks, the identification of Celsus with an Epicurean is not just an unlucky failure of Origen, but part of his argumentation. She thinks Origen’s strategy has to do with the issue of *πρόνοια*: while recognizing divine providence, Celsus refuses to extend it to the human level (see 4.99). This opinion approaches the Aristotelian view that providence ‘stops at the moon’. The Platonist Atticus had responded that this position in practice amounts to the Epicurean one: providence does not affect *us* (see above section 2.6.6). Origen’s reaction of Celsus seems to be similar, as Bergjan argues: Celsus is for Origen an Epicurean because he ‘epicurizes’ (ἐπικουρίζων, 4.75.3), because he represents a doctrine which is equivalent to the Epicurean one. I think she has a point here, but in my view not all Origen’s Epicureanism related argumentation can be explained from this perspective nor does it explain convincingly why Origen in the second part stops with this kind of argumentation (even when the issue of providence is at stake, e.g. in 7.68). See also Bergjan (2001).

²⁰⁷ Origen seems to mean ‘to Platonism’.

²⁰⁸ In 4.63.1 Origen states that Celsus obviously accepts providence (see also 4.76.1-2); in 4.75.3,6 and 4.86.16 Origen chooses his words carefully, suggesting an Epicurean connection without stating that Celsus really is an Epicurean: see the less direct expressions as ἐπικουρίζων and ὡς (ἀληθῶς) ἐπικουρειος: the ideas are ‘epicurean’ and he talks ‘like an Epicurean’. For the link with Platonism see 4.83.38-39 καὶ γὰρ ἐν πολλοῖς πλατωνίζειν θέλει (‘for in many points he likes to follow Plato’) and the respectful indication of Plato in 7.42.1-2. The Platonist connection however is not entirely absent in the first books, as is pointed out by Bergjan (2002:251).

as a whole (4.99, text (25) above). Finally we cannot expect an Epicurean to encourage people to participate in public religious practices as is done by Celsus in his exhortation to worship the traditional gods and the *daemones* (7.68, text (28) above; 8.2; 8.21; 8.66).

4.4 Aristotelianism

How about Celsus' relation to the Peripatetic region? Celsus' belief in a transcendent intelligible world and a divine being that transcends all things (7.45, text (18) above) must be regarded as fundamentally different from the philosophy of Aristotle, who had brought the Platonic two world vision back to a one world conception. Typically Aristotelian terms as cause, actual and potential are not used in Celsus' work. Also the idea of the Unmoved Mover, the perfect mind that continuously thinks of nothing than itself, does not comply with the way Celsus speaks about god. In Aristotle's philosophy this divine Mover is part of the universe, whereas Celsus' god transcends all things on the contrary.

Yet at one point Celsus comes near to the Aristotelian position: in his view on divine providence. The traditional Peripatetic vision on providence is that it involves the upper heavenly spheres only, but not the earth, the sublunary area.²⁰⁹ Viewed from the human perspective the impact of this opinion is what is expressed by Origen in the following words: they 'deny that providence has any care for us and that there is any relationship between god and man' (3.75.22-24).²¹⁰ The Aristotelian version of providence amounts to the rather impersonal act of the causing of movement and the establishing of natural order and laws, without any rational consideration or care for individuals. Alexander of Aphrodisias developed the Peripatetic opinion by asserting that providence concerns the earth as well, but on a general level. This picture resembles, at least in the practical effect, Celsus' view on providence as described in 4.99, text (25) above), though in Celsus' text the element of moving is absent and the wording seems to be somewhat more personal: 'god takes care for the universe and providence never abandons it'; his care focuses on the whole and not on human individuals;²¹¹ god is not like a judge, who punishes bad actions and threatens men; 'he does not inflict correction on the world' (4.69, text (27) above). My conclusion is that Celsus' view on providence at least contains Peripatetic elements.²¹²

4.5 Platonism

Finally we reach the area which Celsus would most likely have recognized as his homeland: the region of the Platonists, a region in which, as stated above, a basis of common convictions did not impede discussions on a lot of issues. As for Celsus: Plato is praised by him as 'a more effective teacher of the problems of theology' (7.42) and particularly in the fragments quoted in book 6 Celsus repeatedly refers to Plato's works, which he apparently regards as authoritative texts. After I referred in the previous pages already several times to Platonic thoughts and language in Celsus' texts, I will now compare elements of the theology of Celsus and Platonism in a more systematic way, on the basis of the themes I dealt with above: existence, knowledge, qualities, relation to the world, providence and daemons.

Both Celsus and Platonists assume the existence of a superior divine being, indicated as *ὁ θεός*, as obvious. He is called *ὁ πρῶτος θεός* both by Celsus and Alcinous, although it must be said that Celsus seems to use the term more to support his argumentation than to express philosophical statements. Celsus does not elaborate the opposition to secondary principles or lower gods that is implied in this title²¹³ in

²⁰⁹ The third position in the list of Epictetus presented above in note 105.

²¹⁰ In 1.21.10-11 Origen had recognized that Aristotle's view is less impious than the Epicurean one: *ὁ ἑλαττον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν πρόνοιαν ἀσεβῶν Ἀριστοτέλης* ('Aristotle, who is less irreverent about providence than he is').

²¹¹ Cf. Celsus anti-anthropocentrism in the fragments quoted in 4.74-99.

²¹² Cf. Bergjan (2002:261) who classifies the Peripatetic Alexander and the Platonist in the same fourth group in Epictetus' list: the position that providence exists and effects not only the heavenly area, but the earth as well, albeit only in a general sense and not on the level of individuals.

²¹³ The only passages referred to in 3.2 above are 7.68 and 8.66, where Celsus contrasts his first god with a lower god and with traditional gods as Helios and Athena.

the way we find it in Alcinous' work.²¹⁴ Celsus certainly not explicitly speaks about a second god, as is done by Numenius. It is difficult to account for this 'silence': did he deliberately not mention this standpoint of his fellow citizen of the Platonic region? Did he neglect it as irrelevant for his own purpose? Or did he perhaps not know the work of his perhaps older contemporary?²¹⁵ Moreover, Celsus does not speak about his god as related to form and matter nor does he develop any connections between the existence of 'god' and philosophical notions as being, unity, timelessness and causality, elements that are present in the theological chapters of Alcinous, Plutarch and Apuleius (see text (1) and (2) above). The different approach can be explained by the different purposes the works of these authors have.

As for the possibility to get some knowledge of god, it can be observed that Celsus' texts on this issue, quoted in 7.36 and 7.42 (see text (15), (16) and (17) above), contain much Platonic thinking and wording.²¹⁶ For instance: only who turns away from the material body and from sense perception and who uses the eye of the mind will be able to achieve the intelligible world and to know god.²¹⁷ Celsus' enumeration of three intellectual ways to attain 'some conception of the nameless and first god' (viz. σύνθεσις, ἀνάλυσις and ἀναλογία, see text (3) above) corresponds with a similar passage in Alcinous' *Didaskalikos*, in which among other intellectual methods also analogy is mentioned (see text (4) above). Alcinous also underlines that god can only be grasped by the intellect (see above 2.6.3). Moreover Alcinous and Apuleius assert that god is ineffable and nameless; to illustrate and substantiate this point they hint at the same words from Plato's *Timaeus* (28c) as Celsus does.

In the next passage of Celsus, quoted in 7.45 (see text (18) above), genuine Platonic dualism can be recognized: the hymn-like passage starts with the opposition of the visible world (of becoming, error, opinion, sight) to the intelligible world (of being, truth, knowledge, insight), corresponding with the opposition presented in Plato's *Timaeus* 28a. Then an elaboration of Plato's Sun Simile (*Respublica* 508b ff.) follows, in which Celsus characterizes his god as the all transcending cause of understanding and of the existence of all intelligible things, of truth and of being itself, just like the comparable position the sun has in the visible world. A more compact version of this simile is found in Alcinous' work (*Didaskalikos* 10.5. text (4) above). Here we are at the heart of Platonic philosophy: the distinction between the material world, perceptible by the senses, and the eternal, divine world, accessible by the intellect, the latter being the cause of the former.²¹⁸ Interestingly, in this key passage Celsus does not refer explicitly to Plato, but to the True Doctrine, that is proclaimed by 'ancient men'. Celsus considers himself to be not only a follower of Plato (which he however never asserts explicitly), but far more he wants to position himself in a long, international tradition of wisdom. In the meantime even this reference to the old tradition itself can be interpreted as part of a Platonist approach of history, that is

²¹⁴ See *Didaskalikos* 10.2-3 in a discursive and philosophical chapter on the existence and qualities of god; in 15.1-2 and 23.1 in a context about creation: ὁ πρῶτος θεός refers to the Demiurge, the creator of the soul, in opposition to the lower ('created') gods who created the body). Dillon (1993:126-128) suggests that Alcinous' sketch of a primal god reflects the ideas of Eudorus of Alexandria (first century BC), who postulated a supreme principle ('the One', ὁ ὑπεράνω θεός) above a pair of opposites called Monad and Dyad.

²¹⁵ There is of course a fourth possibility: Celsus did speak about it, but Origen did not quote these words. This possibility seems to be not very probable, for it is not likely that Origen would miss such an opportunity to weaken the position of his opponent. Numenius' position is closer to the Christian theology, and Origen more than once expresses his appreciation for him. If Celsus would have mentioned the position of Numenius with rejection, this would offer Origen a chance to isolate Celsus from a fellow-philosopher; if Celsus would have agreed with the position of Numenius, Origen would have explained that this would undermine much of Celsus' criticism of the Christian belief in Christ as (a second) God.

²¹⁶ Cf. the discussion of these passages in Dörrie (1967; p.239 in the 1976 edition). He characterizes Celsus' words in 7.36 as 'Propädeutik, die in platonischen Schulen sehr gründlich geübt wurde'. See also notes ad 7.42 in Chadwick (1953:429-430, n.4) and Borret (Vol.4, 1969:112-113, n.1).

²¹⁷ Cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 99de; *Symposium* 219a; *Respublica* 517bc; 519b; 533d.

²¹⁸ According to Dörrie (1967; p.253-254 in the 1976 edition) Celsus makes a step in an ongoing development that had not yet been made by other Platonists before or around him: departing from the Platonic phrase ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας (*Respublica* 509b) there was a tendency towards taking the highest principle away from the domain of 'being'. In 7.45 Celsus seems to attribute to his god a level of being that is superior to the level of other beings. To this level corresponds that he is knowable only ἀρρήτῳ τινὶ δυνάμει. Here Celsus, as Dörrie says, is on the threshold of Neoplatonism.

found in Plutarch and Numenius as well.²¹⁹

As far as divine qualifications are concerned Celsus seems to opt for negative adjectives: god has no connection to emotions, form, body, colour or movement; he cannot change, does not need anything, cannot do bad things nor can he act against nature and reason.²²⁰ The way he argues in 4.14-18 against the possibility of change and protests against deceptive appearances of a god is based on Plato's similar argumentation on these issues in *Respublica* 2.²²¹ Moreover, Celsus stands up to anthropomorphic images of god. This negative theology concerning a god who is confessed to be ineffable, corresponds to the approach of other Platonists. Also Apuleius and Alcinous use negative adjectives to denote the divine, but they seem to be less hesitant to proclaim positive characterizations as well (good, beautiful, perfect, eternal etc.). In my view the difference with Celsus is more gradual than fundamental here and is related to the aim of his book. He seems to be more interested in attacking misrepresentations of his opponents than to define his view of god in a systematic and positive way.

Having discussed the issues of existence, knowledge and qualities of god, now I pass to the next section, which deals with Celsus' thoughts about god's relation to the world: is there any overlap between these ideas and ideas of Platonists? Themes in this section will be: creation, evil and providence.

Celsus' statement on the creation of the world (4.52.11-12: 'whatever works are immortal are works of god, and mortal works are made by them', see text (23) above) is consistent with the account of Plato's *Timaieus*.²²² Here again the mortal world is sharply distinguished from the eternal, divine world: god is only linked to the latter world, to which the soul belongs; the created beings (Celsus does not explicitly call them 'lower gods') in turn created the mortal world. In this representation the gap between god and the corruptible world is maintained. Although Platonic thoughts are easily recognizable here, it is remarkable that Celsus hardly participates in contemporary debates among Platonists about issues that are related to the creation of the world.²²³ For instance the much-debated question whether or not the world is generated (and having an end, see 2.6.5 above).²²⁴ Origen concludes from a fragment of Celsus that he suggests that he thinks that the world is ἀγένητος (1.19.9), but it is not clear if Celsus gave statements on this issue.²²⁵ More indications that Celsus saw the world as eternal (without beginning and without end) can be deduced from the fragments quoted in 4.60-65. In 4.65 (text (26) above) e.g. Celsus speaks about the determined cycles of mortal life, in which 'the same things have happened, are happening now and will happen': this seems to mean that in Celsus' view the world is unperishable and that its basic structure is maintained even in the periodically returning catastrophes like floods and conflagrations. The impression is given that on this theme Celsus combines Platonic thoughts with Stoic elements (i.e. the determination idea: in the successive world periods the same things will happen). Remarkably Celsus' ideas about creation and world history are confined to incidental statements. Was

²¹⁹ Cf. Boys-Stones (2001:105ff.).

²²⁰ Andresen (1955:299) connects Celsus' statements about god as good, beautiful, happy and without change (fragment quoted in 4.14) to Plato's idea of god, referring to *Phaedrus* 246de; *Respublica* 381bc; *Politicus* 269d and *Phaedo* 78c. See also Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* 10.3; 12.1; Apuleius, *De Platone* 1.5.

²²¹ See *Respublica* 381bc; 382ab; Cf. Van Riel (2013:40-42).

²²² See *Timaieus* 69c. Origen explicitly indicates Celsus' words as a paraphrase of the *Timaieus* (4.54.1-2).

²²³ As it seems he does not explicitly comment on the issue of the relation between the creator-god and the highest god (the active god versus the perfect being intellect just thinking himself). Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:68-69) thinks that Celsus for tactical reasons does not focus too much on discussions about creation. Arruzza (2012:65-68) argues that there are good reasons for thinking that Celsus identifies the demiurge with the supreme god (and with the Form of the Good of Plato's *Respublica*).

²²⁴ See Chadwick's note *ad* 4.61 (1953:234, n.1).

²²⁵ Cf. the fragment quoted in 6.52 Celsus avoids commenting: 'I say nothing now about the beginning and the destruction of the world, whether it is uncreated and indestructible, or created and indestructible, or vice versa.' In 4.79.14-16 Origen quotes the passage 'the world is uncreated and indestructible, and only things on earth are subject to floods and conflagrations, and not all of them meet with these catastrophes at the same time', a quote that is introduced by Origen saying 'I think he has forgotten what he said earlier'. The problem is that Origen did not quote these words before. Scholars refer to the fragments quoted in 1.19 and 4.11 as possible original contexts of this missing quote, but the connection is not very easy (both passages speak about floods and conflagrations, but not about 'uncreated and indestructible'). It is questionable whether Origen's quote is complete here. See Chadwick *ad loc.* (1953:247, n.1), Andresen (1955:19-21), Arnold (2016:54, n.114).

he not interested in school discussions on cosmology or was the creation issue not important for him (as Andresen argues)?²²⁶ Possibly, but I would like to give an alternative explanation as well, approaching the question from the perspective of communication and rhetoric: in Celsus' opinion detailed statements about his own position may not be necessary to achieve his purpose, namely attacking Christian opinions. In the diverse contexts in which fragmentary evidence about his standpoint on creation is given, in fact discussions on other subjects were going on. Celsus' remarks on this issue were made in the margin of these discussions and did not intend to present his exact position in the debate on creation (whether or not he had one, is unclear for us).

Next I continue my section with some words on the issue of evil, again not an issue that is widely discussed by Celsus. His words on the cause of evil ('not caused by god, but inherent in matter', 4.65, text (26) above) have Platonic sources.²²⁷ This starting point is developed in the remark quoted in 4.69 (text (27) above): god is unlike a human artisan who creates defective products; therefore he does not need correction or punishment. In this passage a polemic undertone is obvious: Celsus rejects the ideas of his Jewish and Christian opponents, who, as he says, connect a divine descent to the earth with punishment and the need for correction (see also Celsus in 4.20, the passage that will be discussed in chapter VII 9).

As for divine providence I point at three elements in Celsus' quotes: all providence is derived from god; god's providence is involved in the maintenance of the whole universe; the world is full of agents of god's providential administration, like gods, *daemones* and heroes, who deserve to be worshipped by men (4.99 and 7.68, texts (25) and (28) above; cf. 8.2; 8.33). Here also the argumentative value of the statement is obvious: for Celsus this leads to critique of the Christian resistance to polytheism and their refusal to participate in the traditional religious practices (see the fragments quoted in 8.2-8.66). Celsus' picture corresponds to the doctrine on providence that is presented by Apuleius (*De Platone* 1.12, text (13) above), albeit that Celsus does not refer to the world soul and offers a less precisely elaborated picture than Apuleius sketches. In Alcinous' *Didaskalikos* the administration of the earth is attributed to *daemones*, the 'created gods' (15.1) in a similar way. Celsus illustrates his opinion on providence with the comparison between the first god, who rules through the lower gods and the *daemones*, on the one hand and a mighty monarch (the king of Persia or the emperor of Rome) with his generals, prefects, satraps and other servants on the other hand. This comparison runs parallel to the similar metaphor used by Maximus of Tyre (*Dissertationes* 11.12, see text (14) above).²²⁸ As is argued above, in these representations of providence Platonic elements (the *daemones* as intermediary agents) get a strong Peripatetic flavour in Maximus' sketch of the motionless sitting king, who acts like an impersonal law.²²⁹ The notion of 'law' functions also in text (13) of Apuleius, albeit that Maximus compares the king himself to the law, whereas Apuleius presents the law as an instrument given by the highest god to the lower gods. Celsus' view on providence seems to agree with this Peripateticizing Platonism: his first god is said to be the source of all providence, who gave a law to his agents (see Celsus' text (28), comparable to Apuleius words in text (13)). Here Celsus comes close to the view of Alexander of Aphrodisias, who, as is described in 2.5, developed Aristotle's thoughts on providence. According to

²²⁶ Andresen (1955:81-83) asserts that in Celsus' cosmological ideas Stoic and Platonic elements are combined. Celsus' not very precise formula 'work of god' (4.52; 4.99) is interpreted as an indication of the notion of a creator-god without implying a creative act-in-time, in which Stoic influence is felt. Apparently Celsus is not quite interested in school controversies about cosmology. This lack of interest, according to Andresen, 'resultiert letztlich aus einem Weltverständnis, für das – im Gegensatz zum Christentum – das Schöpfungsfaktum selbst angesichts der Beobachtung der ewig kreisenden Gesetze des Kosmos bedeutungslos geworden ist.' (83). See also Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:68-69).

²²⁷ See *Respublica* 379c; *Theaetetus* 176a. For a review of passages of later Platonists and comment on the issue of 'matter and evil' I refer to Boys-Stones (2018:103ff.).

²²⁸ More texts of Platonists about gods, *daemones* and providence are provided, with commentary, by Boys-Stones (2018:288ff and 323ff.).

²²⁹ Cf. the identification of the law and the statesman in Plato, *Politicus* 297a: just like a captain of a ship saves his fellow voyagers not by writing rules, but by his own science, so good politicians rule the state 'making science more powerful than the laws'.

Alexander providence did not ‘stop at the moon’, but also concerns the earth, albeit at a general level, as caring without thinking and as benefaction without the intention to help individuals.

4.6 Conclusion

The conclusion of this section can be that on the map of philosophy the region of the Platonists seems to be the most eligible area to function as Celsus’ homeland, although there is reason for some reservations on this point, as will be explained. But a number of points are beyond doubt: Celsus refers to Plato as a philosopher who spoke with great authority. The fundamental division between the material, mortal world and the superior, intelligible world is undeniably present in his theological passages. This basic Platonic conviction is combined with statements in which god is kept away from the material world: it is not his work. Sense-perception, which is connected by the world of becoming, does never lead to knowledge of god, for he is graspable only by intellect. The intellectual methods of synthesis, analysis and analogy Celsus refers to can be identified as commonly accepted in the Platonic region. This applies also to the expressions of negative theology. Celsus’ remarks on the relation of god to the world resemble the opinions of other Platonists: god is not the cause of evil and he does care for the world, but only indirectly. He rules through his agents, the lower gods and *daemones*.

This allocation of Celsus to the Platonic region however does not entail that he is in all respects a typical local. He does not (or hardly) participate in some of the debates his fellow citizens are involved in, e.g. the debate about the relation between god, form and matter, about the several creation issues, about the distinction between a first and a second god. Moreover, he sometimes does not refrain from borrowing particularities from abroad: with the Stoics he shares for instance thoughts about the determined order of all things and the world cycles; and in his view on providence Peripatetic elements are combined with Platonic ones. In Celsus’ picture of a first god who rules without emotion, movement or change, who does not care of mankind and is not interested in correction or punishment of individuals, also Peripatetic thought is recognizable. In the adoption of elements from other schools however, Celsus is not unique in the Platonic region: other Platonists like Alcinous freely integrated Stoic and Peripatetic elements in their philosophy.

In the meantime: when asked what tradition he felt most connected to, I think Celsus’ answer would not be ‘the Platonic one’, but rather something like: ‘Living in the Platonic region I feel deeply committed to the tradition of the True Doctrine which has been transmitted for centuries in ancient nations by wise men and which in Greece found its expression in the Platonic philosophy.’ An answer in fact that would have been recognized by other Platonists.

5. Origen’s theology

5.1 Introduction

Having discussed in the previous sections Celsus’ theological views and their impact on his words about the divine descent theme I will now focus on his opponent Origen. In the next section an outline will be given of Origen’s theological views as they appear in different parts of *Contra Celsum*. It is not my intention to give a comprehensive overview of Origen’s theology in all its aspects here, for then of course also his other writings should be taken into consideration, e.g. Origen’s early work *De principiis*, his commentaries on several books of the Bible and his homilies.²³⁰ Moreover attention must be given then to the textual and situational context in which theological views function in these writings and to

²³⁰ See e.g. Lyman (1993:47ff.); especially on the character of Origen’ theology and his views on trinity and incarnation Crouzel (1985:203-265).

possible developments of Origen's opinions on theological issues. Such an approach would transcend the limits of my present research, in which I focus on the discourse of Celsus and Origen and the key role theological views play in the debate on a divine descent to the earth. Therefore I confine myself in this section to Origen's views as they are presented in his *Contra Celsum*, the eight books that form the direct context of the discussion of my corpus. In my opinion, from this work, voluminous as it is, sufficient elements can be gathered to get an adequate understanding of Origen's views on God and his relation to the world and to determine how these views are relevant for the interpretation of his contributions in the debate on divine descent in my corpus.

In collecting elements of theology from the different pages of *Contra Celsum* we should maintain an awareness of the character of the work. As I said in the introduction of this chapter, *Contra Celsum* is not conceived as a dogmatic handbook in which the different elements of the theology are exposed transparently and well organized. The absence of such a clarity is caused by Origen's choice, from 1.28 onwards, to respond to Celsus' remarks roughly in the order his opponent made them. In these responses Origen's views on God, his qualities, his knowability and providence are connected to different topics that were raised by Celsus. The context and the perspective of the discourses on the different pages are crucial for the interpretation and evaluation of these responses. Therefore in my more thematically organized overview the context in which Origen presents his opinions repeatedly will be given attention. Occasionally references will be made to ideas of Celsus or to 'Greek' (pagan) opinions or practices Origen opposes.

In my following overview I will discuss the same issues as I previously did in the account of the theology of Celsus and Platonic philosophers: the existence of God, the possibility to get knowledge of him, his qualities and his relation to the world. The latter topic will comprise discussions on creation, correction, providence, evil, angels and demons. Quotes from Origen's text, provided with relevant commentary, will be used to illustrate the most remarkable and typical elements of his views on these topics.

5.2 Existence and Christology

For Origen as a Christian the existence of God is rather a starting point than a point of discussion. Writing to an audience of Christians the existence of God is not a real issue that has to be (or even can be) proved by intellectual reasoning. For Origen God's existence is not topic in a philosophical debate, but often brought up by him in a context of worship and prayer. In these contexts Origen commonly mentions not only God, more specifically indicated as 'the Father', but also 'his Logos' (I come back to this element below). In such passages Origen often opposes the ideas about the Greek gods and the position they had in mythology and Greek religious practices. Another typical feature of Origen's discourses is the use of biblical quotes as a base and illustration of his argument (actually this applies to his discussions on all the subjects treated in *Contra Celsum*).

To illustrate his approach I refer to the next passage, in which Origen responds to Celsus' remarks, quoted in 5.6, which include the reproach, addressed to the Jews, that they refuse to worship the sun, the moon and the other stars. For Origen these remarks give rise to a long series of reactions. Among other points he inserts three quotes from the Bible: 'God is light' (1 John 1.5), the indication of the Son of God as 'true light, which lightens every man coming into the world' (John 1.9) and the words in which this Son qualifies himself as 'I am the light of the world' (John 8.12). These quotes are concluded by the statement that who understands these things, 'would not reasonably worship the light of the sun, moon and stars which is like a dim spark compared with God who is light of the true light.' (5.11.14-16). Then he continues as follows:

(29) Καὶ οὐκ ἀτιμάζοντες γε τὰ τηλικαῦτα τοῦ θεοῦ δημιουργήματα οὐδ' ἀναξαγορείως	We do not say these things about the sun, moon and stars with the intention of disparaging the vast creations of God, nor because we say with

«μύδρον διάπυρον» λέγοντες εἶναι τὸν ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ ἀστέρας τοιαῦτά φαμεν περὶ ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης καὶ ἀστέρων, ἀλλ' αἰσθανόμενοι τε τῆς ἀφάτῳ ὑπεροχῇ ὑπερεχούσης θεϊότητος τοῦ θεοῦ ἔτι δὲ καὶ τοῦ μονογενοῦς αὐτοῦ ὑπερέχοντος τὰ λοιπά. Πειθόμενοι δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ ἀστέρας εὐχεσθαι τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ διὰ τοῦ μονογενοῦς αὐτοῦ, κρίνομεν μὴ δεῖν εὐχεσθαι τοῖς εὐχομένοις. (5.11.17-25)

Anaxagoras that they are 'masses of hot metal', but because we perceive the superiority of the divinity of God which is beyond description and also that of his only-begotten Son who is far above all things. Because we are convinced that the sun itself and the moon and stars pray to the supreme God through his only-begotten Son, we consider that we ought not pray to beings who pray themselves.

The superior position of God and his Son is highlighted here by Origen by a threefold use of the element of supremacy (ὑπεροχῇ, ὑπερεχούσης, ὑπερέχοντος).²³¹ This superior divinity (θεϊότης) is contrasted with the status of creature of sun, moon and stars (δημιουργήματα). Remarkable is that Origen considers celestial bodies as living creatures who pray themselves.²³² Even these creatures refer us to God, as Origen subsequently argues using the figure of *prosopopoiia*: he introduces the sun as a speaking character, quoting from the Gospel (Matt.4.10) and saying: 'Why do you worship me? For "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve". I and all my associates worship and serve him' (5.11.36-38). In the whole passage Origen underlines that God as creator is far beyond even the greatest of his creatures, a position that in this context is connected with the notions of recognition, prayer and worship.²³³ In passing Origen rejects an idea of Anaxagoras about celestial bodies, but he does not use the topic here as a starting point for more philosophical reflections on the existence and position of God.

In (29) we also encounter the qualification Origen uses rather frequently to indicate God as having a supreme position: ὁ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεός ('God who (reigns/ judges) over all').²³⁴ Other qualifying expressions that are used by Origen, indicate God as the creator and governor of the universe: ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός ('the creator of all') and ὁ τῶν ὅλων θεός ('the God of all').²³⁵ The use of the phrases ὁ μέγας θεός ('the great God') and ὁ μέγιστος θεός ('the greatest God') in Origen's text seems to be limited to passages in which he copies these expressions from Celsus' quote he responds to there.²³⁶

The theme of the difference between the creator and the creatures is used by Origen in a different context to criticize Greek religious practices in which also philosophers participate. In the first part of book 6 Origen quotes several passages in which Celsus refers to expressions made by philosophers with agreement and admiration, especially to words of Plato. In his reaction Origen often combines points of criticism with recognition of the good things in these words. In 6.3 he clearly agrees with a Platonic

²³¹ Cf. similar words to indicate God in 3.77.12: τῷ ἀπείρῳ ὑπεροχῇ ὑπερέχοντι πάσης γεννητῆς φύσεως ('he who with infinite supremacy surpasses all created things').

²³² Cf. the explanation in Fiedrowicz & Barthold *ad loc.* (Vol. 4, 2012:890, n.16): following Stoic-Platonic ideas Origen regarded stars as rational beings because of their regular and harmonic movements; they acknowledge God and pray continuously to him. See also 4.77 and 8.66-67, where in a similar context the sun is called 'a noble creature of God, which keeps God's laws and hears the saying 'Praise the Lord, sun and moon' (Ps.148.3) and with all its power praises the Father and Creator of the universe' (8.66.17-20). After that Origen mentions a 'divine choir' of sun, moon and stars that 'sing the praise of the supreme God and his only-begotten Son' (8.67.16-17).

²³³ See also 5.6.24; 5.46.4; 7.64.17-28; 8.26.17ff.

²³⁴ See e.g. in text (29) above; the combination is used 103x in *Contra Celsum*. Chadwick usually renders the phrase as 'the supreme God'. In the Fiedrowicz & Barthold edition it is more precisely translated as 'der über alles waltenden Gott'.

²³⁵ With some variants in 1.20.13; 1.25.23; 1.25.39; 1.30.15; 1.56.34; 2.9.24; 2.51.54; 3.3.7; 3.5.13; 3.15.11 etc.

²³⁶ E.g. in 5.42.3 and 5.51.4 responding to 5.41.26 (Celsus); 7.15.12 and 7.17.3 responding to 7.14.3 (Celsus); 7.70.29 responding to 7.68.10 (Celsus); 8.67.11 responding to 8.66.12 (Celsus).

expression,²³⁷ which he considers as something God had revealed to Plato²³⁸ (6.3.8; 6.4.6). However, having said this,²³⁹ Origen immediately switches to severe criticism of the fact that philosophers joined ‘uneducated people’ in their religious festivals, sacrifices and prayers to the gods. By quoting a long passage from Paul’s letter to the Romans (1.18-23) Origen puts these things in the perspective of Paul’s criticism of ‘ungodliness and unrighteousness’ of men who knew God’s everlasting power and divinity, but did not glorify him as God. Origen continues by applying to philosophers what he had just quoted from Paul (6.4): despite admirable passages in philosophical texts about the highest good, despite their profound philosophical debate and their ascension to the invisible things of God and the intelligible world, these philosophers were in error about God in their religious practices (viz. prayers to Artemis, a sacrifice to Asclepius). ‘They serve the creation rather than the creator’ (6.4.21-22, quoting Rom.1.25). For Origen such considerations form an almost standard component in his discourses in which ancient philosophers are discussed.²⁴⁰

For Origen speaking about God goes along with speaking about his Son, who was, as Origen explains, engaged in the creation of the cosmos, descended to the earth and was united with the body and the soul of the human Jesus. Origen’s views on the relation between Father and Son, between divinity and humanity in Christ and the soteriological implications of his descent to the earth are subjects of much debate amongst scholars. To pay due attention to all these discussions would exceed the limits of my present investigation. In the following section I confine myself to a sketch of some main lines of Origen’s Christology based on passages taken from *Contra Celsum*, keeping in mind what these issues could contribute to a better understanding of Origen’s discourse in my corpus (4.1-22).²⁴¹

I start with a quote from 8.12, where Origen discusses the relation between the Father and the Son. A prominent element in the context here is the notion of monotheism: in a passage quoted at the beginning of the chapter Celsus had indicated the worship Christians pay ‘to an extravagant degree’ to ‘this man who appeared recently’²⁴² as inconsistent with the idea of monotheism. In his response Origen points at unity and diversity within the divinity:

(30) Λεκτέον δὲ καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο ὅτι, εἴπερ νενοήκει ὁ Κέλσος τὸ «Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἓν ἐσμεν» καὶ τὸ ἐν εὐχῇ εἰρημένον ὑπὸ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ «Ὡς ἐγὼ καὶ σὺ ἓν ἐσμεν», οὐκ ἂν ᾤετο ἡμᾶς καὶ ἄλλον θεραπεύειν παρὰ τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεόν. «Ὁ γὰρ πατήρ», φησὶν, «ἐν ἐμοί, καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ». ²⁴³ Εἰ δέ τις ἐκ τούτων περισπασθήσεται, μὴ πη αὐτομολῶμεν πρὸς τοὺς ἀναιροῦντας δύο

I should say to this that if Celsus had considered the saying ‘I and my Father are one’, and the prayer uttered by the Son of God in the words, ‘As I and thou are one’, he would not have imagined that we worship another besides the supreme God. ‘For the Father’, he says, ‘is in me and I in the Father’, If, however, anyone is perturbed by these words lest we should be

²³⁷ Celsus refers to Plato’s seventh letter (341c): ‘... the highest good cannot at all be expressed in words, but comes to us by long familiarity and suddenly like a light in the soul by a leaping spark’.

²³⁸ In fact Origen uses the plural ‘to them’, by which the expression can be identified as the first part of a quote from Paul’s letter to the Romans (1.19), which is completed later in 6.3.

²³⁹ The positive approach is continued in 6.4.4-5, where Origen speaks about ‘such profound philosophy about the soul and the future course of the soul that has lived a good life’, referring to the conversation of Socrates and his companions as reported in Plato’s *Phaedo*.

²⁴⁰ For a similar reference to Rom.1.18 ff. to support criticism of philosophers I refer to in 3.47; 3.77; 4.30; 7.37; 7.46-47 (the latter passage is discussed below see 5.3, text (35). Other passages in which ancient philosophy is criticized are e.g. 1.21; 3.75, 3.81; 4.14; 6.71. See also Crouzel (1962:93-95), Reemts (1998:125-126).

²⁴¹ See Origen’s *Dialogus cum Heraclide* for discussions on the relation between Father and Son and the double nature of the Son. For more comprehensive discussions on Origen’s Christology, based on other writings of Origen as well (especially *De principiis*), I refer to Lyman (1993:69ff.), Edwards (2002:65ff.), Jacobsen (2015), Giulea (2016), who offer more references. Not confined to Origen on this subject is Stead (1994:148-216).

²⁴² For similar (disqualifying) references to the ‘recent appearance’ of Jesus (and of Christianity in general) given by Celsus see 1.26.19; 2.4.2-4; 6.10.36.

²⁴³ *John* 10.30; 14.10-11; 17.21-22.

εἶναι ὑποστάσεις, πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, ἐπιστησάτω τῷ «Ἦν δὲ πάντων τῶν πιστευσάντων ἡ καρδία καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ μία»,²⁴⁴ ἵνα θεωρήσῃ τὸ «Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἓν ἐσμεν». Ἦνα οὖν θεόν, ὡς ἀποδεδώκαμεν, τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν θεραπεύομεν, καὶ μένει ἡμῖν ὁ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους ἀτενὴς λόγος, καὶ οὐ τὸν ἑναγχὸς γε φανέντα ὡς πρότερον οὐκ ὄντα ὑπερθησκεύομεν. Αὐτῷ γὰρ πειθόμεθα τῷ εἰπόντι· «Πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμι» καὶ λέγοντι· «Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀλήθεια».²⁴⁵ καὶ οὐχ οὕτως τις ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ἀνδράποδος, ὡς οἶσθαι ὅτι ἡ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐσία πρὸ τῶν χρόνων τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιφανείας οὐκ ἦν. Θρησκεύομεν οὖν τὸν πατέρα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ὄντα δύο τῇ ὑποστάσει πράγματα, ἐν δὲ τῇ ὁμοιοῖα καὶ τῇ συμφωνίᾳ καὶ τῇ ταυτότητι τοῦ βουλήματος· ὡς τὸν ἑωρακότα τὸν υἱὸν ὄντα «ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης» καὶ χαρακτηῖρα «τῆς ὑποστάσεως» τοῦ θεοῦ ἑωρακέναι ἐν αὐτῷ ὄντι εἰκόνι τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν θεόν. (8.12.6-29)

going over to the view of those who deny that there are two existences, Father and Son, let him pay attention to the text ‘And all those who believed were of one heart and soul’, that he may see the meaning of ‘I and the Father are one’. Accordingly we worship but one God, the Father and the Son, and we still ‘have a valid argument against the others’. And we do not ‘worship to an extravagant degree a man who appeared recently’ as though he did not exist previously. For we believe him who says, ‘Before Abraham was I am’, and who affirms, ‘I am the truth’. None of us is so stupid as to suppose that before the date of Christ’s manifestation the truth did not exist. Therefore we worship the Father of the truth and the Son who is the truth; they are two distinct existences, but one in mental unity, in agreement, and in identity of will. Thus he who has seen the Son, who is an effulgence of the glory and express image of the Person of God, has seen God in him who is God’s image.

In this passage we encounter some of the issues and terms that were part of thorough debate on Trinitarian issues that was going on during the age of early Christianity. This is not the right place to comment on the development of Christian doctrines and formulas in creeds concerning this subject.²⁴⁶ In Origen’s time there were not yet any strictly determined formulas and as it seems Origen did not consider his reply to Celsus to be the appropriate place to elaborate a comprehensive view on the relationship between the Father and the Son (if he ever had such a view).

What strikes me in this passage is firstly that he collects a series of biblical quotes, especially from the Gospel of John, to base his statements upon: as in other doctrinal matters Origen tries to do justice to biblical data also here. And secondly: here Origen lays down the framework within which his thoughts about this relationship in his view should be developed: on the one hand the unity of Father and Son, as proclaimed by Christ himself in the quoted text, should be taken into account; on the other hand also their difference, their being two distinct ὑποστάσεις. Origen tries to deal with the tension between these two premises by characterizing the unity as a unity of mind, agreement and will, thus interpreting (with reference to a passage from Acts 4.32) the notion ‘one’ not as an indication of a physical, personal or essential union. He shows awareness of the risk of an interpretation which only acknowledges the element of unity: such a view might cause ‘disturbance’ (Εἰ δέ τις ἐκ τούτων περισπασθήσεται – ‘if anyone is perturbed by these words’). In this phrase the communicational aspect of the text shows up: Origen explicitly hints at possible reactions of his readers and tries to remove any emotional obstacle that might hinder a good reader’s response and appreciation of his opinion.

Thirdly I point at the elaboration of the idea of difference between Father and Son: in the end of (30) the position of the Son is indicated by the biblical metaphors of ἀπαύγασμα, χαρακτηρ and εἰκὼν (effulgence, impression and image), metaphors in which the primary position of the Father as the

²⁴⁴ Acts 4.32.

²⁴⁵ John 8.58; 14.6.

²⁴⁶ See e.g. Kelly (1960:83ff.; 223ff); Stead (1994:160-186).

‘source’ or the ‘original’ is presupposed.²⁴⁷ The, what might be called, secondary position of the Son is worded by Origen in an even more pronounced way in 8.15, the passage which follows (30). These words of Origen respond to Celsus’ suggestion that Christians call the Son of Man the lord of God. Origen denies this sharply: ‘It is obvious that we ... hold that the Son is not mightier than the Father, but subordinate (ὑποδεέστερον). And we say this because we believe him who said ‘The Father who sent me is greater than I’ (John 14.28): he is not the lord of the God and Father who is mightier than he.’ (8.15.23ff.). This what might be called ‘subordinationist’ position (‘the Son is subordinate to the Father’) – condemned in later times, but in a different context²⁴⁸ – is clearly evoked here by the context of Celsus’ criticism just mentioned, and is based explicitly by Origen on words of Jesus.²⁴⁹

In this context I point at the qualification ‘second God’ (δεύτερος θεός) that is used by Origen in 5.39.21 to denote the Son of God.²⁵⁰ In this chapter however the discussion is not so much about the relation Father-Son as about virtues (wisdom, righteousness). Origen quotes a statement of Paul about the Son of God (‘who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption’, 1 Cor.1.30) and then continues: ‘Even if we may call him a second God’ (Κἂν δεύτερον οὖν λέγωμεν θεόν), it should not be understood by this that we do not mean anything except the virtue which includes all virtues, and the Logos which includes every logos ...’.²⁵¹ The cautious wording ‘even if ...’ (Κἂν ...) leaves some room for doubts as to whether Origen himself wholeheartedly accepts this qualification. Possibly with ‘we’ he indicates ‘we Christians’, meaning that this term indeed is used by other Christians,²⁵² without claiming it as his own.²⁵³ But even if this interpretation is not correct, the continuation of the sentence makes clear that not a subordination to the Father is in Origen’s mind here. Moreover, Origen’s reservation to use the expression ‘second God’ can also be explained by his intention to avoid the suggestion that his theology is not monotheistic, but polytheistic, in line with the response that is given in text (30) to Celsus’ critical remark on this point.²⁵⁴

Origen’s view on the relation between the Father and the Son is given a consequence in Christian religious practice. In 3.34 Origen clarifies this view by means of an explanation of the act of praying. We offer these prayers, he says deliberately choosing his words, *to God through the Son*.²⁵⁵ This is in line with the position of the Son, as Origen explains: ‘(we pray) through him who is, as it were, midway between uncreated nature and that of all created things (διὰ τοῦ ὡς μεταξὺ ὄντος τῆς τοῦ ἀγεννήτου καὶ

²⁴⁷ See *Wisd.*7.26; 2 *Cor.*4.4; *Col.*1.15; *Hebr.*1.3 (also referred to in 3.72.8; 5.10.47,58; 5.30.5; 6.64.24; 6.69.8; 7.17.5; 7.27.13; 7.43.16,34; 8.14.7,10; 8.17.21).

²⁴⁸ Cf. Crouzel (1985:226ff.,245-246).

²⁴⁹ In passing I refer in this context to an interesting textual issue relating to *De principiis* 1.3.5, where Origen differentiates the operation area of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. The Greek text of this part of the work has not been entirely preserved. Justinian (*Epistula ad Menam*) transmitted a fragment of the text in which the area of the Son is limited to ‘only the rational beings’ and is therefore less extensive than the area of the Father (ἐλαττόνως παρὰ τὸν πατέρα), who embraces all beings; the Spirit – in an even inferior way (ἔτι ἡττόνως) – is concerned with the holy people only. This version agrees with the Latin translation of Jerome, who also uses words that indicate a ranking: the Son is ‘lower than the Father’ and ‘secondary to him’, the Spirit is ‘lower than the Son’ (*Filius quoque minorem a patre eo quod secundus ab illo sit, et spiritum sanctum inferiorem a filio*, *Ep.* 124.2). Interestingly in the Latin translation of *De principiis* by Rufinus we do not find an exactly corresponding text. Here the distinction between the Father and the Son is not present and we do not read any words that indicate a hierarchy. Perhaps Rufinus has adapted the text to protect Origen from suspicions of – in the post-Nicene period – unorthodox views on Trinitarian relations. See for the texts the edition of Görgemanns & Karpp (1992:168-169).

²⁵⁰ Origen seems to adopt here a term that was used by Platonist philosophers. See on the use of this term in Numenius in my section on Platonist theology (2.6.2, text (3) and 2.6.5, text (11) above) and in 6.2 below. Philo gave this title to the Logos of God: *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesim* 2.62; cf. *Legum Allegoriae* 2.21.86.

²⁵¹ See also Wolfson (1976:279).

²⁵² Borret *ad loc.* (Vol.5, 1969:118-119 n.2) refers to Justin, *Apologia* 1.12.7 and 13.3-4; *Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudaeo* 56.4.

²⁵³ So Edwards (2002:83, n.120).

²⁵⁴ In 6.61.24 Origen also uses the combination δεύτερος θεός for the Son; here the terminology seems to be invoked by Celsus’ use of ‘the first God’ in the passage Origen responds to. In a different context the issue is also mentioned in 7.57.10-11, where Origen protests against Celsus’ claim to regard Jonah as a god rather than Jesus: Celsus, as Origen says here, ‘would not regard [Jesus] as worthy of the second place of honour after the God of the universe’.

²⁵⁵ Cf. the formula in 8.4.28-29: worship the supreme God ‘through his Son, the divine Logos and Wisdom seen in Jesus’. See also 4.1.3; 5.4.21; 5.5.6; 5.11.23; 8.4.28; 8.6.3; 8.13.20; 8.37.2. Moreover the formula ‘praying to the Logos’ is also used by Origen, e.g. in 5.11.40.

τῆς τῶν γεννητῶν πάντων φύσεως)'. Thus 'he brings to us the benefits of the Father,'²⁵⁶ while as our high-priest he conveys our prayers to the supreme God' (3.34.23-26).²⁵⁷

I continue by quoting a passage in which the involvement of the Son of God in the creation and the incarnation are both indicated briefly by Origen. The passage follows a quote from Celsus in which he blames Christians for claiming on the one hand that God's Son is the Logos himself and at the same time presenting him as a man who is arrested most disgracefully and crucified. Origen in his response refers to words he had written earlier on his theme:

(31) ἐν οἷς ἀπεδείκνυτο ὁ «πάσης κτίσεως» «πρωτότοκος» ἀνειληφῶς σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν ἀνθρωπίνην, καὶ ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἐνετείλατο περὶ τῶν τοσούτων ἐν κόσμῳ, καὶ ἐκτίσθη, καὶ ὅτι ὁ τὴν ἐντολὴν λαβὼν ὁ θεὸς λόγος ἦν. (2.31.7-11)	In these words I proved that the firstborn of all creation assumed a body and a human soul, and that God gave command about the vast things in the world and they were created, and that he who received the command was the divine Logos.

Here Origen quotes the designation given to the Son of God in the *Letter to the Colossians* (1.15) 'firstborn of all creation'.²⁵⁸ He states that this Son of God, the divine Logos, both received God's command to create the things in the world²⁵⁹ and assumed a body and a human soul. In these lines Origen seems to agree completely with the words he had just quoted from Celsus, but I think he has chosen his words carefully here. He does not repeat what Celsus had suggested: that it was the *Logos* who was arrested disgracefully and was crucified. For Origen the distinction between the Logos and the human soul and body is crucial.

The first words of (31) (ἐν οἷς – 'in these words') refer to a previous passage (2.9) in which Origen had explained his position more precisely by dealing with, what may be called, the 'divine and the human side' of the Son of God in Jesus. This passage, quoted below as text (32), comments on Celsus' critical question (formulated by the 'Jew' he had introduced): how could we regard Jesus as God, Jesus who did nothing to prevent his condemnation and was betrayed by those whom he called his disciples? Here are the main parts of Origen's answer:

(32) Πρὸς ταῦτα δὲ φήσομεν ὅτι οὐδ' ἡμεῖς ὑπολαμβάνομεν τὸ βλεπόμενον τότε καὶ αἰσθητὸν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ σῶμα εἶναι θεόν. Καὶ τί λέγω τὸ σῶμα; Ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τὴν ψυχὴν, περὶ ἧς λέλεκται τό· «Περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἕως θανάτου»²⁶⁰ [...] Οὕτω καθ' ἡμᾶς ὁ λόγος θεὸς καὶ θεοῦ τῶν ὄλων υἱὸς ἔλεγεν ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ τό· «Εγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ» καὶ τό· «Εγὼ εἰμι ἡ θύρα» καὶ τό· «Εγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ζῶν ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς»,²⁶¹ καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο τούτοις παραπλήσιον. Ἐγκαλοῦμεν οὖν	To this we will reply that not even we suppose that the body of Jesus, which could then be seen and perceived by the senses, was God. And why do I say the body? For not even his soul was God; for he said of it: 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death' [...] Similarly in our opinion it was the divine Logos and Son of the God of the universe that spoke in Jesus, saying: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life', and 'I am the door', and 'I am the living bread that came down from the heaven' and any other such saying. Therefore, we bring the charge against the

²⁵⁶ Cf. 7.44.48.

²⁵⁷ Cf. 8.26.17-22; 8.36.20-23. See also Perrone (2001:17-18).

²⁵⁸ In fact these words, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, are one of the most quoted designations of the Son of God in *Contra Celsum* (2.25.2; 2.31.7; 5.37.36; 6.17.37; 6.47.31; 6.48.8,25; 6.63.3; 6.64.27; 7.16.14; 7.27.13; 7.43.32; 7.65.14; 7.70.15; 8.17.14,21; 8.26.18).

²⁵⁹ Cf. Ps.33.9 (LXX Ps.32.9); Ps.148.5.

²⁶⁰ Matt.26.38.

²⁶¹ John 14.6; 10.7; 6.51.

Ἰουδαίοις τοῦτον μὴ νομίσασι θεόν, ὑπὸ τῶν προφητῶν πολλαχοῦ μεμαρτυρημένον ὡς μεγάλην ὄντα δύναμιν καὶ θεὸν κατὰ τὸν τῶν ὄλων θεὸν καὶ πατέρα. Τούτῳ γάρ φαμεν ἐν τῇ κατὰ Μωϋσέα κοσμοποιίᾳ προστάττοντα τὸν πατέρα εἰρηκέναι τό· «Γενηθήτω φῶς» καὶ «Γενηθήτω στερέωμα» καὶ τὰ λοιπά, ὅσα προσέταξεν ὁ θεὸς γενέσθαι, καὶ τούτῳ εἰρηκέναι τό· «Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ ὁμοίωσιν ἡμετέραν».²⁶² προσταχθέντα δὲ τὸν λόγον πεποιηκέναι πάντα, ὅσα ὁ πατὴρ αὐτῷ ἐνετείλατο [...] Ὁ βαπτιστὴς Ἰωάννης προφητεύων ὅσον οὐδέπω ἐνστήσεσθαι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, οὐκ ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ σώματι καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ τυγχάνοντα ἀλλὰ γὰρ φθάνοντα πανταχοῦ, λέγει περὶ αὐτοῦ· «Μέσος ὑμῶν στήκει, ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε, ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος.»²⁶³ Εἴπερ οὖν ἐνόει ἐκεῖ μόνον εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅπου τὸ βλεπόμενον ἦν σῶμα Ἰησοῦ, πῶς ἔφασκεν ἂν τό· «Μέσος ὑμῶν στήκει, ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε»; Καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐπαίρων τὸ φρόνημα τῶν μαθητευόντων αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ μείζονα φρονεῖν περὶ υἱοῦ θεοῦ φησιν· «Ὅπου δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα, κἀγὼ ἐκεῖ εἰμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν.»²⁶⁴ Τοιαύτη δ' αὐτοῦ ἐστὶ καὶ ἡ πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς ἐπαγγελία λέγοντος· «Καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.»²⁶⁵ Ταῦτα δὲ φαμεν οὐ χωρίζοντες τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ· ἐν γὰρ μάλιστα μετὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν γεγένηται πρὸς τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα Ἰησοῦ. (2.9.11-15, 24-38, 56-68)

Jews that they have not believed in Jesus as God, because he had been everywhere witnessed by the prophets as being a great power and a God like the God and Father of the universe. We say that it was to him that the Father gave the command in the Mosaic story of creation, when he said: 'Let there be light', and 'Let there be a firmament', and all the other things which God commanded to come into being. To him also he said: 'Let us make man according to our image and likeness.' And when the Logos was commanded, he made everything that the Father enjoined him. [...] John the Baptist, prophesying that the Son of God would presently stand among them, not existing in a particular body and soul only but also extending to every place, said of him: 'There stands one in the midst of you whom you know not, coming after me'. If, therefore, he thought that the Son of God was only in the place where Jesus' body was visible, how could he have said, 'There stands one in the midst of you whom you know not'? Jesus himself also raises the thoughts of those learning from him to greater conceptions of the Son of God when he says: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst.' Such is also the meaning of his promise to his disciples when he said: 'And lo, I am with you always until the end of the world.' When we say this, we do not separate the Son of God from Jesus. For after the incarnation the soul and body of Jesus became very closely united with the Logos of God.

The passage is worth to be quoted entirely, because it contains several elements that clarify Origen's view on the Logos²⁶⁶ and Jesus' human appearance. I highlight the following three points.

Firstly, in the middle part of the passage Origen focuses on the Logos, the 'divine side' of Christ: this divine Logos has to be distinguished from the soul and body of Jesus. This view becomes clear when Origen interprets the statements ('I am ...') he quotes from the gospel of John: these words are, in Origen's interpretation, not spoken by Jesus as the human being, but by the divine Logos 'that spoke

²⁶² Gen.1.3, 6, 26.

²⁶³ John 1.26-27.

²⁶⁴ Matt.18.20.

²⁶⁵ Matt.28.20.

²⁶⁶ Mark Origen's indication of the philosophical character of the title 'Logos' as used in Joh.1.1: περὶ οὗ φιλοσοφούντες λέγομεν τό «Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος ... » (5.24.26-27 – 'using philosophical terminology we say about him: 'In the beginning was the Logos...').

in Jesus'.²⁶⁷ This divine Logos, Origen continues, existed already before the incarnation: he was involved in the creation as the – so to say – 'interlocutor' of the creator who gave his commands to him.²⁶⁸ By the prophets he was already presented as 'being a great power'²⁶⁹ and a God like the God and Father of the universe' (and therefore Origen blames the Jews for not having recognized Jesus as God).

Secondly, in his discussion on the 'human side' of Christ Origen points out right from the start that he does not attribute the qualification 'divine' to Jesus' body and soul.²⁷⁰ As far as the body is concerned his argument is worded in the substantival participle and the adjective he uses: the body is seen at a certain moment in history and can be perceived by senses (τὸ βλέπομενον τότε καὶ αἰσθητὸν ... σῶμα). The implied argument seems to be that visibility is incompatible with divinity. In a similar way is argued concerning the soul: Jesus' words about the sorrow of his soul make clear that his soul cannot have a divine status: feeling pain and sorrow is incompatible with divinity. In the final part of (32), by explaining words of John the Baptist and Jesus, Origen underlines that 'the Son of God' exceeds the body and soul of Jesus: the thoughts of his disciples, as Origen says, are 'raised to greater conceptions about the Son' (ἐπαίρων τὸ φρόνημα τῶν μαθητευόντων αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ μείζονα φρονεῖν περὶ υἱοῦ θεοῦ). Against this background it is understandable why in (31) Origen admittedly says that the Logos has assumed a body and human soul, but implicitly denies to accept Celsus' words about an arrest and crucifixion of the *Logos*: the pain and suffering Jesus experienced affected his human body, but not his divine essence.²⁷¹

Thirdly, Origen rejects explicitly the idea of a complete separation between the Son of God (the divine Logos) and human Jesus: οὐ χωρίζοντες ('without separating'). Although he had underlined the distinction between them, he speaks at the same time about their unity.²⁷² By the word order he chooses (hyperbaton) Origen stresses the unity of them²⁷³ after the incarnation.²⁷⁴ Interestingly Origen elaborates this point in 3.28, where he shows his creativity by giving the perhaps theoretical doctrine concerning Jesus a relevance and a perspective for Christians (his addressees). He illustrates the unity of the human and the divine in Jesus with the metaphor of 'weaving' and presents this 'weaving together' in Jesus as

²⁶⁷ Cf. 4.99.37-39 where the qualifications Logos, Wisdom, Truth, Righteousness are characterized as divine titles of the Son. See also 5.5.7-9; 7.16.7-19. In 8.54.26 the Logos is said to dwell in Jesus (ὁ ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπιδημήσας λόγος).

²⁶⁸ This element is summarized in text (31) above. See also 6.47.12-17; 6.60.15-19.

²⁶⁹ See also 1.13.40; 1.66.51; 2.79.14-15; 7.23.24: 'Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God' (a quote from 1 Cor.1.24).

²⁷⁰ Cf. the phrase in 3.29.9-19: Jesus is qualified as 'God come in a human soul and body' (θεὸν ἐληλυθότα ἐν ἀνθρώπινῃ ψυχῇ καὶ σώματι). In 6.66.24 Jesus is directly called 'God' (ὁ θεὸς Ἰησοῦς).

²⁷¹ Cf. the 'reality' of Jesus' human body is connected with his human birth in 1.69.4-6: 'But we say to this that at his advent into this life, as he was born of a woman, he assumed a body which was human and capable of dying a human death' and 2.23.10-18: 'He (Celsus) did not see that once he (the Son) had assumed his body by birth he had assumed that which in its nature is capable of feeling pain and the grievous agonies, which befall those who live in bodies. [...] Accordingly just as he intentionally assumed a body whose nature was not at all different from the human flesh, so he assumed with the body also its pains and griefs.' In 2.69.38-40 however Origen points at a detail that makes Jesus' birth special: 'his birth was purer than all other births in that he was born not of sexual intercourse but of a virgin...'

²⁷² See also 5.39.25-28 and 6.47.18-20: 'There is nothing amazing about it if, when we affirm that the soul of Jesus was united (ἡνωσθαι) by a supreme participation (τῇ ἄκρᾳ μετοχῇ) with the majesty of the Son of God, we do not make any further distinction (οὐκέτι χωρίζομεν) between them'. The topic of this unity is discussed further in the following parts of 6.47-48. In a similar way Origen speaks in 3.41.7-11 about the union of Jesus' body and the soul in him with the 'very Logos, Wisdom and Truth (ὁ αὐτολόγος, ἡ αὐτοσοφία, ἡ αὐτοαλήθεια): 'We affirm that his mortal body and the human soul in him has received the greatest elevation not only by communion but by union and intermingling (ἐνώσει καὶ ἀνακράσει), so that by sharing in his divinity they were transformed into God.' In the final part of the Greek sentence three Greek perfect forms are used: προσειληφέναι ('has received'), κεκοινωνηκότα ('sharing'), μεταβεβληκέναι ('were transformed'); see also ἡνωσθαι in 6.47.18, just quoted. The perfect indicates that the corresponding 'state' exists as a result at the moment of utterance and presents this state as involved in and relevant for the situation in which the communication takes place (Cf. chapter II 4.1 and 4.4): Origen presents the accomplished elevation, sharing and transformation as significant for himself and his readers.

²⁷³ Mind the prominent position of ἓν in the Greek sentence: the element 'one' is separated from the verb (γεγένηται). Cf. chapter II 6.8 on hyperbaton as a tool to present the 'left-positioned' element as the most salient one.

²⁷⁴ 'incarnation' is the translation here of οἰκονομία. I refer to the note *ad loc.* in the edition of Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.2; 2011:370, n.16), in which are listed several meanings of this word in Origen's texts: 'Heilsplan bzw. Heilsordnung Gottes, Vorsehung, Heilsveranstaltungen, Heilswerk (hier im engeren Sinn die Inkarnation; in Cels.2,26: Jesu irdisches Leben), Heilsanordnungen, planmäßiges Verhalten Gottes, vgl. Cels.2,65.69; 3,31; 4,8f.; 5,50; 6,78'. See also Benjamins (1994:182ff.).

a starting point: ‘starting with Jesus the human and divine nature began to be woven together’ (ἀπ’ ἐκείνου ἤρξατο θεία καὶ ἀνθρωπίνη συνυφαίνεσθαι φύσις).²⁷⁵ What started in Jesus is, according to Origen, an example of what will happen with his followers: not only in Jesus, but also in his followers the human nature by fellowship with the divine will become divine. Everyone who believes and goes on to undertake the life which Jesus taught will come to ‘friendship with God and fellowship with Jesus’ (3.28.45-51).

Let me conclude this section with a brief overview of the points that were discussed. Origen’s work is based on the conviction that God exists. He does not make any efforts to prove this: for him it is rather a reason for worship than for a philosophical examination. Among the designations Origen often uses to denote God are ‘ὁ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεός (translated as ‘the supreme God’, literally: ‘God who (reigns/ judges) over all’) and ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός (‘the creator of all’) or ὁ τῶν ὅλων θεός (‘the God of all’). These indications refer to God as the creator and governor of the universe. Origen argues for a sharp distinction between God as creator and the created world: only the creator deserves to be worshipped. In this perspective Origen criticizes philosophers for their participation in the veneration of the Greek gods: despite their profound philosophical views they serve the creation rather than the creator.

Speaking about God Origen differentiates between the Father and the Son. In his comments on the relation between them Origen is eager to take account of biblical data. On the one hand he points at the unity between the Father and the Son, on the other hand at their difference. In his view the unity is not to be interpreted as a personal, essential union, but as a unity of mind and will. There are several indications that Origen characterizes the Son as subordinate to the Father. The term ‘second God’ is used by Origen, but not wholeheartedly accepted, as it seems. Origen’s view on the position of the Son affects the way he speaks about prayers: the Son brings our prayers to the Father; we pray *to* the Father *through* the Son.

A further distinction in Origen’s discourse concerns the incarnation. The divine Logos, as Origen formulates, assumed a body and a human soul, but is not to be identified with the mortal body and the soul of Jesus. The Logos can speak ‘in Jesus’, but is different from his human appearance. The visibility of Jesus and the pains he suffered cannot be connected to his ‘divine side’. Yet Origen does not think the Logos and the human soul are completely separated. The unity of the divine and the human side in Jesus is presented as a promise for Christians: followers of Jesus will come to unity with the divinity and to friendship with God.

5.3 Knowledge of God

The key passages about the topic of the knowability of God are found in 7.36-46.²⁷⁶ In these chapters several remarks of Celsus are quoted in which he supposes that Christians claim that sense-perception is basic for any knowledge and thus also for the knowledge of God. Celsus strongly rejects this idea and points to the mind: shut your eyes to the world of the sense and look up with the mind, raise the eyes of the soul and then you will see God (7.36.3-9). Characterizing philosophers and seers as travelers on the way to the truth he quotes Plato’s saying about the difficulty of the path and the impossibility for all people to travel it: ‘To find the maker and father of this universe is difficult, and after finding him it is impossible to declare him to all men’ (*Timaeus* 28c; see text (16) above) and recommends the methods of synthesis, analogy and analysis as means to get at least some knowledge of God (7.42.4-11; see also 2.1 above).

In his response Origen points at the fact that the image of the two eyes Celsus refers to, does not

²⁷⁵ Cf. the metaphor of weaving in Plato, *Timaeus* 41d1-2, where the Demiurge orders the lower gods to create man by weaving together the immortal (soul) with the mortal (body): ἀθανάτῳ θνητὸν προσυφαίνοντες.

²⁷⁶ See for a discussion also Daniélou (1948:114-118), O’Leary (2011:230-240), Villani (2018:122-125).

originate from the Greeks but was previously thought of in the ‘Christian philosophy’.²⁷⁷ After a passage on the metaphorical meaning of biblical texts about ‘eyes’ and ‘seeing’ Origen concludes: ‘the eye of the soul of any genuine Christian is awake and that of the senses is closed. And in proportion to the degree in which the superior eye is awake and the sight of the senses is closed, the supreme God and his Son [...] are comprehended and seen by each man’ (7.39.44-49).²⁷⁸ So far Origen agrees with his opponent (except for the issue of the provenance of the notion of the two eyes), but then he indicates some differences. Rather than Celsus’ philosophers and wise men Origen would recommend Moses, the prophets and Jesus Christ as guides on the road to knowledge of God (7.41.19-25). This approach leads to Origen’s judgement of the statement of Plato Celsus had quoted. Although Origen characterizes this statement as ‘noble and impressive’ (μεγαλοφυῶς ... καὶ οὐκ εὐκαταφρονήτως, 7.42.15), he has two reasons to disagree. In the first place he does not follow Plato in his distinction between educated philosophers and other people and in the second place he is less optimistic about the potential of the human nature. The latter issue will be discussed below (as comment on text (34)). The first point is clear in the following passage in which Origen speaks about Christ:²⁷⁹

- (33) [...] δι’ ὑπερβάλλουσιν φιλοφροσύνην ἔχοντα μὲν διδόναι τοῖς συνετωτέροις θεολογίαν, ἐπαῖραι τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ τῶν τῆδε πραγμάτων δυναμένην, οὐδὲν <δ> ἥττον συγκαταβαίνοντα καὶ ταῖς ὑποδεεστέραις ἔξεσιν ιδιωτῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ ἀπλουστέρων γυναικῶν οἰκετῶν τε καὶ ἀπαξιαπλῶς τῶν ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἢ Ἰησοῦ μόνου βεβηθημένων πρὸς τό, ὡς ἐνεχώρει, βέλτιον αὐτοὺς βιοῦν μετὰ δογμάτων ὧν ἐδύναντο περὶ θεοῦ χωρεῖν; (7.41.25-32)
- Because of his exceeding love towards man he was able to give the educated a conception of God which would raise their soul from earthly things, and nevertheless came down to the level even of the more defective capacities of ordinary men and simple women and slaves, and, in general, of people who have been helped by none but by Jesus alone to live a better life, so far as they can, and to accept doctrines about God such as they had capacity to receive.

Origen notes that Christ addressed both educated men and came down to the level of uneducated people.²⁸⁰ Knowledge of God and incentives ‘to live a better life’ are not confined to a small group of selected people, but are addressed to everyone irrespective of their education, gender or social status.²⁸¹ As compared to Plato’s view on the knowledge of God as expressed in the quote from *Timaeus* 28c referred to above, Origen’s approach can be called more inclusive: common people are not excluded, but explicitly involved in the education of Christ. Moreover, in Origen’s concept differentiation in the group of addressees is also present and is based on individual capacities: all people live a good life ‘as far as they can’ and accept ‘doctrines about God such as they had the capacity to receive’.²⁸²

²⁷⁷ προπεφιλοσοφῆσθαι παρ’ ἡμῶν (7.39.21): I point at the use of the perfect which indicates that the result of the philosophical action still exists and is relevant. Origen refers to *Gen.* 3.5-6 and *John* 9.39.

²⁷⁸ Cf. 7.33.10-12: ‘In order to know God we need no body at all. The knowledge of God is not derived from the eye of the body, but from the mind ...’. See also 7.44.39-40.

²⁷⁹ For a proper understanding of text (33) and its grammatical form I note that the passage is the final part of a longer sentence and consists of two participle clauses with participles in the accusative (ἔχοντα; συγκαταβαίνοντα), which refer to ‘Christ’, which was the constituent that had object function in the main clause.

²⁸⁰ Mark the use of the verb συγκαταβαίνω (‘to come down to the level of ...’), which is used 4x in a similar sense in my corpus: 4.5.11; 4.12.22; 4.14.18; 4.15.22.

²⁸¹ The theme of the address to both educated and uneducated people is also discussed in 1.27; 1.29; 3.49; 3.51-54; 4.9-10; 4.49-50; 6.14; 7.46.5-7. Interesting in this context is the contrast Origen describes in 6.2.1-14 between the ‘beautiful and refined style of Plato and those who write similarly’ and the mean style of the Scriptures. The brilliant compositions of philosophers benefit only few people, whereas the lower and practical style of the biblical authors improved the lives of the multitude. See also 6.5.26-35.

²⁸² Cf. the idea of adaptation to individual capacities and the similar use of the verb χωρέω in 2.2.27-30.; 2.16.56-57; 2.64.5-14,38; 2.65.1-3,21-22; 2.67.14-18; 3.75.46-47; 4.16.10-16; 4.18.25; 5.53.21; 5.58.22-24; 6.68.8-12; 6.79.25; 7.51.14-18. Scott

I want to add one more element to my comment on this passage by pointing out the following: Origen explicitly says that Jesus' actions are driven by his exceeding love towards man (δι' ὑπερβάλλουσιν φιλανθρωπίαν). Here Origen brings a new element into the picture, an element that may be called a new 'movement' with its own direction: the topic of knowledge of God is not only about men who want to know (something of) God, as in the Platonic approach (which I denote as an 'upward movement'), but also about Christ, being the Son of God in the midst of the people, who comes down, loves mankind and actively provides them knowledge of God.

In the next passage this idea is further developed by an explanation of the necessity – in Origen's view – of the 'downward movement':

<p>(34) Ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀποφαινόμεθα ὅτι οὐκ αὐτάρκης ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις ὥσπερ οὐκ αὐτάρκης ἡ ζήτησις τὸν θεὸν καὶ εὐρεῖν αὐτὸν καθαρῶς, μὴ βοηθηθεῖσα ὑπὸ τοῦ ζητουμένου, εὐρισκομένου τοῖς ὁμολογοῦσι μετὰ τὸ παρ' αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν ὅτι δέονται αὐτοῦ, ἐμφανίζοντος ἑαυτὸν οἷς ἂν κρίνῃ εὐλογον εἶναι ὀφθῆναι, ὡς πέφυκε θεὸς μὲν ἀνθρώπῳ γινώσκεσθαι ἀνθρώπου δὲ ψυχῇ ἔτι οὐσα ἐν σώματι γινώσκειν τὸν θεόν.
(7.42.28-35)</p>	But we affirm that human nature is not sufficient in any way to seek for God and to find him in his pure nature, unless it is helped by the God who is object of the search. And he is found by those who, after doing what they can, admit that they need him, and shows himself to those to whom he judges it right to appear, so far as it is possible for God to be known to man and for the human soul which is still in the body to know God.

Here Origen resolutely rejects the effectivity of any intellectual means advised by philosophers to gain some knowledge of God: not in any way (ὥσπερ οὐκ αὐτάρκης) human nature is able to seek for God and find him purely. Origen makes clear that in his search for God man is totally dependent on help he gets from the God he seeks for (τοῦ ζητουμένου). Prerequisite for getting such help is that man makes effort himself (μετὰ τὸ παρ' αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν) and then recognizes that he is not successful and needs God (τοῖς ὁμολογοῦσιν ... ὅτι δέονται αὐτοῦ).²⁸³ God then decides who get the possibility to see him and when he judges it to be right, (οἷς ἂν κρίνῃ εὐλογον εἶναι ὀφθῆναι), he shows himself to them.²⁸⁴ In Origen's view it is God himself who takes the initiative and makes the decision whether or not to reveal himself.²⁸⁵ Consequently somewhat further on Origen says that knowledge of God is a gift that can only be received through God's grace and a divine inspiration: 'God is known by a certain divine grace (θεία τινι χάριτι), which does not come about in the soul without God's action (οὐκ ἄθεε), but with a sort of inspiration (μετά τινος ἐνθουσιασμοῦ).' Divine initiative is necessary, as Origen continues, because the knowledge of God is beyond the human capacity, by which the multiple errors in human theology are to be explained (7.44.7-12).²⁸⁶ In conclusion we can say that the 'top-down movement',²⁸⁷ God's grace

(2012: 154-158), referring to 6.26, argues that for Origen himself accommodation works as pedagogical principle: he reserves certain teachings for certain audiences.

²⁸³ Cf. 7.33.21: we need God to create a pure heart (by which 'we shall see God', *Matt.* 5.8).

²⁸⁴ Cf. 2.67.22-24, where Origen asserts that about Jesus: 'And when he was sent into the world he did not merely make himself known; he also concealed himself.'

²⁸⁵ In this context Reemts (1998:133-134) introduces the notion of the 'God of freedom': 'Der Gott des Origenes ist damit als ein Gott der Freiheit gekennzeichnet und d.h. als ein Gott, der dem Menschen, auch dem Zugriff der menschlichen Erkenntnis, nicht einfach zur Verfügung steht; er behält dem Menschen gegenüber immer die Freiheit, zu erscheinen oder sich zu entziehen, eine Freiheit, die es verhindert, dass er jemals zum blossen Object degradiert werden kann. Konkret heisst dass: God wird nicht gesehen, er lässt sich sehen, er wird nicht gehört, er lässt sich hören usw. und zwar wie, wo und auf welche Art er will.' (133) She continues by referring to 2.72.13-14 ('The divine voice is such that it is heard only by those whom the speaker wishes to hear it') and *Homiliae in Lucam* 3, where Origen explains a difference between material and immaterial beings: material objects can be seen whether they want it or not, but higher, divine beings cannot be seen, even when they are present, unless they want it themselves. See also Fiedrowicz & Bartold (Vol. I, 2011:98-99).

²⁸⁶ Cf. Crouzel (1962:54-55).

²⁸⁷ See also 4.12.19-26.

and freedom to decide are crucial elements in Origen's understanding of the way knowledge of God can be achieved.²⁸⁸

So far some key notions of Origen's view have been discussed: the inclusion of common people, the downward movement of God who makes himself known and the characterization of knowledge of God as a gift. Additional elements of Origen's view are presented in the next fragment I want to discuss. Here Origen responds to Celsus' passage quoted in 7.45, in which Celsus elaborates the opposition between being and becoming (οὐσία and γένεσις, see text (4) with comment above).²⁸⁹ Here being is connected with intelligible things, truth, knowledge, insight and mind, whereas becoming is connected with the opposites (visible things, error, opinion, sight and eye). The elements of the first series are, in Celsus' view, essential to achieve knowledge of God. In his response Origen speaks about Christians in the following way, picking up elements of Celsus' text and connecting them to biblical passages:

(35) [...] οὐχ ἵνα λέξῃσι μόναις οὐσίαν ἀπὸ γενέσεως χωρίζωσι καὶ νοητὸν ἀπὸ ὁρατοῦ, καὶ τὴν μὲν ἀλήθειαν τῇ οὐσίᾳ συνάπτωσι τὴν δὲ μετὰ γενέσεως πλάνην παντὶ τρόπῳ φεύγωσι, σκοποῦντες, ὡς ἔμαθον, οὐ τὰ γενέσεως, ἄπερ ἐστὶ «βλεπόμενα» καὶ διὰ τοῦτο «πρόσκαιρα»,²⁹⁰ ἀλλὰ τὰ κρείττονα, εἴτ' οὐσίαν αὐτὰ τις βούλεται καλεῖν εἴτε διὰ τὸ νοητὰ τυγχάνειν «ἀόρατα» εἴτε διὰ τὸ ἔξω αἰσθήσεως εἶναι αὐτῶν τὴν φύσιν «μὴ βλεπόμενα».

Οὕτω δὲ καὶ τοῖς γενέσεως ἐνορῶσιν οἱ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ μαθηταί, ὥστε οἶονεῖ ἐπιβάθρα χρησθαι αὐτοῖς πρὸς τὴν κατανόησιν τῆς τῶν νοητῶν φύσεως· «Τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα» τοῦ θεοῦ «ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου», τουτέστι τὰ νοητά, «τοῖς ποιήμασι νοούμενα» ἐν τῷ νοεῖσθαι «καθορᾶται».²⁹¹ Καὶ οὐχ ἴστανται γε ἀναβάντες ἀπὸ τῶν τοῦ κόσμου κτισμάτων ἐν τοῖς ἀοράτοις τοῦ θεοῦ· ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἱκανῶς ἐκείνοις ἐγγυμνασάμενοι καὶ συνιέντες αὐτὰ ἀναβαίνουσιν ἐπὶ τὴν αἰδίων δύναμιν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἀπαξαιλῶς τὴν θεότητα αὐτοῦ, ἐπιστάμενοι ὅτι ὁ μὲν φιλόανθρωπος θεὸς «τὴν ἀλήθειαν» καὶ «τὸ»

It is not merely a matter of theory when they distinguish between being and becoming and between what is intelligible and what is visible, and when they associate truth with being and by all possible means avoid the error that is bound up with becoming. They look, as they have learnt, not at the things which are becoming, which are seen and on that account are temporal, but at the higher things, whether one wishes to call them 'being', or things 'invisible' because they are intelligible, or 'things which are not seen' because their nature lies outside the realm of sense-perception. It is in this way also that the disciples of Jesus look at the things that are becoming, so that they use them as steps to the contemplation of the nature of intelligible things. 'For the invisible things' of God, that is, the intelligible things, 'are since the creation of the world clearly seen' by the process of thought, 'as they are understood by the things that are made'. And when they have ascended from the created things of the world to the invisible things of God they do not stop there. But after exercising their minds sufficiently among them and understanding them, they ascend to the eternal power of God, and, in a word, to his divinity. They know that out of love to man God 'manifested' 'the truth' and 'that which may be known' of himself, not only to those who are

²⁸⁸ Cf. Daniélou (1948), who states that Origen and Celsus agree that 'la vision de Dieu' is the completion of the human life. Even this issue shows the conflict of their opinions as well: 'Pour Celse la vision de Dieu est accessible, mais difficile; pour Origène elle est inaccessible et facile' (114). And, as explanation of this statement: 'Celse disait, avec Platon: la vision de Dieu est possible à l'homme par un grand effort, mais elle est le privilège de quelques-uns. Origène rejette ces deux thèses: pour lui la vision de Dieu est impossible à tout homme sans exception, qui est laissé à ses forces naturelles – et, par ailleurs, elle est donnée comme une grâce de Dieu à tout homme également qui se tourne vers elle, sans qu'il soit besoin qu'il soit philosophe' (117).

²⁸⁹ See for a discussion of Origen's response De Vogel (1983:292-296).

²⁹⁰ 2 Cor. 4.18 (μὴ σκοποῦντων ἡμῶν τὰ βλεπόμενα ἀλλὰ τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα· τὰ γὰρ βλεπόμενα πρόσκαιρα, τὰ δὲ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια – 'we do not look on the things that are seen, but on the things that are not seen; the things that are seen are temporal, the things that are not seen are eternal'), referred to also in 3.47.18-19; 6.59.20-21; 7.7.17-18; 8.5.11-12.

²⁹¹ Rom. 1.20.

ἐαυτοῦ «γνωστὸν» «ἐφανερώσεν»²⁹² οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀνακειμένοις αὐτῷ ἀλλὰ καὶ τισι τῶν ἔξω τῆς εἰλικρινοῦς θεοσεβείας καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν εὐσεβείας· τινὲς δὲ τῶν θεοῦ προνοία ἀναβεβηκότων ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν τηλικούτων γνῶσιν οὐκ ἄξια τῆς γνώσεως δρῶντες ἀσεβοῦσι καὶ «τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ»²⁹³ κατέχουσιν, οὐδ' ἀπολογίας ἔτι χώραν ἐπὶ τῇ γνώσει τῶν τηλικούτων ἔχειν δυνάμενοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ. (7.46.26-50)

devoted to him, but also to some ignorant of pure worship and piety towards him. But some of those who by God's providence have ascended to the knowledge of such profound truths do not behave worthily of the knowledge, and are impious, and 'hold down the truth in unrighteousness'. And because of their knowledge of these profound truths, they are not able to have any further opportunity for an excuse before God.

For a proper understanding of the beginning of this passage we have to know the topic of the preceding section. In these lines Origen had written about the insults that Christians often have to suffer from other people (like Celsus, who ended his passage by saying that they lack education and are 'entirely lamed and mutilated in [their] souls', 7.45.31-33). In this situation Christians, as Origen says referring to 1 *Cor.* 4.12-13, have learnt to 'bless when they are reviled, to endure when persecuted and entreat when defamed'. It is in this context that Origen indicates in (35) that being a Christian is not only a matter of theory ('not only in words': Οὐχ ... λέξεσι μόναις): in the way they are treated by others they experience vehemently the negative reactions their faith often triggers.²⁹⁴ After this introduction in which Celsus and his companions are criticized, Origen surprisingly continues by noting a high degree of correspondence between the Christian search for truth and knowledge of God and Celsus' approach. In a clever way Origen starts by joining Celsus, then connects Celsus' Platonic words to passages from Paul's letters, using philosophical terms to interpret these texts, and then ends with criticism of philosophers with a reference to Paul's words. Let us consider somewhat more carefully this three-stage response of Origen.

In the first sentence he starts with the statement that Christians just like Celsus distinguish (χωρίζουσι) between οὐσία and γένεσις, with all the items that were associated with these two notions by Celsus. Then, in the participle phrase starting with σκοποῦντες, he adds two elements: firstly he asserts that Christians have learnt to look at the οὐσία-side (indicated as 'the better side', τὰ κρείττονα) and reject the γένεσις-side; so the implication is that there is no reason for Celsus' criticism at this point. Secondly Origen works on the terminology and puts Celsus' terms alongside alternatives that he derives from the Bible: the 'things of becoming' are identified with 'things that are seen' and 'temporal things' (βλεπόμενα, πρόσκαιρα, originating from 2 *Cor.* 4.18) and for 'the better things' he comes up with three alternatives (3x εἶτε): Celsus' οὐσία, and ἀόρατα and μὴ βλεπόμενα, both used by Paul (*Rom.* 1.20 and 2 *Cor.* 4.18). The biblical terms however are explained by philosophically sounding phrases ('because they are intelligible' – διὰ τὸ νοητὰ τυγχάνειν and 'because their nature lies outside the realm of sense-perception' – διὰ τὸ ἔξω αἰσθήσεως εἶναι αὐτῶν τὴν φύσιν). This clarification by philosophical terms is continued in the next sentence, where ἀόρατα and νοούμενα from *Rom.* 1.20 are explained by τὰ νοητά ('the intelligible things') and ἐν τῷ νοεῖσθαι ('by the process of thought') respectively.

Moreover, in Origen's presentation the focus on the invisible, intelligible world does not entail a complete rejection of the visible things, as was recommended by Celsus ('Shut your eyes to the world of sense...' 7.36.7, text (15) above). Jesus' disciples, as Origen says, can utilize the visible things as

²⁹² *Rom.* 1.19.

²⁹³ *Rom.* 1.18.

²⁹⁴ Cf. 6.20.1-10 where Origen, referring to 2 *Cor.* 4.17-18 ('we look at the things that are not seen'), says that for Paul the contemplation of the invisible, eternal things helped him to persevere in the suffering of affliction: 'Even at the very time of affliction and troubles he was in no way weighed down by them, but made light of every difficulty because he was contemplating these things' (8-10).

instruments to proceed to the intelligible things: they ‘also look at the things of becoming’ (καὶ τοῖς γενέσεως ἐνωρῶσιν) and use them ‘as steps to the contemplation of the nature of intelligible things’.²⁹⁵ Origen bases his view on his interpretation of Paul’s words in *Rom.* 1.20: ‘the invisible things are clearly seen from the creation of the world,²⁹⁶ perceived through the things that are made’, which in Origen’s explanation can be read as ‘the intelligible things (τὰ νοητά) can be understood in the process of thought (ἐν τῷ νοεῖσθαι)’. This process of thought, which is characterized as an upward movement (ἀναβάντες, ἀναβαίνουνσιν²⁹⁷), is divided by Origen into three stages here: Jesus’ disciples start from the visible world, then proceed to the world of the invisible things and eventually ‘ascend to the eternal power of God’, to ‘his divinity’ (in the words ἐπὶ τὴν αἰδίων δύναμιν τοῦ θεοῦ and ... τὴν θεότητα αὐτοῦ Origen again refers to *Rom.* 1.20).²⁹⁸ The intellectual nature of this process is underlined by the qualifications Origen uses to describe the second and third stage: the mind is ‘exercised’ among the invisible things, which are ‘understood’ (ἐκείνοις ἐγγυμνασάμενοι καὶ συνιέντες αὐτά) and the third stage is characterized by ‘knowing’ (ἐπιστάμενοι). This ‘intellectual’ character also appears in Origen’s interpretation of Jesus’ saying ‘Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God’ (*Matt.* 5.8). In 6.69.13-15 Origen, (speaking in a context which deals with the thought that God is not corporeal, and therefore not visible) explains that ‘heart’ here means ‘mind’ (νοῦς):²⁹⁹ God ‘may be perceived by those who can perceive with the heart, that is the mind, though not with an ordinary heart, but with a pure heart. It is not right for a heart that has been defiled to look upon God; that which can deservedly perceive him who is pure must be pure too’.³⁰⁰

I conclude my comment on text (35) by pointing at two elements that are present in the final lines. Firstly the adjective φιλόανθρωπος (‘loving mankind’) added by Origen – in the marked position before its noun – to θεός, and his reference to God’s revelation. Herewith Origen clearly presents the Christian position as different from the opponent’s one: Jesus’ disciples believe in a God who loves man, and know that he manifests that which may be known of himself.

Secondly without mentioning names (he only uses the indefinite τινες) Origen disqualifies philosophers as people who did ascend to the knowledge of profound truths, but did not behave in a way that is appropriate with this knowledge: they are impious (ἀσεβοῦσι), ‘hold down the truth in unrighteousness’ and have lost all opportunity for an excuse, as Origen formulates using the words of

²⁹⁵ See also 7.37.2-23: humans ‘have to begin from the senses and from sensible things when they intend to ascend to the nature of intelligible things, yet they must on no account remain content with sensible things’, Cf. 3.47.14-20; 3.56.2-7.

²⁹⁶ I point at the remarkable word order in Origen’s quote of Paul’s words in 7.46.37: the constituent τούτῃσι τὰ νοητά, which explains τὰ ἀόρατα is not placed immediately after these words, but after ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου, by which Origen seems to interpret this prepositional constituent as having attributive function, modifying τὰ ἀόρατα: ‘the invisible things [that exist] since (or belong to) to creation of the world’ (although we would in this case have expected a repetition of the article τὰ; without this repetition an adverbial interpretation seems to be more probable). Cf. a similar interrupted quote of the text in 6.4.8-10.

²⁹⁷ Cf. a similar explanation of *Rom.* 1.20 in 3.47.25-26: according to Origen Paul hints here at ‘those who ascend from the visible things to the intelligible things’ (τοὺς ἀναβαίνοντας ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρατῶν ἐπὶ τὰ νοητά). See also 6.4.9-11.

²⁹⁸ Origen seems to interpret ‘the eternal power and divinity of God’ in Paul’s text not as an apposition to τὰ ἀόρατα, but to interpret them as two different entities. In 3.47 he uses the phrase from *Rom.* 1.20, combined with 2 *Cor.* 4.18, in his rejection of the doctrine of materialistic philosophies (‘systems which regard material and corporeal things as fundamental and assert that all ultimate realities are corporeal’ 3.47.9-12). Origen does not clearly explain there (nor in 7.46) what he exactly means by these ‘invisible things’. According to Fiedrowicz & Barthold *ad* 7.46. (Vol.5, 2012:1278 n.81) Origen has his own individual interpretation of τὰ ἀόρατα as referring to the spiritual creatures as souls and angels: ‘eine [...] Interpretation [...], bei der nicht die ‘unsichtbare Wirklichkeit’ Gottes gemeint ist, sondern seine ‘unsichtbare Werke’, d.h. die geistigen Geschöpfe (Seelen, Engel). Cf. Borret, note *ad* 3.47 (Vol.2, 1968:114-115 n.1). Such invisible beings are denoted by Origen in 7.37.12: μαθὼν ἀόρατον εἶναι τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἶναι τινα δημιουργήματα ἀόρατα, τούτῃσι νοητά (‘knowing that God is invisible and that there are certain invisible, that is intelligible creations’). See also De Vogel (1983:293): ‘Er (Orig.) unterscheidet zwischen den νοητά, “dem Unsichtbaren Gottes” und Seinem Wesen, “Seiner ewigen Kraft und Göttlichkeit” (*Rom.* 1.20). Die νοητά sind Gottes. Für uns und unser Denken sind sie aber eine Art Vorhalle Seiner Herrlichkeit. Wir haben uns mit dem Denken in den νοητά zu üben, bevor wir zu Ihm-selbst emporsteigen können’.

²⁹⁹ See also *De principiis* 1.1.9 ‘nam quid aliud est ‘corde deum videre’ nisi [...] mente eum intellegere atque cognoscere’ (‘For what does ‘seeing God by the heart’ mean but [...] understanding him with the mind and knowing him’). Moreover, as we saw above, in 7.33.13-18 Origen interprets the purity explicitly in an ethical sense: a heart from which no evil thoughts nor evil deeds proceed.

³⁰⁰ The final words seem to hint at Plato, *Phaedo* 67b2.

Paul again (*Rom.* 1.18 and 20). Origen can indicate this criticism in short terms and without a clear address here, because he had rejected the (religious) behaviour of philosophers already in 6.4, using the same words of Paul.³⁰¹

The criticism of philosophers in the last lines of (35) corresponds with similar words Origen had written some pages earlier, in 7.44. There he rejects the religious practice of a philosopher, who ‘after studying the profoundest doctrines about god or gods’ turns his eyes to images in the temples and prays to them or, while seeing at these images, prays to ‘the spiritually interpreted god, to whom he imagines he should ascend from the visible and symbolical world’ (7.44.31-36). In contrast, as Origen says, even an uneducated Christian believes that any place is suitable for prayer. Then Origen presents prayer as a part of the way to knowledge of God that is characteristic for a Christian: ‘by shutting his eyes of sense and raising those of the soul’³⁰² he ascends beyond the entire world. He does not stop even at the vault of heaven, but comes in mind to the super-celestial region,³⁰³ being guided by the divine Spirit, and being as it were outside the world he sends up his prayer to God’. This prayer is not about everyday matters, but he seeks for ‘things that are great and truly divine which, as God’s gifts, help in the journey to the blessedness with him, attained through the mediation of his Son, who is the Logos of God’ (7.44.39-49). Remarkable in this passage is that Platonic-sounding phrases are combined with Christian elements. In the ascending movement not only the mind (τῇ διανοίᾳ), but also prayer (τὴν εὐχὴν) are involved: prayer is presented as the completing action of the mental journey to the blessedness.³⁰⁴ Moreover Origen points at the guidance of the divine Spirit, the gift-character of the benefits provided and the mediation role of the Son of God.

This brings us to the next point, for the section about knowledge of God is not complete until attention has been given to Christ, the Logos, and the mediating position Origen attributes to him. Therefore I will now discuss a number of passages from book 6 in which Origen dedicates some chapters to the role of the Son of God. As we have seen above (text 34), the human nature is in Origen’s opinion not able to reach knowledge of God unless when it gets help of God. In 6.17 Origen explains that this is due to ‘the defilement (διὰ τὸν μiasμόν) of the mind that is bound to a human body of humiliation’ and by its ‘restricted capacity to comprehend God’ (6.17.19-22). Origen continues the chapter by pointing at the ‘Logos of God’ and the key role he plays in the achievement of knowledge of God. Absolute understanding of God as he deserves (κατ’ ἀξίαν) is possessed only by the Logos and, secondary, by those whose minds are illuminated by the Logos, as Jesus says in the words Origen quotes subsequently: ‘No man has known the Son save the Father, and no man has known the Father save the Son, and him to whom the Son will reveal him.’ (*Matt.* 11.27).³⁰⁵

These words are again quoted by Origen in 6.65, where he responds to Celsus’ remark ‘οὐδε λόγῳ ἐφικτός ἐστιν ὁ θεός’ (‘God is not attainable by reason’, 6.65.15-16). Origen’s reaction is double: he agrees if λόγος is interpreted as referring to ‘the reason that is in us’ (λόγῳ τῷ ἐν ἡμῖν), but he rejects Celsus’ statement if by λόγος is meant the Logos mentioned in *John* 1.1: God is attainable by this Logos and by any man to whom he reveals the Father.³⁰⁶

³⁰¹ See above 5.2.

³⁰² Origen quotes the phrase of his opponent (7.36.8).

³⁰³ An allusion to Plato, *Phaedrus* 247c. Cf. 3.80.7-8 and 6.59.23-27: ... ‘he has gone out of the world, since the Logos takes him out from this earthly existence and transfers him to the region beyond the heavens for the contemplation of the realm of beauty.’

³⁰⁴ See Hensels (2002:95): ‘Für Origenes ist das Gebet eine wesentliche Bedingung für den Empfang des göttlichen Gnade, die den Menschen zur Anschauung Gottes führen kann.’ See for a discussion on prayer in *Contra Celsum* Perrone (2001), who pays special attention to 7.44 (p.13-18). The metaphor of the journey of the soul towards perfection is used by Origen also in other contexts; for a discussion see Scott (2012:104-115).

³⁰⁵ In 2.71.1-6 in a similar context Origen also quotes *John* 1.18 (‘No man has seen God at any time; the only-begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him’) and then continues: ‘He spoke about God (θεολογῶν) and told his true disciples about his characteristics’.

³⁰⁶ See Villani (2018:121), who indicates Origen’s approach as ‘Differenzierungsanalyse’.

This idea of revealing is further elaborated by Origen in 6.68, where he explains the incarnation of the Logos as a key factor. I quote the entire passage, in which Origen incorporates several words or passages from the Bible into the explanation of his position:

- (36) Τίς δ' ἄλλος σῶσαι καὶ προσαγαγεῖν τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ δύναται τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴν ἢ ὁ θεὸς λόγος; Ὅστις «ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν» ὢν διὰ τοὺς κολληθέντας τῇ σαρκὶ καὶ γενομένους ὅπερ «σὰρξ» «ἐγένετο» «σὰρξ», ἵνα χωρηθῇ ὑπὸ τῶν μὴ δυναμένων αὐτὸν βλέπειν καθὼς «λόγος» ἦν καὶ «πρὸς θεόν» ἦν «καὶ θεὸς ἦν».³⁰⁷ Καὶ σωματικῶς γε λαλούμενος καὶ ὡς «σὰρξ» ἀπαγγελλόμενος ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν καλεῖ τοὺς ὄντας σάρκα, ἵν' αὐτοὺς ποιήσῃ πρῶτον μορφωθῆναι κατὰ λόγον τὸν γενόμενον σάρκα, καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο αὐτοὺς ἀναβιάσῃ ἐπὶ τὸ ἰδεῖν αὐτόν, ὅπερ ἦν πρὶν γένηται «σὰρξ».³⁰⁸ ὥστε αὐτοὺς ὠφεληθέντας καὶ ἀναβάντας ἀπὸ τῆς κατὰ σάρκα εἰσαγωγῆς εἰπεῖν τό· «Εἰ καὶ Χριστὸν ποτε κατὰ σάρκα ἐγνώκαμεν, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκομεν.»³⁰⁹ «Σὰρξ» οὖν «ἐγένετο», καὶ γενόμενος «σὰρξ» «ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν»³¹⁰ οὐκ ἔξω γινόμενος ἡμῶν, σκηνώσας δὲ καὶ γενόμενος ἐν ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔμεινεν ἐπὶ τῆς πρώτης μορφῆς, ἀλλ' ἀναβιβάσας ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τὸ λογικὸν «ὕψηλόν ὄρος» ἔδειξεν ἡμῖν τὴν ἑνδοξον μορφήν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὴν λαμπρότητα τῶν ἐνδυμάτων αὐτοῦ [...].³¹¹ Ὁ δὲ ταῦτα θεωρήσας εἶποι ἂν τό· «Ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.»³¹² (6.68.6-31)
- Who but the divine Logos can save and lead the soul of man to the supreme God? He 'was in the beginning with God'; but because of those who had cleaved to the flesh and become as flesh, he became flesh, that he might be received by those incapable of seeing him in his nature as one who was the Logos, who 'was with God', 'who was God'. And being spoken of under physical forms, and being proclaimed to be flesh, he calls to himself those who are flesh, that he may make them first to be formed like the Logos who became flesh, and after that lead them up to see him as he was before he became flesh; so that they may be helped and may advance from the first stage which is that of the flesh and say: 'Even if we have known Christ after the flesh, yet we know him so no more'. Accordingly he became flesh, and having become flesh he lived among us and was not outside of us. But even while he lived and was in us, he did not remain with his primary form. After leading us up to the spiritual 'high mountain', he showed us his glorious form and the radiance of his clothing [...]. He, then, who has seen these things may say: 'We beheld his glory, a glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'

The striking thing in this passage is it is filled for the most part with quotes from the Bible: words from John 1, a quote from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians and finally a reference to the story of the Transfiguration of Jesus. Origen's contribution in his own words is very small and mainly consists of the introduction and the connection of biblical phrases. The passage is conceived as an answer to a question of Celsus, which is represented by Origen³¹³ as follows: 'how we think we can come to know God and how we image we shall be saved by him'. Origen takes this question as an opportunity to bring

³⁰⁷ John 1.1.

³⁰⁸ John 1.14.

³⁰⁹ 2 Cor. 5.16.

³¹⁰ John 1.14.

³¹¹ Cf. Matt. 17.1-2; Marc. 9.2-3; Luc. 9.28-29.

³¹² John 1.14.

³¹³ The use of the first person 'we' makes clear that this obviously is not a literally quote, but a representation in Origen's own words.

forward an element of the Christian faith. In this passage the focus is not so much on refutation as on confirmation and explanation. In a passage like this Origen will have had in mind that his work can be profitable for his Christian readers not only by being apologetic, but also by presenting the Christian doctrines and the biblical base that they have in his view.³¹⁴ The fact that the instruction is given the form of a series of quotes³¹⁵ from the Bible can be interpreted as part of a rhetorical strategy: the authoritative status the Bible has for Origen and his readers increases the persuasive power of the argument. Origen minimalizes his own contribution and in this way seems to step backwards, so to speak, in the shadow of the biblical texts he quotes: the reader should be convinced by these texts and play less attention to the input of the author who ‘only’ took care of the collection and connection of the quotes.

After these introductory remarks I continue by commenting on several aspects of the content of text (36).³¹⁶ The crucial word in the passage is σάρξ (‘flesh’; used 11x here), which denotes the human material existence, often with the association of weakness, sin and opposition to God.³¹⁷ In this passage σάρξ is used firstly to characterize humans who do not know God and have to be saved (remember that knowledge and salvation were the two items that gave rise to the argument in 6.68): they are the ones that had cleaved to the flesh and become as flesh (τοὺς κολληθέντας τῇ σαρκὶ καὶ γενομένους ὅπερ σάρξ, 8.68.8-9) and ‘those who are flesh’ (τοὺς ὄντας σάρκα). In the second place σάρξ is used to denote the incarnation of the Logos. Origen at first designates him in his ‘original status’ in the terms of John 1.1: he was ‘God’ and ‘in beginning with God’. Then this Logos ‘became flesh’, as Origen says quoting John 1.14, although we can infer from the subsequent indications that Origen prefers a less direct formula: he is ‘being spoken of under physical terms’ and ‘proclaimed to be flesh’ (σωματικῶς γε λαλούμενος³¹⁸ καὶ ὡς σάρξ ἀπαγγελλόμενος). Origen’s hesitation to connect the Logos too directly to physicality can be understood against the background of his Christological ideas (see 5.2 in the comment of text (32) above).

He is clear however about the reason and the purpose of the incarnation: it is because of (διὰ) the humans who are stuck to the flesh, and the purpose is: ‘that he may be received by those incapable of seeing him’ as God, the Logos. These ‘incapable’ people are the ones who have to be saved and here Origen formulates what this salvation comprises in his view: ‘seeing’ (i.e. knowing) the Logos in his ‘original’ divine nature. This is achieved in a two-stage procedure, as Origen writes: firstly ‘those who are flesh’ are formed (μορφωθῆναι) by the Logos according to the incarnated Logos. Origen obviously indicates here a change by which people quit their sinful way of life³¹⁹ and follow the Logos, who while being in the flesh ‘did no sin’ (1 Pet.2.22).³²⁰ After this first transformation they are helped (ὠφεληθέντας) further: the Logos leads them upwards to ‘see’ him as he was before the incarnation. That Origen by ‘seeing’ (ιδεῖν here, βλέπειν some lines above) means ‘knowing’ can be inferred from the quote (from 2 Cor.5.16) he puts the ‘saved’ humans in their mouths, in which the verb ‘to know’ is

³¹⁴ Cf. 4.1, where Origen prays for wisdom not only to destroy ‘ideas contrary to the truth’, but also to ‘build up the doctrines of Christ’.

³¹⁵ Other passages in which the instruction and argument consist of quite a number of biblical quotes are e.g. 2.9 (the Logos and Jesus’ body and soul; also 7.16), 3.60 (purity), 4.13 (God and fire), 4.28 (God’s love for the whole creation), 4.29 (‘higher beings, angels, ‘gods’; also 8.3-4; 8.25); 4.44 and 4.49-50 (allegorical interpretation), 5.11 (light; also 6.5); 5.29 and 5.32 (division of the nations; overseers), 6.6 and 6.17 (higher knowledge of God), 6.20 (spiritual reality), 6.70 (spirit of God), 7.34 (sense-perception), 7.38 (flesh and spirit), 7.50 (body), 8.12-14 (Father-Son), 8.40 (sin and punishment).

³¹⁶ See also Hensels (2002:97-99).

³¹⁷ See e.g. 1.24.43; 2.1.45; 2.23.15; 2.25.8,14; 3.28.40; 5.19.22; 6.29.25; 6.59.8; 6.70.34; 7.4.10; 7.22.12; 8.23.12,18,20,23.

³¹⁸ The same words are used in 4.15.24, where even the reference to *John* 1.14 is modified by οἶοι.

³¹⁹ Cf. the interpretation of the ‘pure heart’ (by which God can be seen, *Matt*.5.8) in 7.33.13-18 as the heart that produces no evil thoughts and deeds.

³²⁰ See 4.15.3-6 about the sinless existence of the Logos in the flesh. On the life-changing power of the Logos see 3.68, a chapter which ends with the following conclusion: ‘Those whom a man could not change even by punishment, the Logos transformed, shaping and moulding them according to his will’ (21-24). See also 1.67.19-21; 2.30.30-33; 4.5.29-34; 5.23.25-31; 5.55.12-14.

used twice (ἐγνώκαμεν, γινώσκομεν): ‘Even if we have known Christ after the flesh, yet we know him so no more’.³²¹

The second part of the passage, indicated as such by οὖν (6.68.19),³²² leads the discourse back to the main line of the discussion about the incarnation (σάρξ ἐγένετο is repeated): one more aspect of it is explained by Origen. Now he quotes a second phrase from John 1.14: ἐσκηνώσεν ἐν ἡμῖν (‘he lived in/ among us’)³²³ and highlights a double appearance of Christ during his lifetime on the earth: his ‘primary form’ (τῆς πρώτης μορφῆς, in his normal human shape, but living without sins) and his ‘glorious form’ (τὴν ἑνδοξον μορφήν). The latter one can only be seen (known) if the Logos leads us up (ἀναβιβάσας in 22 picks up ἀναβιβάση in 15). This ascent was literally made by Jesus’ disciples who ascended the ‘high mountain, where they, as the gospels tell, saw Christ appearing in a glorious form. However, Origen does not mean here this material mountain, but a ‘spiritual’ one, as he clarifies by the adjective λογικός.³²⁴ The ascent of the disciples is allegorically interpreted as an inner upward movement within man, who is given higher knowledge of God and the Logos.³²⁵ This movement can be identified with the process of intellectual activity that is described in 7.46 (text (35) above): starting with what is visible, the mind proceeds to the intelligible things and ultimately gets knowledge of God. The incarnation-passage ends with a quote from John 1.14 again, where in Origen’s interpretation the sight of the Logos in his glorious form is indicated. By carefully spreading the words of the key incarnation-verse (John 1.14) Origen highlights three aspects of the incarnation: (1) the Logos became flesh in order to transform the sinful life of man; (2) the incarnated Logos lived in us, generating an upward spiritual movement within us; (3) this ‘ascent’ results in higher knowledge of the Logos in his proper (glorious) form. This is the way by which the Logos saves people and leads the soul to the supreme God (6.68.6-7, the first line of text (36)).

To this exposition of the way the Logos gives knowledge to man one element can be added. In 6.77 Origen comes back to the story of the ‘high mountain’ and draws attention to ‘an even more mysterious meaning’. He points at the fact that not all of Jesus’ disciples were led up to the mountain: only those ‘who could follow him’. For those ‘who are still down below and are not yet prepared to ascend’ the glorious form of the Logos is not shown. They saw him in his humiliated form (described in terms of Jes.53.2-3 as ‘he has not form nor beauty’ and ‘was dishonourable and deserted from men’). This leads Origen to the conclusion that there are ‘different forms of Jesus’, which ‘are to be applied to the nature of the divine Logos’ (6.77.18-19). The revelation of these different forms to people is dependent on their diverse capacities.³²⁶

Moreover, it is good to recall in this context the general caveat that Origen formulated in 7.42 (text (34) above), as we have seen. The gift of knowledge can be given only ‘so far as it is possible for God to be known to man and for the human soul which is still in the body to know God’. The fundamental difference between God and man causes a limit to the knowledge of God, whatever the capacities of individuals are.

³²¹ Cf. a similar division in two stages characterized by a comparison of the Logos with a physician and a teacher in 3.62.7-10: ‘The divine Logos was sent as a physician to sinners, but to those already pure and no longer sinning as a teacher of divine mysteries.’ The medical metaphor (God as physician; the world as hospital for souls) is elaborated by Origen in several of his works; for a discussion of passages see Scott (2012:93-99).

³²² See for the presentational meaning of οὖν chapter II 5.2.

³²³ Origen seems to suggest by the contrast οὐκ ἔξω γίνομενος ἡμῶν (‘he was not outside of us’), that ἐν not just means ‘among’ but also can be taken in the literal sense ‘in’: the Logos is *in* us. A similar suggestion is given in 4.15.22-24, where Origen presents the Logos as coming down to those who cannot see him in his divinity and thus ‘as it were becomes flesh’.

³²⁴ Cf. for λογικός in this sense 4.13.15; see Lampe s.v. C.

³²⁵ Cf. for a similar interpretation of the Transfiguration story 4.16.6ff.

³²⁶ These different aspects of the Logos, corresponding to the different capacities of man, are also discussed in 2.64 and 4.15-16. In 2.64-66 Origen discusses more examples from the New Testament from which in his opinion can be inferred that Jesus did not appear in the same way to all who saw him.

At the end of this section I will now summarize the main points that were discussed in this section. Origen characterizes the way to knowledge of God mainly as a process of thought: not the eye of the senses, but the eye of the soul should be open. Moreover, visible things are useful as a first step on the path; from there the disciples of Jesus proceed to the intelligible things and ultimately arrive at knowledge of God and his Son (as far as possible for human beings). This upward movement (*ἀναβαίνω*) is characterized by mental training and increasing understanding. Moreover Origen is convinced that man cannot reach knowledge of God unless he is helped by this same God. It is God who decides in freedom to reveal himself; he is not just at our disposal. Gaining knowledge of God is made possible by a gift from God. In this context it is understandable that for Origen prayer for divine help is an important action in the process of achieving knowledge of God.

Then, God is not indifferent to man, but is characterized by philanthropy. This love of God is expressed in a downward movement, which forms the counterpart of the aforementioned upward movement. The downward movement is demonstrated particularly in the incarnation – a key element in Origen’s theology. The Son of God, the Logos, who is God, became flesh, as Origen explains, in order to save man. The aim of his incarnation was causing an ethical transformation of the life of man (which provides a ‘pure heart’), inducing a spiritual ascent of his thought, which results ultimately in the knowledge of God, to the degree that corresponds to the individual capacities and the limited capacity of humans in general. In this process common people are explicitly included. God’s love is not restricted to educated people and therefore the knowledge of God is not confined to a small group of selected people, but offered to everyone irrespective of their education, gender or social status.

5.4 Qualities

Speaking about qualities of God in an adequate way is, strictly speaking, impossible, as Origen knows. In his response to Celsus’ statement that God cannot be named (*οὐκ ὀνομαστός*), he at first agrees with Celsus, though he calls for a precise definition of this notion: ‘If he means that none of the descriptions by words or expressions can show the attributes of God, the affirmation is true.’ (6.65.17-19). He continues by pointing at the general difficulty to express qualities exactly in words: how could anyone find words to express ‘the difference between the quality of sweetness of a date and that of a dried fig’? Does this lead to the conclusion that nothing whatsoever can be said about God? Origen has his readers in mind and thinks this conclusion is too rigorous:

(37) Εἰ δὲ τὸ ὀνομαστὸν λαμβάνεις καθὸ οἷόν τε ἐστὶν ὀνόμασι παραστήσαι τι τῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ χειραγωγῆσαι τὸν ἀκροατὴν καὶ ποιῆσαι νοῆσαι περὶ θεοῦ κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτὸν τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει τινὰ τῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ, οὐδὲν ἄτοπον λέγειν αὐτὸν ὀνομαστόν. (6.65.24-28)	But if you take the word to mean that it is possible by names to show something about his attributes in order to guide the hearer and to make him understand God’s character in so far as some attributes are attainable by human nature, then it is not wrong at all to say that he can be named.

I draw attention to the careful way Origen chooses his words (he does not even use the word ‘attributes’ that is used in the translation) and the reservation he inserts: ‘something about his attributes’ (*τι τῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ*), ‘some attributes’ (*τινὰ τῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ*) and ‘in so far as ... attainable by human nature’ (*κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτὸν τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει*). This is far from stating that we can define qualities of God, but also implies a denial of the obligation to remain silent about God’s nature.³²⁷ This approach is in line with the response Origen had given some chapters earlier to Celsus’ words ‘God does not have any other of the characteristics of which we know’ (*οὐδ’ ἄλλο φησιν εἶναι τῷ θεῷ ὃν ἡμεῖς ἴσμεν*, 6.62.13-14):

³²⁷ See also Reemts (1998:129-131).

VI. Philosophical theology

Origen firstly points out that generally speaking this is not true: God has many characteristics we know, e.g. virtue, blessedness and divinity. But he realizes that in a more exalted sense Celsus is right: ‘all we know is inferior to God’ and thus ‘the attributes of God (τὰ προσόντα τῷ θεῷ) are superior to any which are known not only by human nature, but even by the nature of beings who have risen beyond it.’ Not only humans, but also superior beings as angels do not know God’s attributes.³²⁸

Against this background I will discuss in this section a number of qualifications and attributes that can be found in Origen’s text in *Contra Celsum*. They will be divided roughly into two groups, although there is some overlap and interference between them: firstly qualifications that are inspired by contemporary philosophical conceptions and debates, and secondly indications that have biblical sources.

To start with the ‘philosophical’ group: here we encounter particularly negative adjectives, by which is indicated what God’s nature is *not*. The majority of them is discussed by Origen because the issue or the term was brought up by Celsus in his philosophically inspired critical remarks, but occasionally Origen takes the initiative himself. An example of the latter is a relatively short paragraph about the rather abstract topic of ‘parts’ and ‘the whole’.

Origen’s remarks on this topic are found in 1.23, where the discussion is about monotheism versus polytheism. In this context Origen suggests that the order and the unity of the cosmos justify the worship of only one creator. Then he writes: ‘All things are parts of the world, but God is not part of the whole. For God may not be incomplete as the part is incomplete. And probably a deeper inquiry could show that, strictly speaking, so also he is not the whole, since the whole is made up of parts. And reason does not demand that we should accept the view that the supreme God is made up of parts, each of which cannot do what the other part can.’ (1.23.24-30).³²⁹ The result of this short reasoning has a negative character: obviously ‘part’ and ‘whole’ are not terms that could be applied to God, who cannot be incomplete and is indivisible.³³⁰

Subsequently I quote a passage in which Origen enumerates four adjectives in a row. Speaking about Epicurus and the Stoics he writes:

(38) Οὐδὲ γὰρ δεδύνηνται οὗτοι τρανῶσαι τὴν φυσικὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἔννοιαν ὥς πάντῃ ἀφθάρτου, ἀπλοῦ, ἀσυνθέτου, ἀδιαιρέτου. (4.14.27-30)	Not even they have been able to perceive clearly the natural conception of God’s nature, as being entirely incorruptible, simple, uncompounded, indivisible.

This is Origen’s conclusion after a short reference to ideas of Epicurus and the Stoics about God: Epicurus presented gods as compound of atoms and therefore liable to dissolution, whereas in the Stoic conception god is capable of transformation and destruction.³³¹ This is in conflict with what Origen calls the ‘natural conception of God’s nature’,³³² in which is excluded that he can be compound, divided and destructed.

Text (38) is part of a section in which the topic of change is discussed (4.14-19). The occasion is Celsus’ allegation that the Christian doctrine of a divine descent entails a changing God, and change (μεταβολή), as Celsus asserts, is not desired by and possible for God. Origen agrees and demonstrates

³²⁸ See on the theme of transcendence and ineffability in 6.62-69 also O’Leary (2009:456ff.) and O’Leary (2011:214ff.).

³²⁹ The Stoic origin of the idea is indicated in Chadwick (1947: 44-45) and Borret *ad loc.* (Vol.1; 1967:134).

³³⁰ In 5.7 Origen points at a corresponding discussion among Greek philosophers who assert that the whole world is God. If this is true: what about its parts?

³³¹ Cf. the similar criticism of the Stoics in 1.21.14-18; 6.71.14-17. See also Reemts (1998:124-126), Villani (2018:118-119).

³³² See Reemts (1998: 114-115) on the provenance of the term φυσικαὶ (or κοιναὶ) ἔννοιαι: in the Stoic philosophy these are general conceptions that are implanted in the human nature, e.g. moral laws (1.4.5-6; 1.5.10-13) and the idea that God is not material (3.40.1-10).

that in biblical texts God is also presented as not subject to change: ‘While remaining unchanged in essence, he comes down in his providence and care over human affairs’ (4.14.18-19).³³³ God’s immutability is maintained by Origen also with regard to the incarnation: the ‘immortal divine Logos’, the ‘divine side’ of Christ as I indicated it above, ‘in his assumption of both a human body and a human soul’ did not change: the Logos remains Logos in essence (4.15.18-21).

Then the Platonic indication ‘beyond being’: according to Celsus Christians asserted that God participates in being.³³⁴ Origen is evasive and cautious in his reaction. On the one hand Celsus’ assertion is denied by Origen: ‘For he [God] is participated in rather than participates’ (6.64.14-15).³³⁵ On the other hand Origen recognizes that the issue of ‘being’ is complex. He is content by just enumerating a number of the questions involved: we have to discover whether God transcends being,³³⁶ or whether he is himself being; further, whether the Son of God is to be designated as ‘being of beings’, ‘idea of ideas’ and ‘beginning’ (οὐσίαν οὐσιῶν, ἰδέαν ἰδεῶν, ἀρχήν) and God, his Father, as beyond all these (ἐπέκεινα πάντων τούτων) (6.64.19-28). By giving this list of questions Origen shows that he is familiar with the philosophical debate, that Celsus is too quick with his criticism given the complicated nature of the issue. Meanwhile such a list of problems creates a comfortable escape without having to answer any of the questions. The notion of ‘beyond being’ is found again in 7.38.1-2, but also in this passage Origen keeps options open without speaking out clearly: ‘Asserting that the God of the universe is mind, or that he transcends mind and being (νοῦν ... ἢ ἐπέκεινα νοῦ καὶ οὐσίας), is simple and invisible and incorporeal ...’. That Origen avoids choosing in this abstract matter is understandable given the context: in 7.37-38 the discourse is about sense-perception and the possibility to get any knowledge (of God) without sense perception. About *this* issue Origen is not unclear: the invisible God cannot be seen by the eye of the body, he has to be comprehended by mind (irrespective whether God is mind or beyond mind and being).³³⁷ As it seems Origen is reluctant to making clear statements about the transcendence of God, perhaps because this idea could be felt as being incompatible to God’s love for mankind, a conviction that is an important element in Origen’s theology.³³⁸

Next I continue by discussing qualifications that can be gathered under the collective term of anthropomorphisms. Origen underlines that God is not corporeal (ἄσωματός, 7.27.12) and has not a form like a human body (4.37.10-11).³³⁹ When in the Bible God’s hands, eyes and ears are mentioned, these indications should not be interpreted in a literal sense, but allegorically (τροπικῶς, 6.61.29).³⁴⁰ He has no voice in the sense of ‘vibrated air, or a concussion of air, or any other definition given in textbooks

³³³ Origen quotes *Ps.* 101.28 and *Mal.* 3.6; the same combination is found in 1.21.22-23; 6.62.25-26 (in the latter passage Origen continues by saying ‘Remaining the same he controls the things that are subject to change’).

³³⁴ Ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ οὐσίας μετέχει ὁ θεός. Following Borret and Fiedrowicz & Barthold I take the words Ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ as not belonging to the quote from Celsus, but as Origen’s text (different from Chadwick’s translation, in which ‘not even’ is italicized), just like in the introductory formulas to the previous quotes given in 6.64 (where also Chadwick keeps the negatives outside the quote). In accordance with Platonism Celsus defends the idea of transcendence and here criticizes Christians for ‘degrading’ God to being.

³³⁵ As explanation Origen adds the statement that those who possess ‘the spirit of God’ (1 *Cor.* 7.40) participate in God (cf. 4.5.24; 6.70.4-6). And about Christ (referring to 1 *Cor.* 1.30): He ‘does not participate in righteousness, but being righteous, he is participated in by the righteous’. Origen uses the words μετέχω (or rather: takes it over from Celsus) and seems to adopt here Platonic thought in which the Forms are the primary (real) world, the source which things in the visible world participate in. See on the passage also O’Leary (2009:457-459).

³³⁶ A reference to the statement in Plato’s *Republica* 509b.

³³⁷ As far as I see this is the only text in which Origen in *Contra Celsum* uses the – within Platonism not uncommon – indication of God as ‘mind’ (νοῦς), although it sounds as a remark in passing and it is presented as only one of the options. Notice that 7.38 starts with a clause dependent on the participle λέγοντες, which not necessarily has the causal sense Chadwick in his translation opts for (‘Since we affirm ...’); a conditional interpretation seems to be not excluded: the following future φήσομεν can be given an inferential meaning: ‘if we say that ... then we would infer from it that ...’. Probably Origen in this passage has in mind the ancient epistemological notion *similia similibus cognoscuntur* (‘like knows like’): Being mind, God can be known by mind.

³³⁸ Cf. Whittaker (1969b); Villani (2018:119).

³³⁹ See also 6.64.3-5.

³⁴⁰ See also 4.37.5-13; 7.38.10-14.

on sound' (2.72.15-17,³⁴¹ cf. 6.62.6-9). Having no physical form God does not partake in movement and biblical phrases that suggest he moves should be interpreted figuratively (6.64.4-11). Responding to Celsus' suggestion that God leaves his throne when he comes down to men (4.5.3-4), Origen says that here not a spatial movement is denoted: God fills the whole world, so he cannot leave one place and fill another. Again allegory has to be applied in the interpretation of such expressions. In 4.72 .33-39 we find the same approach in the case of God's 'sleep'. Because God is not corporeal he is invisible: he cannot be seen with the eye of the body, but with a pure heart (6.69.13-15).³⁴² Origen generally agrees with Celsus in his rejection of anthropomorphic qualifications of God,³⁴³ at least when they are interpreted in a literal sense. Besides the reference to an allegorical interpretation Origen also applies semantical differentiation as defence strategy: he investigates the meaning of the used expressions, presents several options and evaluates them.³⁴⁴

In the light of this standpoint we can understand that Origen also denies that God can have negative emotions or undergo suffering. He agrees when Celsus says: 'God is outside any emotional experience' (6.65.30-31). For passages in the Bible in which hate or anger are attributed to God, Origen provides this general principle of interpretation: 'the Bible uses these words of God *as if* he possessed human passions' (1.71.9-10). In 4.71.4-11 Origen explains that the expressions used in the Bible are accommodated to the ability and the benefit of the human addressees, like adults in conversations with little children use language that is appropriate for them.³⁴⁵ Moreover, in Origen's view God's wrath and anger are not emotional reactions, but should be characterized as stern methods to correct those who have committed sins (4.72). In his interpretation of anthropomorphisms in the context of adaptation and education Origen agrees with Philo's approach in his interpretation of texts from the Old Testament.³⁴⁶ In fact since ancient days philosophers had criticized the humanlike representations of gods in myths and the epic tales of Homer.³⁴⁷ Discussions on these issues had been part of the debates between philosophical schools.³⁴⁸

³⁴¹ For references to such textbooks see Chadwick (1953:121 n.5), Borret *ad loc.* (Vol.1, 1967:457 n.2).

³⁴² See also 7.66.20-22.

³⁴³ These are mainly enumerated in the fragments quoted in 6.61-65.

³⁴⁴ Villani (2018:121) refers to διαστέλλομαι τὸ σημαίνόμενον ('I draw a distinction in the meaning', 6.65.8) and demonstrates a number of examples from 6.62-65.

³⁴⁵ See also 6.58.24-25. The comparison with the conversation with children is found also in Origen's *Homiliae in Jeremiam* 18.6.50ff. See on anthropomorphisms and accommodation in Origen Kuitert (1962:91-98).

³⁴⁶ An example of Philo's approach concerns *Genesis* 1.26-27, the passage about man who was made in the image and likeness of God. Philo underlines that this has nothing to do with a body or a physical form of God, but has to be taken in reference to the mind: οὐτε γὰρ ἀνθρωπόμορφος ὁ θεός, οὐτε θεοειδὲς τὸ ἀνθρώπειον σῶμα, ἡ δὲ εἰκὼν λέλεκται κατὰ τὸν τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγέμονα νοῦν ('for neither is God in human form, nor is the human body God-like. No, it is in respect of the Mind, the sovereign element of the soul, that the word 'image' is used', *De opificio mundi* 69, translation F.H. Colson, G.H. Whitaker, Loeb-edition). Kuitert (1962:90-91) argues that since Philo God's adaptation to the human situation has become the standard explanation of anthropomorphisms in Scripture. See for an example of the topic of education Philo's interpretation of *Genesis* 11.5 (about the Tower of Babel): when we read 'The Lord went down to see that city and that tower', we should, according to Philo, not think of any physical movement, but 'these things are spoken in an anthropomorphic way by Moses, the lawgiver, about God who is not anthropomorphic, in order to help us in our education' (ταῦτα δὲ ἀνθρωπολογεῖται παρὰ τῷ νομοθέτῃ περὶ τοῦ μὴ ἀνθρωπομόρφου θεοῦ διὰ τὰς τῶν παιδευομένων ἡμῶν [...] ὠφελείας, *De confusione linguarum* 135). Similar rejection of any notion of God in humanlike forms and passions by Philo in his *Legum Allegoriae* 1.36-37 (no mouth or nostrils), *Quod deus* 58-59 (no eyes, no human passions), *De Sacrificiis Abelis* 95 (no hands, feet, human passions), *De Plantatione* 35 (no need of food). The education motive is repeated by Philo in *Quod Deus* 54 and *De Somniis* 1.235.

³⁴⁷ For Plato such untruthful stories are not only incompatible with the true nature of the divine, but the morally indefensible behaviour of these gods also provides bad examples and keeps people away from righteousness and a virtuous way of life (see *Respublica* 377-383). Cf. also Van Riel (2013:25-30), who describes two developments in Greek thought (from ca.500 BC onwards) that undermine the traditional anthropomorphic religion: the idea of gods as personified natural forces was changed by a new conception of nature in which the Olympian gods had no personal role anymore. Secondly the growing criticism of the bad morals of the gods lead to a change in the image of the gods: still human, but without signs of maliciousness or evil. In both tendencies the principles of reason (λόγος) and intellect (νοῦς) were important explanatory factors.

³⁴⁸ See e.g. Cicero's *De natura deorum* 1.76-102 (where the Academic Cotta dwells on the theme in his criticism of the Epicurean theology) and 2.70 (where the Stoic Balbus characterizes the mythical gods as an 'imaginary and fanciful pantheon: the perversion has been a fruitful source of false beliefs, crazy errors and superstitions hardly above the level of old wives' tales' – ... *commenticios et fictos deos. Quae res genuit falsas opinionones erroresque turbulentos et superstitiones paene aniles*

VI. Philosophical theology

In this context I also refer to Origen's rejection of Celsus' claim that the human-like activities and experiences that are recorded of Jesus argue against his divine status.³⁴⁹ Origen agrees that divinity and suffering cannot be associated.³⁵⁰ Indeed, Jesus suffered pain, ate food, was betrayed by a friend, was afraid, endured shameful treatments (etc.), but all these things are to be connected, as Origen argues, to the human body and soul that was assumed by the divine Logos: 'At his advent into life, as he was born of a woman, he assumed a body which was human and capable of dying a human death.' (1.69.4-6).³⁵¹

Is God omnipotent? Celsus raised the issue in the fragment that is quoted in 3.70.1-2: 'God will be able to do everything'. In Origen's response the issue is nuanced: 'In our opinion God is able to do everything which he can do without abandoning his position as God, as good and as wise' (3.70.8-10). Therefore God cannot do wrong, 'for the power to do wrong contradicts his divinity and all his divine power' (3.70.16-18).³⁵²

So far on qualifications that emerge from debates with Celsus and abstractions that belong to the philosophical sphere. To provide a more complete picture I will continue with a discussion on a number of qualities and characteristics of God that are not inspired by Celsus' criticism, but have biblical sources. In the first place I refer to general indications that are used *passim* by Origen: Father, Son and Logos.³⁵³ In 2.71 then Origen refers to Jesus' teachings: the Son, as he is presented here, the only one who knows the Father,³⁵⁴ reveals to his disciples the nature of the Father. The traces of this can, as Origen says, be used as starting points of the 'theology' (ἀφορμὰς ... θεολογεῖν, 'speaking about God', 2.71.7). Origen mentions two of these traces: the characterization of God as 'light' (φῶς) and as 'spirit' (πνεῦμα). In that context Origen confines himself to quoting two biblical texts without further explanation: 'God is light and in him is no darkness at all' (1 John 1.5) and 'God is spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth' (John 4.24). The image of light is associated by Origen elsewhere with the notions of knowledge and that of goodness.³⁵⁵ 'Light' is also used to denote the Son of God.³⁵⁶ The qualification of God as 'spirit' and the worship 'in spirit and truth' is briefly discussed in 6.70-71, where Origen firstly contrasts worshipping God in external signs as carnal sacrifices ('worship in flesh', ἐν σαρκί) with worshipping God with the mind (νοητῶς λατρεύειν) as explanation of 'in spirit' (6.70.34-37). Then, provoked by Celsus' allegation that by saying 'God is spirit' Christians are not different from Stoics in this respect,³⁵⁷ Origen explains that πνεῦμα in the Stoic doctrine is material and therefore destructible, whereas in the Christian view God is not material (6.71; also 6.70.18).³⁵⁸ A positive explanation of the meaning of 'God is spirit' is not given here.

(translation H. Rackham, Loeb-edition); see also 2.63-69 and 71-72 about allegorical interpretations proposed to 'save' the traditional gods and the religious practices.

³⁴⁹ See above 3.4 for a more comprehensive account of Celsus' claim.

³⁵⁰ See above 5.2 on Origen's Christology.

³⁵¹ See also 1.68.43-45; 2.23.10-18; 2.42.16-19; 4.15.16-20; in 2.25 and 7.16.7-19 Origen mentions some statements of Jesus and explicitly divides them into words of the divine Logos and words of the weak human flesh.

³⁵² Cf. 5.24.1-2; and 5.23.19-20: 'God does not desire what is contrary to nature, neither what is the result of sin, nor what is done irrationally'. On God's power and its limitations see also *De principiis* 1.2.9-10; 1.9.1; 4.4.8.

³⁵³ Origen is aware of the philosophical origin of the title λόγος as used in *John* 1.1: 5.24.26-27.

³⁵⁴ Quotes from *Matt.* 11.27; *John* 1.18.

³⁵⁵ The association with knowledge is found in 5.10-11, where a contrast is made with the created light of sun, moon and stars: the light in the celestial bodies is called 'visible' (τὸ αἰσθητὸν φῶς) as opposed to the great intellectual light of knowledge' (τηλικούτον νοητὸν γνώσεως φῶς). (See also 6.66.14-16; see also 6.3.29; 6.5.3; 6.66.16-20). For the moral significance: in 3.70.15-16 and 6.27.30 light stands for a good way of life and is opposed to the darkness of doing wrong.

³⁵⁶ The phrase 'the effulgence of eternal light' (ἀπαύγασμα φωτὸς αἰδίου, used in *Wisd.* 7.26 to denote Wisdom is in Origen's interpretation an indication of the Son of God, who reflects the light of the Father (quoted in 3.72.8-9; 5.10.47-48, 58; 5.30.5; 8.14.10-11; and with a little variation in 7.17.5; 8.12.27; 8.14.7). Also texts in which the Logos himself is called 'light' are quoted by Origen: *John* 1.4 ('light of men') in 5.10.52; *John* 1.9 ('the Son of God is true light') in 5.10.51-52; 5.11.11-13; 6.5.7-8; 6.59.13-14; *John* 8.12 ('I am the light of the world') in 5.10.52; 5.11.14; 6.5.8; 1 *John* 2.8 ('true light') in 6.67.18; 7.31.17).

³⁵⁷ See Andresen (1955:71-77).

³⁵⁸ *John* 4.28 is quoted again in 7.27.18-19 in a context of a denial of the corporeality and visibility of God.

More metaphorical indications are found in the statements of self-presentation of Christ found in the gospel of John: 'I am the living bread', 'I am the door', 'I am the light of the world', 'I am the resurrection', 'I am the way, the truth and the life'.³⁵⁹ Origen does not provide any explanation of the meaning of these metaphors, but underlines several times that they denote the divinity of Jesus: these words are to be attributed to the Logos who spoke 'in Jesus'.³⁶⁰ That these terms do not refer to the human Jesus is obvious to everyone in Origen's opinion: even for common people the figurative character of these qualifications is clear, for no one would think that the life died or that resurrection died in a literal sense.³⁶¹

I will conclude this section by discussing characteristics in which God's relation with man is involved. I mean God's grace, kindness, forgiveness and philanthropy. We might classify these qualifications as 'emotions' that are attributed to God in the Bible. Origen does not use that term himself, but does deny that God can show mercy and speaks of his grace, kindness and love for man as motive for his actions. We do not encounter any suggestion that these 'emotions' require an allegorical interpretation. Let me show some context in which Origen discusses these themes.

In book 3 of *Contra Celsum* a number of fragments is quoted in which Celsus talks about sins and judgement. He criticizes the God of the Christians for having feelings of mercy: 'perhaps does God not judge on consideration of the truth, but is influenced by flattery' (3.63.9-10).³⁶² Celsus asks whether mercy does not encourage sinners and thinks it is obvious to everyone that people who sin by nature and habit cannot be changed, not even by punishments, much the less by mercy (3.65.1,22-26). In his response Origen firstly dwells some time on the possibility to change one's evil way of life and then in 3.71 comments to the feelings of pity. He denies that God is influenced by lamentations only. God does not help 'any bad man who has not made progression towards virtue' (μη προτετραμμένον ἐπ' ἀρετήν). But then he continues as follows:

(39) [...] ἀλλὰ τοὺς σφόδρα ἑαυτῶν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἡμαρτημένοις κατεγνωκότας, ὡς ἐπὶ τούτῳ οἰοεὶ πενθεῖν καὶ θρηγεῖν ἑαυτοὺς ὡς ἀπολωλότας ὅσον ἐπὶ τοῖς προπεπραγμένοις καὶ ἀξιόλογον ἐπιδεικνυμένους μεταβολήν, προσίεται τῆς μετανοίας χάριν ὁ θεὸς καὶ τοὺς ἐκ μεταβολῆς κακίστου βίου. Ἀμνηστίαν γὰρ τοῖς τοιοῦτοις δίδωσιν ἀρετὴ [...] (3.71.10-15)	But those who severely have condemned themselves from their past sins, so that for this they mourn, as it were, and lament for themselves as people who have perished because of their past misdeeds, if they show significant evidence of repentance, will be accepted by God on the ground of repentance, even those who change from the worst life. For virtue grants forgiveness to men like this [...]

Origen is clear: God will accept even the worst offender if he sincerely repents and shows a virtuous way of life or at least progression in the right direction.³⁶³ Origen underlines that the repentance should be deep and sincere by amplifying the self-accusing thoughts of the remorseful sinner. In contrast with this extended formulas Origen seems to minimize the emotional element in God's part of the process.³⁶⁴ Acceptance and amnesty is presented as granted by both God and by the virtue of the person involved. In the latter approach and in the emphasis on repentance we recognize Origen's underlining of the human

³⁵⁹ *John* 6.51; 10.7; 8.12; 11.25; 14.6. Quoted in 1.66.15-16; 2.9.25-27,47-48; 2.25.3; 2.64.3-5; 5.11.14; 6.66.29-30; 7.16.15-17,25; 8.12.21; 8.20.32-33. Remarkably the 'good shepherd' (*John* 10.11) and 'the true vine' (*John* 15.1) are not quoted in *Contra Celsum*.

³⁶⁰ See 1.66.14; 2.9.25; 7.16.13-14.

³⁶¹ See 7.16.20-27.

³⁶² Chadwick (1947:47 and 1953:176 n.1) and Borret *ad loc.* (Vol.2, 1968:146-147 n.1) point at the Stoic disapproval of mercy: as πάθος it is not a virtue but a vice.

³⁶³ See also 3.62.28-32.

³⁶⁴ Cf. ἐλεηθέντες in 6.67.33 provoked by the preceding biblical quote.

free will and responsibility.³⁶⁵ Virtue is presented here as the goal of the human process of correction and, as is explained elsewhere, all individuals make their own progression towards virtue.³⁶⁶

God's grace (χάρις), kindness (χρηστότης) and love to man (φιλανθρωπία) are mentioned by Origen several times. In the next passage all three of them are used:

(40) Ὁ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος εἰπὼν· «Οὐδεὶς ἔγνω τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ ὃ ἂν ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψῃ»³⁶⁷ θείᾳ τινὶ χάριτι, οὐκ ἄθεεῖ ἐγγινομένη τῇ ψυχῇ ἀλλὰ μετὰ τινος ἐνθουσιασμοῦ, ἀποφαίνεται γινώσκεσθαι τὸν θεόν. Καὶ γὰρ εἰκὸς μείζονα μὲν ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν εἶναι τὴν γνῶσιν τοῦ θεοῦ – διὸ καὶ τὰ τοσαῦτα παρ' ἀνθρώποις ἐστὶ περὶ θεοῦ σφάλματα – χρηστότητι δὲ καὶ φιλανθρωπία τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παραδόξῳ καὶ θειοτέρῳ χάριτι φθάνειν τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ γνῶσιν ἐπὶ τοὺς προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ προκαταληφθέντας ὅτι ἀξίως βιώσουσι τοῦ ἐγνωσμένου. (7.44.6-15)

But when the Logos says that 'No man has known the Father except the Son, and the man to whom the Son may reveal him', he indicates that God is known by a certain divine grace, which does not come about in the soul without God's action, but with a sort of inspiration. Moreover, it is probable that the knowledge of God is beyond the capacity of human nature (that is why there are such great errors about God among men), but that by God's kindness and love to man and by a miraculous divine grace the knowledge of God extends to those who by God's foreknowledge have been previously determined, because they would live lives worthy of him after he was made known to them.

Responding to Celsus' opinion that intellectual methods of synthesis, analysis and analogy can be used to achieve some knowledge of God, Origen points in a different direction: knowledge of God can only be given by divine grace³⁶⁸ and by inspiration, which come from God's kindness and philanthropy. Origen underlines his point by an accumulation of expressions: θείᾳ τινὶ χάριτι, οὐκ ἄθεεῖ μετὰ τινος ἐνθουσιασμοῦ, χρηστότητι δὲ καὶ φιλανθρωπία τοῦ θεοῦ,³⁶⁹ παραδόξῳ καὶ θειοτέρῳ χάριτι. The necessity of this divine initiative is explained from the character of this knowledge: it is beyond the human capacity.³⁷⁰ Man is dependent on God's love and kindness, but in the final part of (40) the complex connection between God's action, his foreknowledge and the 'worthy life' of man is expressed. In my reconstruction: God knew in advance³⁷¹ that certain people would live appropriately after they had come to know God; therefore he granted them knowledge by his kindness and love. The mention of the worthy life as a key factor corresponds with the way the element of free will and virtue is discussed in the comment to (39).³⁷² Whereas the qualities of kindness and philanthropy are in text (40) related to the gift of the knowledge of God, elsewhere they are presented by Origen as motives for the God's descent to the earth,³⁷³ which is an interesting fact in view of the subject of my corpus.³⁷⁴

³⁶⁵ See 4.3.34-49 on the essential role that is given to free will in the process of correction. Cf. Reemts (1998:137-138).

³⁶⁶ On (progression towards) virtue as an element of the Christian life and the teachings of Christ 2.29.14; 2.48.39; 3.30.19-24; 3.58.7-9; 3.59.25-28; 3.60.7-10; 4.5.22-24; 4.6.3-5; 4.16.3-5; 4.64.8-12; 6.54.4-6; 7.3.22-25; 7.4.8-10; 7.18.21-30; 8.17.11-20.

³⁶⁷ *Matt.* 11.27.

³⁶⁸ For the use of χάρις in a context of the gift of knowledge, wisdom, prophecy and inspiration see 4.66.14; 5.50.22; 6.6.25; 6.7.4; 6.13.5; 8.46.23.

³⁶⁹ The combination χρηστότης φιλανθρωπία is derived from *Tit.* 3.4 and is found also in 1.64.17; 1.67.24-25.

³⁷⁰ See also in the section on knowledge, 5.3, above.

³⁷¹ See on foreknowledge also 2.14; 2.18; 2.20; 6.45.20.

³⁷² In addition I refer to 7.33.13-19 where the 'worthy life' is given an ethical specification: the 'pure heart' which 'sees God' (*Matt.* 5.8), is the heart 'from which evil thoughts no longer proceed [...] nor any other evil deed' (Origen enumerates seven of such evil practices).

³⁷³ See 4.15.2; 4.17.18; 4.18.33; 5.12.1. See also Osborn (1992:276), who argues that Origen's references to φιλανθρωπία are related to '(1) incarnation, the human life and death of Christ and (2) revelation in Scripture and the teachings of Christ'.

³⁷⁴ See Benjamins (1994:194-205) for a discussion of questions concerning the combination of all the qualities Origen attributes to God: e.g. how does God's love and feelings of regret and mercy relate to his immutability?

In summary: Origen points out that qualifications that might be attributed to God never can be adequate, for God's nature is far superior to what can be understood by the humans. Yet there is no reason to remain completely silent: at least something might be said about God's nature. The qualifications discussed were divided into a group with philosophical inspiration and a group that Origen derived from the Bible.

The first group consists mainly of negative adjectives: indivisible, incorruptible, uncompounded, immutable, invisible and incorporeal. Concerning these attributes there is a high degree of agreement between Origen and Celsus. This applies also to the rejection of anthropomorphic indications of God, albeit that for Origen such expressions if they are used in the Bible should not be rejected, but allegorically interpreted. Origen seems to be somewhat reluctant to qualify God as 'beyond being', probably because he felt this as hard to combine with God's commitment to the world and his love to man.

In the second group, consisting of qualifications with biblical sources, we find designations of God as light and spirit; and the self-qualifications of Jesus as the way, the truth, the life, the resurrection etc., metaphorical expressions that are quoted by Origen and interpreted denoting the divinity of Jesus: it is the Logos who speaks in him. Any further explanation concerning the meaning of the metaphors is not given. Origen argues that God accepts sinners, if they show clear signs of repentance and search for a virtuous life. Finally God's grace, kindness and love to man were discussed, which in Origen's text function as motives for God to come down to man and grant him wisdom and knowledge of himself.

5.5 God and the world: creation and correction

Next I will deal with Origen's view on the relation between God and the world. In this section the following topics will be discussed: creation, the nature of evil and God's commitment to correct the world.

For Origen the issue of the origin of the world needs no long discussion: God created the universe. Several times God is indicated by him as 'the creator of the world'.³⁷⁵ In response to Celsus, who, in accordance with Plato's *Timaeus* 69c, had denoted only immortal beings as god's work and mortal beings as the work of immortal creator-gods (4.52, see text (23) above), Origen thinks that it is a better option to believe in one God, who created each thing for a certain purpose and reason (4.54). In a different context Origen affirms that Christians 'maintain that even the sensible world is made by the creator of all things' (8.15.23-24). Celsus' suggestions concerning a difference between another creator and the supreme God are rejected by Origen: this is not what Christians say; perhaps such objections should be addressed to Marcion rather than to Christians (6.52-53). As we saw above in text (32), Origen attributes a role in the creation to the Logos as well: referring to Gen.1.3 and Ps.33.9 he says that it was the Father who commanded and the Logos who fulfilled the commands.³⁷⁶

In opposition to Celsus' opinion Origen argues that man has a special position within the created world. Celsus, as part of a passage in which he interrupts his series of critical remarks towards Christianity and presents his own teachings 'about the order of nature',³⁷⁷ asserted that 'everything was made just as much for the irrational animals as for men' (4.74.4-5, text (24) above), is the beginning of a lengthy discussion (until the end of book 4) about rational and irrational beings. Origen defends anthropocentrism and formulates the Christian approach as follows:

³⁷⁵ Origen both uses forms of κτίζω (1.18.24; 2.29.30; 3.3.9; 3.15.17; 3.40.17; 3.69.4; 4.75.24; 8.1.13; 8.15.23; 8.33.11; 8.56.3) and δημιουργέω/δημιουργός (e.g. 1.11.16; 1.18.25; 1.19.17; 1.20.13; 1.23.20; 3.40.13-14; 3.54.28; 3.69.4-5; 4.57.16; 4.78.23; 8.14.18). Less favorite is ποιέω: 5.6.24; 6.50.27; 6.69.21; 8.50.21.

³⁷⁶ See 2.9.32-46; 2.31.9-11. In 6.47.12-17 Origen criticizes Celsus for not referring to Plato's 6th letter, in which, according to Origen, the 'son of God' is denoted as the one who 'ordered the universe'.

³⁷⁷ See his announcement quoted in 4.52.10-11.

- (41) Ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς οἱ τῷ ταῦτα κτίσαντι μόνῳ ἀνακείμενοι θεῷ Χριστιανοὶ καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις χάριν οἶδαμεν τῷ καὶ τούτων δημιουργῷ, ὅτι ἡμῖν τηλικαύτην ἐστίαν εὐτρέπισε καὶ δι' ἡμᾶς τοῖς δουλεύουσιν ἡμῖν ζώοις. (4.75.23-27)
- We Christians, however, who are devoted to the only God who created these things, acknowledge our gratitude for them to him who is also the creator of these things³⁷⁸, because he has prepared such a home for us and, with a view to our benefit, for the animals which serve us.

In this passage several elements of Origen's view come together: his belief in God as creator (τῷ ταῦτα κτίσαντι μόνῳ, τῷ καὶ τούτων δημιουργῷ), his conviction that all is made for the sake of man (δι' ἡμᾶς, δουλεύουσιν ἡμῖν) and his expressions of gratitude for this to the creator (ἀνακείμενοι, ἐπὶ τούτοις χάριν οἶδαμεν). In the latter phrases the communicational aspect of the text comes to the fore: Origen, so to say, leaves for a moment the philosophical debate and inserts words expressing personal religious devotion he shares with his readers (ἡμεῖς ... Χριστιανοί). In the context of the philosophical debate however Origen explicitly denotes agreement with the standpoint of the Stoics: 'They quite rightly put man and the rational nature in general above all irrational beings, and say that providence has made everything for the sake of the rational nature' (4.74.12-15).³⁷⁹ Reason (λόγος) is what connects man ('probably') to God, as Origen says: '[...] reason which is common to men and to divine and heavenly beings, and probably also to the supreme God himself. This explains why he is said to have been made in the image of God; for the image of the supreme God is his reason (Logos).' (4.85.21-24).³⁸⁰ In his ability to think and order everything, man is 'working together with providence' (4.81.12-15).

The 'didactical' part of Celsus' comments also deals with the issue of evil (fragments quoted in 4.62-70).³⁸¹ According to Celsus knowledge of the origin of evil is not easy to achieve for those who have not read philosophy. In his reaction Origen acknowledges the difficulty of the issue and points out what in his opinion minimal conditions are to obtain some clarity:³⁸² firstly it has to be recognized that ignorance of God and the right way to worship him is among the greatest evils and secondly the role of 'the so-called devil and his angels'³⁸³ should be investigated (4.65.17-35).³⁸⁴ Thus putting the problem in a theological perspective Origen refrains from a discussion of his opinion on this issue here³⁸⁵ and

³⁷⁸ καὶ τούτων ('also these things') refers to 'thunders, lightnings, rainstorms, plants, trees, grass and thorns'. In 4.75 Origen discusses passages in which Celsus denies that such material things are made by God, or (if one were to allow that he did create them), that they serve men more than irrational animals. In text (41) Origen rejects both points: God is the creator of these things as well, and he created them eventually for the sake of men.

³⁷⁹ Cf. 4.24.23-24; 4.25.22-24; 4.77.26; 4.78.22-23; 4.81.2-3; 4.99.13-14.

³⁸⁰ Notice Origen's use of the word 'image' (εἰκόν) to link *Gen.* 1.26 to 1 *Cor.* 1.15. Cf. 4.83.44-48. Borret *ad loc.* (Vol.2, 1968:306-397 n.1; see also 1968:243 n.3) refers to similar words of Seneca: *Ratio vero diis hominibusque communis est* ('Reason is common to gods and men', *Epistula* 92.27). Cf. also Cicero, *De Legibus* 1.23: *Est igitur quoniam nihil est ratione melius, eaque est in homine et in deo, prima homini cum deo rationis societas* ('Because there is nothing better than reason and this exists both in man and god, so there is a primary rational connection of man with god'). See Chadwick (1947:36-37) on Origen and Stoics here.

³⁸¹ For a general discussion of these chapters see Rist (1983). Origen's view on evil is discussed in Scott (2012:23-48).

³⁸² Cf. the use of γοῦν in 4.65.17. See Rijksbaron (2000:160): γοῦν is both a text structuring and a scope particle; it indicates the start of a next section in which is a minimal proof of the preceding is presented.

³⁸³ In *De principiis* 1.6.3; 1.8; 1.3.8; 1.41; 1.5.2-3; 2.9.2; 4.4.94 Origen had discussed the fall of the rational beings and suggested as reasons their free will and a certain 'aversion of commitment towards the good and negligence' (*desidia et laboris taedium in servando bono et aversion ac negligentia*, 2.9.2). In 1.3.8 Rufinus, the Latin translator of *De principiis*, refers to *satiety* ('satiety') by which he translates the Greek word κόπος (the word appears in the text of the condemnation of Origen by emperor Justinian (543) in c.1; for the text see the *De principiis* edition of Görgemanns & Karpp (1992:822). In *Contra Celsum* 6.44.33 κορεσθεῖς ('sated') is used to explain the fall of Satan. For a general discussion, based especially on *De principiis*, on the pre-existence of the souls and their fall see Crouzel (1985:267ff.); Scott (2012:61-66).

³⁸⁴ Cf. 6.44-45 on 'Satan' and 'Antichrist'.

³⁸⁵ Why does Origen at this point in *Contra Celsum* show reluctance to present his own view? Maybe because he here wants to avoid the negative reactions among Christians that were aroused by his investigating method and his speculative suggestions about the pre-existence of rational beings. As alternative (or in addition) I also give a more rhetorical-pragmatical reason that is based on the character of the discussion in this part of *Contra Celsum*: Celsus does not attack Christian opinions in this

confines himself to the analysis of the problem and the presentation of the line of questioning desired.³⁸⁶ Moreover while he agrees with Celsus that evils are not caused by God,³⁸⁷ he disagrees when Celsus relates evil to ‘the matter that dwells among mortals’.³⁸⁸ For, as Origen says, ‘each person’s leading principle (τὸ ἐκάστου ἡγεμονικόν) is responsible for the evilness (κακία) which exists in him and this is what evil (τὸ κακόν) is. Evil things (κακά) are the actions which result from it (viz. κακία).’ (4.66.8-12). So for the origin of evil Origen points at the leading principle in human mind: the will that is free to choose, even to choose for evil. Such a choice leads to the existence of evilness in this person, from which evil actions arise.

From a different context in which the issue of evil is discussed again I pick up some elements which can complete the picture. In 6.53.21-22 Origen quotes Celsus’ question: ‘... how can it be that God should make what is evil?’ Origen starts by quoting ‘disturbing’ biblical passages in which ‘in a looser sense’ (6.55.1) God is presented as causing evil.³⁸⁹ In his discussion of the problem Origen starts with the statement that ‘evil things, badness and the actions that result from it’ are not made by God. Stating that these things originate from God could lead to undesired moral consequences: bad people cannot be judged for evil deeds nor can good people be rewarded for virtuous actions (yet such judgements and rewards occur in the Bible; so evil cannot originate from God). Origen distinguishes between evil in the strict and the loose sense of the word (κυρίως – καταχρηστικῶς) and states: in a strict sense God made no evils, but ‘evils ... have been the consequence of the works which were his primary intention,³⁹⁰ just as spiral shavings and sawdust are a consequence of the primary works of a carpenter and as builders may seem to cause the mess that lies beside buildings such as the dirt that falls off the stones and the plaster’ (6.55.33-40).³⁹¹ Things however ‘which are loosely described as evils, physical and external evils’ can be caused by God who uses them as a means to heal or convert people, just like fathers, teachers and physicians sometimes use pains for remedial purposes.³⁹² The biblical passages Origen had quoted are to be explained in this perspective (6.56).

Although in Origen’s view God did not cause evil in its strict sense, he does not remain indifferent to it: ‘It is not in accord with God’s character not to stop the spread of evil and bring moral renewal.’ (4.20.13-14). In the next passage Origen makes clear that God always works on correction. The passage is a response to Celsus’ statement that God does not need a new reformation (καινότερα διόρθωσις) and does not inflict correction on the world (4.69.8-10). Origen does not agree:

(42) Θέλει οὖν διὰ καινότερας διορθώσεως αἰεὶ ὁ θεὸς τὰ σφάλματα ἀναλαμβάνειν. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ τέτακται αὐτῷ πάντα κάλλιστα καὶ ἀσφαλέστατα κατὰ τὴν τῶν ὅλων	By a new reformation then God always wants to make good that which is wrong. Even though everything had been arranged by him at the creation of the universe to be very beautiful and very steadfast, yet nevertheless he has had to

section, but just explains his own thoughts. This discourse situation removes the necessity of a defence for Origen and opens the possibility to limit his reaction to asking critical questions and to analyze the problem his opponent raised.

³⁸⁶ The questions he proposes here are not in conflict with the approach in *De principiis* (see note above): about the devil we should ask ‘who he was before he became a devil, and how he became a devil, and what caused his so-called angels to rebel with him’ and about the daemons we must ‘be aware that they are not God’s creation in so far as they are daemons, but only in so far as they are rational beings of some sort’. And we must understand ‘how they came to be such that their mind put them in the position of daemons’ (4.65.26-35).

³⁸⁷ See 4.66.6.

³⁸⁸ See on the neutral status of matter and the body also 3.42 ‘What is properly speaking abominable (τὸ ... μισητόν) is of the nature of evilness (ἀπὸ κακίας). The nature of the body is not abominable; for in itself bodily nature is not involved in evilness which is the originating cause of what is abominable.’

³⁸⁹ Job saying to his wife: ‘For if we have received good from the Lord’s hand, shall we not submit to evil?’ (*Job* 2.10); elsewhere God is presented as saying: ‘I am he that makes peace and creates evil’ (*Isa*.45.7); and: ‘Evil came down from the Lord to the gates of Jerusalem, a noise of chariots and horsemen’ (*Micah* 1.12-13).

³⁹⁰ Cf. 6.53.32-33; 7.68.35-37; 8.68.25-27.

³⁹¹ Chadwick (1953:372 n.1) refers to the similar comparison made by Maximus of Tyre (41.4) and Marcus Aurelius (8.50).

³⁹² Cf. 2.24.32-36; 4.72.40-44.

δημιουργίαν, ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἤττον ἱατρικῆς apply some medical treatment to people sick
 τινος αὐτῷ ἐδέησε τοῖς τὴν κακίαν νοσοῦσι with sin and to all the world as it were defiled
 καὶ παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ, ὑπ' αὐτῆς ὥσπερὶ by it.
 μολυνομένῳ. (4.69.16-21)

Opposing to Celsus Origen states that God always³⁹³ wants to carry out the correction demanded: even in the world that was beautifully ordered, corrective interventions are necessary due to the presence of evil. By comparing the consequences of evil to illness and pollution³⁹⁴ Origen presents the divine correction as healing and cleaning treatments. In a different context he explains the biblical metaphor of fire in this sense: God is represented as a consuming fire because he 'consumes evil and the actions resulting from it' and 'he makes the evil which has permeated the whole soul to disappear' (4.13.11-12,34-35).³⁹⁵ The focus in the ongoing divine activities is on the correction of the human soul and a moral reformation:³⁹⁶ 'God has at no time not desired to correct the life of man, but he had always cared for reformation of the rational being and given opportunities of virtue' (4.7.8-11). For this reason God has continually sent his messengers, among which Origen mentions Moses and the prophets and especially Jesus.³⁹⁷ Jesus called people to conversion and to moral reformation by showing himself as an example of the best life, and also by his teachings and miracles.³⁹⁸ The sins of man caused Christ's descent to the earth: 'for the sake of the sinners in all places Jesus has come down, according to our preaching, so that they would forsake their sin and entrust themselves to God' (4.28.32-35).³⁹⁹ The reforming effect of Jesus' healing actions also continued after his death: the spread of his teachings all over the world, as Origen says, causes churches to exist everywhere, as 'lights in the world' in opposition to 'the assemblies of superstitious, licentious and unrighteous men'.⁴⁰⁰

The decisive impact the divine correction has in Origen's view, is demonstrated in one of the final chapters of *Contra Celsum*, where Origen shows his optimism about the power of the divine Logos to eliminate all evil in the end. The passage is provoked by a quote from Celsus in which on the one hand he wishes that it would be possible to unite the people of Asia, Europe and Libya under one law, but on the other hand seems to express that this is impossible.⁴⁰¹ Origen thinks a unity of all the rational beings under one law is not only possible but even true, albeit, as he adds later on, this situation will not be accomplished during the life on earth: it does not apply to 'those who are still in the body', but 'after they have been delivered from it'.⁴⁰² In his response to Celsus' wish Origen firstly refers to the Stoic doctrine of the conflagration in which one element dominates all the others. Then he words his Christian belief as follows:

(43) [...] ἡμεῖς δὲ τῆς λογικῆς φύσεώς φαμεν ὅλης [...] we believe that at some time the Logos
 κρατῆσαι ποτε τὸν λόγον καὶ μεταποιῆσαι will have overcome the entire rational nature,

³⁹³ Cf. Origen's underling of the permanent character of God's corrective interactions in 4.3.24-26; 4.4.11-21; 4.7.8-16; 4.78.17-18; 6.70.4-6.

³⁹⁴ Cf. medical metaphors in 1.55.17; 2.48.42; 2.67.28-29; 3.62.7-10; 4.15.16-18; 4.19.12-15; 4.99.34; 5.11.41-44; 8.59.20-22; 8.72.20-23; for metaphors with the image of pollution see also 6.69.16; 7.45.6-11; 7.64.26-28.

³⁹⁵ See also 5.15.7-20, where the fire is presented as means to purify the world, not to consume to sinner, but evil actions, words and thoughts.

³⁹⁶ Cf. τῶν ἡθῶν ἐπανόρθωσις in 1.68.26,34; 2.51.37; 3.27.26; 7.10.17.

³⁹⁷ Cf. 1.37.19-20; 1.45; 3.29.17; 4.3.11-21; 4.4.17-21; 4.96.18; 6.79.43-44; 6.81.5-9; 7.41.20-32; 8.43.7-9.

³⁹⁸ Cf. 1.43.36-40; 1.68.33-41; 3.29.17-22; 3.62.7-10; 4.9.3-7.

³⁹⁹ In this context Origen refers to 1 *Tim.* 4.10; 1 *John* 2.2; *Rom.* 5.7-8. See also 3.17.16-18; 3.49.4-9; 4.4.20; 4.19.24-30; 8.13.18-24.

⁴⁰⁰ See 4.29.17-28, a passage in which Origen plays with the double meaning of ἐκκλησία: political 'assembly' and 'church'. See on the life changing effect of the Logos and the Christian message 3.33.6-14; 3.34.19-22; 3.56.2-8; 3.69.2-11; 4.5.29-34. See on the use the morality argument in the debate on truth Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.1, 2011:107-109).

⁴⁰¹ The passage is subject of much debate, see Chadwick (1953:507 n.1), Andresen (1955:190-192), Borret (Vol.4, 1969: 340-341 n.1), Fiedrowicz & Barthold (Vol.5, 2012:1464 n.247) and with many other references Arnold (2016:177 n.264).

⁴⁰² See 8.72.61-62.

πασαν ψυχὴν εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ τελειότητα, ἐπὶ ἑκάστος ψυχῇ χρησάμενος τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ἐλθεται ἃ βούλεται καὶ γένηται ἐν οἷς εἴλατο· καὶ φάμεν ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν εἰκός, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν <ἐν> τοῖς σώμασι νοσημάτων καὶ τραυμάτων τινὰ τῶν συμβαινόντων ισχυρότερα εἶναι πάσης ἰατρικῆς τέχνης, οὕτως ἐπὶ τῶν ψυχῶν εἶναι τι τῶν ἀπὸ κακίας ἀδύνατον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσι λογικοῦ καὶ θεοῦ θεραπευθῆναι. Πάντων γὰρ τῶν ἐν ψυχῇ κακῶν δυνατότερος ὢν ὁ λόγος καὶ ἡ ἐν αὐτῷ θεραπεία προσάγει κατὰ βούλησιν θεοῦ ἐκάστῳ αὐτὴν, καὶ τὸ τέλος τῶν πραγμάτων ἀναιρεθῆναι ἐστὶ τὴν κακίαν· πότερον δὲ ὥστε μηδαμῇ μηδαμῶς ἐτι αὐτὴν ἐπιτραπῆναι δύνασθαι ἢ μή, οὐ τοῦ παρόντος ἐστὶ λόγου διδάξαι. (8.72.11-25)

and will have remodelled every soul to his own perfection, when each individual simply by the exercise of his freedom will choose what he wants and will be in that state which he has chosen. And we hold that it is not probable that, just as concerning physical diseases and wounds some cases would be too hard for any medical art, in the case of the souls any of the consequences of evil would be incapable of being cured by the rational and supreme God. For since the Logos and the healing power within him are more powerful than any evils in the soul, he applies this power to each individual according to God's will, and the end of the treatment is the abolition of evil. But to teach whether or not the consequence is that it can under no circumstances be allowed any further existence, is not relevant for the present discussion.

In this passage Origen speaks about the human souls ('rational nature'⁴⁰³) and evil that leaves imprints on these souls. The impact the Logos has on souls is illustrated by a medical comparison concerning the human body: some physical diseases and wounds might be incurable by medical art, yet it is improbable that any effects of diseases of the soul cannot be healed. Christians, as Origen explains, are convinced of the ultimate victory of the power of the Logos, who will prove to be stronger than any evil in the soul. In the end all souls will be reshaped by the Logos to his own perfection and all the consequences of evil will be eliminated. Typical of Origen's approach is the reference to the role of the free will of these souls.⁴⁰⁴ The transformation to perfection is presented as a situation that results from the free choice of the individual.⁴⁰⁵ At the same time God's will also is involved: the healing power is applied by the Logos 'according to God's will' (κατὰ βούλησιν θεοῦ).⁴⁰⁶ All ends in the abolition⁴⁰⁷ of evil, as Origen firmly states.⁴⁰⁸

The certainty of this conclusion is nuanced however by the intriguing final words, in which Origen raises doubts as to whether or not there are circumstances in which evil can return in any way. It might be asked why Origen raises this question, when he refuses to answer it here.⁴⁰⁹ Did he think it was better to avoid clear statements about this tricky subject which might cause negative reactions among his fellow-Christians? Possibly these words can be interpreted in the light of the reference to the Stoic

⁴⁰³ Origen often uses ἡ λογικὴ φύσις or τὰ λογικά to indicate the human souls (and angels), who are 'rational' because of their participation in the divine Logos, cf. 4.25.23-24.

⁴⁰⁴ As Origen states for the existence of virtue free will is an essential condition, see 4.3.48-49: 'If you take away the element of free will from virtue, you also destroy its essence'.

⁴⁰⁵ Origen does not indicate the subject of ἃ βούλεται. Chadwick (153:507) and Borret (Vol.4, 1969:341) express an explicit choice: 'what the Logos wills', 'ce que veut le Logos', but the sentence does not provide any cause to think of a subject change; so I think still ἑκάστος is to be taken as subject. In this interpretation the freedom of the individual choice is fully preserved. Or is Origen deliberately ambiguous here?

⁴⁰⁶ The tension between the free will and God's will and knowledge is discussed (but not completely resolved) more comprehensively in *De principiis* 3.1.

⁴⁰⁷ The verb ἀναιρεθῆναι is marked by its position before the main verb and the hyperbaton.

⁴⁰⁸ Cf. May (1998:350-351): Origen distances himself from the thought that punishment of sins has an eternal nature. Punishments in his view must be limited, because God's goodness must prevail over the sins of his creatures. Heine (2011:240-256) argues that Origen in Caesarea reconsidered his earlier views of the ultimate salvation. Having discussed a number of passages, including *Contra Celsum* 8.72, Heine concludes (256): 'There is a basis for thinking that in his later life Origen did think there were limitations on the redemptive work of God.' See also Scott (2012:150-151).

⁴⁰⁹ As similar approach in 4.69.14-16, where Origen refers to a book primarily dealing with this subject. See Borret *ad loc* (Vol.2, 1968:354-355 n.4).

doctrine of conflagration that was just mentioned. According to the Stoics after the conflagration the cycle started again and the same world as the previous one would arise again, in which evil would have its place again. Elsewhere⁴¹⁰ Origen had rejected the Stoic determinism that leads to the repetition of an endless series of indistinguishable worlds, because this idea was incompatible with the notion of free will as an essential permanent quality of rational beings.⁴¹¹ Because of this free will however it cannot be excluded that a completely purified soul would fall again, which would cause a repetition of the healing process.⁴¹² So while Origen refers here to the healing power of the Logos and states that in the end all evil is abolished, his conviction concerning free will hinders him to exclude that evil possibly could return again. And, as he says here, the discussion of this whole issue seemed to be inappropriate in this context.⁴¹³ He concludes his treatment of the issue, subsequently to text (43), by a lengthy quote of a prophecy in which in his interpretation is announced that there will be a time in which all people are united ‘under one yoke’ and together will worship the Lord (Zeph.3.7-12). Then, as Origen hopes, Celsus’ wish of a unification of different people will come true.

The effect divine correction has on human souls not only appears in the abolition of sins, but also, more positively, in the connection that is established between these souls and God. Jesus is characterized as a teacher, not only of the doctrine about God and the right way to worship him, but also of ‘every moral action which is able to bring the man who follows his teachings into relation with the supreme God’ (οἰκειῶσαι τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ, 1.30.15-17). In this context Origen’s qualification of Moses is interesting: he is called a man ‘who rose above all that is created and attached himself to the creator of the universe’ (1.19.16-17). And using words of a closer connection Origen says that everyone who believes and begins to live according to Jesus’ teachings, is ‘brought upwards to friendship with God and fellowship with Jesus’ (ἀνάγοντα ἐπὶ τὴν πρὸς θεὸν φιλίαν καὶ τὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνον κοινωνίαν, 3.28.49-51, see also 5.2 above). Origen even speaks about unity with God and the unifying activity of the Logos in his characterization of the task of Christian leaders: they have to be concerned about all men, inside and still outside the church, ‘that [...] they may become absorbed in the word of God and the divine law, and so be united with the supreme God through the Son of God, the Logos, Wisdom, Truth and Righteousness, who unites to him everyone who has been persuaded to live according to God’s will in all things (8.75.23-27)’. Here we encounter the implementation of God’s philanthropy that has an important place in Origen’s conception of God: his love for man manifests itself the removal of evil, the reformation of human morality and the establishing of friendship and unity between himself and the purified souls.⁴¹⁴

In this section we have seen that Origen stated that God is the creator of the universe (including the sensible world) and that the Logos had a role of executer of the divine creative commandments. In the creation the rational beings have a special position: all is created for the sake of man, who shares his reason with God. Evil in Origen’s view has to do with ignorance of God. It originates from the free choices made by the rational beings. Evil in the strict sense is not caused by God, but things that might

⁴¹⁰ See 4.68; 5.20.

⁴¹¹ See 4.67.6-7; cf. *De principiis* 2.3.4; for a discussion see Rist (1983:236-237).

⁴¹² See Crouzel (1985:340) and Chadwick (1947:41-42), where is referred also to the reservation expressed in a clause in 6.20.21-22: the purified souls will continuously enjoy heavenly visions and praise the name of the Lord ‘as long as we praise him’ (ὅσον γε αἰνοῦμεν αὐτόν). Roukema (1999) argues that Origen earlier had speculated about the continuous possibility of a fall after the purification, but that his ultimate idea (presented in his Commentary to Romans) would be that in the end the rational beings would be so much filled with love for God that this love stopped their inclination to fall back again. See on victorious love also Borret (Vol.1, 1967:70-71 n.1). Reemts discusses the issue from the perspective of Origen’s view on the freedom of God and the freedom of men: ‘Dabei zeigt sich, dass für das Denken Origenes dem freien Gott der freie Mensch entspricht’ (1998:141).

⁴¹³ Similar formulas to refuse the treatment of an issue as being not appropriate in the context (‘this is not the right moment to ...’) are used by Origen in 1.22.17-18; 1.48.73; 1.66.52; 2.2.55; 2.9.82; 4.12.5-6; 4.39.65-66; 4.51.23; 4.68.18-19; 6.26.6-7; 8.20.6; 8.40.21.

⁴¹⁴ See also 3.56.5-8; 3.80.3-4; 4.3.26; 4.6.24; 4.19.24-28; 8.1.9-13; 8.64.22-23.

be described as external evils can be used by God in order to heal or convert people. Origen is convinced that God is always committed to stop evil and to bring about purification. Therefore he has sent his servants and especially Jesus to implement correction and moral reformation. Origen expects that the power of the Logos will in the end remove all evil (albeit that, because of the role he attributes to free will, Origen seems to maintain the possibility that evil can return). God's corrective activities aim not only at the abolition of evil, but also at establishing unity and connections of friendship between himself and his creatures.

5.6 Providence, daemons and worship

Origen is a convinced defender of the idea of God's providence.⁴¹⁵ In the passages in which Origen enumerates schools of philosophers and evaluates their doctrines, the rejection of providence by the Epicureans, the rejection of providence 'for us' by Peripatetics and the acceptance of providence by others are regular features.⁴¹⁶ For Origen God is involved in the creation and the structuring of the world. His providence appears for instance in the existence of variety among animals and the diversity of human conditions.⁴¹⁷ He uses the noun *πρόνοια* also to indicate God's governance and maintenance of the world.⁴¹⁸ In this context Origen pays special attention to the good things that effect the human life: 'no benefit comes to mankind without God's action' (οὐδὲν ... ἀθεεῖ, 1.9.40-41).⁴¹⁹ Moreover, God's providence is referred to specifically in the interpretation of developments in the human history.⁴²⁰ Here special focus is on God's plan to save the world and to purify it from all evil. In that context the incarnation of the Logos and the suffering of Jesus are presented as caused by providence and part of God's salvation plan.⁴²¹ The same applies for the spread of the Christian message: God is called the 'father of the teachings of the Christians, who out of his very great love for man converts men to God and has arranged that the teaching for the souls will be spread among all people' (3.75.35-37).⁴²² Thus, as Origen says, the persuasive power of preachers which makes their effort successful is granted to them 'not without God' (6.2.29).

In view of the important place that is given to the free will of the rational beings (τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῶν) in Origen's thought it is not surprising that this item also pops up in his view on divine providence.⁴²³ A specimen of this is found in the next fragment I will quote. It is from a passage in which Origen criticizes Celsus' mocking remarks about the Christian doctrine. What in Origen's opinion rather deserves to be mocked are several 'absurd' ideas of philosophers including the determinism of the Stoics. In contrast Origen presents the Christian doctrine on divine governance as a reasonable theory. I quote this part of his discourse, in which Origen not only shows the content of his standpoint in a nutshell, but also argues that this doctrine should be taken seriously (see the final rhetorical question):

⁴¹⁵ Besides the commonly used *πρόνοια* God's providence is in Origen's text also indicated by the litotes οὐκ ἀθεεῖ ('not without God'). Sometimes *πρόνοια* as metonymy stands for 'God' (as creator or governor of the world), e.g. in 4.32.3; 4.74.14; 4.74.21; 4.76.24; 4.98.31; 4.99.22; 7.7.4; 7.26.22. On God's providence in Origen's theology see also Lyman (1993:56-58), Bergjan (2002:171ff.).

⁴¹⁶ See on rejection by Epicureans 1.10.23; 1.13.22; 1.21.10; 2.13.25-26; 3.75.19; 4.4.8; 8.38.13; on Peripatetics 3.75.22-23; on acceptance 2.35.5; 2.42.22; 4.3.59-51; 4.40.8-9; 4.64.20-21; 4.81.1-2; 5.7.26; 6.57.3.

⁴¹⁷ See 3.38.20; 4.77.26; 4.79.24; 4.98.31.

⁴¹⁸ Cf. 4.14.19; 4.99.22.

⁴¹⁹ Cf. 1.26.38-41; 5.12.2. Some examples given by Origen: healing (by physicians) (1.9.36-39; 1.26.29), protection against wild animals (4.80.18), birth of children (8.55.25), supply of food (8.67.26-30), the gift of knowledge of God (7.33.13; 7.46.47).

⁴²⁰ Cf. 2.78.17ff.; 3.5.13.

⁴²¹ Cf. 3.27.27,39; 4.99.23; 7.55.29. In this context God's salvation plan is often denoted by the noun *οἰκονομία* (2.9.67; 2.26.7; 2.65.4; 2.69.2; 3.31.14; 5.50.21; 6.78.17; 6.80.21. Cf. Fiedrowicz & Barthold note *ad* 2.9 (Vol.2, 2011:370 n.16). See on 'oikonomia' in Origen's works and the Christian tradition before Origen Benjamins (1994:166ff.).

⁴²² See also 3.8.23-35 on God's protection of Christians; 4.32. 3-7 on the transfer of salvation from only the Jews to all people.

⁴²³ See Lyman (1993:59-60); Reemts (1998:136-141).

- (44) [...] ἡμεῖς δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς σχέσεως τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἐκάστου οἰκονομεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ λέγοντες τὸ πᾶν καὶ ἀεὶ ἄγεσθαι κατὰ τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἐφ' ἡμῖν φύσιν γινώσκοντες ἐνδεχομένου ἃ ἐνδέχεται – οὐ γὰρ δύναται χωρῆσαι τὸ πάντῃ ἄτρεπτον τοῦ θεοῦ – οὐ δοκοῦμεν ἄξια λέγειν βασάνου καὶ ἐξετάσεως; (5.21.14-20)
- While as for us who say that the universe is cared for by God in accordance with the condition of the free will of each man, and that as far as possible it is always being led on to be better, and who know that the nature of our free will is to admit various possibilities – for it cannot achieve the entire unchangeable nature of God – do we appear to say nothing worthy of trial and study?

Here Origen points at three elements of the Christian doctrine: (1) there is correspondence between God's care for the universe and the condition of the free will of individuals (the word order makes clear that this 'correspondence with the free will' is Origen's most salient point here); (2) the universe is always led to improvement 'as far as possible'; (3) typical of our free will is that various possibilities are admitted. The use of the verb ἐνδέχομαι in part (2) and (3) suggests that the possibilities referred to in (2) also have to be interpreted as related to the free will as explained in (3). The divergent character of τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, as denoted in (3), is highlighted again in the parenthesis by the contrast with the unchangeable nature of God. So Origen states here that the free will of human individuals is always taken into full account in God's care for the universe.⁴²⁴ This view is illustrated by Origen's interpretation of the story about the escape of Jesus to Egypt immediately after his birth: 'it was better that the child Jesus should avoid the plot of Herod and depart with those who were bringing him up to Egypt [...], than that the providence guarding Jesus should hinder the free will of Herod in his desire to kill the child' (1.66.39-44). Origen states that, since Herod's free will had to be fully acknowledged, no special method of hiding Jesus nor any special blindness of Herod's soldiers were engaged in order to protect Jesus.⁴²⁵

In this context we can understand that Origen does not unreservedly agree with Celsus' statements that 'all things are administered according to God's will' and that 'whatever there may be in the universe, whether the work of a god, or of angels, or of other daemons, or heroes, all things keep a law given by the greatest God' (7.68.6-11, quoted in 3.6 text (28) above). In his response Origen raises two points. Firstly he rejects the first statement if we have to take the words 'all things' as including the sins of men and other rational creatures: saying that (evil) things are administered according to God's will is not the same as saying that they happen because God does not prevent them (see 7.68.18-37). As we saw above, Origen connects God's providence just to *good* things and benefits for mankind. Secondly he points at the transgression of God's law by men and daemons. In this context he explains his (Christian) interpretation of the term 'daemon'. Here we encounter an important difference between the views of Origen and Celsus. Therefore I quote this passage:

- (45) Οὐ πάντα οὖν ἔχει νόμον ἐκ τοῦ μεγίστου θεοῦ. Ὅσα γὰρ παρ' ἰδίαν ἀπροσεξίαν, κακίαν ἢ πονηρίαν ἢ ἄγνοιαν τῶν καλῶν, ἀποπέπτωκε τοῦ θεοῦ νόμου, οὐκ ἔχει τὸν νόμον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἵνα ὀνομάσω καὶ τὸ ὄνοματι καὶ τῷ κατὰ τὴν γραφήν, τὸν νόμον
- Therefore, it is not true that all things keep a law given by the greatest God. All beings who through their own neglect, evil, or wickedness, or ignorance of the good, fell from the divine law, do not keep the law of God, but (to coin a phrase, which is also scriptural) keep the 'law of sin'. However, in

⁴²⁴ Cf. 4.70.10-14: God, preserving the free will of each man, even uses the evil of bad man for the ordering of the whole; however, this does not mean that this person loses his responsibility: he is nonetheless guilty. Origen wants to avoid that his approach would be an incentive to sin. On providence and free will see Scott (2012:75ff.).

⁴²⁵ From a different perspective the issue is discussed in 6.57.11-40 where Origen responds to Celsus' suggestion that the God of his opponents is incapable of persuading men. Origen points at the reciprocal nature of persuasion: even if persuasive words are given by God, the act of assent to them is not caused by God. When some people are not convinced, this is due to their choice: they do not accept God's persuasive words.

ἔχει «τῆς ἀμαρτίας».⁴²⁶ Κατὰ μὲν οὖν τοὺς πολλοὺς τῶν τιθέντων εἶναι δαίμονας καὶ οἱ φαῦλοι δαίμονες οὐκ ἔχουσι τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ νόμον ἀλλὰ παρανομοῦσι· κατὰ δὲ ἡμᾶς πάντες δαίμονες ἀποπεσόντες τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁδοῦ, πρότερον οὐκ ὄντες δαίμονες· καὶ ἔστιν εἶδος τῶν ἐκπεσόντων θεοῦ τὸ τῶν δαιμόνων. Διόπερ οὐ χρὴ θεραπεύειν δαίμονας ὅστις σέβει θεόν. (7.69.2-13)

the view of the majority of people who hold that daemons exist, it is only the evil daemons who do not keep the law of God but transgress it. But in our opinion all daemons have fallen from the way to goodness, and previously they were not daemons; for the category of daemons is one of those classes of beings which have fallen away from God. That is why no one who worships God ought to worship daemons.

The structure of the passage is indicated by the particle οὖν, used twice here. The first part deals with the statement of Celsus, which is (in a shortened version) quoted again by Origen in the first sentence. Origen explains (γάρ) his rejection of Celsus' words by pointing at the current situation in the universe that is caused by the fall of the rational beings,⁴²⁷ a fall that is driven by qualities of these beings themselves (παρ' ἰδίαν ἀπροσεξίαν, κακίαν ἢ πονηρίαν ἢ ἄγνοιαν τῶν καλῶν).⁴²⁸ In this situation not God's law, but the 'law of sin' is kept by these fallen beings. Considering the effect of the free will and evil choices of the rational beings Origen presents the situation in the universe not as just in accordance with God's will and law. In this respect Origen has a less positive view than Celsus.

The beginning of the second part of the passage, marked by οὖν again, deals with the status of 'daemons'. Origen contrasts two opinions (κατὰ μὲν ... κατὰ δέ...): according to the view of the majority only *evil* daemons do not keep the divine law, whereas in his own Christian view *all* daemons transgress God's law.⁴²⁹ These daemons were originally not daemons, but became daemons by their fall from the way to goodness.⁴³⁰ The passage ends with a conclusion that hints at the practical consequences: worshipping daemons is incompatible with worshipping God. In this short sentence Origen reminds his readers that theory often has significance for the religious praxis.⁴³¹ The contrast with Celsus' opinion is remarkable here: for Celsus daemons are intermediary beings between the great god and the material world, to whom power and authority are given in order to exercise god's governance in the world; daemons function as instruments of the divine providence and therefore in Celsus' view daemons deserve to be worshipped.⁴³²

Origen follows the language of the New Testament and characterizes daemons as 'servants of the evil one' (8.13.12-14).⁴³³ He explains that 'daemon' is never used as a morally neutral term: 'the name of daemons is always applied to evil powers without a grosser body, and they lead men astray and distract them, and drag them down from God and the world beyond the heavens to earthly things' (5.5.27-31).⁴³⁴ Daemons are said to be responsible for disasters as famines, barren vines and fruit-trees, droughts, pollution of the air, death of animals and plague among men (8.31.29-32).⁴³⁵ The 'gods of the heathen' are identified as daemons, who are 'gluttonous' and 'wander around sacrifices and blood'

⁴²⁶ Rom. 8.2.

⁴²⁷ Notice the perfect tense of ἀποπέπτωκε which marks the state of affairs as state that exists as a result, a state that has relevance and validity for the 'here and now' of Origen's discourse. See chapter II 4.1; 4.4.

⁴²⁸ See above 5.5 note 383.

⁴²⁹ Notice the pragmatism of the word order here: both the constituents οἱ φαῦλοι δαίμονες and πάντες δαίμονες are in the Focus position (immediately before the verb and the participle). The position of the attributives *before* their nouns mark them as the most salient elements. See chapter II 6.5-7.

⁴³⁰ On the fall of daemons see also 4.65.25-35; 4.92.1ff.

⁴³¹ The rejection of worshipping daemons is also found in e.g. 7.67.11-13; 8.13.16-17; 8.24.8-32; 8.26.27-29.

⁴³² See above 3.6 (with references).

⁴³³ See also 8.25.18-19; 8.39.12-13.

⁴³⁴ For 'without a body' see also 4.92.6; for their intention to drag men away from God see 4.92.8; 4.97.38-41; 8.13.14; 8.54.34. As bodiless beings they can creep into rapacious wild beasts and other wicked animals (4.92.9).

⁴³⁵ See also 1.31.27-28; 8.32.1-10; 8.34.29-32; 8.54.32; 8.73.28-29.

(3.37.9-12).⁴³⁶ Therefore they resisted Jesus' teaching, because they understood, as Origen says, that he would 'destroy their conspiracy' and would deprive them of the burn-offerings they longed for (3.29.15-22).⁴³⁷ Celsus' statement that there are certain beings (daemons) appointed over each particular thing which got powers and are to perform special tasks (7.68.10-11), is responded by Origen with some speculative remarks: maybe 'wicked daemons are appointed for certain tasks by the divine Logos who administers the whole world', just like 'in cities public executioners and officers' are appointed 'for unpleasant but necessary work' (7.70.4-7).⁴³⁸ So Origen does not deny that 'there are many daemons on earth': 'they exist and have power among bad men on account of the wickedness of the latter', but 'they have no power against those who have put on the whole armour of God' (8.34.29-33, with a reference to Ef.6.11-12).

It is clear that Origen denies Celsus' view that daemons are instruments of God's providence.⁴³⁹ In Origen's view such a qualification is rather appropriate for men and the (good) angels. In 4.82.11-15 Origen, speaking about the difference between man and animals, states that man 'cooperates with providence' (συνεργοῦντα τῇ προνοίᾳ): he does 'works which are the product not merely of the natural instincts with which he is endowed by the providence of God, but also of his own independent thought'. In a different context he indicates not daemons, but angels as servants of God, who have an intermediate position between God and man. They ascend to bring the human prayers to God and descend to bring 'to each individual according to his merits some benefits which God commands them to administer to those who are to receive his favours' (5.4.7-14).⁴⁴⁰ Angels are said to help man and protect them against daemons; they are appointed in charge of the fruits on the earth and the birth of animals;⁴⁴¹ they serve as an example of perfection: 'when men are made perfect they become equal to angels' (4.29.16-18).⁴⁴²

The discussions on angels and daemons reach their climax in the final part of *Contra Celsum* (from 7.68 onwards), in which Origen deals with Celsus' criticism of the Christian refusal to participate in the religious practices and the worship of the traditional gods and daemons. Here especially the debate turns out to be not just on philosophical, rational issues, but to have a deep religious base. This applies both to Celsus and Origen: Celsus' concern about the Christian abandonment of the traditional polytheistic religion is answered by Origen's repetitive statement that Christians will never pray to daemons, but only to God. I quote three of such passages as example: 'We ought to pray to the supreme God alone, and to pray besides to the only-begotten Logos of God, the firstborn of all creation; we ought to beseech

⁴³⁶ Origen more than once quotes in this context Ps.96.5 (LXX 95.5) ὅτι πάντες οἱ θεοὶ τῶν ἔθνων εἰσι δαιμόνια (for all the gods of the heathen are daemons'), see 3.2.27; 4.29.9; 7.65.25; 7.69.21; 8.3.10. For similar indications of daemons as greedy, bloodthirsty and feeding themselves with sacrifices see 3.29.11; 4.32.8-9; 7.35.5-10; 8.18.7; 8.30.1-5; 8.63.2,10. The qualification 'daemon' is given by Origen to a number of named gods as Asclepius (3.25.1; 5.2.25), Apollo (3.28.17; 5.2.25), Zeus (5.46.9), the genius of the emperor (8.65.32-34) and the deified heroes Trophonius, Amphiaraus and Mopsus (7.35.1-10). The Greek religious practices with festivals, altars, images and temples are indicated as 'worship of daemons' (7.69.14-30; 8.13; 8.24).

⁴³⁷ About (the name of) Jesus and the daemons see also 1.6.10-15,25-27; 1.67.21-23; 3.35-36; 4.32; 8.64.23-25.

⁴³⁸ This suggestion (notice τάχα – 'maybe') is repeated as one of two options in 8.33.19-21. The other option mentioned is that daemons themselves divided among themselves regions in which no knowledge of God was found. What Origen definitely rejects here is that daemons are allotted control of earthly things according to God's laws. See on a division of regions also 1.24. In 8.32.1-16 Origen discusses the possibility that certain wicked angels are allowed to cause disasters in the context of divine judgement. Here, as in the similar contexts I referred to, Origen expressly points at the depth of such thoughts, hard to grasp for a mind that is 'still bound to the mortal body'. His hesitation to make statements here is understandable because he on the one hand quotes Ps.78.49 (LXX 77.49, about God's wrath and trouble sent by means of wicked angels), and on the other hand he wants to avoid the suggestion of some sort of divine involvement in evil things. Cf. 4.72.17ff.: God's wrath is not an emotional reaction, but has corrective intentions.

⁴³⁹ Cf. 8.36.3-6.

⁴⁴⁰ Origen adds that we commonly call these beings 'angels', but that in some Psalms they are even called 'gods', but not in the sense that they deserve our reverence and worship instead of God (5.4.14-19); see also on their 'participation in divinity' 3.37.23-25; 7.65.23-24.

⁴⁴¹ See 8.27.3-5; 8.57.25-27; 8.64.3-16. In 8.36.1-3 angels are called by Origen (who uses terms here derived from the text of his opponent) 'the true satraps, subordinate governors, officers and procurators of God'.

⁴⁴² I ignore here a special issue in which angels play a role: the idea of the division of the nations and the appointment of overseeing angels, see 5.28-32 on this 'secret conception of more profound truths'.

him, as a high-priest, to bear our prayer, when it has reached him, up to his God and our God and to his Father and the Father of people who live according to the word of God' (8.26.17-22).⁴⁴³ And: 'We ought to propitiate the one supreme God and to pray that he may be gracious, propitiating him by piety and every virtue' (8.64.1-3). 'We address our hymns of praise to the supreme God alone and to his only-begotten son, the divine Logos' (8.67.12-13).⁴⁴⁴

I finish with a summary of the main elements of this section. The discussion has shown that for Origen God's providence is a key element in his theology. Providence is manifest in the creation and governance of the world and in the granting of benefits to man. It has a focus on the salvation and the purification from evil. The conversion of people and the spread of the Christian faith do not occur without God's involvement. Providence only has to do with the provision of good things; the sins of the rational beings are excluded from divine governance. In Origen's view free will is an essential characteristic of rational beings and this freedom is fully maintained in his doctrine of divine providence: he argues for a correspondence between God's care and the free will of individuals.

Divine providence is not administered by daemons, rather by good angels, who function as intermediaries between God and man: they bring up our prayers to God and by order of God they bring down benefits to man. In Origen's biblical terminology daemons are only wicked beings, who transgress God's laws and are fallen from the way to goodness by their own free will. They cause disasters on earth, resist Jesus' teachings and want to lead people away from God. The discussion on daemons effects the attitudes to the religious practices that were common in the Greek world.

In Origen's view the gods of the heathen can be regarded as daemons; daemons deserve no form of worship. For Christians only God and the Logos are worthy to be worshipped and therefore participation in the conventional cults of the Greek gods is definitely refused by them.

6. Origen's theology compared with views of Celsus and philosophical schools

6.1 Introduction

To conclude the section on Origen's theology I will now try to place his views alongside those of Celsus and the philosophical schools that have been discussed earlier. This enables us to discover points of agreement and disagreement between the different views. To arrive at an accurate picture we will have to determine not only whether or not certain opinions are shared on a rather superficial level, but also how the points function within the totality of the doctrines compared. In the comparison special attention will be given to Platonism, the school Celsus' ideas were most affiliated to, as we have seen in 4.5-6 above. Also for the positioning of Origen's views this school, with all its variety, will prove to be the most interesting party to compare with.⁴⁴⁵ In the following discussion I still confine myself to Origen's theology as far as it is presented in *Contra Celsum*; his other works are not taken into account. The issues that were discussed previously will remain the guiding principle. In order to carry out the comparison ideas that were discussed earlier will be repeated here in an abbreviated form; for a more detailed presentation and references to the source-passages I refer to the relevant sections above.

⁴⁴³ Notice the Biblical references to *Col.* 1.15; *John* 1.1, 14; *Hebr.* 2.17; 4.14-15; *John* 20.17. The idea of Christ who as high-priest conveys prayers to God is also expressed in 3.34.26; 7.46.9; 8.36.20-23.

⁴⁴⁴ Similar words in 7.70.14-16; 8.8.13-18; 8.12.24-29; 8.13. 18-30; 8.34.1-10; 8.56.20-24; 8.75.20-27.

⁴⁴⁵ See Villani (2018:111-116) on Origen's use of Plato in his polemic strategy in *Contra Celsum* and Origen's judgement on Plato. An overview of Origen's comment on the Greek philosophical schools in *Contra Celsum* is given in Koetschau (1899:XXXVI-XLII).

6.2 Existence and Christology

To start with some remarks on the existence of God: it is obvious that Origen shares with Celsus and philosophers what may be called a theist standpoint.⁴⁴⁶ None of them denies the existence of God or gods, but here the agreement between philosophers on this subject stops. Epicureans do recognize the existence of the gods, but in their philosophy gods are in fact ignored (at best their blessed non-interference with human troubles functions as example of the recommended way of life). In Stoicism the divine functions as an immanent principle that pervades all things in the world. In Aristotle's philosophy the divine is described as the immaterial Unmoved Mover, which is totally self-sufficient and only thinks about himself. Platonists as Alcinoüs and Apuleius incorporate 'god' in their discussions on physics (side by side with form and matter) and use rational arguments to demonstrate the existence of the first god. This first god functions at the top of (or even beyond) the transcendent world, part of which are also lower 'created' gods. Plutarch speaks about god as characterized by unity and being. Numenius introduces a second god besides the first god: according to him the first god ('the Father' or 'the Good') is concerned with intelligible things, whereas the second god acts as an intermediate between the intelligible and the sensible world. Celsus, moreover, does not mention 'god' in the context of philosophical discussions on physics: the purpose of his *Alethes Logos* is rather criticizing Christian ideas than discussing philosophical theories. From the favorite phrases Celsus uses to indicate his god ('the first god', the greatest god') cannot be concluded that Celsus also assumes the existence of a second god: he never mentions a Numenius-like standpoint. The adjectives 'greatest' and 'first' probably refer in his discourse to the distinction between the supreme god and the lower gods or the gods of the traditional religion.

Origen explicitly criticizes the theological views of Epicurus, Aristotle and the Stoics,⁴⁴⁷ but seems to be silent as far as the Platonist theology is concerned. Does this mean that he agrees with it? I think he recognized the way Platonists underline the supreme position of their god. In Origen's presentation the superior divinity of God is expressed in a similar way: God as creator is far beyond even the greatest of his creatures. He rejects however the creation model of Plato's *Timaeus*, in which the Demiurg created the immortal world and the lower gods the mortal beings. The difference between (the one) creator and the creatures is essential for Origen, which is expressed in his criticism of the traditional religious practices of the Greek, in which also philosophers participate. This criticism is repeated more than once: these people – and this time Platonic philosophers are explicitly included – 'serve the creation rather than the creator'. For Origen the search for the true doctrines cannot be considered in isolation from the religious questions about the right address of human worship.⁴⁴⁸ The basic distinction creator-creation can be regarded as the background of epithets Origen often uses to indicate God: ὁ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεός, ὁ τῶν ὅλων θεός and ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός, phrases which characterize God's supreme position as creator and governor of all things. Moreover Origen does not try to provide rational evidence of the existence of God. For him this existence is part of his Christian belief, based on biblical data, and reason for worship and prayer rather than for philosophical speculation.

A major point of disagreement between Celsus and Origen is related to the position that is given to the Son of God in the Christian doctrine and worship. Celsus criticizes the Christians for their worship of this 'man who appeared recently' and suggests that it is inconsistent with monotheism if they also worship God's servant (see Celsus in 8.12). In his reaction Origen rejects the notion of the recent

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. Crouzel (1962:19-20), who quotes from Origen's *Homiliae in Genesim* 14.3, where Origen illustrates his statement that philosophy is not completely opposed to the law of God nor completely in accordance with it, by saying: 'A lot of philosophers recognize the existence of a unique God who has created everything'.

⁴⁴⁷ See e.g. 1.21; 3.75; 4.14; 6.71.

⁴⁴⁸ At this point agreement with Celsus can be noticed: also for him religious practices are important, as can be seen mainly in the final series of fragments, quoted in book 7 and 8. Here Celsus criticizes Christians because they abandon the worship of the traditional gods and the daemons.

appearance of Christ, as we have seen in text (30), and confirms that Christians worship both the Father and the Son. As regards the issue of monotheism: Origen does not explicitly mention this point in his response, but in his explanation of the relationship between the Father and the Son he does his best to combine both unity and diversity.⁴⁴⁹ The unity, as denoted in the words of Christ himself ('I and the Father are one'), is explained by Origen as an mental unity. But, while they are one in agreement and will, they are two different existences. The position of the Son is indicated as secondary (in the metaphors of 'effulgence', 'impression' and 'image') and subordinate to the Father. The Son acts in an intermediate position between the supreme God and his creatures: he brings human prayers upwards to God and God's benefits downwards to man, as Origen says, painting a picture that in many respects is different from Celsus' Platonic ideas.

Interesting in this context is that Origen occasionally uses the term 'second God' (δεύτερος θεός) to indicate the Son of God, a term which he probably adopted from Platonic philosophers as Philo and Numenius, as we have seen above (5.2).⁴⁵⁰ If we have to infer from the use of this expression that Origen accounted for this term – there are some reasons to doubt it, as I pointed out in 5.2 – does this mean that Origen agrees here with thoughts of Platonic philosophers?⁴⁵¹ In my opinion we can note that in his view on the Son of God Origen shares some elements with Numenius' conception of the 'second god': both speak about a divine being that is secondary in relation to the 'primary' God; both use the metaphor of 'image' (εἰκών) to describe his position, albeit that the context in Numenius' texts is coloured by Platonic terminology and Origen in different discourses uses the notion with reference to biblical texts.⁴⁵² That the agreement is only partial can be deduced from the fact that Numenius' second god functions as the creator of the cosmos (his first god cannot be concerned with matter), whereas Origen following biblical data qualifies (the supreme) God as creator of all things and the Logos as his 'co-worker' who received God's commands to create the world. The distance Numenius' first god has to the world is not compatible with Origen's conception of God's involvement in the world he created. Nor does Origen's identification of the Son of God with Jesus, who claims to be sent to the earth by the Father, correspond to anything in Numenius' idea. So I think it is understandable that Origen, who obviously knew Numenius' works and showed his appreciation for him on several occasions, does not hint at agreement at this point in *Contra Celsum*.⁴⁵³

The final issue I discuss in this section is Origen's conviction that the Son of God, who participated in the creation of the world and has a mediating position between the Father and the creation, assumed a human soul and a mortal body. For Celsus such an idea of such a descent of 'a god or the son of god' to the earth is absolutely shameful. It is not compatible with his conception of god and the distance he and his fellow Platonists postulate between the divine, intelligible world and the human, material one. For Origen the incarnation is one of the key elements in his Christian theology. Meanwhile the

⁴⁴⁹ Here the difference with Plutarch's approach is clear: in text (2) Plutarch underlined the existence (being) and the oneness as typical for god.

⁴⁵⁰ Origen had knowledge of the works of Philo and Numenius, see his references in 1.15.4-5; 4.51.7,14-15; 5.38.32; 5.57.8; 6.21.14. Cf. the testimony of Jerome in his *Epistula* 70.4 on Origen's lost work *Stromateis*, in which he 'compared the views of Christians and philosophers and confirmed all the doctrines of our religion with texts from Plato, Aristotle, Numenius and Cornutus'. See on the relation between Origen and Numenius Somos (2009).

⁴⁵¹ I refer once more (as I did in 2.6.5) to the background of the discussions within the group of Platonist philosophers about the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus*: is he identical with the supreme god? And how is the relation with 'the Good' as described in the *Republic*? The Pythagorean Platonists Eudorus and Numenius assumed that above all there existed a supreme principle ('the Good', 'the One', 'the Father', 'god'): according to Eudorus the One is the principle of all things, but Numenius thought that besides the first god there was a second god, who functioned as the demiurge and created the world (with all its diversity). These approaches proved to be influential in the development of Platonism: they form a step in the direction of the Neoplatonism of Plotinus; see Adamson (2015:154-157,264).

⁴⁵² See Numenius fragment 16, quoted above as text (11), a text full of philosophical terms as νοητόν, νοῦς, ἡ οὐσία, τὸ ἀγαθόν, μνηστῆς, ἰδέα (see also fragm.11; 12). Origen in 4.85.24; 5.11.34; 6.64.24; 6.69.8-12; 7.27.13; 7.43.17,34; 8.12.29; 8.14.12 refers to *Wisd.* 7.26 and *Col.* 1.15.

⁴⁵³ Somos (2009), who enumerates similarities between Origen and Numenius (but also differences), refers mainly to Origen's *De principiis* and *Commentarii in Iohannem*.

distinction between the divine and the human, created world also in his thought plays a role. This is clearly shown in the careful distinction he makes between the divine Logos in Jesus on the one hand and his human soul and body on the other hand: Jesus was visible and suffered insofar his ‘human’ side was involved. Yet Origen claims that he does not want to separate the Logos entirely from the human soul. The tension between distinction and unity we saw above in Origen’s view on the relationship between the Father and the Son is echoed here in his attempt to account for the combination of the divine and the human in Christ.

6.3 Knowledge of God

A popular quote in discussions on the issue of the possibility to gain knowledge of God (god) is derived from Plato. It says that it is difficult to discover God, and that, after discovering him, it is impossible to describe him to all men (*Timaeus* 28c). These words are quoted by Apuleius and Celsus, referred to by Alcinous, as we have seen,⁴⁵⁴ and also Origen responds to them. In the Platonist tradition sense-perception is rejected as an effective path to knowledge of god: only the intellect (νοῦς) is regarded to be the means to grasp to some extent the ineffable and invisible god. In the background here is the Platonic division of the reality into the material, visible world of becoming and the intellectual, divine world of being (as elaborated by Celsus in text (18) above; cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 28a). Celsus recommends the intellectual methods of synthesis, analysis and analogy to gain some knowledge of the first god. In similar words these ideas are expressed by Alcinous and illustrated in the Sun-simile, that goes back to texts of Plato himself (see text (4) with comment above).

Origen in his response to Celsus’ texts follows his opponent to a large extent in his approach. As we saw in text (35), he accepts the Platonic division between being and becoming, between the visible and the intelligible world as well as the characterization of ‘being’ and ‘intellect’ as the better side. He agrees with Celsus’ advice to close ‘the eyes of the senses’: it is the intellectual method of opening ‘the eyes of the soul’ that will lead us to knowledge of God. Origen uses this difference in his explanation of several texts from the Bible: passages from the paradise-story, the Gospel of John and Paul’s letters are interpreted with the help of the Platonic scheme. In text (35) the way to gain knowledge of God is presented as an upward intellectual movement: looking at the things of the visible world can be used by Christians as the first step to move up to the contemplation of the invisible things of God’s world. By a process of intellectual exercise and ongoing understanding they can finally ascend to God’s divinity. This idea of a staged ascent and the use of the image of the ‘steps’ Origen uses here, can be interpreted as a reference to Plato’s *Symposium*, where Diotima advises Socrates to start his intellectual quest for the Form of Beauty by looking at visible beautiful bodies and then to move on through continuing levels of abstraction.⁴⁵⁵

In Origen’s view described so far a substantial agreement with the ideas of Celsus and other Platonists can be denoted. This however is not the full picture. As we have seen above, Origen adds some elements which are typical for his Christian approach. In the first place I point at the role he attributes to prayer as means in the ascent to knowledge: prayer also is an act of shutting the eyes of the senses and opening those of the soul. Besides the mind also prayer is involved in the movement towards knowledge of the divine things. Here it appears that philosophy is not working separately from religion for Origen: also

⁴⁵⁴ Text (16) above, see 3.3 and 2.6.3.

⁴⁵⁵ See Plato, *Symposium* 210-211 and especially 211c3 where the ‘steps of the stairs’ are referred to by the ἐπαναβασιμός in the phrase ὥστε ἐπαναβασμοῖς χρῶμενον. Origen in 7.46 (text (35)) uses ἐπιβάθρα, which can be regarded as synonym of ἐπαναβασιμός. Cf. Origen’s statement in one of his homilies on the Psalms (8.4.8): τὰ γὰρ αἰσθητὰ ἐπιβάθρα γίνεται πρὸς τὸ νοῆσαι τὰ κρείττονα (‘what can be seen functions as steps to understand the higher things’). In this context I also refer to Plato’s *Republica* 517bc and *Phaedrus* 247c. In 6.59 Origen, having quoted *Rom.* 1.20 and *2 Cor.* 4.18, also hints at the latter passage: if a man understands these texts, ‘he might say that if he is among the things that are invisible [...], he has gone out of the world, since the Logos takes him out from this earthly existence and transfers him to the region beyond the heavens for the contemplation of the realm of beauty.’

in the intellectual process the Christian is aware of his relation to God and expresses his dependency on God and his need for guidance.⁴⁵⁶

According to Origen – secondly – the human nature is indeed dependent on such help: man is only able to seek for God and to find him if he gets assistance from the God he seeks for. So Origen does not agree completely with the *Timaeus*-quote just mentioned: discovering God is not just difficult, but for the human nature even impossible without divine help. Therefore he characterizes knowledge of God as a gift from God, which is granted to individuals by a free decision of God. In Origen's view the human ascending movement towards knowledge of God is made possible by a descending movement of God who reveals himself. Such a downward movement, motivated by God's love of man, is alien to Platonic theology and for Origen an essential part of his Christian belief.⁴⁵⁷

Related to this is the third element that is specific for Origen's view: the meditating role Christ plays in the revelation of God. In this context Origen refers to the Jesus' statement: 'No man has known the Father save the Son, and him to whom the Son will reveal him' (Matt.11.27). The role of Christ is elaborated in text (36), where Origen discusses again a notion that is without exact parallels in Platonism: the divine Logos assumed a human soul and body and this incarnation is crucial for the salvation of man and the provision of knowledge. As Origen explains, the Logos became flesh in order to improve the human way of living and to lift up people spiritually so that they gain knowledge of God. In this process all people are involved, as Origen underlines, not only the educated elite, but common people as well, albeit that the revelation is adapted to the capacity of the recipients. Origen connects this issue with an element of criticism of Plato's works: the sophisticated style of these works, admirable as it may be, prevents the content to be accessible for all people. The more simple language of the Bible makes it possible that its message is heard by everyone, regardless education, gender and social status.

6.4 Qualities

Among Platonists the idea of the ineffability of god was commonly accepted: human words are not sufficient to express the essence of god. Origen agrees with this principle: in the strict sense God cannot be named. We can only opt for attributes from our human perspective and God is superior to all qualifications that can be imagined by creatures. In this context Origen however points at the general restrictive capacity of human language to denote precisely even things in the material world.

Nevertheless Origen does not deny to use any adjective to indicate God's attributes in some way, just like a philosopher as Apuleius, as we saw in text (5), enumerated several attributes of the Platonic god despite the fact that one of these qualification was *indictum* ('unnamable'). Origen agrees with most of these qualifications, most of which have a negative character: God has no form, no body, no color, he does not move, he does not change, he is invisible and indivisible. In the recognition of God's incorporeality and immutability the debate between philosophical schools is involved. Origen joins Platonists in their rejection of any materialism in the conception of God: in text (38) he states that Epicurus and the Stoics were wrong in their representation of the gods as compound and (therefore) liable for transformation and destruction. Origen moreover agrees with Celsus that anthropomorphic qualifications cannot be applied to God, at least in a literal sense. Concerning biblical passages with anthropomorphisms Origen points at the accommodation of biblical language to the human capacities

⁴⁵⁶ The importance the intellect has for Origen is nuanced by De Vogel (1983:295): she states that Origen acknowledged the Platonic metaphysics in its truth and integrated it in his Christian thought on the creation and his reverence for the creator ('Anerkennung des Schöpfers'). Then she continues: 'Diese Anerkennung ist für ihn das einzig Wichtige. Sie ist in seiner Sicht an erster Stelle eine Akt des Intellekts. Wohl ist sie wesentlich die Hingabe der ganzen menschlichen Person. Diese Hingabe äussert sich naturgemäss in der Anbetung, Verehrung und Danksagung, im ganzen Lebensstil und inneren Verhalten des Menschen.'

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. O'Leary (2009:451): 'The basic distinction between Platonism and Christianity for Origen is that the Christian God is not a passive object of contemplation but an active subject who takes the initiative in revealing himself to those He wills, in an act of sovereign freedom'.

and the necessity to search for a deeper meaning by taking them allegorically. In this approach Origen follows the interpretation that Greek philosophers apply to the works of Homer which contain passages that were offensive for them. In his responses to Celsus Origen refers to these ‘Greek’ habits in order to defend his own allegorical interpretation of the Bible: what is granted to the Greeks cannot be denied to Christians. To conclude this paragraph: generally speaking we can notice a rather high degree of agreement between Celsus, other Platonists and Origen concerning the qualifications discussed so far. Although Origen now and then nuances Celsus’ remarks, raises some doubts and alternative approaches on certain issues, in fact he does not distance himself fiercely from his opponent here.

For Origen however these qualifications are only half the story: the attributes and images that are used in the Bible have to be added. They partly consist of metaphorical indications as Father, Son, Logos, light and spirit (of course, as Origen knows, ‘logos’ and ‘spirit’ are used in philosophical contexts as well, which prompts Origen to reject explicitly the material connotation ‘spirit’ (πνεῦμα) has in the Stoic philosophy). The second category I mentioned in 5.4 has to do with God’s relation to the world and mankind: his mercy, forgiveness and love of man. In Origen’s view these qualities are essential in his theology: they demonstrate God’s commitment to the world and motivate his actions for the salvation of man. These ideas are unknown to Platonist philosophers, who generally followed the Aristotelean conception of a god for whom involvement with something outside himself would reduce his perfect situation.

6.5 God and the world: creation and correction

The philosophical schools differed in their view on the emergence and functioning of the world and divine involvement in it. According to Epicurus this is all a matter of atoms and chance, without any concern of the gods. For the Stoics the divine principle, represented as fire, pervades all things; in a process of condensation the fire develops into other elements and in the end the cycle returns into a situation of complete fire, after which the next cycle starts. In Aristotle’s view the divine First Mover is part of the universe. This introverted principle causes the movements in the cosmos, but is not its creator: the cosmos is assumed to be eternal.

In Platonism the idea of creation is given a key position by Plato’s myth of the *Timaeus*.⁴⁵⁸ Following this myth Platonists denote god as the creator (δημιουργός), albeit that not all of them considered the creator to be identical with the supreme god. In Numenius’ view the first god is the father of the creator, but not the creator himself: he is only concerned with the intelligible things (see text (3) above). Alcinous, in his loyal representation of the *Timaeus*, describes the successive stages in which the universe is established: firstly the creator made the lower (‘created’) gods; then these gods made man and the mortal world. The indirect creation of man was necessary to avoid the consequence that man would be immortal if he were created by god himself (see text (10) above). Celsus echoes this in his statement: ‘God made nothing mortal; whatever beings are immortal are works of god, and mortal beings are made by them’ (see text (23) above).

The idea of a creation is an element that Origen shares with Platonists, albeit that he underlines that God is the only creator of all things. A model in which the mortal part of the world is created by lower gods is rejected by him. Although he recognizes that the Logos cooperated in the creation, Origen refuses to distinguish between (the supreme) God and another creator: Marcion might perhaps teach such things, Christians do not. Hereby an element of Numenius’ doctrine is also implicitly rejected.

Conflict with Platonism we find also in Origen’s idea of anthropocentrism. Origen disagrees with Celsus’ statement that ‘things are not made just as much for irrational animals as for man’ (text (24) above). The central position of man in the world is motivated by the fact that man is a rational being.

⁴⁵⁸ See Sedley (2007:95ff.) on the myth and its interpretation.

Here Origen shares the standpoint of the Stoics (see text (41) above).

As to the issue of the origin of evil moreover both Origen and Celsus declare that evil is not caused by God. The idea of the good creator and the goodness of the creation come to the fore both in Plato's *Timaeus* and in the creation-story in *Genesis*. Origen however does not agree when Celsus (like other Platonists) points at matter as the source of evil (see text (26) above): according to Origen evil actions result from evilness that can be found in the human mind. The appearance of evil in the world is related to the fall of rational beings who departed from God.⁴⁵⁹ Leading in Origen's thought is his conviction that rational beings dispose of a free will: they are free to choose for the evil and the good. This gift makes humans responsible for their own actions and safeguards morality: 'the essence of virtue is destroyed if you take away the element of free will' (4.3.48-49). Judgement of bad behaviour and rewards of righteous living are only possible if decisions can be made in freedom.

Origen and Celsus sharply disagree about the divine response on evilness in the world. In Celsus' view in fact there is no divine response: the distance between the good and unchanging divine world and the material world with its constant present of evil is too great. God does not interfere to bring about correction in any form (see text (27) above) nor does he judge man for good or bad actions. Great disasters, floods and conflagrations cannot be regarded as punishments or purifications of the world.⁴⁶⁰ The absence of any divine involvement and corrective measures in Celsus' view is diametrically opposed to Origen's underlining of the continuing corrective interventions of God: 'By a new reformation God always wants to make good which is wrong' (4.69.16, text (42) above). God is presented as a fire that consumes evil. Punishments of sins have a pedagogical function: men are invited to return to God. In human history God's interventions appear, as Origen says, in the sending of messengers, Moses and the prophets, and especially Jesus: the purpose of his teachings and the good way he lived was to summon people to abandon evil behaviour and to establish friendship with God. The human free will is taken into account in the divine healing process. From text (43) can be deduced that Origen is optimistic about the end: punishment of sins will not be eternal, for God's power and love will prevail and evil will be abolished (albeit that Origen does not exclude the possibility that evil returns, as is explained in 5.5).

6.6 Providence, daemons and worship

Ancient philosophical schools are divided on the notion of divine providence. Epicureans deny divine involvement in the world in any form whatsoever. For this reason Origen repeatedly distances himself explicitly from this school, as we have seen. In the school of Aristotle providence is accepted and described in terms of the movements of the celestial spheres: 'god' causes the first movement for the first sphere and this movement passes through the other spheres, 'up to the moon'. Alexander of Aphrodisias however asserted that divine care, functioning as an impersonal force of nature, also concerned the earth. Providence in the Aristotelean view is regarded as beneficial, because it creates

⁴⁵⁹ The ideas about the fall of the pre-existent rational beings is elaborated by Origen particularly in his *De principiis* (e.g. in 1.3.8; 1.4.1; 1.5.2; 1.5.5; 1.6.2). In *Contra Celsum* this topic is not prominent. Crouzel (1985:268-282) points at the Platonic source of the theory of the pre-existence of the souls, but underlines that it functions in a different discourse; in Plato's doctrine the context is epistemological: knowledge is presented as remembrance of things the human soul had seen before its life on the earth. Origen however uses this idea in discourses on the origin of the soul and in controversies with Valentinians and Marcionites about determinism. Martens (2015) compares Origen's version on the pre-existence theory with Plato's account in *Phaedrus* 246-249 and concludes that Origen's account in *De principiis* can best be considered to be a revision or emendation. Rather than indicating it as an example of Hellenization of Christianity he argues that 'it would be more accurate to consider Origen's version of pre-existence as yet another episode in the larger phenomenon of the "Christianization of Hellenism", where it was *Plato* who was remodeled according to the standards of Christian orthodoxy in the third century' (620).

⁴⁶⁰ Punishments of evil deeds and rewards for good conduct however are not denied by Celsus, as appears in the fragments quoted in 3.16 and 8.49. He even believes in *eternal* punishments for wicked people; see Plato, *Gorgias* 525c-e; *Phaedo* 113e. In Origen's view punishment ultimately will have its limit. See May (1998).

order. In his characterization of the Peripatetic position Origen is mainly interested in the impact providence has on man; he speaks about the Peripatetics as the philosophers ‘who deny that providence has any care for us and that there is any relationship between God and man’ (3.75.22-24).⁴⁶¹ This recalls the way the Platonist Atticus criticized the Peripatetics on this matter: they are like the Epicureans, for ‘both alike think the gods have no concern for humans’ (fragm.3.8).

The connection between Origen and the Stoics in their view on providence is undeniable: he agrees with the Stoic idea of divine care of the universe as a whole and the special place humans as rational beings have in the providential governance. Origen joins Stoic arguments to argue for anthropocentrism in his response on the criticism of Celsus on this issue. Yet Stoicism is only partly embraced by Origen: not only the materialism of the Stoics is repeatedly rejected by Origen, but also their determinism. In Origen’s view this is incompatible with his conviction that the free will of rational beings is a key factor in God’s care of the universe.

As for the Platonists: Origen recognizes the element of their position that is represented by Atticus: God cares for everything, including human beings. Yet, as we have seen, he criticizes Celsus’ assertion that ‘all things are administered according to God’s will’: this is not true in case of the sins of men and other rational beings; God’s providence is related to *good* things only (a position moreover that corresponds with Plato’s picture of the demiurge as good). Although there may be a correspondence between the positions of Platonists and Origen on a general level, a more detailed look at the providence-issue shows differences as well. Two of them will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

The first has to do with the way divine care ‘works’ according to Platonists: providence that originates from the supreme god, is in their view carried out by the agency of the world soul, the lower gods and *daemones*. In their approach a direct contact between the supreme god, remaining in the intelligible world or even beyond it, and the material world is avoided: the gap is filled by a system of intermediate powers. Celsus underlines the distance when he describes god’s providence as a care for the universe *as a whole*, in which humans have no special position, a care moreover, which does not entail any divine intervention in the world (see texts (25) and (27) above; Apuleius in text (13) uses the terms secondary and tertiary providence). In Origen’s view a similar ‘Platonic gap’ does not exist: events and developments in the human history are interpreted by him as caused directly by God’s governance. This difference with the Platonist position can be noticed in Origen’s statement that God descends himself in these interventions: ‘God comes down from his own greatness and majesty when he cares for the affairs of men, and particularly of bad men’ (4.12.19-21). This is quite different from the vivid picture of the Platonist view on providence that is given by Maximus of Tyre in text (14): here it is the hierarchy of the subordinate agents that descends, whereas the great king remains ‘sitting motionless like a law’. By contrast Origen repeatedly refers to God’s actions to fight evil and to purify the world. Further Origen points at the incarnation of the Logos as the most comprehensive demonstration of God’s descent, arising out of his love for man: the Logos enters the mortal world and associates with the human reality and misery.⁴⁶² God’s providence not just aims at creating order and the progression of the

⁴⁶¹ Cf. 2.13.27-28: ‘... the Peripatetics who say that prayers and sacrifices to God have no effect’.

⁴⁶² Cf. Osborn (1992:274-275), who compares Origen’s use of the notion of *φιλανθρωπία* with the meaning this term has in the Platonist and Stoic philosophy. Both Stoics and Platonists assert that *φιλανθρωπία* is demonstrated in providence, but in the same way as Hellenistic rulers from their supreme position provide benefits and show mercy to prisoners or captives: a ‘condescension’ they can afford because of their high position and that costs them little. They she writes: ‘Thus although for the Stoics God is immanent in the world while for Middle Platonism the divine is transcendent, in neither case does *φιλανθρωπία* involve stepping down across a divide, not only because the Stoic god is, as it were, down already and is not threatened by associating with the world, whereas for the Platonist providence operates at a distance and need not imply messy involvement with matter; but more fundamentally because providence does not threaten the divine status of the provider: so far from requiring identification with the needs and weakness of mortals, it implies that God, unlike them, has no lack and can supply their needs without detriment to himself. This contrasts with Origen’s view, not only in that Origen envisages the divine stepping down from transcendence to immanence, but also in that God’s act is not one of providence supplying human needs, but of taking the sins and weakness on himself, with a counter-providential concern not merely for the virtuous and deserving, but also for the sinful and undeserving’ (275).

universe, but at the restoration of the world and the abolition of evil.

The second point of criticism leveled by Origen concerns the position Platonists attribute to *daemones*. According to Celsus these are intermediate beings that are entrusted with power as executors of the divine providence; therefore it is necessary, as Celsus argues, to worship them in order to secure their goodwill towards humans. Origen does not deny the existence of spiritual beings in an invisible world above the earth and their interference in human affairs. He recognizes the duties that are performed by angels as servants of God, and speculates about tasks that might be assigned to them as overseers of diverse nations. Following biblical accounts he recognizes the reality of the gods that are worshipped by the heathen, gods that are identified as daemons. For Origen daemons are evil beings, who want to drag men down from God. Protection against these enemies of men can be afforded by angels. This however can never be a reason to worship angels (and even less daemons): Christians only worship 'the supreme God and the only begotten Logos of God'.

Thus Origen agrees with Platonists in his acceptance of a spiritual world, but he approaches this issue from a different perspective. The determining factor in Origen's view on this world is not the necessity of an intermediate bridge between the immortal and the material world. More decisive in the whole created world (both the visible and the invisible) is the question of good and evil: did the rational beings use their free will to depart from God or to obey him?

6.7 Summary and evaluation

Finally I will recapitulate some main lines of the preceding sections, in which Origen's theology was compared with Celsus' and the views of philosophical schools. The general picture is that Origen rejects the ideas of Epicurus and Peripatetics. As for the Stoics: he rejects their materialism and determinism, but shares their ideas about a divine providence that applies to everything in the world and about the top position man has in the world as a rational being. Even though the debate with Celsus is sometimes vehement, Origen, as we have seen, agrees with Platonist ideas on a number of essential points. He recognizes the description of the supreme position of God as given by Platonists in their series of – mainly negative – qualifications. His conviction that the world is created by God corresponds to the Platonist conception of a creator-god. Origen and Platonists share the opinion that divine providence is extended to everything, including human beings (although Platonists differ on this subject: Celsus argues that providence is focused on the whole of the universe). Origen accepts the Platonic division between the material, visible world and the intelligible, invisible one and their indication of the latter as the better, divine world, to which human attention should be turned. Just like Platonists he presents the way of arriving at knowledge of God as an intellectual process. With approval he uses Plato's image of a step by step ascent to the divine world and interprets biblical words about this issue in philosophical (Platonic) terms. In all these points a large amount of agreement between Origen and Platonists can be noticed.

However, as is demonstrated above, there are also issues in which Origen diverges from Platonist ideas.⁴⁶³ I point at the important role he attributes to the free will of the rational beings and to his definition of 'daemons' as evil beings, in which he differs from Celsus' approach. The most essential theological differences however are in my opinion related to two issues: (1) God's commitment to the world and (2) the position of the Logos and the incarnation.

To start with the first issue: God, who is in Origen's view the creator of all things and is above all creatures, is not at distance in such a way that he is not at the same time deeply engaged in the human world. This appears in Origen's representation of divine providence, as expressed in the words I quote once more: 'God comes down from his own greatness and majesty when he cares for the affairs of men,

⁴⁶³ *Pace* Koetschau who in a passage in which he asserts that Origen, just like his opponent Celsus, accepts Plato's view, continues: 'Dies gilt besonders vor der Platonischen Gottesvorstellung, gegen die er nichts einzuwenden hat' (1899:XLII).

and particularly of bad men' (4.12.19-21). Besides God's involvement in the human history Origen also indicates God's willingness to come down to the human level in order to provide us knowledge of himself. Whereas Celsus, following *Timaeus* 28c, keeps open some options for 'wise men' to get some knowledge of god by intellectual methods, Origen denies the human ability to gain knowledge of God just by our intellect: intellectual activity has to be sustained by help and revelation from the side of God and by prayers of man. God's engagement with the world is, as Origen emphasizes, clear in his response to the evil in the world: different from Celsus' god who is not interested in correction, God in Origen's view always aims at reformation, pedagogical treatment of human souls and the abolition of evil. This engagement, apparent in the provision of knowledge, in God's providence and his corrective measures, is motivated by his love for man, a quality that is alien to the god of Platonists.

The ultimate show of this love is given in the incarnation of the Logos, the second point of difference with Platonism I mentioned above. Origen believes that in Jesus the divine Logos was connected to a human soul and body. The incarnation is part of God's plan to restore the world and here the distance between the divine and the human world is minimalized. At this point the Christian and the Platonist largely diverge: the idea that 'a god or the son of a god' would come down to the earth is a shameful for Celsus and without correspondence to anything in Platonist theology, including the ideas of Numenius, albeit that his conception of a second god besides the first god has some similarity with Origen's biblical distinction of the Father and the Son – in fact Origen does use once or twice the term 'second God' to denote the Logos (but maybe not with complete conviction, as was demonstrated above). A closer examination of details however shows that the similarity seems to be superficial: the distance Numenius' first god keeps to the human world does not comply with Origen's view; the attribution of a divine status to an intermediate being corresponds to Origen's words about the divine Logos, but nothing corresponding to the incarnation is found in Numenius' texts.

In Origen's picture of the supreme God who is not at distance, but involved in the world, who continually works on correction and who shows his love for man in Jesus in whom the divine and the human are connected, we encounter a theology that differs essentially from the Platonist approach. However, while defending these ideas as typical for the Christian conception of God, Origen does not offer an easy solution for all the problems involved. He is aware of the tension between divinity and humanity as appears in his attempt to combine unity and diversity in his account of the connection between the Logos and Jesus' soul and body. In a similar way the issue of monotheism and the distinction between the Father and the Son is treated by Origen. Sometimes, in my opinion, he feels conflicts between biblical data (or the way they were commonly interpreted by other Christians) and ideas he was inclined to endorse from a philosophical perspective. In one of these cases he adopts a clear solution: he argues for an allegorical interpretation of anthropomorphisms that are found in the Bible and resolves in this way conflicts with divine qualities on which he agrees with philosophers (not corporeal, not visible, no passions, no pain). On other points Origen is less straight: he seems to feel uncomfortable with Platonically inspired phrases as 'second God', 'God is beyond being' and the representation of God as 'intellect' (νοῦς). In *Contra Celsum* his strategy concerning these issues seems to be evasive: without acceptance and without denial shifting the issue by raising other related questions.

All in all the relation between Origen and Platonism appears to be a complex one.⁴⁶⁴ As far as his

⁴⁶⁴ Can Origen be called a 'Christian Platonist'? There has been much debate among scholars on this subject, against the background of the broader question of the relation between Christianity and Platonism or the 'Hellenization of Christianity' (A. von Harnack). These debates, even those about Origen's position, exceed the scope of my present research which is focused just on *Contra Celsum* (and leaves out his other works) and on theology (and not on the other issues involved, including especially the issue of the pre-existence of the soul). For an overview I refer to Bos (1996:98-121), Ramelli (2009:252-261), Kobusch (2018), who provide more references. I confine myself to a short presentation of some of the standpoints they describe: Dörrie (1971) characterizes Christianity as Anti-Platonism; Edwards (2002) has a similar approach ('Origen against Plato'), whereas Ramelli (2009) indicates Origen as a Christian Platonist ('Patristic Platonists like Clement, Origen, or Eusebius, for their part, would never have thought of their own contribution in terms of "Platonising Christianity", as a sort of superimposition of Platonism upon Christianity, since, in their view, Scripture and Plato were in fundamental agreement, and Moses was far

theology is concerned it can be confirmed that he shares a number of ideas with Plato and Platonists. And, to go a step further, it seems to be probable that he is influenced by Platonism, which was the source he derived these ideas from. This is true in my opinion for his endorsement of the division between the visible and the intelligible world and for his approval of philosophically inspired qualifications of God (as his immutability). It is also true for his presentation of the Christian way of gaining knowledge of God as an intellectual process.⁴⁶⁵ Moreover, correspondence of Plato's statements with biblical texts was for Origen never a reason to regard the Christian version as secondary. On the contrary, he often argues that Moses was older than all the Greek authors and occasionally suggests that Plato might have learnt some words from Hebrew writers.⁴⁶⁶ Nonetheless, as we have seen, Origen's theology on key issues also differs from views of Platonists. Platonists would not support the conception of a God who wants to be known and who himself shows commitment to provide knowledge of himself. The account of a God who comes down to the created world, was found by Origen in the Christian Scriptures, whose authority for Origen greatly transcended the appreciation he had for the works of Plato. Following these Scriptures Origen pointed at 'the special descent God made, because of his great love for man, in order to convert those whom the divine Scripture mystically calls, 'the lost sheep of Israel'' (4.17.17-20). In Origen's underlining of God's commitment to the world and of the divine grace in the downward movement of God's revelation and in his explanation of the incarnation of the Son of God we encounter elements of a theology that can be characterized as typically Christian.

more ancient than Plato, who was inspired by the same Logos that subsequently got incarnated' (2009:261). She opts for the term 'Christianisation of Hellenism' (like Martens 2015:619-620). Kobusch (2018:62) argues that Origen's thought is to a large extent influenced, and even determined, by Platonic philosophy, and that where Origen exceeds Plato, this is done in the sense of and in line with Plato. Subsequently he discusses five of Origen's modifications of Plato's doctrine ('und Platon hätte – dahin geht meine Vermutung – bei einige nur leise widersprochen'), modifications however that are not, or only indirectly, related to the theme of my corpus. See also Scott (2012:40-48).

⁴⁶⁵ This does not mean, as Origen repeatedly claims, that only educated people can be saved: 'Christ is saviour of all people, [...] whether intelligent or simpleminded' (3.49.5-7); for the latter group to be saved is a matter of 'belief' (πίστις), see also 4.9.13-17; 4.49.6-8; 4.50.31-32; 6.2.4-9; 6.13.26-27; 7.41.25-32.

⁴⁶⁶ See 6.19.23-26. Cf. also 4.21.17-18; 4.36.22-23; 6.7.1-3; 7.28.28-29; 7.39.19-36; 7.59.1-18. In 3.81.3-4 Origen indicates that Christians and philosophers 'have some ideas in common'; in 7.46.1-4 he recognizes that ideas from a not-Christian source can also be acceptable: 'We are careful not to raise objections to any good teachings, even if their authors are outside the faith, nor to seek an occasion for a dispute with them, nor to find a way of overthrowing statements which are sound.' See a discussion in Villani (2018:112-116).

VII. THEOLOGY IN *CONTRA CELSUM* 4.1-22

1. Introduction

In the next section I return to my corpus (*Contra Celsum* 4.1-22), the chapters in which Celsus' critical remarks about the Jewish-Christian belief in a descent of 'a God or son of God' are responded to by Origen. In the previous sections the theology of Celsus and Origen has been investigated and a sketch has been given of the headlines of their theological views and of the philosophical environments these views can be located in. Now it is my intention to apply the results of this investigation to a better understanding of the position Celsus and Origen take in the chapters of my corpus. For this purpose I will discuss these fragments again, this time not taking a linguistic and rhetorical approach as I do in my commentary chapter, but analyzing the text from the perspective of the theological views that determine the contributions of both Celsus and Origen in the passages on 'divine descent'. The analysis will deal with questions such as: what are the ideas that form the background against which Celsus' criticism and Origen's responses in these passages can be interpreted? How does their theology function in the argumentation and evaluation? Is there any connection to Platonism recognizable in their approach in these fragments? Can we trace any other philosophical influences? I would like to remind that such questions about theological views are not unrelated to the issues of rhetoric. In fact they are an integral part of the speaker's task that is indicated as *inventio* in the rhetorical theories: the task related to the content of the text, with a focus on the definition of the standpoints and the choosing of the appropriate arguments and strategy. Attention to the theology of Celsus and Origen can help us to understand the context of the standpoints and arguments they express in the chapters of my corpus.

In the next paragraphs the chapters will be discussed in the order in which they are presented by Origen. Each section will start with a discussion on Celsus' theological views, followed by Origen's responses. For the convenience of the reader the main line of the argumentation in each of the sections will be briefly summarized.

2. Distance (*Contra Celsum* 4.2)

In the initial fragment quoted in 4.2. Celsus raises the question of the divine descent with a strong rejection of the opinion of his opponents: it is a 'most shameful' idea (αἰσχιστον). In the wording Celsus shows his indignation: he keeps his distance from the Jewish-Christian assertion that 'some God or son of God' (τινα θεὸν ἢ θεοῦ υἱόν) has come down or will come down to the earth to correct mankind.

Celsus' rejection can be understood as based on several theological considerations. Firstly a divine descent would, in Celsus' view, imply an inappropriate, unacceptable and impossible way to bridge the gap which in his view exists between the great god and the material world. As is indicated in the texts (15), (18) and (23) quoted in chapter VI, Celsus assumes a fundamental distinction between the visible, mortal world of becoming and the intelligible, immortal world of being. The first god is at great distance of the visible world and even his relation to the intelligible things can only be indicated by means of an analogy; god transcends all things and is beyond being, an idea that can be traced back directly to Plato.¹

¹ See *Respublica* 509b, where is claimed that the Form of the Good is 'not being, but even beyond being' (οὐκ οὐσίας ὄντος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐτι ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας). Celsus' view is in accordance with the words of Diotima: θεὸς δὲ ἀνθρώπων οὐ μίγνυται ('god and man do not mingle'; Plato, *Symposium* 203a).

In this vision it is inconceivable that god would descend to the material world. Here the dualism and the basic elements of the mainstream theology of Platonism are undeniable.² Celsus' reaction to the idea of a divine descent can be understood against this background. His indignation reflects his awareness that this point concerns a key element of Platonism: the notion of a descending god runs contrary to the conception of god that is common in the Platonist 'family'.

However, to refine the picture a little bit: this view represented by Alcinoüs and Celsus is not the only approach found among Platonists. As is explained in chapter VI (see text (3) and (11) with comment), Numenius, while retaining the distinction between the intelligible and the sensible world, opts for a doctrine in which two gods appear. His first god is of the 'Peripatetic type', motionless and only concerned with the intelligible objects, while his second god is involved in both the intelligible and the sensible things. Here the being that bridges the gap so to say 'in person' is given divine status.³ This creator is even called 'god of becoming' and is said to 'pass through the heavens.'⁴ Perhaps Numenius would have been less critical, if he had heard of the Christian idea of a descending God.

The idea, moreover, that there would exist 'a son of god' (θεοῦ υἱόν) is unthinkable for Celsus. In his view Jesus certainly cannot be considered to be 'God': his qualities show that he was human; what he did and experienced would not be appropriate for a divine being.⁵ Numenius again perhaps would have been more understanding: though I did not find the combination υἱὸς θεοῦ in his texts, he does denote the first god as 'the father of the creator' and, according to Proclus, speaking of 'three gods' used the terms 'ancestor, offspring, descendant'.⁶

In his response to Celsus' vehement words Origen does not comment on the Platonist background of this criticism. As we have seen in chapter VI 5.3 and 6.3, Origen does not reject the distinction between a visible and an intelligible world, but is convinced that the distance between the creator and the creation does not mean that God does not interfere: in his descent to the human affairs he shows his commitment to the created world.⁷ However, in 4.2 Origen focuses on another issue: the difference indicated by Celsus between the Jewish and the Christian view about the moment of the divine descent: in the future or in the past. Without going deeply into the issue he points at the way to a solution: by interpreting the books of the prophets and commenting on the question whether or not Jesus is the Christ promised by

² This is illustrated in Alcinoüs' description of the character of the first god and his being related to the external world without moving himself: mixing Platonic and Peripatetic elements in his sentences Alcinoüs presents the first god as 'the cause of the eternal activity of the intellect of the whole heaven. It acts on this while remaining itself unmoved, as the sun on vision, when this is directed towards it, and as the object of desire moves desire, while remaining motionless itself' (see text (1) in chapter VI). The sun-analogy, which is favorite among Platonists and can be traced back to Plato himself, is combined with the Aristotelian desire-analogy in order to make clear that it is inappropriate to think that god would move: even when affecting the intelligible world he remains motionless. Even more inappropriate would be the idea that god would move towards the material world.

³ Did Numenius also assume the existence of *daemones*? Dillon asserts that it is 'intrinsically probable', but that more cannot be said due to lack of evidence (1977:378).

⁴ See Fragment 16 (text (11) in my chapter VI) and 12, quoted in Boys-Stones (2018:181 and 179).

⁵ Cf. Celsus in 3.41; 4.72 and the series of arguments quoted in books 1-2. As hypothesis Celsus is ready to assume that Jesus was 'really an angel' (fragment quoted in 5.52), but as it seems he presents this option as a move for the sake of the discourse, in order to point at more serious inconsistencies in the Christian doctrine. In 6.47 a fragment is quoted in which Celsus explains his vision on the origin of the expression 'son of God' used by Christians. He refers to the words of wise men in which in his view the good old true doctrine is expressed: 'Men of olden times used to call this world God's child and a demigod on the ground that it is originated from him'. The Christian use of the expression to denote Christ is presented as an example of corruption of an element of this ancient wisdom.

⁶ Fragments 12 and 21, quoted in Boys-Stones (2018:179,182). Numenius' words of fragment 21 have not been preserved in their original context, but only embedded in Proclus' text of his *Commentary on the Timaeus* (I 303.27-304.5), where Proclus reports that Numenius raises a hymn to three gods: the father (πατέρα), the maker (ποιητήν) and the artefact/cosmos (ποίημα/κόσμος). Proclus says he prefers such terms to Numenius' use of 'rather theatrical language' (προστραγωδῶν): 'ancestor, offspring, descendant' (πάππον, ἔγγονον, ἀπόγονον). Bonazzi (2004:76-81) argues that Numenius' second term ἔγγονον might be derived from a passage about the Good from Plato's *Respublica* 506d-509b, where the equivalent ἔκγονον is used to denote 'the offspring of the Good, most nearly made in its likeness' (ἐκγονος τε τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ὁμοιότατος ἐκείνῳ, 506e7, cf. 507a3, 508b12-13).

⁷ See my chapter VI 5.3 and 5.5.

the prophets.⁸ In his indication of the Scriptures as landmark in theological disputes Origen clearly differs from his opponent.

3. Correction (*Contra Celsum* 4.3-4)

Then I pass to the element of ‘correction’ of ‘the situation in the world’, which was, as Celsus said, in the doctrine of his opponents the purpose of the divine descent (τῶν τῆδε δικαιωτῆν, 4.2.3). This theme – with a link to ethics, but rather on a general than an individual level – is picked up by Celsus in the fragments quoted in 4.3, where he seeks to demonstrate the improbability of the idea of a divine descent by means of a series of rhetorical questions. He asks what might be the purpose of such a descent. One of the purposes suggested by Celsus is that it was meant to correct (ἐπανορθοῦν) men (4.3.22-24).

It is clear that Celsus argues here from the perspective of his opponents, for in his own theology there is no place for such a corrective intervention from the side of his god. Such an intervention, he thinks, would not be compatible with the distant and indirect relation this god has to the world. Here Celsus’ view on divine providence is involved. As is explained in chapter VI 3.6, according to him all providence has its source in the first god, but the implementation of the governance is entrusted to lower beings. There is not any personal involvement of the first god in his care for the universe nor is he in need of any correction. This picture of the distant god ruling through his agents was described in chapter VI as a mix of Platonism and elements derived from Peripatetic origin (see 4.4-5).⁹ Against this background it is understandable that in Celsus’ view correction of mankind as motive for a divine descent has to be rejected.

This brings us to the next suggestion Celsus presents in 4.3.32-34. There he refers to the ‘divine power’ and asks if ‘God’ was unable to correct men merely by divine power (δυνάμει θεῖα): was it really necessary to send down someone? These questions of Celsus are more intended to demonstrate inappropriate views on divine power on the side of his opponents than to illustrate his own opinion.¹⁰ Celsus surely attributes great power to his god, but does not believe that he would use that power directly and ‘in his own person’ in the material world. In his view god does not intervene in the events of the earth, neither in order to punish or purify people nor to reform things that went wrong; he does not show any anger or threats (4.99.9-10).

Origen in his response in 4.3-4 shows fundamental disagreement with Celsus’ view. He underlines that God always seeks to correct the human situation. In Origen’s view this is the explanation of the idea of the divine descent: correction was the aim God pursued by sending his servants during the Old Testament period, and for this reason also Christ came down to this world: ‘In each generation his word

⁸ See for another passage on the prophets in my corpus 4.21.32-38.

⁹ Illustrations of this view of Celsus can be found in fragments discussed in chapter VI. In text (27) Celsus explains that god is not like a human craftsman whose work can be imperfect and in need of correction: god does not need such a correction (Οὐτε τῷ θεῷ καινοτέρας δεῖ διορθώσεως, 4.69.8). In text (25) Celsus summarizes his view on the way god is related to the world, which is called ‘his work’, well-proportioned for the sake of the whole: ‘God takes care of the universe, and providence never abandons it, nor does it become more evil’ (4.99.6-8). Indeed, there is evil in the world, connected with matter, but the level of evil is constant: there is no decrease or increase of evil in the long term (4.62.4-5; 4.69.6-7), an allegation which Origen links to words of Plato. In his response in 4.62 Origen thinks Celsus, in the words he had just quoted, had paraphrased Plato’s *Theaetetus* 176a, where Socrates says that evil cannot be destroyed: there must always be something opposed to the good; evil is not established among the gods, but necessarily wanders around the mortal nature and the earth where humans live. Celsus refers to this passage also in 8.55.

¹⁰ In the philosophy of Philo powers (δυνάμεις) function as separate entities between the supreme God and the world: the world is created and ruled by these powers (cf. Dillon 1977:161-163). Although Celsus uses the same word here (but in singular), there is too little reason to assume that Celsus denotes such separate entities here. In Celsus’ doctrine there were intermediate beings between the first god and the material world, but he does not call them δυνάμεις themselves, but says that power was allotted to them (Celsus in 7.68.10-11).

descends into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets. And by the advent of Christ he corrects through the Christian gospel not the unwilling but those who choose the higher life which is pleasing to God.’ (4.3.24-30).¹¹

The last phrase of this quote expresses another typical element of Origen’s view that is mentioned in 4.3: the free will of man, which is presented as a crucial factor in the implementation of the correction of mankind. Moral improvement cannot be achieved by the implantation of virtue by an external force, because ‘if you take away the element of free will from virtue, you will also destroy its essence’ (4.3.48-49).¹² In 4.4 Origen brings an additional argument in the debate: he addresses Celsus as a defender of the notion of divine providence (‘you do not appear from your treatise to be an Epicurean at all’, 4.4.7-8). In that passage Origen suggests that it is likely that God who knows the human situation will correct them and deliver man from evil by divine power. Here Origen implicitly criticizes Celsus’ Platonic view on providence without an intention to expel evil. Such a conception of a god who is not engaged in restoration is fundamentally opposed to Origen’s biblical God, who ‘is continually sending people to correct men’ and to ‘the reformation of Jesus’ who ‘came as saviour of all men’ (4.4.12,18-21).

4. Anthropomorphisms (*Contra Celsum* 4.5-6)

In the next fragments, quoted in 4.5, Celsus raises the issue of the well-balanced situation that exists in the universe, which in Celsus’ view would be in danger if ‘God’ would leave his throne in order to come down to men. Celsus picks up an aspect of the anthropomorphic image he ascribes to his opponents, and points at physical details of ‘a throne of God’ which literally would be left vacant in case ‘God’ would descend. Celsus then argues that ‘the change of one quite insignificant thing on earth, would upset and destroy everything’ (4.5.28-29). Here we get a hint of a world view in which the cosmos consists of a coherent system which all things are bound to: a divine descent would entail a distortion of the universal law¹³ (see text (25) in chapter VI) and therefore has to be considered as a dangerous and irresponsible act, according to Celsus.

The argument of anthropomorphism is continued in Celsus’ next fragment (4.6), in which Celsus suggests another reason why the God of his opponents would have descended: a ‘strong and very mortal ambition’ is attributed to their God by Jews and Christians, as Celsus says. God’s reason to come down, in Celsus’ representation of the standpoint of his opponents, would have been his consideration that he was unknown among men, and his thought of being underrated: his descent, as Celsus concludes, is to be compared with the performance of ‘nouveaux riches’ who want to show off. No doubt Celsus here mockingly presents a caricature of the view of his opponents. In fact it is his aim to show his strong opposition against this conception of God, in which not very noble human motives are attributed to him, who, as Celsus asserts, exists in the most fortunate situation, cannot act shamefully and is in need of nothing¹⁴.

Origen’s response in these chapters is in line with his approach of this topic that was discussed in my chapter VI 5.4: on the one hand he rejects anthropomorphic representations of God if they are taken in a literal sense, on the other hand he proposes an allegorical interpretation of expressions that might suggest such representations. Both elements are present in 4.5. Origen rejects Celsus’ suggestion that

¹¹ Similar phrases are repeated in 4.4.11-21. See also chapter VI, text (42) and the discussions in 5.5 and 6.5 there. In 4.3.5-13 Origen mentions additional (or rather: more detailed) purposes of the descent of God: the conversion of the Jews (‘the lost sheep of the house of Israel’) and the transmission of God’s kingdom to the Christians.

¹² See also chapter VI, text (39), discussed in 5.4, and text (44) with comment in 5.6.

¹³ Andresen (1955:92-93) points at the Stoic origin of this world view.

¹⁴ See chapter VI, texts (19), (20) and (22) and the comment in 3.4.

God while coming down to men leaves his throne: such a spatial representation, as Origen says, is incompatible with biblical words about God as the one who fills heaven and earth, and in whom we all ‘live and move and have our being’ (4.5.7-9). A divine descent does not mean that God goes ‘away from where he was, nor does he leave his throne, as though one place were deprived of him, and another which previously did not possess him were filled’ (4.5.14-16). However, the rejection of a literal leaving of the throne does not mean that Origen also rejects the idea that ‘the God of the universe descends with Jesus into human life by his power’ and that the Logos ‘comes to us’.

Meanwhile, Origen sees no reason to reject the verbs ἐκλείπειν (to leave) and πληροῦν (to fill) completely in this context: he offers an allegorical interpretation which he considers to be in line with his conception of God as being separated from evil and stimulating virtue. ‘Being deserted by God’ can properly be said of the ‘soul of a bad man who is deluged with evil’ and ‘being filled by a divine spirit’ can be said of the ‘soul of a man who desires to live virtuously, or has even made some progress, or is even already living virtuously’ (4.5.19-24). In a similar way Origen responds to Celsus’ suggestion that things on earth would be changed with disastrous consequences. Origen does not reject the verb μεταβάλλειν (to change) in the context of the advent of the Logos to man, but explains this change as a moral reformation of the man who has received the coming of the Logos in his soul.

In 4.6 Origen rejects Celsus’ words about negative human characteristics Christians would attribute to God (mortal ambition, the thought of being underrated, showy behaviour). Origen however is not stuck in rejection only, but turns Celsus’ negative approach into positive intentions he attributes to God. God’s desire to make himself known is, in Origen’s explanation, caused by the fact the knowledge of God delivers man from evil and implants blessedness in the human soul (4.6.9-11,15,22).

The common theme of Origen’s argument in these chapters is his rejection of anthropomorphic, physical representations combined with his intention to use Celsus’ criticism as an opportunity to confirm what in his Christian view is characteristic of God: the commitment to the fight against evil and the correction of man.¹⁵ God is, as he says, ‘concerned to enable us to obtain friendship with him through Christ and the constant indwelling of the Logos’ (4.6.23-24).

5. Salvation plan (*Contra Celsum* 4.7-9)

Remarkably in 4.7 a passage follows in which Celsus presents a different reason for God’s descent to the earth, a passage which is introduced by Origen as words that are written ‘somewhat later’ (ὅσπερὸν ποτε).¹⁶ In this passage words of Christians (and/or Jews) are represented by Celsus, saying that God does not need to be known for his own sake, but wants ‘us’ to know him because of ‘our’ salvation: it is God’s intention to save good people and to punish the wicked. For Celsus this ‘quote’ of his opponents is an introduction to his next critical question: ‘So now, after such a long time, God remembered to correct human life, and previously he did not care?’¹⁷

In this question the echo of several elements from Celsus’ theology can be heard. Firstly, the anthropomorphic issue is at stake here again: Celsus suggests that the God of the Christians could be

¹⁵ See chapter VI 5.5.

¹⁶ According to Arnold (2016:554-556) this passage was originally part of a section that Celsus wrote ‘somewhat later’ in his book. From there (maybe the passage quoted in 4.23) it seems to be moved to 4.7 by Origen in order to show that Celsus definitely was aware of the reason his opponents present themselves for God’s descent and that his words quoted in 4.6 can be regarded as malignant polemic. See in my commentary chapter IV *ad loc.*

¹⁷ This question runs parallel to similar questions that were asked in philosophical discussions on the relation between creation and time: those who reject the Aristotelian idea of an eternal cosmos and claim that it came into being at some moment, have to face the question why this would happen at that moment and not at another time. Cf. Boys-Stones (2018:186-187) and my chapter VI 2.6.5.

accused of human faults as oblivion and negligence. Next, the difference between the situation νῦν and πρότερον also implies change on the part of God, a notion that is rejected by Celsus (see the passage quoted in 4.14; this issue will be discussed below). And, furthermore, Celsus apparently argues here from the standpoint of his opponents, for in his own conception of god, as we saw in chapter VI 3.5, there is no question of any corrective intervention from the side of god (see text (27) in chapter VI) and, moreover, certainly not an intervention that is focused on mankind only: anthropocentrism is rejected by Celsus (see the texts (24) and (25) in chapter VI).

Origen in his response discusses two elements that are typical for his theology: the continuity of God's desire for correction and his phased salvation plan. The first element is intended to reject Celsus' suggestion of oblivion, negligence and change on the part of God. It is elaborated in 4.7. by the use of various phrases that indicate the continuity in God's governance: οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτ' οὐκ ('at no time not', 4.7.9), ἀεί ('always' (4.7.10), καθ' ἐκάστην γενεάν ('in each generation', 4.7.12,15). We can also notice a variety of expressions to denote the notion of correction: δικαιοῦσαι τὸν ἀνθρώπων βίον ('to correct the life of man', 4.7.10), διδοὺς ἀρετῆς ἀφορμὰς τοῦ ἐπανορθοῦσθαι τὸ λογικὸν ζῷον ('by giving incentives for virtue for the reformation of the rational being', 4.7.11) and φίλους θεοῦ καὶ προφῆτας κατασκευάζει¹⁸ ('to make them friends of God and prophets', 4.7.13-14). The second of these phrases contains a reference to the free will of the rational beings: God does not force them to reform their lives, but offers incentives to do so. The element of choice of the souls also appears in the words εἰς ψυχὰς ἃς εὕρισκε ὁσίαις ('into souls which she finds to be holy', 4.7.12-13) and ὅσοι καὶ δεκτικοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεύματος ('holy men who were receptive of the divine spirit', 4.7.15-16): God enters with his wisdom and spirit into souls who previously have made themselves appropriate to receive him by a holy way of life. As we saw earlier in chapter VI 5.6 (text (44) with comment), this is a key element of Origen's theology.

The second element is discussed in 4.8-9, where Origen points at God's salvation plan and the differentiated way this plan is worked out in history. Here we encounter an aspect of Origen's view on divine providence (as discussed earlier in chapter VI 5.6): the focus on God's plan to save the world. Origen frequently indicates this plan by the noun οἰκονομία, which also is used twice in these chapters (4.8.28; 4.9.4). Origen explains that it is developed in different phases: firstly by prophets, who by their uncompromising way of life surpassed their contemporaries (4.8.1-5; 4.9.2-3) and secondly by the advent of Christ at one specific point in history (καίρῳ, 4.8.5-8; 4.9.3-7), an event which is indicated as the culmination of God's plan (in the abstract phrase ἐξαιρέτον τι χρῆμα – 'something special', 4.8.6). The focus of God's plan in both phases was correction, but Origen points at a difference in extent and method: in the phase of the prophets the focus was on Israel and the method is described as coercive (symbolically indicated in μαστίγων καὶ δεσμῶν καὶ βασανιστηρίων – 'whips and bonds and tortures', 4.9.4-5). The focus of Christ's correction is on the whole world and the harsh approach is substituted by 'education' (4.9.5). According to Origen this phased plan is indicated in a rather mysterious way in the text about the division of the nations (*Deut.* 32.8-9).¹⁹ Origen combines this passage with a quote from *Ps.* 2.8 and confines his explanation to the enumeration of questions that should be answered to understand the deeper meaning of these texts (see 4.8.10-28). I point at three elements in Origen's comment: (1) in his view these texts are related to the advent of Christ (4.8.11-12) and the different providential care for souls (4.8.27-28); (2) the plan is not without logic and consistency (4.9.20,26); (3) the plan consists of two phases ('firstly', 'later', 4.9.21,23), which correspond with the prophets phase (focus on Israel) and the period after the advent of Christ ('the ends of the earth'), as Origen explains in 4.9.1-7.

Origen concludes the passage about the explanation of these 'mysterious issues' by making a division

¹⁸ The phrase is derived from *Wisd.* 7.27. The work of the prophets as messengers of God is indicated in the phrase ὡς ἐπέστρεφον τοὺς καθ' αὐτοὺς ὅση δύναμις ('how they tried as well as they could to convert their contemporaries', 4.7.16).

¹⁹ The passage is also quoted in 5.29 in the context of a discussion on differences between peoples.

between two groups of Christians: the ‘philosophical’ group and the mass with less education. The duty of the first group is to argue and to use proofs taken both from the Bible and logic, whereas for the second group it is enough to trust themselves to God and to believe the words of the Saviour (4.9.10-17). Such a division is discussed also elsewhere in *Contra Celsum* in the context to the gaining of knowledge of God. As we have seen in chapter VI 5.3 (text (33) with comment), Origen typically argues for the importance of differentiation between believers with respect for individual capacities and for the inclusion of common people without education.

6. Punishments (*Contra Celsum* 4.10)

In the next lines from Celsus’ work, quoted in 4.10, Celsus looks back to statements of his opponents as he had represented them earlier. Here he presents his judgement on these statements: it is all babbling about God without any piety or purity, meant to ‘arouse amazement of the uneducated people’. To illustrate his judgement he compares his opponents with ‘those in the Bacchic mysteries who introduce phantoms and terrors’ (τὰ φάσματα καὶ τὰ δαίματα, 4.10.8-9). The background of this approach of fear and intimidation is, according to Celsus, a wrong opinion on punishment (‘they do not speak the truth about the punishments’, περὶ κολάσεων, 4.10.6).

In a similar way δαίματα, κόλασις and reprehensible influencing of common people are connected by Celsus in passages quoted in 3.16, where he speaks about terrors ‘invented’ by Christians. There he characterizes these terrifying doctrines as ‘misunderstandings of the ancient tradition’ and compares their effect to the enchantment of flute music in the Cybele cult, another religion connected to ecstasy and exiting practices.²⁰ Yet in the same context he confesses in strong words – in agreement with Platonic thought – that he does accept the doctrine of punishment of the unrighteous and rewards for the righteous.²¹ What then is Celsus’ focus in his criticism worded in 4.10?

One point is correctly indicated by Cook (2000:99): Celsus’ protest is against the use of intimidating arguments he attributes to Christians in their attempt to persuade people to join their movement; terror should not be used to bring people to faith.

I would like to mention an additional point which is associated to Celsus’ theology and his thoughts on the working of god’s providence. The link with theology is present in Celsus’ text: the impious ideas of his opponents are called babbling *about god* (περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, 4.10.4).²² As is stated earlier, Celsus denies that the supreme god shows any anger and threats towards mankind (see fragment (25) in chapter VI): the distance between him and the material world is too great. This does, in Celsus’ view, not apply to the ‘lower gods’ and the *daemones*, who are appointed to rule over mankind (cf. fragment (28) in chapter VI) and certainly do interfere with human affairs.²³ In Celsus’ view the punishment of the unrighteous is not carried out by the great god, but by intermediate beings, although they have to keep the law given by the great god (7.68.10).

²⁰ Cf. Celsus’ reference to the hellfire preaching of wandering prophets, quoted in 7.9, and of priests of mystery religions, quoted in 8.48. More references in Arnold (2016:172-177). Arnold argues that the fragments on this theme probably are not quoted by Origen in their original order; for his reconstruction see p.568-574.

²¹ Cf. also Celsus in 8.49.14-18. See May (1998); Cook (2000:97-99).

²² Here giving attention to the word order can help us to determine what Celsus presents as his most salient element of information: the words περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ are in the preverbal position in the subordinate clause, so they have Focus function. Cf. chapter II 6.5.

²³ Celsus points at priests of oracles and interpreters of mysteries who provide evidence for eternal punishments by demonic powers (8.48) and speaks of the ‘wrath of *daemones*’ (8.45.14) and of ‘tortures and punishments’ (8.58.14). He ensures that whoever blasphemes them will not escape punishment: ‘for either he runs away and hides himself on account of what he has done, or he is caught and destroyed’ (8.41). Even the fact that men are bound to the body can be regarded as a penalty of sins; in this context the *daemones* are called the ‘officers in charge of the prison’ (8.53).

My conclusion is that Celsus' protest to the 'false doctrine' on punishment (4.10.6) is not concerned with the idea of punishment of wrong actions in general. He rather rejects on the one hand the intimidation of common people by 'phantoms and terrors' he attributes to Christians,²⁴ and on the other hand the idea that it is the great god who executes punishments.

Whereas Celsus accepts the idea of eternal punishments for wrongdoers as 'a doctrine that never may be abandoned' (8.49.16-18), he is not explicit about his motive for it. Among Platonists this theme is not uncommon and they mention purification and correction as purposes of punishment; some of them however add that healing is not attainable for each soul.²⁵ Celsus is less explicit about the reasons of punishment than his Platonists colleagues. Perhaps he was attached to the doctrine of eternal punishments for the maintenance of justice and the world order or for the vengeance of evil. The possibility of purification or correction seems to be excluded by him, as I explained above (3). Here again he appears to go his own way within the group of Platonists.

Origen rejects Celsus' suggestive comparison of Christian practices with Bacchic mystery cults. Punishments in the Christian view are not intended to intimidate common people, but have a pedagogical function and aim at reformation (ἐπανορθοῦν, 4.10.13) of the human race.²⁶ Here again Origen connects the issue to his correction theme. He distinguishes two corrective methods: threats of punishments (qualified as necessary and not unbeneficial) and promises for people who live well, comprising the promises of a blessed life after death (4.10.12-18). Moreover, elsewhere in *Contra Celsum* Origen speaks about punishments in the context of a righteous judgement by God in which people who lived good will be rewarded and sinners will be punished. He argues that such a doctrine is part of common notions of righteousness and moral principles, and therefore is shared by Christians and people of other convictions.²⁷ About an eternal character of such punishments Origen seems to speak only reluctantly, as May correctly argues, obviously because in his view all punishments will prove to be limited: God's goodness will triumph over the sins of his creatures.²⁸

7. Flood and conflagration (*Contra Celsum* 4.11-13)

In 4.11 another argument of Celsus is represented which is part of his criticism of the idea of a divine descent.²⁹ Here Celsus provides his explanation of the origin of the Jewish-Christian opinion that God

²⁴ One might question whether Celsus himself is entirely free of argumentation based on fear in his defence of worshipping the *daemones* (cf. the fragments quoted in 8.35-58).

²⁵ Plato himself had dwelled on it in the mythical passages in his *Gorgias* (525a-526c) and *Phaedo* (113d-114b), passages in which punishment is located in the underworld and is aimed at purification and healing of the soul (though some souls are marked as incurable). Alcinous adopts the medical metaphor in his comment on this issue: 'It is advantageous for the wrongdoer to undergo punishment, even as it is for a sick man to submit his body to a doctor for treatment; for all punishment is a kind of cure for the soul that has sinned' (*Didaskalikos* 31.3). Apuleius devotes a longer passage to the theme of punishment (*De Platone* 2.17-18) and agrees that being punished is less serious than granting impunity to a wrongdoer, just as it is terrible to lack medicine for the harshest disease. Yet, he adds, referring to Plato's *Politicus* 308e-309a, some souls are so saturated by vices that death is the only way out: the best doctors sometimes stop curing hopeless cases. In worst cases death can be the only delivery from tormenting evils. An extensive description of diverse punishments after death (combined with the option of reincarnation) is given by Plutarch in the mythical story at the end of his *De sera numinis vindicta* (ch.25-26, 564e-565e). See also the description of punishments and reincarnation in Vergil, *Aeneis* 6.724-755, where Stoic and Platonic elements are mixed.

²⁶ See also chapter VI 6.5.

²⁷ See 1.4.3-9; 3.16.3-6; 8.52.4-16; 8.57.17.

²⁸ See May (1998:350-351) and chapter VI 5.5.

²⁹ By the way – it does not really affect my argument here – I refer to Arnold (2016:556-560), who suggests that Origen changed in his quotation the order of Celsus' text. He argues that the original order of 4.10-22 probably has been: fragment 4.10 – fragments 4.20-22 – fragments 4.11-18.

will come down to the earth. In his view it is based on misunderstanding³⁰ of Greek doctrines about periodically returning floods and conflagrations. The last flood, as he says paraphrasing the thoughts of his opponents, occurred in the times of Deucalion and so the cycle now ‘demands a conflagration in accordance with the alternating succession of the universe’. This reasoning, Celsus concludes, ‘was responsible for their mistaken opinion that God will come down and bring fire like a torturer.’ (4.11.8-12). In these last words the connection with the previous argument is indicated: the alleged purpose of the descent is punishment by God, a notion rejected by Celsus, as is explained in the previous section (6). An additional aspect that can be observed in the words ‘like a torturer’, is an objection against an anthropomorphic conception of god.³¹ The idea of a human-like god personally executing punishments is despicable for Celsus.

In the meantime he assumes³² the reality of ‘cycles of long periods’ and the return of floods and conflagrations. His belief in the occurrence of ‘many conflagrations and many floods’ is also indicated in his words quoted in 1.19, where he refers to the catastrophes in the time of Deucalion and Phaethon.³³ In Celsus’ view of time and history necessity and determination play a key role, as well as the conception of the cyclic return of mortal life to its original position (see 4.60 and 4.65, text (26) in chapter VI): all things occur ‘in accordance with the alternating succession of the universe’ (4.11.9-10). Although Celsus opines that the world order is maintained by the providence of the great god (cf. text (25) in chapter VI), this does not mean that he presents catastrophes like floods and conflagrations as directly caused by god: god does not intervene in the material world. Celsus’ alternative explanation is based on determinism: disasters occur and have to occur for physical reasons.³⁴ These catastrophes, meanwhile, will not end in a total destruction of the cosmos: god’s providence, he says, will never abandon it nor ‘does god turn it back to himself after a time’ (4.99.7-8, see text (25) in chapter VI). The eternal, unchangeable laws are not subject to time; history, development and the cyclic change of world periods only exist in the material world of ‘becoming’ (cf. 7.45, see text (18) in chapter VI).³⁵ The doctrine of the conflagration, which has Stoic sources, is given a Platonic twist: it is limited here to the material world and the divine, unchanging world is excluded.³⁶

All these details function as background in Celsus’ main theological argument in 4.11: floods and conflagrations cannot be regarded as punishments of god and Christians or Jews who think the great god intervenes in this world misunderstood the ‘true doctrine’.

Origen’s response consists of several elements. In 4.11-12 he starts with the rejection of Celsus’ criticism concerning the alleged misunderstanding by Christians. Origen’s discourse here is not based

³⁰ Other passages in which Celsus blames his opponents for misunderstanding of Greek thoughts and ‘the ancient tradition’ are e.g. 3.16 (on punishments), 4.22 (on the tower of Babel and Sodom and Gomorrah; these passages will be discussed below) and 6.42 (on an opponent of God, Satan, based on myths about divine wars). See Andresen (1955:146ff.).

³¹ For a similar picture of God using fire see the fragments of Celsus quoted in 5.14 (‘God applies fire like a cook, and the rest of mankind will be roasted’) and 7.9 (Celsus quotes ‘wandering prophets’ who announce that God will cast fire upon men who did not worship him).

³² The use of the particle *δή* (4.11.6) indicates that Celsus presents this statement as an evident fact which is expected to be accepted by his readers as well.

³³ These issues are discussed in 1.19 for a different reason: the debate is there on the age of the world and the cosmology of Moses, who, according to Celsus, derived his ideas from other ‘wise nations and distinguished men’ (1.21.1-3).

³⁴ ‘ein immanentes, naturgesetzliches Geschehen’, Andresen (1955:161); see also Cook (2000:98); Arnold (2016:366).

³⁵ See Andresen (1955:87-88): ‘Ein von Gott gesetztes Ende, eine Eschatologie gibt es nicht, ebensowenig wie einen von Gott gesetzten Anfang.’ Origen points at the latter element in 1.19.4-5 ‘Celsus agrees with those who say that the world is uncreated (ἀγένητον), although he hides his real intention.’ Here we have a point of disagreement between Christianity and Celsus.

³⁶ Notice the difference with the impact of the conflagration in the Stoic world view with its immanent divine principle. Here conflagration means the return of all things to the original and most pure fiery status: the divine principle, represented as fire, is explicitly involved in the process. I point at Celsus’ words in 4.99.7-8: οὐδὲ διὰ χρόνου πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ὁ θεὸς ἐπιστρέφει (‘god does not turn it back to himself after a time’). Possibly while writing the words πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ... ἐπιστρέφει, Celsus had in mind the Stoic doctrine (all things flow from the divine source and will be turned back to it after a time). It is likely that this phrase has anti-Stoic intentions here, as part of the conclusion of a passage that attacks anthropocentric opinions shared by Christians and Stoics. See also Andresen (1955:66). Plutarch represents elements of this Stoic doctrine with critical remarks in *De Stoicorum repugnantiis* 1053b. More sources (with comment) are collected in Long & Sedley (1987:275-279).

on theological, but on chronological argumentation: Celsus fails to give attention to the antiquity of Moses. In this passage three related issues are briefly mentioned by Origen. Firstly without an extended discussion of the matter and the expression of a clear standpoint he suggests that he does not want to exclude the possible existence of cycles in the world history and of periodically returning floods and conflagrations. Secondly he rejects the idea that subsequent periods will be exactly identical: such a view is characterized as a corruption by ‘others’ who derived their ideas from Moses and misunderstood his account. Here Origen briefly hints at deterministic ideas of his opponent and the Stoics, ideas that are incompatible with his own thoughts about the free will of rational beings.³⁷ Thirdly Origen explains his view on the cause of the occurrence of the flood and the conflagration: a torrent of evil and the necessity to purify the earth. By this remark Origen turns the discussion on the great disasters into a discussion that is related to a key element of his theology: the combat against evil. His remark can be interpreted as a prelude to the more comprehensive discussion that follows in chapter 4.13.

In the last section of 4.12 and in 4.13 we encounter more elements of Origen’s theology. Here he responds to Celsus’ words that ‘God will come down and bring fire like a torturer’. The first words of this section function as an indication of the theme: Θεὸν δὲ καταβαίνοντα (‘as for God’s descent’, 4.12.17). Right from the start Origen makes clear that he defends the reality of such a descent – differently from his opponent – but not in a literal sense: if prophets in the Bible say that God comes down, these words should be interpreted allegorically. The meaning of this descent is expressed as follows: ‘God comes down from his own greatness and majesty when he cares for the affairs of men, and particularly of bad men’ (4.12.19-21). Next Origen, who has been a teacher himself during his lifetime, inserts a comparison that evokes an educational situation: he compares God with a teacher who comes down to the level of children and students of philosophy. The key element here is that the descent has no physical character (οὐ ... σωματικῶς, 4.12.24). In this passage Origen clarifies that he rejects an anthropomorphic and spatial interpretation of God’s descent.³⁸ He recognizes it in God’s care for mankind and in his pedagogical coaching of people who need help in their process of gaining beneficial knowledge.³⁹ Origen does not speak about any intermediate beings by whom in the view of Platonists divine providential care would be executed: it is God himself who comes down. In this indication of a direct involvement of God Origen disagrees with the Platonic view. Origen’s theology is also apparent in 4.13, where Origen discusses biblical texts in which God and fire are connected. Origen uses allegory to arrive at an appropriate interpretation and explains the texts as indications of God’s continuing extermination of evil: ‘God as fire consumes evil and the actions resulting of it’ (4.13.11-14).

8. Change (*Contra Celsum* 4.14-19)

Celsus announces his next argument, quoted in 4.14.2-9, with an explicit reference to the ‘ancient doctrines’: he uses the Platonic conception of god as good, beautiful, happy and existing in the optimal circumstances as the starting point of his argumentation. This goodness and happiness (ἀγαθός, καλός, εὐδαίμων, ἄριστος) is underlined by contrasting it with its opposites (κακόν, αἰσχρόν, κακοδαιμονίαν, πονηρότατον – ‘bad, shameful, misfortune, most wicked’). The list of qualities can be related to Platonic dualism and an echo of Plato’s statement can be heard here: ‘the divine is beautiful, wise and good, and possesses all other such qualities’ (τὸ δὲ θεῖον καλόν, σοφόν, ἀγαθόν καὶ πᾶν ὅτι τοιοῦτον, *Phaedrus*

³⁷ In 4.67-48 and 5.20 the issue of determinism and identical world periods is discussed more extensively by Origen. See Chadwick (1947:40-41).

³⁸ In line with his approach of anthropomorphisms described in chapter VI 5.4.

³⁹ See for συγκатаβαίνω (‘coming down to the level of...’) also 4.5.11; 4.14.18; 5.12.2; 7.60.30 and 7.41.28; for comment on the latter passage, quoted as text (33) in chapter VI 5.3.

246d). Moreover in the fragments quoted in 4.14 and 4.18 Celsus reproduces several elements of the discussion that are found in Plato's *Republica* 379a-383c. Here Socrates discusses what would be the best way to speak about god: we have to keep distance to mythological pictures and the images provided by Homer, but instead we should present god 'as he is' (οἷος τυγχάνει ὁ θεὸς ὢν, 379a7), which means firstly: acknowledge that god is good, not harmful, not causing anything bad, but producing what is good (379b-380c); secondly: god is not a sorcerer, who can change himself and wants to deceive people (380d-383a). Later Platonists incorporate similar statements in their passages on divine qualities.⁴⁰

Celsus' introductory statement about god as good, beautiful and happy (4.14.4-5) has a clear objective: Celsus wants to demonstrate that god must undergo change for the worse, if he descends to the earth, a change (μεταβολή) that no one would choose to undergo and for a god even is impossible.⁴¹ For god a descent to the earth would inevitably entail a change towards the bad and shameful, towards misfortune and wickedness, qualifications which apply to the material world, to which evil is connected (cf. the texts (22) and (26) quoted in chapter VI). Celsus distinguishes mortal (τῷ θνητῷ) from immortal (τῷ ἀθανάτῳ) and states that change (ἀλλάττεσθαι καὶ μεταπλάττεσθαι) is compatible with the mortal nature, whereas 'the nature of the immortal is to remain the same without alteration' (κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν, a quote from Plato's *Phaedo* 78c). This distinction is in line with the picture shown in chapter VI text (18), in which Celsus' belief in the great gap between the intelligible and the material world is explained. This Platonic dualism is recognizable in the contrastive structure of Celsus' sentence.⁴² His denial of change in the divine, immortal world agrees with the statements of Alcinoüs and Plutarch on this subject (see texts (8) and (9) in chapter VI).⁴³ Moreover, I point at the fact that in Celsus' argument again we are facing his opposition against an anthropomorphic conception of God: assuming that god comes down and undergoes the change that is involved in such a descent, implies ascribing him things that are characteristic of the ever changing human world.⁴⁴

Then I pass to Celsus' next fragment, quoted in 4.18, in which he further develops the change topic. Now he speaks explicitly of an alleged change of 'God' 'into a mortal body': Celsus suggests that, such a change being impossible, 'God' does not really change, but deceivingly makes people believe that he did change. As it seems, Plato's text of *Republica* 381e-383a is in Celsus' mind, when he wrote these lines.⁴⁵ He totally agrees with the conclusion drawn in this passage: god is straightforward and true, and besides he is no sorcerer who changes himself and misleads people by cheating and telling lies (382e8-383a5). This goodness and immutability are key qualities in Platonic theology.⁴⁶ In a nutshell: Celsus

⁴⁰ See Apuleius in text (5) and Alcinoüs in text (8) in chapter VI 2.6.4.

⁴¹ Cf. texts (19) and (21) quoted in chapter VI. Celsus' words summarize Plato, *Republica* 381bc, see especially the conclusion there: Ἀδύνατον ἄρα, ἔφη, καὶ θεῶ ἐθέλειν αὐτὸν ἀλλοιοῦν, ἀλλ' ὥς ἔοικε, κάλλιστος καὶ ἄριστος ὢν εἰς τὸ δυνατόν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν μένει αἰεὶ ἀπλῶς ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ μορφῇ (381c7-9: 'So, I said, it is impossible for a god to want to alter himself, but, as it seems, because he is the most beautiful and best possible, each of them remains always and absolutely in his own shape', my translation).

⁴² Cf. my commentary chapter *ad loc.*

⁴³ In Plutarch's text we encounter an ontological approach: change is not possible for god who by his nature 'is', whereas 'change' intrinsically belongs to the world of 'becoming'. See Stead (1994:120ff) on 'God as simple unchanging being'.

⁴⁴ By the way: although Celsus argues here against Jewish-Christian ideas, at this point he, just like other Platonists, definitely also disagrees with the Stoic conception of god. The Stoics asserted that their divine principle was immanent: during the existence of the universe god is in all things, as the fire that penetrates everything. So god participates in the cyclic process of transformation of the world. An immutable god is alien to the Stoic philosophy. Platonic criticism of the Stoic conception of god in which transformation and destruction of the world were implied is given by Ammonius in Plutarch's text about the E at Delphi (see text (9) in chapter VI).

⁴⁵ Notice the almost verbal resemblances: αὐτὸς μὲν οὐ μεταβάλλει (Celsus, 4.18.6) – αὐτοὶ μὲν οἱ θεοὶ εἰσιν οἷοι μὴ μεταβάλλειν (Plato, 381e7-8); ποιεῖ δὲ τοὺς ὁρῶντας δοκεῖν (Celsus, 4.18.6-7) – ἡμῖν δὲ ποιοῦσιν δοκεῖν (Plato, 381e7); ψεύδεται, ἀπατῇ καὶ ψεύδος (Celsus, 4.18.7-8) – ἐξαπατῶντες, ψεύδεσθαι, ψεύδος (Plato, 38e10; 382a1, a4); ὥς ἐν φαρμάκου μοῖρα (Celsus, 4.18.8) – ὥς φάρμακον (Plato, 382c10); μεμνηνός (Celsus, 4.18.9) – μανία (Plato, 382c8; e2); πρὸς ἐχθρούς (Celsus 4.18.10) – πρὸς τοὺς πολέμιους/ τοὺς ἐχθρούς (Plato, 382c7-8/d11); οὔτε δὲ νοσῶν ἢ μεμνηνὼς οὐδεὶς θεῶ φίλος (Celsus, 4.18.11) – οὐδεὶς ... τῶν ἀνοήτων καὶ μαινομένων θεοφιλῆς (Plato, 382e3).

⁴⁶ See Van Riel (2013:38-42). As regards the immutability of god Platonists disagree with Stoics, who in their doctrine of a cyclic development of the universe implied change for their immanent divine principle (cf. Origen's words in 1.21.16-18).

opines that the Jewish-Christian doctrine of a divine descent implies a theology in which ‘God’ acts not only as a human being, but even as a bad and dishonest person, a ‘most shameful’ thought, as Celsus judged earlier (4.2).

How is Origen’s response to this criticism which arises from thoughts he shares with Platonism? Also in his view God is good and the Scriptures represent him as ‘not subject to change’ (ἄτρεπτος, 4.14.18, 20).⁴⁷ Does not the incarnation imply change of the divine Logos? Origen’s answer can be characterized as a nuanced approach of the issues including careful distinctions and allegorical interpretations, as will be shown next.

Firstly Origen holds on to ‘what in the Bible is called God’s descent to human affairs’ (4.14.13-14) and underlines that this does not imply change as Celsus had indicated. Origen now introduces the philosophical term ‘essence’ (οὐσία), which will be used several times in this chapter to specify Origen’s view: ‘while remaining unchanged in essence (τῇ οὐσίᾳ), he comes down in his providence and care over human affairs’ (4.14.18-19).⁴⁸ At this point he inserts critical remarks concerning the theology of Epicurus and the Stoics, in which, as he argues, the divine immutability is not present: these philosophers were unable to perceive four qualities of God’s nature, namely that God is ‘incorruptible, simple, uncompounded and indivisible’ (4.14.29-30). This list of qualities is derived from the conception that God is incorporeal, and is in agreement with Platonist theology.⁴⁹ So far on the topic that God remains essentially unchanged in his providential care.

Next, in 4.15, in cautious words Origen goes into the issue of the ‘incarnation’: remarkably he uses the neuter τὸ καταβεβηκὸς εἰς ἀνθρώπους (‘what has come down to men’), but from the biblical phrases he quotes in 4.15.1-7 it can be deduced that he refers to the humiliation of Christ. Origen’s intention is firstly to deny that this descent involved any change. This point is also illustrated by the comparison between Christ and a physician. In its well-chosen wording the comparison also contains references to other aspects of Origen’s theology and Christology: the healing effect Christ’s advent has for the human souls and his being unaffected by evil because of the divine Logos within him (4.15.16-18). In the final sentence of 4.15 Origen indicates more clearly what he means by ‘incarnation’ in this passage. Although he initially uses a formula that indicates Christ in his advent on the earth (‘the immortal divine Logos assumes a human body and a human soul’),⁵⁰ he makes clear that he rather refers to the incarnation in a metaphorical sense. This does not mean that the reality of Jesus’ advent to man is denied or even disputed by Origen, as he explicitly demonstrates later on.⁵¹ But the words οἶονεὶ σὰρξ γίνεται (‘he becomes *as it were* flesh’) make clear in 4.15 his focus is different: here he does not refer to the one time historical event, but a movement that ‘sometimes’ (ἔσθ’ ὅτε) takes place and continues to happen on several moments. It is the moment in which the Logos descends to the level of a person who cannot see God in a proper way; if he receives the Logos, this person is lifted up and eventually can look even to his ‘essential form’ (4.15.22-27). Obviously Origen refers to an individual process of enlightenment that leads to knowledge of God and close relationship with him.⁵² However, Origen’s point of interest in the passage is to highlight that also in this process the Logos does not undergo a substantial change: he ‘remains Logos in essence (τῇ οὐσίᾳ) and suffers nothing of the experience of the body or the soul’ (4.15.21-22).

The words ‘in essence’ prove to be an important restriction in the perspective of the discussion that follows in 4.16 and 4.18. In these chapters the idea of ‘no change’ as discussed so far, is complemented

⁴⁷ With reference to *Ps.*102.28 (LXX 101.28) and *Mal.*3.6, texts that in a similar context are also quoted in 1.21.21-24 and 6.62.24-29.

⁴⁸ See my discussion in chapter VI 5.6 on Origen’s view on providence.

⁴⁹ Quoted in chapter VI 5.4, text (38). See also Crouzel (1962:29,40-41); Stead (1994:126-133); Reemts (1998:125).

⁵⁰ Cf. 1.69.5-10; 1.70.10; 2.23.11-18; 2.31.7-9; 3.28.41-45; 3.41.7-11; 5.48.28-29; 6.73.15; 7.17.5-11.

⁵¹ See 4.19.3-4, where Origen rejects Celsus’ suggestion of a change only in ‘appearance’: the opposition of δόκησιν and ἀλήθειαν here entails a rejection of Docetism.

⁵² See on the relevance of the ‘incarnation’ for individual souls 3.28.41-51; see chapter VI 5.2 and 5.5.

and nuanced: Origen explains that in a certain respect it is correct to speak of ‘changes’ of the Logos, because such transformations (μεταβολὰς ἢ μεταμορφώσεις) are mentioned in the Scriptures (4.16.17-18). What Origen means here are the different ‘forms’ (μορφαί) in which the Logos appears to each individual, depending on the degree of progression this person has reached (4.16.1-5).⁵³ In 4.18 Origen again refers to this element of adaptation to individual situations when he uses a comparison in which the Logos is compared with food.⁵⁴ The passage aims to explain in what sense the divine Logos can be connected to ‘change’. The chapter as a whole can be interpreted in the perspective of Origen’s Christology: the distinction between what may be called the ‘divine and the human side’ of the Son of God, that has been discussed earlier,⁵⁵ is reflected here in the separate sections that are devoted to the nature of the divine Logos and to the soul of Jesus (in relation to his body). This theological distinction is mobilized here as an instrument to respond to Celsus’ criticism. In the first of these sections (4.18.14-26) Origen clarifies that he does not follow Celsus completely in his rejection of the idea of ‘divine change’: if interpreted in a metaphorical way, it is not inappropriate to say that the nature of the divine Logos ‘changes’ (μεταβάλλει, 4.18.21). For, as Origen argues, it is the nature of the Logos ‘to nourish the human soul’, and because souls have different capacities to receive this food, the Logos is given to them in different forms, by which some sort of change is implied. Origen does not specify the reality to which the metaphor refers, but probably it can be related to the individual ways souls gain knowledge of God.⁵⁶ In the second section (4.18.27-46) Origen discusses the topic of ‘change’ in relation to the human soul of Jesus. Firstly he denies that some change could have affected the essence (οὐσία, 4.18.29) of this soul (essential change of rational souls is excluded anyway), but then he suggests that this soul experienced something (πάσχει τι), ‘because it has been mixed with the body and because of the place into which it has come’ (4.18.30-32): contact with the material world is liable to leave some traces behind.

It is remarkable that in his response to Celsus’ criticism concerning ‘descent and change’ Origen not only speaks about ‘change’, but frequently alters the focus of the discussion to a topic that is in the heart of his theology: the descending involvement of Christ in the process of the salvation of the human soul and his adaptation to the progression of the individuals. To this main topic he refers in the final lines of 4.17 (after a digression on the myth of Dionysus and allegorical interpretation): he once more highlights the ‘unique special descent because of great love to man’ intended to convert and save lost people (4.17.18-22).⁵⁷ Similar references are given in 4.18.32-46 (again the phrase ‘because of great love to man’; further ‘to cure men’, ‘descending of his own free will’ and an integral quote from *Phil.* 2.5-9 about the humiliation and glorification of Christ). In 4.19 Origen applies the notion of ‘healing’ brought in by Celsus, to Christ who ‘healed the human race that was dear to him’ and cured them ‘by methods which the Logos saw to be beneficial to lunatics that they might recover their right mind’ (4.19.12-17). Some lines below Origen refers to the purpose of God’s salvation plan (οἰκονομία): it aims at ‘those who, because their soul is diseased and their natural reasoning powers distracted, are still enemies, so that they may become friends of God’ (4.19.25-28). And the section is concluded by the statement that Jesus has ‘accepted everything for the sake of sinners, that he might deliver them from sin and make them righteous’ (4.19.28-30).⁵⁸ The repetitive insertion of such phrases show that Origen is eager to

⁵³ A similar discussion is found in 6.68, text (36) and 7.41, text (33), both in chapter VI and commented on there in 5.3. Both in 6.68 and 4.15 Origen refers to the Transfiguration story as an illustration of the transformation of Christ: on the high mountain he showed himself to some people in a more superior form than to others who were not in such an advanced stage that they could see this more divine form.

⁵⁴ In fact it is a double comparison, about food that changes into milk in the mother who breastfeeds her child, and about different diets that are prescribed by a physician to different patients. See my commentary chapter *ad loc.* for more explanation.

⁵⁵ See chapter VI 5.2, text (32) with comment.

⁵⁶ Indicated also in 4.16.3-5; see chapter VI 5.3, text (35) with comment.

⁵⁷ Cf. the reference to φιλάνθρωπία as incentive for the divine descent in 4.15.2 and 4.18.33; see also chapter VI 5.3 and 5.4.

⁵⁸ Reference to *Wisd.* 7.27; *Matt.* 9.12-13; *Rom.* 5.8-10, 19.

combine the notion of the divine immutability with God's continuous involvement in the correction of the human race and with Christ's descent because of his love to man.

9. Purification and punishment (*Contra Celsum* 4.20-22)

Celsus' final arguments in my corpus consist of a cluster of quotes spread over the chapters 4.20-22. These fragments belong together as is indicated by their common theme and the way Celsus connects them in his introductions: in the fragment quoted in 4.20 he announces that he will represent the opinion of the Jews; and in the fragment quoted in 4.22 he says that he will add certain Christian doctrines to the Jewish ones.⁵⁹ Both passages deal with punishment and purification as reason for the sending down of the Messiah.⁶⁰ Celsus represents⁶¹ the Jewish view as follows: all kinds of evil had filled life; bad people had to be punished and all had to be purified; for this reason someone has to be sent down from God; this action can be compared to the 'first flood' (4.20.6-9). By way of illustration Celsus then refers to other stories of punishment and purification told in *Genesis*: the tower of Babel and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (4.21).⁶² In the next passage, quoted in 4.22, Celsus presents some additional reasons that are put forward by the Christians: 'the son of God' is sent down because of the 'sins of the Jews': they punished Jesus and giving him gall (χολήν) to drink they drew upon them God's anger (χόλον).

Celsus' representation of these Jewish and Christian opinions is formulated without any explicit comment,⁶³ but undoubtedly Celsus did not agree with them: he thinks the total amount of evil in the world will be constant ('no decrease or increase of evils', 4.62.5), that God does not intervene in this world, that he does not show any anger and that floods should not be regarded as instruments of punishment or purification. I confine myself to a short enumeration of these points, because I discussed them in previous sections. It is clear that the reasons for the sending down of the Messiah Celsus attributes to his opponents are not convincing for Celsus himself. His theology is totally different.

Origen's response contains elements that have been discussed earlier. The central point here is Origen's representation of God as fighting against evil and establishing a new world. Firstly he deploys that conception to argue that it is not absurd to believe that God has sent someone who purifies the world: 'It is not in accord with God's character not to stop the spread of evil and bring moral renewal' (4.20.11-14).⁶⁴ Secondly he points out that also Greek philosophers, including Plato, accepted the idea of purification. Thirdly he argues that, contrary to Celsus' interpretation, purification of the earth was not the purpose of the destruction of the tower of Babel.⁶⁵ Fourthly, in response to Celsus' remarks about Sodom and Gomorrah (and the Phaethon myth), Origen does 'not deny the reality of purifying fire and the destruction of the world to destroy evil and renew the universe' (4.21.30-32).

⁵⁹ Cf. the parallelism in Origen's introduction to 4.20: ἰδίᾳ μὲν Ἰουδαίους ... ἰδίᾳ δὲ Χριστιανούς.

⁶⁰ Notice Celsus' different terms to indicate 'the Messiah': in the 'Jewish' passage the rather unspecified formula τοῦ καταπεμπομένου ἀπὸ θεοῦ (4.20.7) and in the 'Christian' passage τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ (4.22.3). In 4.2.28-31 Origen had criticized Celsus' undifferentiated use of the formula θεὸν ἢ θεοῦ υἱόν in his representation of both Jewish and Christian doctrines: Jews would never say 'that the Messiah who will come down is God or Son of God'. In the fragments quoted in 4.20 and 4.22 Celsus seems to be aware of the difference.

⁶¹ Cf. Origen uses the verb προσωποποιεῖ ('to put into the mouth') to characterize Celsus' approach.

⁶² Because this chapter is about theology I refrain from discussing Celsus' remarks on the *Genesis* stories as corrupted versions of Greek myths and Origen's response to them.

⁶³ Maybe he did comment in the expression ἀνάλογον τῷ πρώτῳ συμβάντι κατακλυσμῷ? These words suggest that this 'first flood' will be not the last one. By this formula Celsus seems to attribute to the Jews a belief in cyclic returning floods (cf. his words quoted in 4.11). Or can this expression better be interpreted as a comment of Celsus himself, just like the commenting remarks quoted in 4.21? Certainly this indication would fit in his own view on the world history (see above 7).

⁶⁴ Cf. chapter VI 5.5.

⁶⁵ Origen's own interpretation of the story is discussed in 5.29ff.

In the last part of my corpus (4.22) Origen responds to Celsus' representation of the 'Christian' view that the Jews drew upon them God's anger because they punished Jesus. From this chapter I pick up two elements that concern Origen's theology. Firstly, as I remarked in my commentary section, Origen, while connecting here the destruction of Jerusalem with the sufferings of Jesus, is only explicit about the *temporal* link between them; a causal link is only suggested. Furthermore, God is not explicitly designated as the one who carried out the destruction of the holy city. Origen, who does not deny God's involvement in history, seems to be reluctant here to state explicitly that (or how) God was involved in this specific historical event. This reluctance is probably due to Origen's general hesitation to comment on a connection between God and evil, let alone to present God as causing evil.⁶⁶ Secondly, the initial word of the final sentence, ἐχρῆν ('it was necessary', 'had to', 4.22.23), can be interpreted as an implicit reference to God's plan of salvation. As parts of this plan Origen not only mentions the destruction of Jerusalem and the expulsion of the Jews, but also the transfer of God's invitation to a blessed life to the Christians. As he did in previous chapters,⁶⁷ here Origen talks about the phased character of God's plan: the former focus on one nation and cultural setting is now extended to everyone and everywhere. Christianity is characterized as a world-wide society which functions with 'new laws' and has received the 'teaching about the true and pure worship' (4.22.27-29).

10. Conclusions

In this section I discussed the content of the chapters of my corpus from the perspective of the underlying theological views. The discussion demonstrated that different conceptions of God and his relation to the world form the background for the positions that are defended here by Celsus and Origen. Knowledge of their theology therefore has proven to be beneficial for a proper interpretation of the texts of my corpus. I conclude this chapter by a juxtaposition of the main ideas that are the foundation of the different approaches of the topic discussed.

Celsus' rejection of the idea of a divine descent as 'most shameful' is rooted in his conception of a distant god, who as a motionless governor safeguards the conservation of the universe as a whole, but is not directly engaged in earthly matters. In the conception of his first god Platonic thoughts are mixed with elements from the Peripatetic school. He follows the idea of the Platonic distinction between the intelligible, divine world of being and the material, mortal world of becoming. In his conception there is no room for the idea of a second god, as is presented by Numenius: the existence of a 'Son of God' is considered to be a Christian aberration. As a consequence of the distance between the first god and the material world Celsus rejects corporeal, physical and anthropomorphic images of god. Moreover, in his view any change is impossible for god: change belongs to the mortal world of becoming. According to Celsus the motion and the maintenance of the material world are controlled by a universal law, which would be distorted by a divine descent. In this fixed cyclic world system great disasters can occur, but just brought about by natural causes and not by divine intervention. Floods and conflagrations are not intended as punishment by the first god nor as purifying actions to eliminate evil. God in Celsus' view is not involved in any combat against evil nor does he perform any corrective interventions. Celsus denies that man has a special position in the divine providential care and any thought of a god who loves man is not included in his theology. In this context his rejection of the idea of a divine descent is understandable: it would entail an improbable bridging of the distance between the two worlds, a

⁶⁶ For a discussion see chapter VI 5.5. In 8.42.27-29 Origen in a similar context speaks ('paradoxically', ἵνα παραδόξως εἴπω) of God both as judging (κρίνοντος ... τοῦ θεοῦ) and as sparing the Jews (φειδόμενος).

⁶⁷ See e.g. in my corpus 4.3.5-13 and 4.8-9.

dangerous distortion of the universal law, an impossible change in the good situation of god and inappropriate thoughts about a divine interest in corrective engagement in the world.

For Origen however the idea of the divine descent is a key element in his theology. Prominent in his bible-based conception of God is the belief that God is actively involved in human affairs: he always intends to combat evil, to restore the bad situation of man and to connect people with himself. This intention is caused by his love for man, as Origen frequently underlines. The corrective interference of God is an integral part of Origen's conception of providence. In fact he assumes that in the human history God performs his salvation plan in different phases. In the implementation of this plan God accounts for the free will of the rational beings. The thought of a direct restoration by divine power is rejected by Origen, because virtue can only be based on free choice. God does not force man, but rather applies incentives for a better way of life. He uses education to provide man knowledge of himself. Individual capacities are taken into consideration in this process and less educated people are explicitly included. Corrective measures as rewards and (temporary) punishments fit into God's providential care. In this context Origen defends the thought of a descent of God, albeit interpreted in a metaphorical sense: in his providential care for men God comes down from his greatness and majesty, and in the process of individual enlightenment he condescends as a teacher to the level of each 'student'. Moreover, as the culmination of God's salvation plan the divine Logos descended to the world and connected himself to the human soul and body of Jesus. Remarkable is that Origen, besides this 'historical' incarnation, the reality of which he explicitly underlines, also speaks about an 'incarnation' in an allegorical way: the Logos 'becomes *as it were* flesh' when he comes down to the human level and lifts up people by giving them higher knowledge. This descending movement that takes place continuously in history, includes a different approach of people in accordance with their degree of progression: the Logos appears to each of them in different forms.

In these discussions Origen seems to test the limits of his theology and to combine what hardly seems to go together: on the one hand he wants to maintain the idea that the divine nature of the creator is fundamentally different from the mortal nature of the creatures (an idea that corresponds to the view of the Platonists) and on the other hand he wants to account for an involvement of God in this world and a proper understanding of the connection between the divine and the human in Christ. Sometimes allegory helps him to solve problems: he rejects anthropomorphic images of God in a literal sense, but allegory is frequently used to provide an appropriate meaning of expressions that seem to apply physical or human-like images of God. Sometimes allegory is combined with a precise analytic approach of problems and the use of philosophical 'language'.⁶⁸ This can be observed in Origen's discussion on the issue of 'change': on the one hand he accepts Celsus' (Platonic) conviction that God cannot undergo change (and refers to biblical texts to confirm this idea), but on the other hand by inserting the philosophical term 'essence' he creates possibilities to provide a more subtle image: essential change is not possible for God nor for the soul of Jesus, but in a metaphorical sense it can be acceptable to speak of change of the Logos (appearing in different forms and as different forms of 'food' to different people) and the human soul of Jesus is liable to be not unaffected by contact with the material body. All in all we encounter in Origen's theology elements which he shares with Platonist philosophers, but these elements are positioned in a setting that basically diverges from Celsus' Platonism in the belief in a creator who is engaged in the human world. For Origen this belief is reflected significantly in the thought of the divine descent.

⁶⁸ Cf. the philosophical language used in 7.46.26ff., text (35) discussed in chapter VI 5.3.

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IX. SUMMARY

The early Christian teacher and biblical scholar Origen (c.185-254) was a prolific writer. Many of his works have been lost or are only known through Latin translations. One of the treatises preserved in Greek is *Contra Celsum* ('Against Celsus'), probably written in 248, when Origen was over 60 years of age. In this comprehensive work Origen defends his Christian belief against 'accusations' of a man named Celsus, who more than seventy years before (c.180) had strongly criticized Jewish and Christian ideas. In his view these ideas deviated from the 'true doctrine', which existed from the beginning, has been maintained by 'the wisest nations' and by 'wise men', and is expressed in the most adequate way in Greek philosophy. Celsus' book, which has not been preserved, is known to us thanks to Origen, who in his *Contra Celsum* quoted and paraphrased numerous passages of Celsus' work. Origen's work is not addressed to Celsus himself, who was no longer alive in 248. In a formal sense Origen addresses Ambrose, his friend and sponsor, who had asked him to reply to Celsus' work, but in fact he writes for a larger audience: his fellow-Christians, more specifically the educated ones among them.

This thesis is about the first part of the fourth book of *Contra Celsum* (4.1-22), where Origen replies to Celsus' criticism of the Jewish-Christian concept of a 'divine descent'. According to Celsus it is most shameful to assert that 'some god or son of god' will come down, or has come down, to the earth in order to correct the situation up here. Origen, reacting from a Christian perspective, defends the concept of a 'divine descent' as an essential part of his belief. Speaking about this descent he refers to Christ's coming in the world, but more generally also to God's governance of the world and to the way God and the Logos come down to the level of human souls in order to illuminate and correct them. The core of this thesis is formed by the chapters IV and VII, where the Greek text of my corpus is commented on from three perspectives: linguistics, rhetoric and 'philosophical theology'. Chapter IV, which comprises the linguistic-rhetorical commentary, is prepared by the preceding chapters: in chapter II, following a general introduction in chapter I, aspects of the linguistic approach of the 'discourse analysis' are discussed, whereas chapter III provides an overview of relevant elements of ancient rhetoric. The linguistic-rhetorical part ends with a retrospective and conclusions of this part (chapter V). The second part, on philosophical theology, starts in chapter VI by sketching the philosophical landscape of the Greco-Roman Age, followed by a discussion of Celsus' theological ideas. Next Origen's concept of God and his relation to the world is presented and compared to the views of Celsus and other philosophers. Then a second commentary on my corpus is presented in chapter VII, now focused on the theological concepts which form the base of Celsus' and Origen's discourses.

In 'discourse analysis' (chapter II), an approach which is relatively new in the study of early Christian texts, language utterances are analyzed as parts of the communicative situation they function in. The focus is on the *use* of language and not (just) on the language system. In an analysis of the discourse situation *Contra Celsum* is characterized as an 'monologal' text which contains 'diaphonic' elements (which refer to the communicative situation the text functions in, e.g. the use of the first and second person of verbs and pronouns, rhetorical questions, directives and evaluative remarks). The first person is used in text structuring remarks and also to indicate a position in the discussion. The second person can refer to Ambrose, but also to the reader in general. Celsus is commonly referred to by the third person, which can be compared to the courtroom situation, where the defendant does not address the prosecutor, but the judges. If he does address the prosecutor – in fact also in *Contra Celsum* such passages can be found – then his words comprise a message for the judges as well. Diaphonic elements often appear in introductions and text structuring utterances. In argumentative text parts more interactional passages are alternated with discourse parts in which the author seems to withdraw: the discussion proceeds on its own, independently of the author, the readers and even the debate with Celsus.

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These more ‘objective’ parts often concern interpretations of biblical texts, passages meant for educated readers who can understand the details Origen offers.

The linguistic analysis also shows how the use of particles and tenses of the verb forms (aspects) is related to the communication between the author and the readers. Particles can be used as means to indicate the text structure for the readers, but also to clarify the attitude of the author to his words and to generate interaction with the readers. Text structuring particles appear to be more frequent in *Contra Celsum* than interactional particles: Origen seems to be more focused on text organization than on the expression of personal involvement. As regards the tenses I confine myself here to briefly comment on the use of the future and the perfect. Future forms can be used to refer to the future actions and situations, but within a (hypothetical) reasoning they can also present a next step that can be logically inferred from the previous one (inferential future). In forensic oratory the Greek perfect, which connects a past situation with the ‘present’ of the speaker and indicates its relevance for the actual situation, can be used to indicate facts and words from the past that are important in the present courtroom situation. It appears that Origen uses the perfect in a similar way in his apology against Celsus.

The section on linguistic elements is concluded by a discussion of the communicative aspects of word order in the Greek sentences. The assumption that an author wishes to guide his reader through his text and to influence its reception, forms the basis of a hypothesis concerning word order that is discussed in chapter II. This complex hypothesis cannot be presented here in all its aspects; in this summary I just indicate the following key elements. Typically a sentence contains at least an element that provides an orientation to the reader (Topic) and an element that indicates the most salient piece of information (Focus). In classical Greek (and also in Origen’s texts, as it appears) the Topic commonly can be found in the first part of the sentence, whereas the Focus-constituent is positioned immediately before the verb.

Origen repeatedly frames his confrontation with Celsus’ criticism as a courtroom situation. Ancient rhetoric provides approved tools to be successful in courtrooms; therefore it can be expected that such tools can be effective for the analysis of the text of *Contra Celsum*. Elements of ancient rhetoric that are used in the commentary section, are presented in chapter III, complemented by a discussion of the modern pragma-dialectical analysis of incorrect arguments.

Because of the rhetorical setting *Contra Celsum* is familiar with the juridical type of speech, although the work is not a speech in the literal sense. As regards the three ‘persuasive means’, it is clear that *Contra Celsum* is dominated by rational argumentation (*logos*). Particularly in introductory passages however we find also *ethos*-argumentation (based on a positive self-representation and negative characterization of the opponent). Passages of highly emotional argumentation (*pathos*) are rare in Origen’s text. Celsus does not evade *pathos*. Whereas he occasionally presents (the opinions of) his opponents in a very negative way, at other times he opts for more rationally based criticism.

Rhetoric provides the defending party four possible defense positions: denial, presenting an alternative definition, justification and procedural objections. All four positions are used alternately by Origen. Sometimes he even combines two approaches: having denied Celsus’ point of criticism (which basically means ‘problem solved’), he sometimes continues his discourse by offering an alternative definition or justification of the issue discussed. Apparently Origen does not only aim at a refutation of Celsus’ criticism, but also looks for opportunities to explain elements of the Christian doctrine to his audience.

It can be assumed that Origen was well-informed of the rhetorical theories. In his writings he demonstrates that he had good knowledge of the relevant terminology. Though he had never studied rhetoric with a *rhetor*, he gave his students in Alexandria and Caesarea classes in elementary rhetoric. The style of his sermons is characterized as plain and analytical: he wanted to persuade his audience by biblical arguments rather than by a sophisticated style. Speaking in *Contra Celsum* about the deceptive

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character of rhetoric he is especially referring to sophistry and verbosity, that do not benefit common people, as he says. Another reason to object to rhetoric is his conviction that faith should not rest 'in wisdom of men, but in the power of God' (1 *Cor.*2,5).

Chapter IV comprises a linguistic-rhetorical commentary on the text of my corpus, divided in twelve sections. In each section firstly the rhetorical strategies and the text structure are discussed, which is followed by a commentary on words and sentences. This results in a detailed explanation of the communicative and persuasive aspects of the text. Because it is impossible to present all these details in this summary, I will focus now on some of the main lines of the discourse.

Celsus criticizes the idea of a divine descent to the earth, as we saw above. He confronts his opponents with critical questions: what would be the purpose of such a descent? Was God unable to correct without sending someone to the earth? Is it possible for him to leave his throne without destroying the cosmic order? Why did he postpone his corrective interference? Did God really think that he was unknown among men? Celsus asserts that Jews and Christians babble about God impiously and impurely, apparently in order to frighten common people with threats of punishments for sinners. In Celsus' view the doctrine of a god who comes down bringing fire, is caused by a misunderstanding of Greek stories about floods and conflagrations. Celsus also asserts that descending is incompatible to the concept of the divine unchangeability: maybe the descent is a farce (and therefore deceitful)? Finally the issue is connected to Jewish ideas about the punishment of evil people, to which Christians, in Celsus' view, added the theory that the Son of God already came on account of the sins of the Jews, who punished Jesus.

Origen does not leave one of these issues unexamined. The text of his comment sections can be divided into three parts: after a short introduction he quotes (or paraphrases) a passage from Celsus' text, which is followed by a refutation of Celsus' charges (and often by an explanation of elements of the Christian doctrine).

The key element of his reply is his claim that God always has cared for men, firstly by sending Moses and the prophets, and eventually by the advent of Christ. Celsus' suggestion to correct the world by direct divine interference, without sending someone to implant virtue in the human hearts, would entail that there would be no room for free will. This is unthinkable for Origen: 'if you take away the element of free will from virtue, you also destroy its essence'. God cannot leave his throne in a literal sense: God fills the whole world, He cannot leave one place in order to fill another in a spatial sense. 'Fill' and 'leave' can only be used allegorically: a soul that is filled with evil is deserted by God and a soul of a man who wants to live virtually is filled by divine spirit. Origen rejects Celsus' suggestions that Christians attribute a mortal ambition to God or want to frighten people by stories about punishments. Moses' version of the flood is older than Greek myths and therefore cannot be derived from that source. If the Bible speaks about God who operates with fire, these passages are related to the destruction of evil. Origen denies that God's unchangeability is under threat: when God descends in his providence and care over human affairs, he remains unchanged in essence. Christians maintain – better than Epicurus and the Stoics – that God is incorruptible and unchangeable. Even when the Logos came down to men, he underwent no change from a good to a bad situation. The Logos remains Logos also when he comes down ('becomes as it were flesh') to the level of men and grants them knowledge of his true form. For the Logos appears in different forms to humans, corresponding to the degree of progress in virtue of each individual. Such a change of form ('metamorphosis') is illustrated in the Transfiguration story, as Origen explains. The Logos did not descend only in appearance, not does he mislead people.

Next Origen discusses the idea of punishment of evil and purification of the world, an idea that is accepted by Plato, as he reminds Celsus. What is regarded as acceptable when approved by the Greeks, should not be rejected when it is maintained by Christians. Finally Origen discusses the historical

connection between the crucifixion of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem. In his view the Jewish people had to be overthrown: now not just one nation, but everyone is invited to God's blessedness.

The second part of this thesis deals with philosophical theology. Starting from the claim that the disagreement between Celsus and Origen in my corpus can be traced back to different concepts of God, in chapter VI their theologies are discussed and compared to ideas of ancient philosophers concerning god(s) and his/their relation to the world.

A brief introduction to the thoughts of the philosophical schools starts with the observation that Epicurus recognized the existence of gods, but denied that they interfere in the world. Stoics however accept divine providence. In their view god is material and present 'in' all things, as an all pervading fire. They asserted that the universe goes through a cyclic process: all is generated by fire and eventually returns to fire again. In each cycle the divinity makes the same perfect choices, so that the cycles are all identical. In Aristotle's thought god appears as the Unmoved Mover: a mind thinking of itself, for thinking of other objects would reduce its perfect state. After Aristotle's death ideas concerning providence were developed in the Peripatetic school: divine governance would be confined to the celestial regions without reaching the earth (sublunary region). Alexander of Aphrodisias, an older contemporary of Origen, however stated that also the earth is included; he characterized divine providence as an impersonal force of nature, that from a distance safeguards the natural regularities.

Because the (middle-)platonist school comes closest to the thoughts of Celsus and Origen, this school is given more attention in chapter VI. Texts of Alcinoüs, Apuleius, Atticus, Maximus, Numenius and Plutarch are discussed in this section that is structured in the following five part format: existence, knowledge and qualities of god, his relation to the world and finally providence and 'demons'.

Platonists consider their god to be one of the three principle causes (together with form and matter). He is indicated as the (nearly) ineffable, One, the god who is. An interesting position is taken by Numenius, who distinguishes between the first god (fixed, concerned with the intelligible objects) and the second god (in motion, concerning with intelligible and sensible objects). It is not easy to discover god: only by intellectual methods as abstraction, analogy and contemplation some knowledge of him can be achieved. Mainly negative qualities are attributed to god: ineffable, invisible, indivisible, incorporeal, without change, but also: good, beautiful, eternal, truth, father. God is characterized as the primary intellect, that is always engaged in thinking itself.

The relation with the world is described in accordance with Plato's *Timaeus*, a dialogue in which the Platonic difference between the eternal world of being and the changing world of becoming is discussed: god (the 'demiurge') himself creates the heavenly world, the lower gods and the world soul; the creation of the mortal world is ordered to these created gods. In later times Platonists debate about whether the demiurge is identical with the highest god; in Numenius' view the demiurge is the second, lower god. Platonists accept the idea of a divine providence, that governs the visible world, including the earth. The difference between the divine and the mortal world is maintained: the governance is executed by lower gods and 'demons', that fill the interspace and in a system of hierarchy perform their duties as agents of providence. Apuleius indicates their actions as 'second providence'.

Celsus' theological idea largely correspond to those of the (other) Platonists. He also differentiates between the mortal world, created by lower gods, and the intelligible world of being. He also asserts that only intellectual methods can lead to some knowledge of god. Although Celsus uses the qualification 'the highest god', this does not mean that he recognizes, like Numenius, a second god. Divine qualities are described in negative terms and anthropomorphic images are strongly rejected. In his view on providence Platonic and Peripatetic elements are combined: the highest god governs the world from a distance, without any change or emotion, and his governance aims to maintain the whole; he is not interested in correction of the situation in the world nor in punishment of evil. Lower gods and demons carry out his providence and should be worshipped for that reason. Celsus shares his ideas of

IX. Summary

determined and identical world cycles with the Stoics.

As for Origen: he rejects the thoughts of Epicurus and Aristotle, mainly because they deny or limit the divine providence. Stoics are criticized by him because of their materialism and determinism, but he agrees with them in his claim that providence concerns everything in the world, and in his anthropocentrism: against Celsus he maintains that humans as rational beings are at the center of the creation.

Origen's relationship with Platonism is complex. Just like Platonists he underlines the high position of God and characterizes him with negative qualifications. Anthropomorphic images that occur in the Bible should be interpreted allegorically. Just like Plato he recognizes that the world is created by God, although he does not give a role to lower gods: God is the creator of the whole world. Origen accepts the Platonic difference between a material and a intelligible world. Men can achieve knowledge of God only by their intellect: just like Plato Origen describes how the intellect by an upward movement, step-by-step, can reach contemplation of the invisible and the divine.

Besides these points of agreement Origen differs essentially from Platonism in his emphasis on God's involvement in the world and in his presentation of the incarnation. As regards the first issue: the supreme creator of all things does not remain at a distance from the world, but comes down in his care for humans, in his direct governance of the world, in his assistance to provide men knowledge of himself, in his continuous fight against evil and his corrective interference in the world. Origen often refers to God's love for mankind. His involvement is particularly visible in the incarnation of the Logos, as a part of God's plan to restore the world. Here we arrive at the second distinctive element in Origen's theology: the position he attributes to Christ. As Son of God he is secondary and subordinated to the Father; he acts as mediator between the Father and creatures. Although Origen uses the term 'second God' (hesitatingly, as it seems), this qualification functions within a total concept that is different from Numenius' ideas. In the Platonic dualism the idea of an incarnation is unthinkable ('most shameful', according to Celsus). The difference between the nature of the divine and the created things is reflected in Origen's words about the incarnation: he differentiates between the divine Logos in Jesus and Jesus' soul and body. He recognizes the tension between the divine and the human in Jesus and tries both to connect and to distinguish these sides.

In chapter VII follows a second commentary on the text of my corpus, now from the perspective of the different concepts of God upon which Celsus' and Origen's discourses are based. Starting from the notion of a distant god, who without any motion preserves the whole of the universe, but is not interested in correction of the situation on the earth, Celsus rejects the idea of a divine descent to the world as completely inappropriate. Origen defends an different concept: God certainly is the supreme creator, but he shows his permanent commitment to his creation and wishes to connect human beings to himself. Because he loves men he carries out a salvation plan, in which he provides room for free will of rational beings and for a different approach of all individuals. From this conviction Origen acts as a fierce defender of the idea of a divine descent.

X. SAMENVATTING (SUMMARY IN DUTCH)

De vroegchristelijke leraar en bijbelgeleerde Origenes (ca.185-254) was een productief schrijver. Veel van zijn geschriften zijn verloren gegaan of slechts bekend via Latijnse vertalingen. Een van de werken waarvan de Griekse tekst is overgeleverd, is *Contra Celsum* ('Tegen Celsus'). Het is waarschijnlijk geschreven in 248, toen Origenes de zestig al gepasseerd was. Het is een omvangrijk werk waarin hij zijn christelijke geloof verdedigt tegen 'aanklachten' van een zekere Celsus. Deze had ruim zeventig jaar eerder (rond 180) in zijn *Alèthès Logos* ('De ware leer') scherpe kritiek geleverd op joodse en christelijke denkbeelden. Volgens hem wijken die af van de 'ware leer' die sinds eeuwen bekend is bij 'de meest wijze volken', is overgeleverd door 'wijze mannen' en het meest treffend is verwoord in de Griekse filosofie. Celsus' boek is niet bewaard gebleven: we kennen het alleen dankzij Origenes, die in zijn *Contra Celsum* er een groot aantal passages uit heeft geciteerd en geparafraseerd. Origenes' geschrift is niet geadresseerd aan Celsus zelf: hij was in 248 niet meer in leven. In formele zin adresseert Origenes het werk aan zijn sponsor Ambrosius, die hem had verzocht op Celsus' werk te reageren, maar in feite schrijft hij voor een breder publiek: zijn medechristenen, en dan kennelijk speciaal degenen onder hen die beter opgeleid waren.

In dit proefschrift staat het eerste gedeelte van het vierde boek van *Contra Celsum* centraal (4.1-22). In die passage reageert Origenes op Celsus' kritiek op het joods-christelijke concept van een 'goddelijke afdaling': volgens Celsus is het schandalig te menen dat een god (of een zoon van een god) naar de aarde zal afdalen of is afgedaald om de situatie hier te corrigeren. Origenes reageert op deze kritiek vanuit christelijke perspectief en verdedigt de gedachte van een 'goddelijke afdaling' als een wezenlijk onderdeel van zijn geloof. Hij brengt die afdaling in verband met de komst van Christus in de wereld, maar meer in het algemeen ook met Gods bestuur van de wereld en met de verlichtende en correctieve inwerking van God en zijn Logos in de ziel van mensen .

Het hart van dit proefschrift is te vinden in de hoofdstukken IV en VII, waarin de Griekse tekst van mijn corpus wordt becommentarieerd. Voor het commentaar zijn drie elkaar aanvullende invalshoeken gekozen: de teksten worden benaderd vanuit de linguïstiek, de antieke retorica en de 'filosofische theologie'. In hoofdstuk IV wordt de tekst besproken vanuit linguïstisch-retorisch perspectief. Een methodologische voorbereiding hierop wordt geboden in de voorafgaande hoofdstukken: na een algemene inleiding in hoofdstuk I wordt in hoofdstuk II de linguïstische aanpak van de 'discourse analysis' geïntroduceerd en biedt hoofdstuk III een globaal overzicht van relevante elementen uit de antieke retorische theorieën. Het linguïstisch-retorische deel wordt afgesloten in hoofdstuk V met een terugblik en enkele conclusies. Het tweede, 'theologische' deel begint in hoofdstuk VI met een schets van het filosofische landschap in de Grieks-Romeinse oudheid en een aansluitende bespreking van de theologie van Celsus. Daarna volgt een presentatie van Origenes' denkbeelden over God en een vergelijking met de theologie van Celsus en andere denkers. Dit biedt materiaal om in hoofdstuk VII opnieuw commentaar te leveren op de tekst van mijn corpus, waarbij de aandacht nu uitgaat naar de ideeën over God die de basis vormen voor het betoog van Celsus en Origenes.

Bij de 'discourse analysis' (hoofdstuk II), een aanpak die betrekkelijk nieuw is bij het onderzoek van patristische teksten, worden taalkundige verschijnselen benaderd vanuit het *gebruik* van de taal, en niet (alleen) als onderdeel van een taalsysteem. Taaluitingen worden geanalyseerd binnen de communicatieve situatie waarin ze functioneren. In dat kader wordt onderzocht welke positie is toebedeeld aan de deelnemers van het discours. *Contra Celsum* kan worden getypeerd als een 'monologale' tekst waarin ook 'diafonische' elementen zijn opgenomen, elementen die duiden op de communicatieve setting waarin het werk functioneert (bijvoorbeeld het gebruik van de eerste en tweede persoon van werkwoorden en voornaamwoorden, retorische vragen, aansporingen, persoonlijke

evaluaties). De eerste persoon wordt soms gebruikt in tekststructurende opmerkingen, soms om een standpunt in het debat aan te duiden. De tweede persoon kan verwijzen naar de geadresseerde (Ambrosius), maar ook naar de lezer in het algemeen. Celsus wordt normaliter aangeduid met de derde persoon, zoals de verdediger in een rechtszaak niet de aanklager aanspreekt, maar de rechters; als hij zich wel richt tot de aanklager – ook *Contra Celsum* bevat zulke passages – dan bevatten die woorden ook een boodschap voor de rechters. Diafonische elementen blijken vaker voor te komen in inleidingen en tekststructurende opmerkingen. In de argumenterende tekstgedeelten worden passages met meer interactionele elementen afgewisseld met passages waarin de auteur zich terug lijkt te trekken en het betoog zelfstandig zijn weg laat vinden, los van de schrijver, de lezers en zelfs het debat met Celsus. Die laatste, meer ‘objectieve’ passages betreffen vaak de exegese van bijbelteksten, met soms gedetailleerde onderscheidingen – voer voor de beter opgeleide lezer.

De linguïstische analyse richt zich verder op het gebruik van partikels en werkwoordstijden (aspecten) in relatie tot de communicatie tussen schrijver en lezers. Partikels kunnen bijvoorbeeld fungeren als middelen om de tekst voor de lezer te structureren, maar ook duiden op de houding van schrijver ten opzichte van zijn uitspraak en daarbij een zekere interactie met de lezer beogen. In Origenes’ tekst blijken tekststructurende partikels veel vaker gebruikt te zijn dan interactionele partikels: Origenes lijkt meer gericht te zijn op de organisatie van zijn betoog dan op het tonen van persoonlijke betrokkenheid. Wat betreft de werkwoordstijden wijs ik hier als voorbeeld op het gebruik van het futurum en het perfectum. Het futurum kan verwijzen naar de toekomst, maar ook binnen de (hypothetische) redenering gebruikt worden om de lezer mee te nemen in een volgende stap in het betoog die logisch is af te leiden uit het voorgaande (inferentieel futurum). Het Griekse perfectum, dat een situatie in het verleden verbindt met het ‘heden’ van de spreker en de relevantie ervan voor dat heden aanduidt, kan in de rechtbank gebruikt worden als aanduiding van gedane zaken, gesproken woorden en vastgestelde teksten die van belang zijn voor de rechtszaak. Origenes blijkt het perfectum op een vergelijkbare manier in te zetten in zijn confrontatie met Celsus.

In de linguïstische analyse wordt ten slotte aandacht besteed aan de communicatieve aspecten van de woordvolgorde. Uitgangspunt hierbij is de aanname dat de auteur de lezer door zijn tekst heen wil leiden en de ontvangst ervan wil beïnvloeden: dit bepaalt de volgorde waarin de constituenten in de zin worden geplaatst. Hoofdstuk II bespreekt hypothesen aangaande de woordvolgorde in het Grieks die op basis van het genoemde uitgangspunt zijn geformuleerd. Het geheel is te complex om hier kort weer te geven. Om een idee te geven beperk ik me tot het volgende: in de regel blijkt een zin tenminste een element te bevatten, waarmee wordt aangeduid waarover de zin gaat (Topic) en een waarin de belangrijkste informatie wordt verwoord (Focus); in het klassieke Grieks (en ook bij Origenes, zo blijkt) staat het Topic-element gewoonlijk in het eerste deel van de zin, terwijl het Focus element meteen vóór de werkwoordsvorm geplaatst wordt.

Origenes zet geregeld het frame van de rechtszaak in om zijn confrontatie met Celsus’ kritiek te typeren. De antieke retorica biedt een beproefd instrumentarium om effectief te opereren in de rechtbank. Vandaar de keuze om voor de analyse van de tekst van *Contra Celsum* gebruik te maken van die gereedschapskist. Hoofdstuk III bevat een bespreking van retorische onderscheidingen en termen die gebruikt worden in het commentaar op mijn corpus. De bespreking gaat voornamelijk uit van de antieke retorica, maar in de paragraaf over de argumentatietypen wordt een uitstapje gemaakt: in het kader van ‘incorrecte argumentatie’ komt de moderne pragma-dialectische analyse van drogredenen ter sprake.

Origenes’ boek is het meest verwant aan het genre van de juridische redevoeringen (hoewel de tekst in strikte zin geen redevoering is). Van de drie ‘overtuigingsmiddelen’ zet Origenes vooral *logos* (rationele middelen) in. Met name in inleidende passages is ook *ethos*-argumentatie (positieve zelfpresentatie en een negatieve typering van de opponent) aan te wijzen; sterk emotionele passages (*pathos*) zijn zo goed als afwezig. Celsus vermijdt *pathos* niet en geeft bovendien geregeld een negatieve

presentatie van (de standpunten van) zijn tegenstanders (*ethos*); bij andere kritiekpunten kiest hij voor een meer rationele benadering.

De retorica onderscheidt voor de verdedigende partij vier mogelijke invalshoeken om de verdediging op te zetten: de zaak ontkennen; een alternatieve definitie van de kwestie presenteren; de zaak rechtvaardigen; procedurele bezwaren indienen. Origenes maakt afwisselend gebruik van deze vier verdedigingsposities en kiest per ‘aanklacht’ de meest passende strategie. Opvallend is dat hij soms twee posities combineert: na een aanvankelijke ontkenning van het door Celsus ingediende punt (waarmee die zaak in principe als afgehandeld mag worden beschouwd) vervolgt Origenes soms zijn betoog door ook alternatieve omschrijvingen of een rechtvaardiging van eraan gerelateerde zaken te bieden. De verklaring hiervoor is dat Origenes kennelijk niet alleen Celsus’ kritiek wil weerleggen, maar ook aanleidingen zoekt om zijn medechristenen te dienen met een nadere uitleg van elementen van het christelijk geloof.

Kunnen we aannemen dat Origenes kennis had van de antieke retorica? Het antwoord is bevestigend: hij volgde weliswaar nooit lessen bij een *rhetor*, maar tot het onderwijspakket dat hij aan zijn studenten in Alexandrië en Caesarea aanbood, behoorde ook basiskennis van de retorica. Uit zijn geschriften kunnen we afleiden dat hij goed op de hoogte was van de retorische terminologie. De stijl van zijn preken wordt gekarakteriseerd als eenvoudig en analytisch: hij overtuigde liever met argumenten dan met een hoogdravende stijl en een vloed van woorden. Wanneer hij in *Contra Celsum* afwijzend spreekt over het bedrieglijke karakter van retorica, doelt hij vooral op het gebruik van sofismen en gekunstelde taal: daarmee wordt de ‘gewone man’ niet bereikt. Als bezwaar tegen retorica noemt hij ook dat geloof niet moet rusten op ‘wijsheid van mensen, maar op kracht van God’ (1 *Kor*.2.5).

Hoofdstuk IV bevat het commentaar op de tekst van mijn corpus volgens de besproken linguïstische en retorische aanpak. Nadat bij elk tekstgedeelte eerst wordt ingegaan op de retorische strategieën en de tekststructuur, volgt aansluitend een commentaar op woord- en zinsniveau. Dit resulteert in een gedetailleerd beeld van de tekst waarin de communicatieve aspecten en het overtuigingsproces uitgelicht worden. Het beeld is te divers om in een samenvatting adequaat te beschrijven. Om toch een indruk te geven van de inhoud van mijn corpus, geef ik enkele hoofdpunten van het betoog kort weer.

Celsus werkt zijn kritiek op de gedachte aan een ‘goddelijke afdaling’ uit door zijn opponenten een aantal vragen te stellen: welk doel zou zo’n afdaling kunnen hebben? Kan God niet corrigeren zonder iemand naar de aarde te sturen? Kan hij zijn troon wel verlaten zonder ernstige gevolgen voor de wereldorde? Waarom stelt hij zijn corrigerende ingrijpen uit tot een bepaald moment? Vindt God soms dat hij te weinig bekendheid geniet? Celsus stelt dat Joden en christenen onzinnig en onheilig over God spreken, kennelijk om ‘de gewone man’ bang te maken met ideeën over straf voor zondaren. Volgens hem is de leer van een god die met vuur afdaalt te verklaren vanuit een verkeerde interpretatie van Griekse zondvloed- en wereldbrandverhalen. Celsus stelt ook dat een afdaling naar de aarde niet te verenigen is met het principe van de goddelijke onveranderlijkheid: is er wellicht sprake van een schijnverandering (en dus in feite van bedrog)? Ten slotte brengt hij de zaak in verband met joodse gedachten over een bestraffing van het kwaad. Christenen zouden daaraan volgens Celsus nog toevoegen dat Gods zoon is gestuurd vanwege de zonden van de Joden, die Jezus hebben terechtgesteld.

Origenes laat geen van deze punten onbesproken. De teksteenheden waarin mijn corpus bestaat, hebben steeds een driedelige opbouw: na een korte introductie citeert (of parafraseert) Origenes een gedeelte van Celsus’ tekst. Daarop volgt Origenes’ reactie met enerzijds een weerlegging van Celsus’ beschuldigingen, anderzijds een positieve uiteenzetting van elementen van het christelijke geloof.

Centraal in zijn repliek staat de stelling dat God voortdurend bezig is de situatie op aarde te corrigeren: aanvankelijk door Mozes en de profeten te sturen, maar uiteindelijk vooral door Christus’ komst op aarde. Wat betreft Celsus’ suggestie van een direct corrigerend ingrijpen van God (door zonder iemand te sturen deugd in het hart van de mens in te planten): dit zou betekenen dat er geen ruimte is

voor de vrije wil van de mens. Dat is voor Origenes onbestaanbaar: deugd kan alleen gebaseerd zijn op een vrije keuze. Van een letterlijk verlaten van Gods troon kan geen sprake zijn. God vervult de wereld: Hij verlaat niet de ene plaats om een andere te vullen. Van 'vullen' en 'verlaten' kan alleen gesproken worden in een overdrachtelijke zin: de ziel die vervuld is van het kwaad wordt door God 'verlaten'; de ziel die groeit in deugdzaamheid wordt 'vervuld' van zijn geest. Origenes wijst Celsus' suggestie af dat christenen God een menselijke eierzucht zouden toeschrijven of mensen willen intimideren met verhalen over straf. Mozes' verhaal over de zondvloed is ouder dan de Griekse mythen daarover en kan daaraan dus niet ontleend zijn. Overigens wordt in de Bijbel wel gesproken over Gods optreden met vuur: dan gaat het steeds om de vernietiging van het kwaad.

Origenes ontkent dat de onveranderlijkheid van God in het geding is: als God afdaalt in zijn bestuur van de aarde, blijft hij naar zijn wezen onveranderd. Dat God onvergankelijk en onveranderlijk is, wordt door christenen beter begrepen dan door Epicurus en de stoïcijnen. Ook de afdaling van Gods Logos betekende geen overgang van een goede naar een slechtere situatie. De Logos blijft ook wezenlijk Logos als hij afdaalt ('als het ware vlees wordt') naar de mens die zijn goddelijkheid niet kan bevatten, en hem zicht geeft op zijn 'ware gestalte'. De Logos vertoont zich namelijk in meerdere gestalten aan de mens, afhankelijk van de mate waarin deze gevorderd is op de weg van de deugd. Als illustratie van zo'n vormverandering ('metamorfose') wijst Origenes op het bijbelse verhaal over de transfiguratie. De gedachte aan een schijnverandering (of bedrog) wijst Origenes af.

Origenes vraagt Celsus vervolgens wat er vreemd is aan het idee van een bestraffing van het kwaad en een reiniging van de aarde. Bij Plato komt dit ook voor: wat bij de Grieken acceptabel wordt geacht, kan men christenen niet onzeggen. Ten slotte gaat Origenes in op het historische verband tussen de kruisiging van Jezus en de verwoesting van Jeruzalem. In zijn visie moest dit gebeuren: Gods uitnodiging tot het geluk, eerder gericht op één volk, is nu bestemd voor alle mensen.

In het tweede deel van dit proefschrift staat de filosofische theologie centraal. Het uitgangspunt is de claim dat het in mijn corpus besproken meningsverschil tussen Celsus en Origenes is terug te voeren op een verschillend godsbeeld. In hoofdstuk VI wordt daarom hun theologie onderzocht en vergeleken met ideeën van antieke filosofen over god(en) en zijn/hun relatie tot de wereld.

In een korte verkenning van de filosofische scholen wordt vastgesteld dat Epicurus het bestaan van goden erkent, maar ontkent dat zij zich met de wereld bemoeien. Stoïcijnen gaan wel uit van een goddelijke voorzienigheid. Volgens hen is god materieel en aanwezig 'in' alle dingen, als vuur dat alles doortrekt. In hun visie doorloopt de kosmos een cyclisch proces: alles komt voort uit het vuur en keert aan het eind van de cyclus in het vuur terug. In elke cyclus maakt het goddelijke dezelfde perfecte keuzes: alle cycli zijn dus identiek. In Aristoteles' filosofie komt het goddelijke voor als de onbewogen beweger, die slechts zichzelf denkt; de gedachte aan iets anders zou afbreuk doen aan zijn volmaakte status. Na Aristoteles' dood zijn in de peripatetische school ideeën ontwikkeld over de goddelijke voorzienigheid: die zou de hemelse streken betreffen, maar niet de aarde (het 'ondermaanse'). Alexander van Aphrodisias, een oudere tijdgenoot van Origenes, meent dat ook de aarde valt onder de voorzienigheid, die hij typeert als een onpersoonlijke natuurkracht die op afstand zorgdraagt voor de instandhouding van de natuurlijke wetmatigheden.

De theologie van het (midden-)platonisme bevat de meeste aanknopingspunten voor een vergelijking met de gedachten van Celsus en Origenes. Daarom krijgt deze school meer aandacht in hoofdstuk VI, in een bespreking van teksten van Alcinous, Apuleius, Atticus, Maximus, Numenius en Plutarchus. Om hun theologie goed te kunnen vergelijken met die van Celsus en Origenes, is gekozen voor een vast format in de behandeling: steeds wordt ingegaan op het bestaan, de kennis en de eigenschappen van god (God), op zijn relatie tot de wereld, voorzienigheid en 'demonen'.

Platonici zien hun god als een van de drie grondoorzaken (samen met materie en vorm). Hij wordt aangeduid als de (bijna) onuitsprekbare, de ene, de god die is. Interessant is de positie van Numenius:

hij maakt onderscheid tussen de eerste god (onbeweeglijk, betrokken op het intelligibele) en de tweede god (in beweging, betrokken op het intelligibele en het waarneembare). God ontdekken is niet eenvoudig: slechts via het intellect is enige kennis van hem bereikbaar, via methoden als abstractie, analogie en contemplatie. Aan god worden met name negatieve kwaliteiten toegekend: onuitsprekelijk, onzichtbaar, ongedeeld, niet lichamelijk, onveranderlijk; maar ook: goed, mooi, eeuwig, waarheid, vader. God wordt voorgesteld als intellect, dat alleen zichzelf denkt.

Wat betreft de relatie met de wereld speelt Plato's *Timaeus* een belangrijke rol. In deze dialoog wordt gesproken over het karakteristieke platoonse onderscheid tussen de eeuwige wereld van het zijn en de steeds veranderende wereld van het worden. Er treedt een vakman-god ('demiurg') op als schepper van de goddelijke wezens en de wereldziel; de schepping van de sterfelijke wereld draagt hij op aan zijn schepselen, de lagere goden. Latere platonici voeren discussies over de vraag of de demiurg identiek is met de hoogste god; volgens Numenius is de demiurg de lagere, tweede god. Platonici gaan uit van een goddelijke voorzienigheid die de zichtbare wereld, inclusief de aarde, bestuurt. De scheiding tussen de goddelijke en de sterfelijke wereld blijft in stand: de uitvoering van het bestuur is toevertrouwd aan lagere goden en 'demonen', die de tussenruimte vullen en in een hiërarchisch systeem de hun opgedragen taken uitvoeren. Hun activiteit wordt door Apuleius aangeduid als de 'tweede voorzienigheid'.

Celsus' theologie komt grotendeels overeen met die van de (andere) platonici. Ook hij maakt het onderscheid tussen de sterfelijke wereld, gemaakt door lagere goden, en de intelligibele wereld van het zijn. Ook hij erkent dat slechts intellectuele methoden kunnen leiden tot enig begrip van god. Celsus' spreken over 'de hoogste god' impliceert niet dat hij, net als Numenius, ook een tweede god erkent. Eigenschappen die hij god toekent worden in negatieve termen omschreven; hij heeft grote bezwaren tegen antropomorfe godsvoorstellingen. Celsus' visie op de voorzienigheid combineert platoonse en peripatetische elementen. De hoogste god bestuurt de wereld op afstand, onbeweeglijk en emotioneel. Zijn bestuur is gericht op de instandhouding van het geheel. Hij is niet geïnteresseerd in verbetering van de toestand op aarde of bestraffing van verkeerd gedrag. Zijn bestuur wordt uitgevoerd door lagere goden en 'demonen', die hierom ook moeten worden vereerd door de mens. Met de stoïcijnen deelt Celsus ideeën over de gedetermineerde cycli van tijdperken, waarin precies dezelfde dingen steeds weer voorvallen.

Wat betreft Origenes: de ideeën van Epicurus en Aristoteles wijst hij af, vooral vanwege hun ontkennen of beperken van de voorzienigheid. Op stoïcijnen heeft hij kritiek om hun materialisme en determinisme, maar hij deelt met hen de opvatting dat Gods bestuur de hele wereld betreft. Net als zij verdedigt hij een antropocentrisch standpunt: tegenover Celsus stelt hij dat de mens als rationeel wezen een centrale plaats heeft in de schepping.

Origenes' relatie tot het platonisme is complex. Net als de platonici benadrukt hij de hoge positie van God en typeert Hem ook met veel negatieve kwalificaties. Voor antropomorfe typering van God die in de Bijbel voorkomen, bepleit hij een allegorische interpretatie. Net als Plato ziet hij de wereld als gemaakt door een scheppende God, zij het dat hij daarbij geen rol toekent aan lagere goden: God is de schepper van de hele wereld. Origenes accepteert het platoonse onderscheid tussen een materiële en een hogere, intelligibele wereld. Kennis krijgen van God is alleen mogelijk langs de weg van het intellect: net als Plato beschrijft Origenes een stapsgewijze opwaartse beweging waarmee het verstand kan komen tot contemplatie van het onzichtbare en het goddelijke.

Naast deze punten van overeenstemming met het platonisme zijn er ook essentiële verschillen. Origenes' theologie is anders in zijn nadruk op Gods betrokkenheid bij de wereld en in zijn presentatie van de incarnatie. Wat betreft het eerste punt: de verheven schepper van alles blijft niet op afstand van de wereld, maar daalt af in zijn zorg voor de mensen, in zijn directe wereldbestuur, in zijn hulp aan mensen om hun kennis van hemzelf te geven, in zijn voortdurende strijd tegen het kwaad en zijn corrigerend ingrijpen in de wereld. In dit verband gebruikt Origenes vaak de positieve kwalificatie van

Gods liefde voor mensen. Zijn betrokkenheid blijkt volgens Origenes vooral in de incarnatie van de Logos, als onderdeel van Gods plan om de wereld te herstellen. Hier tekent zich een tweede onderscheidend punt van Origenes' theologie af: de positie die hij toekent aan Christus. Als Zoon van God is hij secundair en ondergeschikt aan de Vader; hij bemiddelt tussen de Vader en de schepselen. Hoewel Origenes de term 'tweede god' (met enige aarzeling, lijkt het) gebruikt, fungeert die typering binnen een ander totaalconcept dan bij Numenius. In het platoonse dualisme is de gedachte aan een incarnatie onbestaanbaar ('schandelijk', vindt Celsus). Als Origenes spreekt over de incarnatie laat hij het onderscheid tussen het goddelijke en het geschapene doorklinken in zijn woordkeus: hij spreekt enerzijds over de goddelijke Logos in Jezus en anderzijds over Jezus' menselijke ziel en lichaam. Hij erkent de spanning tussen het goddelijke en het menselijke in Jezus en probeert beide kanten zowel te verbinden als te onderscheiden.

In hoofdstuk VII wordt de tekst van mijn corpus opnieuw becommentarieerd. Nu ligt de focus op de wijze waarop verschillende godsideeën van Celsus en Origenes de discussie bepalen. Vanuit de notie van een afstandelijke god, die onbewogen van het geheel van de wereld in stand houdt, maar geen interesse heeft in correctie van de toestand op aarde, is voor Celsus de gedachte dat een god zou afdalen naar de wereld is totaal ongepast. Origenes' godsbeeld is anders: God is wel de verheven schepper, maar hij toont zich voortdurend betrokken op zijn schepping en wil de mens aan zich verbinden. Uit liefde voor de mens voert hij een reddingsplan uit, waarin ruimte is voor de menselijke vrije wil en ieder individu een eigen aanpak krijgt. Vanuit deze overtuiging presenteert Origenes zich als een vurig verdediger van de gedachte dat God afdaalt naar de aarde.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Freerk Jan Hemes Berghuis was born in Grootegast on 14 June 1957. After graduating from secondary school (Gereformeerd Lyceum, Groningen) in 1975, he studied Greek and Latin Language and Culture at the University of Groningen. His final paper comprised a commentary on Eusebius' *Epistula Caesareensis*.

From 1981 until 1988 he taught Classics at several schools in Drachten, Amersfoort and Rotterdam. Since 1987 he works as teacher Greek and Latin Language and Culture at the Gomarus College in Groningen.

In 2009 he published a translation into Dutch of Origen's *De principiis* (with an introduction and comments): *Origenes, De Basis. Onderzoek naar de fundamenteën van geloof en wereld* (Budel: Damon).