

Philosophical renovation in the 3rd century: The polemical component of Porphyry's *Vita Plotini* in relation to Gregory of Neocaesaria's *Oratio Panegyrica*

Roman S. Soloviev

Moscow Theological Academy,
Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, Sergiev Posad, Moscow Region, 141300, Russian Federation;
solorom@gmail.com

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This paper offers an analysis of similar and parallel developing projects of creating a true philosophy by the disciples and followers of Origen and Plotinus. Two texts permeated by the eulogy of the scholar are analysed: Gregory the Wonderworker's *The Address of Thanksgiving to Origen* and *the Life of Plotinus* by Porphyry. Gregory was a student of Origen, while Porphyry attended his school long enough to become familiar with the doctrine, teaching methods and personality of the scholar. The author establishes the structural, thematic and lexical similarity of both texts. The text by Gregory the Wonderworker, chronologically earlier, was a pushing away point for Porphyry in creating an image of the ideal scholar in the person of Plotinus. This is confirmed by the structural and lexical contrast in the portrayal of Plotinus in *Vita Plotini* and Origen in the passage preserved by Proclus (Procl. *In Tim.* I.63. 29–33). In particular, the negative image of Origen in *Vita Plotini* 13. 10–17 is echoed by the figure of Thaumasiaus, dissatisfied with the protracted dispute between Plotinus and Porphyry, which rarely draws the scholars' attention. Nowhere else mentioned, Thaumasiaus appears as a marginal figure: either he himself was interested in general statements and wanted to hear Plotinus speaking in the manner of a set treatise (trans. Armstrong), or he wanted Plotinus to “faire une conférence suivie et propre à être écrite” (trans. Bréhier). The author hypothesises that it is not a proper name but a nickname. The author suggests that Thaumasiaus is not an accidental participant in a specific episode of the Neoplatonists' school life but the philosophical rival of the Neoplatonists, theologian Origen, ironically presented in an unattractive manner. Thus, the deliberately constructed episode with Plotinus and Thaumasiaus is a polemical jab at Origen's followers, who put forward a programme of philosophical renovation alternative to the Platonic, and the very depiction of Plotinus as a ‘divine man’ (θεῖος ἀνὴρ) responds to the image of Origen painted by his followers. The supposed allusions in *Vita Plotini* 13. 5–17 testify to the openness of the Roman Neoplatonic school to the already-formed Christian version of philosophy. For this reason, Porphyry chose to portray a situation in which Plotinus showed attention and patience in interpreting difficult philosophical questions for three days. In contrast, Origen, in a similar situation, showed impatience and irritability.

Keywords: Neoplatonism, Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, Thaumasiaus, Gregory of Neocaesarea, *Oratio Panegyrica*, Origen.

1. Introduction

In the third century, a similar tendency emerged among the Platonists and Christians towards an idealised representation of the scholar, who leads his disciples towards the main aim of philosophical studies — to liken himself as much as possible to God (Plato. *Theaet.* 176B). So, if we look at how Porphyry presents his teacher Plotinus, then the readers of the *Life of Plotinus* see not a simple teacher or healer of souls,¹ but a real divine man, able to perform miracles, to communicate with demons and to direct the whole life of his students towards the main goal — salvation.² The deification of the scholar would become commonplace among the Neoplatonists, giving rise to a whole genre of pagan biographies, such as the *Life of Pythagoras* by Iamblichus and the *Lives of Philosophers and Sophists* by Eunapius, the *Life of Proclus* by Marinus, the *Life of Isidore* by Damascus, where figures of pagan “divine wisdom teachers” are not presented in the traditional genre of encomium, but as “Neoplatonic saints”, whose images sometimes directly compete with those of Christ.³ At the same time, the tendency to praise the scholar was also characteristic of the philosophers who formed the circle of disciples and followers of the Christian Origen, who never stopped practising philosophy. It is especially noticeable in two authors: Gregory of Neocaesarea, who wrote *The Oration and Panegyric Addressed to Origen* and Eusebius of Caesarea, who devoted Book VI of his *Ecclesiastical History* to the Origen’s life.

The images of teachers created in the biographies became the locus of a polemic over who owned and taught true philosophy between the party of the educated elite, *πεπαιδευμένοι*, represented by the Neoplatonists, and the increasingly influential Christians. The school leader was a living example of philosophical life, passing on experience to his immediate disciples. After his death — already through his texts — he became a role model for his followers in line with figures both of the distant past (Pythagoras for the Platonists, Moses for the Christians⁴) and of recent times. This is how the disciples regarded Plotinus and Origen,⁵ praising them as founders of the school, reformers and teachers of

¹ The metaphor of the philosopher as a healer of souls was common among the Stoics, e. g., Arr. *Epict. diss.* 3. 23. 30; Sen. *Epist.* 48. 4.

² See Soloviev 2022, 89–91.

³ This idea was introduced previously: Réville 1866. It has also been discussed in modern times: Miller 1983; Edwards 2000.

⁴ Gregory of Nyssa writes the *Life of Moses*. Also beloved by Christians, Philo wrote biographies of the patriarchs, including the biographies of Moses, as examples of “living laws”. These hagiographies (*On Abraham, On Joseph, On Moses*) are axiomatically reminiscent of Iamblichus’ *Life of Pythagoras*.

⁵ The question of the two Origenes requires special consideration and contains many details which are not directly relevant to the task of this article. Nevertheless, one argument in favour of the Unitarians must be pointed out. Namely, it is necessary to remember that no one, neither Christians nor pagan Platonists, including Porphyry, spoke about two Origenes, though it was almost impossible with the celebrity of both contemporaries; moreover, both Longinus and Porphyry should have known them. That there were two Origenes, if that were so, Eusebius could not have failed to know. Thus, the *onus probandi* in resolving this question is not on those who claim that there was only one Origen, but on those who are certain there were two of them. Of course, one cannot reduce everything to the fact that the Gentiles did not mention Christians because Porphyry is exactly talking about the Christians Ammonius and Origen. As Digeser has aptly pointed out, the defence of the hypothesis of two Origenes is based mainly on a subconscious fear of blurring the line between Platonism and Christianity, the destruction of which would upset the usual “Pagan-Christian” dichotomy within which many studies of late antique literature are still conducted (Digeser 2012, 13). In recent years it has been increasingly argued that there was only one Origen, who studied with Heraclius and Plotinus under Ammonius Saccas and, in turn, was the teacher not only to Gregory the

knowledge and virtue. The struggle between nascent Christian orthodoxy and Platonism, which sought to preserve the pagan legacy, can be seen in the way both proposed a purified philosophy project put into the mouth of the ideal scholar they created.

In this paper, we will analyse two images of the deified teacher: in the school by Origen and in that of Plotinus, point out their similarities and the possible dependence of the description of Porphyry on Gregory the Wonderworker,⁶ and suggest that Porphyry, discontented with the claim of Christians to possess true philosophy, in the *Life of Plotinus* introduces polemical jabs against his opponents, who were in serious competition with his project of philosophical renewal as presented in the *Enneads*, constructed by Porphyry as a kind of “sacred scripture” of renewed Platonism.

2. *Oratio Panegyrica*'s addressee is Pagans

In 238, at the end of a five-year cycle of study, Gregory of Neocaesarea, later nicknamed the Wonderworker (Θαυματουργός), delivered his *Thanksgiving Speech to Origen* (CPG 1753, hereafter *Or. Pan.*),⁷ the first extant Christian speech in this genre,⁸ which remains one of the most interesting accounts of the life and work of Origen's philosophical school. Gregory's speech pays modest attention to Christian theological topics, but, on the contrary, shows a pronounced interest in establishing the figure of Origen as a true philosopher and leader of a full-fledged philosophical school.

There are reasons for this: M. Castagno has suggested that Gregory did so deliberately, wishing to emphasise the overlap in thought between pagans and Christians.⁹ M. Rizzi¹⁰ and J. Trigg¹¹ agree with this approach to the text and see it as an “apologia for Christianity as a true philosophy” addressed to pagans who are negative towards Christianity. Gregory thus applied himself the method of Origen, who first taught disciplines unrelated to Christianity, and then, when his students assimilated them, pointed out their compatibility with Christianity.¹² Emphasising his inability to give proper credit to Origen, Gregory nevertheless describes his visit to Origen at his school in Palestine Caesarea in detail and shows how Origen was able to fascinate him and inspire in him a love of philosophy and the Logos.¹³ The program of Origen's teaching which combined Hellenistic

Wonderworker but also to such pagans as Longinus and Porphyry. For an extensive bibliography of authors who are convinced that there was only one Origen, see Beatrice 2019, 268, n. 6.

⁶ It should be noted that before his baptism, Gregory was called Theodore, and the name Gregory, which was not in use among the Gentiles, was given to him already in the school of Origen (Crouzel 1969, 14). This recalls a similar practice in the school of Plotinus: Plotinus himself changed Amelius' nickname to Amerius (*Plot.* 7. 3–5), while Porphyry was originally called Malchus, Amelius refers to him as Basileus (*Plot.* 17. 13–15); Amelius calls the doctor Paulinus of Scythopolis Mikkalos (*Plot.* 7. 6–7).

⁷ This is reported by Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 6. 30; 7. 14 who identifies the author of *Oratio Panegyrica* with bishop Theodore who took part in the Council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata (Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 7.28.1; 7.30.2), and was the recipient of Origen's letter to Gregory. P. Nautin has questioned whether Gregory was the author of the *Thanksgiving Speech* (Nautin 1977, 81–86, 155–161), but this view has not been supported in recent studies: Celia 2016; Beatrice 2019.

⁸ Kennedy 1980, 40–141.

⁹ Monaci Castagno 2002, 79.

¹⁰ Rizzi 2002, 35.

¹¹ Trigg 2001, 50–52.

¹² Origen. *In Ierem.* 20. 5. 25–34.

¹³ Thereafter, Gregory wrote *Metaphrasis in Ecclesiasten* (CPG 1766), where he reproduced the contents of the biblical book in correct and elegant Greek. In this way, having brought the language of the book

philosophy and Christian theology in the teaching is described in details,¹⁴ and at the end of the speech the author expresses his regret of having to leave the school, which under the guidance of Origen, who led a pure way of life and contemplated the divine mysteries, was for Gregory a prototype of the heavenly life. For the same missionary purpose in relation to pagan intellectuals, Gregory introduces into the text abundant allusions to Plato's dialogues, the contents of which were dear to pagans and at the same time found a place in Christian theology.¹⁵

3. Porphyry and the Origen School in Caesarea

The school of Origen in Caesarea, quite famous, may have been attended by Porphyry of Tyre. Eusebius of Caesarea preserved a fragment from the treatise *Against the Christians* (fr. 39 Harnack = *Hist. eccl.* 6. 19. 5), where Porphyry states that in his youth he met the Christian Origen, which is quite possible given that Origen died soon after Decius' persecution (251) and moved to Caesarea, which was situated near Tyre. The historian Socrates, claiming to refer to Eusebius of Caesarea (who, however, has no such information in the extant texts), reports that Porphyry was a Christian. However, when some Christians beat him in Caesarea, Porphyry renounced Christianity in a fit of "melancholy".¹⁶ This account has been critically received by researchers of Porphyry: while A. von Harnack considered it authentic,¹⁷ already J. Bidez considered it dubious.¹⁸ P. de Labriolle,¹⁹ R. Beutler,²⁰ R. Wilken,²¹ É. Des Places,²² who believed it to be a Christian fiction aimed at denigrating Porphyry, agreed with him. Researchers, however, were not so unanimous: E. Nock,²³ W. den Boer,²⁴ P. Beatrice,²⁵ B. Croke²⁶ considered the reasons for denying the authenticity of this account unconvincing since such transitions were not unusual.

After saying how much Origen excelled in Greek philosophy, which cemented his authority with contemporary philosophers (dedicating treatises to Origen and exchanging writings with him), Porphyry reports that he knew Origen in his youth (ὃ καὶ γὰρ κομιδῆν νέος ὦν ἔτι ἐντετύχηκα).²⁷ He further reports that Origen "was continually studying Plato,

closer to the standards of the Second Sophistic, he continued his missionary work among the educated Greek elite, seeking to lead them, following the example of his teacher Origen, to the practice of philosophy in its Christian form (Slusser 1998, 23).

¹⁴ About Origen's syllabus: Klein/Guyot 1996, 16–18.

¹⁵ To give just one example, Origen is presented as a farmer (Greg. Thaum. *Or. Pan.* 7. 3–8: ἀγαθὸς γεωργός). This is echoed in both the Parable of the Sower in the Synoptic Gospels and in Plato's *Phaedrus* (276b–277a). For examples of such echoes of Plato's *Republic* and *Sophist*, see Celia 2019, 285–295.

¹⁶ Socr. *Hist. eccl.* 3. 23. 114–119. This testimony is later repeated by Byzantine historians: *Epit. Theod. Anagn.* 153; Georg. Mon. *Chron.* p. 539, 17–22; Niceph. Call. *Hist. eccl.* 10. 36, and also in the epitome of a fifth-century work (probably under the emperor Zeno (474–491) called *Tübingen Theosophy* 54. 693 — 55. 699.

¹⁷ von Harnack 1916, 4, n. 4.

¹⁸ Bidez 1964, 6.

¹⁹ de Labriolle, Zeller 1948, 6.

²⁰ Beutler 1953, 276.

²¹ Wilken 1986, 129–130.

²² Des Places 1982, 104, n. 1.

²³ Nock, Rothschild 2019, 157.

²⁴ Den Boer 1974.

²⁵ Beatrice 1997, 54.

²⁶ Croke 1983, 168.

²⁷ Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 6. 19. 5. 2.

and he busied himself with the writings of Numenius and Cronius, Apollonides, Longinus, Moderatus, and Nicomachus, and those famous among the Pythagoreans. And he used the books of Chaeremon the Stoic, and of Cornutus. Becoming acquainted through them with the figurative interpretation of the Grecian mysteries, he applied it to the Jewish Scriptures.²⁸ This attests to Porphyry's deeply personal experience with Origen and his circle. It would have been impossible to know Origen's intellectual habits if Porphyry had only encountered Origen once, rather than having attended Origen's school and library in Caesarea for some time.²⁹

P. Beatrice drew attention to the testimony of Athanasius the Syrian (7th century CE) about Porphyry, which not only states that Porphyry was a pupil of Origen, but also that he was treated unkindly by everyone there because he dared to make an interpretation of the holy Gospel, which was opposed by Gregory the Wonderworker,³⁰ who spent eight years in Origen's school (*Or. Pan.* 1. 3).³¹ This kind of disputation may well have taken place if placed in 248–249 and before the pronouncement of the *Thanksgiving Speech to Origen*.³² So, at this point we can assume that Porphyry was acquainted with Origen, attended his school, and also had some unpleasant experiences with the Christians in Caesarea.³³

4. Structural and thematic similarities between *Or. Pan.* and *Vita Plotini*

Long ago, F. Schroeder speculated that the *Vita Plotini* (hereafter *Plot.*) was a text with polemical overtones,³⁴ and L. Jerphagnon pointed out many examples of structural proximity between this text and the Gospels.³⁵ Below we propose a comparison of *Plot.* and *Or. Pan.* in the course of which we will highlight the convergences and possible repulsions of Porphyry from Gregory's text in the created description of the ideal scholar.

Both texts, whose authors may have been acquainted from the school of Origen, refuse to describe the teacher's background and upbringing in their programmatic writings (*Or. Pan.* 2. 20–21 and *Plot.* 1. 3–4). Gregory is reluctant to speak of such transient things as beauty and strength (*Or. Pan.* 2. 24–32), while Porphyry also describes at the beginning of his text how Plotinus refused to pose for a portrait, lest he leave behind a likeness of himself (*Plot.* 1. 4–9). Both Plotinus and Origen come from Egypt but leave Alexandria (*Or. Pan.* 5. 67–71; *Plot.* 3. 6–8).

²⁸ Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 6. 19. 8.

²⁹ See the arguments of Beatrice, who shows that one cannot, along with Johnson (Johnson 2013, 16, n. 68), assume that the encounter with Origen was through reading his books. There are both linguistic reasons for this (ἐντυγχάνοντες in the sense of readers with the addition in the dative case indicates a book, a text, not a reader) and Porphyry's caveat in Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 6. 19. 2–3, that he knew (ἐγνωκέαι) Origen in his youth. Finally, evidence in favour of the encounter is Rufinus' Latin translation of this passage from Eusebius, rendering ἐντετύχηκα by the verb vidi (Schwartz, Mommsen, Winkelmann 1999, 559). The meeting between Porphyry and Origen was not a one-off, their communication lasted at least several months: Beatrice 2019, 270–273.

³⁰ Smith 1993, 24, 29aT.

³¹ Cf. Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.30: Eusebius speaks of five years of study.

³² The possibility of such an encounter is mentioned by Trigg 2001, 27, n. 2, and Beatrice 2019, 272.

³³ For a detailed discussion of Porphyry's acquaintance with Christianity in his youth see Kinzig 1998.

³⁴ Schroeder 1987, 518–519.

³⁵ Jerphagnon 1990. This line is followed by J. Dillon (von Albrecht, Dillon 2002, 295–296) and Y. A. Shichalin (Shichalin 2013, 3–7).

Gregory was concerned with underlining the scholar's god-like character, his kinship with and longing for the Godhead (*Or. Pan.* 2. 32–35, 4. 40), just as Porphyry describes Plotinus as a particular person who, from the very beginning, was different from all other men and was guarded by the supreme Deity (*Plot.* 10. 14. 23–25; 23. 3–7). The reference to the Deity also confirms the higher status of the scholar: just as Origen is guarded by an Angel, which Gregory identifies as the second hypostasis of the Trinity (*Or. Pan.* 2. 38–44), so later Plotinus is not guarded by a daemon, but by the higher God, as we learn from the famous episode in the Temple of Isis (*Plot.* 10. 23–25). Both authors agree that the supreme Deity directs the life of the entire universe (*Or. Pan.* 4. 1–66 and *Plot.* 22. 35–39).

According to the model of the God who looks after people, scholars are also represented as guardians of their pupils: while Gregory calls Origen the guardian and tutor both of himself, once orphaned, and of his friends (*Or. Pan.* 4. 47–52), Porphyrian deduces Plotinus as a real tutor of orphaned children (*Plot.* 9. 5–16). Further, Origen possessed discernment so that he could also advise his disciples on the hidden movements of their hearts (*Or. Pan.* 9. 7–17), while Porphyry places in the *Life of Plotinus* the account of how Plotinus pointed out the thief of the Chione's necklace, how he predicted the future fate of Polemon and how he finally recognised Porphyry's state of mind and sent him to Sicily to turn him away from suicide (*Plot.* 11. 1–15).

Regarding the biographical information about himself, Gregory describes the main stages of his life: he speaks in a humble and self-deprecating spirit about his youth, his training by other teachers and finally by Origen (*Or. Pan.* 2. 44–51, 69–70; 3. 53–55), he emphasises his rhetorical ineptitude in every way and would rather keep silent, but he has to speak in excess of gratitude (*Or. Pan.* 1. 1–4; 2. 41–43; 16. 8–11; 18. 1–4). Porphyry also describes himself, but in a different way: in *Plot.* he gives much information about himself so that, as in the case of Gregory, we can reconstruct the chronology of his life: we know where Porphyry was at the time of his teacher's death (*Plot.* 2. 32), where he studied before coming to Plotinus and at what age he came to the school (*Plot.* 4. 1–9), how many years he was at the school (*Plot.* 5. 1–7), when and why he left it and went to Sicily (*Plot.* 6. 1–3; 11. 11–15), whom he communicated with on the island and how long he lived there (*Plot.* 11. 16–19), what cities he visited (*Plot.* 19. 34–35). Porphyry's life journey, like Gregory's, is divided into three phases in the text: before school — at school — and out of school. Porphyry makes the central part of the text his period at the school of Plotinus:³⁶ the teacher calls Porphyry “poet, philosopher and hierophant” (*Plot.* 15. 5), and Porphyry defends Plotinus against accusations of plagiarism from Numenius (*Plot.* 17. 1–6), favourably influences the teacher and Amelius by encouraging them to record their writings (*Plot.* 4. 9–14). Moreover, he systematically highlights his personality within the teacher's biography: the phrase “I Porphyry” occurs 20 times in the short treatise in various forms.³⁷

The two texts are more closely related by their experience of contact with the Divine, though there are nuances: Gregory says of himself that he was first visited by the Logos at the age of 14, and saw the animated Logos of the first Mind (*Or. Pan.* 5. 10–11: τοῦ πρώτου

³⁶ Porphyry spent five years at Plotinus' school, whereas Amelius spent 24. Nevertheless, in the episodes of *Plot.* 5. 1–5; 11. 11–15; 13. 10–17; 15. 1–17, 20–21; 18. 18–23 the proximity of Porphyry to the teacher is noted.

³⁷ Porph. *Plot.* 2. 31; 4. 1; 4. 8; 4. 12; 5. 60; 7. 27; 7. 50; 11. 11; 13. 10; 15. 11; 15. 20; 16. 14; 17. 6; 17. 7; 17. 12; 18. 9; 18. 18; 21. 12; 21. 21; 23. 12.

νοῦ λόγος ἔμψυχος ὢν), while, according to Porphyry, to Plotinus there appeared a Deity who has neither appearance nor form and is above Mind and all mental comprehension (*Plot.* 23. 9–18). Both the disciples could not reach the perfection of their teachers: Origen was a friend of the Logos, an interpreter of His divine words, which he received straight from the mouth of God (*Or. Pan.* 6. 69–70; 15. 37–41), and Gregory testifies, that through his sluggishness and sloth, he did not yet attain the fullness of virtues (*Or. Pan.* 12. 1–11). Plotinus united with the Godhead four times during his life, and Porphyry only once, in the 68th year of his life.

The episode of finding a teacher is also similar to the two works: the teacher of laws foreshadows Gregory's subsequent encounter with Origen (*Or. Pan.* 5. 54–56, 61–62), while Porphyry, in turn, describes how Plotinus has already found a true mentor in Ammonius (*Plot.* 3. 6–13: τοῦτον ἐζήτουν). Both Gregory and Porphyry disagreed with their teachers at first: Porphyry had a bad impression of Plotinus, arguing with his philosophical positions (*Plot.* 18. 1–11), and Gregory even tried to leave Origen (*Or. Pan.* 6. 1–9), but the unique, persuasive manner of the mentors induced him both to stay and pursue philosophy (*Or. Pan.* 6. 30–35, 7. 64–71; *Plot.* 8. 11–15, 13. 1–2). The doctrine of the teachers seems false and incomprehensible to both of them at first, but then Gregory, and Porphyry after him, come to reason and are convinced of the truth of their teachers' views (*Or. Pan.* 7. 97–98 and *Plot.* 18. 8–19).

In Gregory's text, Origen advises him to put off the worries of everyday life, to avoid everything that might distract from philosophy (*Or. Pan.* 6. 11–32), and Plotinus, in a text by Porphyry, praises the senator Rogatian who left the service and devoted himself wholly to philosophy (*Plot.* 7. 31–46). There is also a negative example in the *Life of Plotinus*: among Plotinus' students, there was once Serapion, an Alexandrian, who could not escape the vices of avarice and usury (*Plot.* 7. 46–49). Both preceptors treat their students well (*Or. Pan.* 6. 51–55 and *Plot.* 13. 5–10; 15. 4–6; 15. 15–17). This is evident also from the way in which Origen, speaking to Gregory, seeks to get to the heart of the student's questions and answers them (*Or. Pan.* 7. 21–26). Plotinus treats the Porphyry's questions with the same attention and to such an extent that he is not ready to continue the study until he has answered all his questions (*Plot.* 13. 10–17).

The similarity between the teaching of Origen and Plotinus is striking. Origen's voice was enchanting (*Or. Pan.* 6. 47–48: λόγους... καταγεγοητευμένους), and suggestive of favour (*Or. Pan.* 6. 53–54: εὐνοητική τις... αὐταῖς ταῖς φωναῖς αὐτοῦ προσφθεγγόμενου καὶ ὁμιλοῦντος); treated him ably and kindly (*Or. Pan.* 6. 51–52: δεξιότητος καὶ διαθέσεως τῆς ἀγαθῆς) in order that "by favourable, man-loving and noble disposition" (*Or. Pan.* 6. 56: δεξιᾶ δὲ καὶ φιλανθρώπων καὶ χρηστοτάτη γνώμη) lead to philosophy and guide to salvation. Plotinus' teaching charisma, his asceticism, and his concentration on the exegesis of authoritative texts, in primis Plato, were shaped by eleven years of study at the school of Ammonius.³⁸ The criticism in school classes of Gnostic texts, such as the revelation of

³⁸ If Porphyry of Tyre reports that Ammonius, being a Christian, was brought up by Christian parents, when he gave himself to study and to philosophy straightway conformed to the life required by the laws and became (μετεβάλετο) a heathen (Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 6. 19. 7), Eusebius himself, who preserves the report of Porphyry, refutes this information and states that Ammonius was a Christian to the end of his life (Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 6. 19. 9–10). The school of Ammonius was attended by Christians and non-Christians (Origen(es), Herennius, Theodosius, Longinus, Olympius, Antoninus), and the school, according to Porphyry in *Plot.* 3. 6, was not among the most famous in Alexandria. Nevertheless, the teacher had an extraordinary influence on his students: we see it both in the figure of Plotinus, who chose exactly Ammonius as his teacher and kept

Zostrian and Zoroaster (*Plot.* 16. 12–18), demonstrates the importance of textual criticism in establishing the authenticity of a potential source of ancient wisdom. This correlates well with the interest of the common teacher of Plotinus and Origen, Ammonius, in comparing the gospel stories necessary to establish the actual teaching of Christ, which he compared with that of Moses. Apart from the teacher, this approach brings Plotinus closer to another disciple of Ammonius, Origen, whose *Hexapla* appears as a parallel attempt to discover what the Hebrew scriptures actually communicate. The authors Plotinus considers in his classes overlap with those that Origen the Christian discussed in his school: Numenius, Cronius, Moderatus, Longinus, and the Stoics.³⁹ Furthermore, if we speak about the correlation between the author's originality and the adherence to the teaching of the preceding scholars, Origen exemplified both: Origen reached some concepts on his own, while he learned others from his teachers (*Or. Pan.* 8. 12–15). Plotinus is represented in the same way: developing his own interpretations, he mainly showed his students the thought of his teacher Ammonius (*Plot.* 14. 14–16). Origen read with his students all the philosophers except the atheists (*Or. Pan.* 13. 7–11), as Plotinus, besides Aristotle and Plato, read and interpreted many philosophers (*Plot.* 14. 10–14), yet each of the scholars described appears above his contemporaries as having a direct relationship to God (*Or. Pan.* 15. 13–26, 37–41 and *Plot.* 23. 21–27).

Origen did not usually write his treatises but dictated them to his scribes, which explains many features of his style: repetitions, abrupt transitions and equally abrupt returns to interrupted themes, additions which the writing author would have put in the right place, he puts at the end of the passage or elsewhere.⁴⁰ Porphyry also describes how Plotinus did not write at the beginning of his school career but taught verbally (*Plot.* 3. 30–35).

Gregory describes a clear programme of study, oriented towards the Platonists and aimed at directing the soul towards the contemplation of God and happiness, attained by successive ascent. In Origen's school, geometry and astronomy were studied as an initial stage, then they proceeded to philosophy, which was divided into dialectics (διαλεκτική), ethics (πρακτική) and physics (θεωρητική). The physical conceptions of the pristine elements are deliberately presented in their variety (*Or. Pan.* 8. 8–12), since their whole complex is understood as a propaedeutic to Christian theology, true philosophy and Christian science,⁴¹ embodied as a way of life pervaded and guided by a mind directed towards a higher truth.

Plotinus wrote treatises, which Porphyry assembled into a coherent whole, edited,⁴² titled and published according to his own plan. Porphyry adhered to a thematic principle: ascending from the sensual world (the first to the third *Ennead*) to the soul (the fourth *Ennead*), to the intellect (the fifth) and to the One (the sixth), which made it possible to

his teaching a secret for long years, and in a letter by Origen, who justified his zealous study of philosophy by Ammonius (Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 6. 9. 12. 4) and Longinus who studied under him and thought his teacher a great philosopher (*Plot.* 20. 36).

³⁹ Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 6. 19. 8 and Porph. *Plot.* 14. 10–14.

⁴⁰ This is visible when comparing the treatises *De oratione* and *Exhortatio ad martyrium* written by his hand.

⁴¹ It is perhaps this attitude of Christians to their theology that Porphyry criticises as self-exaltation, whereas the method of philosophising remained the same as that of the Platonists: reading critically established biblical texts and interpreting them, guided by a teacher.

⁴² Porphyry's proposed list of Plotinus' works in chronological order (*Plot.* 4–6) helps establish that Porphyry deliberately divided Plotinus' large texts to obtain the six *Enneads* sought, such as treatises 30 to 33, initially constituting one treatise.

arrange the treatises into a straightforward programme of transition from the material world to the One. Origen's teaching method also resembles the features of Socrates' zetetic and eristic method⁴³ and that of Plotinus (Porphy. *Plot.* 15. 24–26).

Both texts use the language of Plato's *Symposium*⁴⁴ to describe a connection with the Deity, and if Gregory describes how Origen indoctrinated him with the love of the virtues (*Or. Pan.* 12. 13–24: ἐρωτηθέντας; τὸν ἐρασιμώτατον; ὁ πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδε τὸν αὐτοῦ φίλον καὶ προήγορον ἔρωτος; τετρωμένος), Porphyry specifically stipulates that he uses the imagery of Plato's *Symposium* on purpose (*Plot.* 23. 9–10).

Towards the end of his speech, Gregory explicitly says that Origen has become for him a paradise, an image of the original paradise, which (i. e. the mentor's school) he, like a second Adam, is now forced to leave. (*Or. Pan.* 16. 1–8). This image appears turned inside out in Porphyry, who in the Oracle of Apollo, quoted at the end of *Plot.*, speaks directly of how Plotinus returned to the original world in the community of the divine Plato and Pythagoras and remained in paradise with all those that form the Choir of Immortal Love (*Plot.* 22. 45–60; 23. 28–40).

So, we see a certain similarity in the representation of the figure of the scholar by both Porphyry and Gregory. Gregory's testimony is chronologically the first and cannot be influenced by Porphyry, who, like Gregory, attended the school of Origen. The picture presented by Porphyry in *Plot.* asserts his school's claim to philosophical truth and has obvious polemical zeal, directed specifically against *Or. Pan.*

5. The bad scholar Origen and the good scholar Plotinus

Having established the two texts' general similarity, let us focus on *Plot.* 13. 5–10, where Porphyry describes Plotinus: the mind in Plotinus shone in a way that enlightened his face, Plotinus had a pleasant appearance, and at moments of speech, he was unusually handsome. At such moments a light sweat appeared on his face; he shone with meekness, and was glad of the questions he meekly answered. L. Brisson rightly notes the similarity with *Mt* 17:2,⁴⁵ but this description seems to be a reaction to the image of Origen, which was drawn by Gregory the Wonderworker. But the same image of Plotinus is quite comparable as a negative to the image of Origen⁴⁶ which Porphyry draws and which we know in Proclus' transmission: "Origenes spent three whole days shouting and going red in the face, and getting into quite a sweat, saying that the claim (hypothesis) was important

⁴³ Alieva 2013, 684. The eristic method of Origen, who applied it to refute the fallacies of heretics and pagan philosophers, was noted by Pamphilus (See in Ruf. *Apol.* 3: discussio, disputans, inquirere) and Athanasius of Alexandria (Athanas. *De Decr. Nic. Syn.* 27. 1–2).

⁴⁴ Plato. *Symp.* 179a6–b2, 204c1–5, 210–211.

⁴⁵ *Mt.* 17:2 ESV: And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun (Καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν καὶ ἔλαμψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος).

⁴⁶ Nowadays, this testimony of Porphyry is evaluated as evidence in favour of Origen the Platonist on the ground that a Christian Origen would not have pursued the poetry of Homer, and Porphyry's argument with the cited opinion points to Origen the Platonist. In Gregory, however, we see a direct reference to the study of philosophers and poets at school, which, moreover, is consistent with Origen's interest in and admiration for Homer, which we find in the treatise *Against Celsus*: C. *Cels.* 1. 17, 1. 31, 1. 42; 2. 76; 4. 36; 4. 55; 4. 91; 7. 6; 7. 36; 7. 54; 8. 16; 8. 53; 8. 68. For more details see Beatrice 2019, 273–274. Porphyry may have become acquainted with Origen's discussion of Homer ἀπὸ φωνῆς and then mentioned his views in his writings. On the meaning of ἀπὸ φωνῆς see Richard 1950.

and problematic, and very keen to demonstrate that the imitation in Homer adequately depicts actions of excellence”.⁴⁷

Let us note the similarities between the two episodes. In both episodes the narrator is Porphyry, who recounts three days of intellectual strain on the head of the school. In the fragment from Proclus Origen behaves unworthily: going red in the face (ἐρυθριῶντα), shouting (βοῶντα), getting into quite a sweat (ιδρώτι πολλῶ κατεχόμενον), showing no restraint and telling his students how difficult the problem at hand is, while he undertakes it wishing to become famous (φιλοτιμούμενον) by solving such an important question. Plotinus, however, is described in precisely the opposite way and by the same characteristics: appearance, inner qualities, attitude towards his pupils, expressions of tension, and nature of speech. Thus, as we have already noted, in his moments of philosophical study he seemed to his disciples particularly handsome (ἐράσμιος μὲν ὀφθῆναι, καλλίων δὲ τότε μάλιστα ὀρώμενος), his face was lightly covered with sweat (λεπτὸς τις ιδρώς), he glowed with meekness (ἡ πραότης), showed disposition (τὸ προσηγές) to the disciples’ questions and stamina (τὸ εὔτονον).

The description of Plotinus in *Plot.* 13. 5–10 is quite comparable to that of Origen by his disciples, particularly Gregory the Wonderworker, to which Porphyry may have responded. Gregory in *Or. Pan.* 13. 1–2, 7–9 reports how in Origen’s school with all diligence and zeal (πάση φιλοπονίᾳ καὶ σπουδῇ... πάση δυνάμει) studied “all the works of the ancient philosophers and poets” (τῶν ἀρχαίων πάντα ὅσα καὶ φιλοσόφων καὶ ὑμνωδῶν ἐστὶ γράμματα). In particular, Porphyry’s training in the Caesarean school may explain the creation of the negative image of Origen reasoning about Homer’s epic poems. To this image Porphyry contrasts the image of the true philosopher, Plotinus. It is all the more possible that Gregory openly frames his speech as a challenge to the other Hellenistic teachers: Origen is better than they are, because he not only teaches his pupils the dialectics and the art of speech but also develops virtues in them (*Or. Pan.* 11. 133; 14. 162). Gregory emphasises the traits of a true philosopher in his teacher, namely Socrates,⁴⁸ presenting his appeal to philosophy on the model of Alcibiades. Origen’s speeches possessed divine power (*Or. Pan.* 6. 50), and he himself was a friend of God who kindled in his disciples love for himself and, through him, for the Logos.⁴⁹ Whereas in Porphyry, the Mind fills Plotinus’ face with light so that he becomes beautiful and increasingly loved by his disciples, in Gregory, Origen is portrayed as a friend of the Logos, who comes to him and communicates his gifts to a far greater extent than all other contemporaries, with the result that the disciples love both the Logos and his proclaimer Origen even more.⁵⁰

Thus, Porphyry’s positive image of Plotinus is in line with the negative image of Origen. Whatever the interpretation, it is perfectly obvious that the two texts have intersections and overlaps. Supposedly, Porphyry, dissatisfied with the claims of Origen and his followers to the true philosophy, creates an episode, in which Origen is portrayed as unat-

⁴⁷ Transl. after Tarrant 2007, 157. Cf. Procl. *In Tim.* 1. 63. 29–33: τριῶν ὅλων ἡμερῶν διατελέσαι τὸν Ὀριγένη βοῶντα καὶ ἐρυθριῶντα καὶ ιδρώτι πολλῶ κατεχόμενον, μεγάλην εἶναι λέγοντα τὴν ὑπόθεσιν καὶ τὴν ἀπορίαν, καὶ δεικνύνα φιλοτιμούμενον, ὅτι πρὸς τὰς κατ’ ἀρετὴν πράξεις ἀρκοῦσά ἐστιν ἢ παρ’ Ὀμήρω μίμησις.

⁴⁸ For an analysis of Gregory’s image of Origen in the image of Socrates see Alieva 2013, 681–689.

⁴⁹ Greg. Thaum. *Or. Pan.* 6. 66–70.

⁵⁰ Greg. Thaum. *Or. Pan.* 6. 58–66; 6. 69–70: καὶ ὁ πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδε τὸν αὐτοῦ φίλον καὶ προήγορον ἔρωσ.

tractive. But furthermore, there is an episode in *Plot.* which directly reproduces the scene with Origen described by Proclus. Let us consider it.

6. Who is Thaumasius?

In chapter 13 of *Plot.* Porphyry describes his three-day argument with Plotinus about how the soul coexists with the body, which took place immediately after he arrived at the school. In this episode, the name of another visitor to the class, Thaumasius, appears:

...τὸ προσηνὲς πρὸς τὰς ἐρωτήσεις ἐδείκνυτο καὶ τὸ εὐτονον. Τριῶν γοῦν ἡμερῶν ἐμοῦ Πορφυρίου ἐρωτήσαντος, πῶς ἡ ψυχὴ σύνεστι τῷ σώματι, παρέτεινεν ἀποδεικνύς, ὥστε καὶ Θαυμασίου τινὸς τοῦνομα ἐπισελθόντος τοὺς καθόλου λόγους πράττοντος καὶ εἰς βιβλία ἀκοῦσαι αὐτοῦ λέγοντος θέλειν, Πορφυρίου δὲ ἀποκρινομένου καὶ ἐρωτῶντος μὴ ἀνασχέσθαι, ὁ δὲ ἔφη ‘ἀλλὰ ἂν μὴ Πορφυρίου ἐρωτῶντος λύσωμεν τὰς ἀπορίας, εἰπεῖν τι καθάπαξ εἰς τὸ βιβλίον οὐ δυνασόμεθα’ (*Plot.* 13. 9–17).

...he displayed a cordiality of questioning and a harmonic tone. At one time I myself kept interrogating him during three days as to how the soul is associated with the body, and he continued explaining; a man called Thaumasius entered in the midst of our discussions; the visitor was more interested in the general drift of the system than in particular points, and said he wished to hear Plotinus expounding some theory as he would **in a set treatise**, but that he could not endure Porphyry’s questions and answers: Plotinus asked, ‘But if we cannot first solve the difficulties Porphyry raises what could go **into the treatise**?’ (Transl. S. MacKenna 1921, 13)

The problematic place of MacKenna’s translation is immediately apparent: the expressions of the original “εἰς βιβλία — εἰς τὸ βιβλίον” are translated in two different ways, which we also find in other translations into different languages.⁵¹ In his notes to the French two-volume book on *Plot.*,⁵² L. Brisson observes that the name Thaumasius is not real here but is given to the student with intent since Porphyry wished to emphasise the listener’s surprise at Plotinus’ course of thought (Brisson 1992, 261). From the French translation, however, it cannot be understood why Porphyry gives an emotionally coloured, “speaking name” to a man who “wished to hear Plotinus expounding some theory as he would in a set treatise”. What was the surprise of this visitor?

The rare name Thaumasius occurs mainly in later Christian texts;⁵³ in Porphyry’s vast corpus, it occurs only in the episode in question. Apparently, this Thaumasius is not a ran-

⁵¹ Thus in Westermann: Thaumasius quidam, qui ingressus erat, ut universales disputationes exigeret *in scripta transferendas atque audiret ipsum* (Westermann 1850, 109); in Armstrong: a man called Thaumasius came in who was interested in general statements and said that he wanted to hear Plotinus speaking *in the manner of a set treatise* (Armstrong 1966, 39); in Brayer: un certain Thaumasius, entré dans la salle, dit qu’il voulait l’entendre faire une conférence suivie *et propre à être écrite* (Brehier 1924, 15); with Harder: Und als ein Mann names Thaumasius eintrat und eine Vorlesung über allgemeine Fragen forderte, er wollte etwas hören *zum Nachschreiben* (Harder 1958, 31).

⁵² The *Life of Plotinus* was, for many years, the subject of the work of the E.R. research team. 76 CNRS, which resulted in the publication of two major collective monographs devoted to the study of *Plot.*: Brisson et al. 1982 and Brisson et al. 1992.

⁵³ Thaumasius is the name of a martyr from Cyzicus (*Synaxar.* April. 29 2. 4: τῶν ἀγίων ἐννέα τοῦ Χριστοῦ μαρτύρων τῶν ἐν Κυζίκῳ, Θεόγνιδος, Ρούφου, Ἀντιπάτρου, Θεοστίχου, Ἀρτεμᾶ, Μάγνου, Θεοδότου, Θαυμασίου καὶ Φιλήμονος). We further hear of a certain Ammonius, a monk of Nitria, executed for killing the prefect Orestes; his body was laid to rest in one of the churches by St Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril also gave him the new name Thaumasius supposed to connect Ammonius with the Cyzicus martyr of the

dom person, but an important man interested in philosophy, perhaps attending Plotinus' school and participating in school debates. The fact that he behaves freely in class, and in Porphyry's view, even rudely, indicates two things: first, he is his own man, and second, he is somehow unpleasant to Porphyry. But why is he named Thaumasius?

In the *Thanksgiving Speech*, which, as we have shown, overlaps with *Plot.* and ought to be known to Porphyry, Gregory the Wonderworker states that he delivers it in an assembly of "those admirable men who have embraced the noble study of philosophy" (*Or. Pan.* 1. 14–16: τῶν θαυμασίων τούτων ἀνδρῶν, τῶν καλὴν φιλοσοφίαν ἀσπασαμένων), that is, among his associates and Origen's students. Gregory gives a similar epithet to Origen himself, a philosopher extraordinaire, an admirable man, this friend and advocate of the virtues (*Or. Pan.* 12. 14–15: ὁ θαυμαστός οὗτος καὶ φίλος τῶν ἀρετῶν καὶ προήγορος), in whom he, Gregory, found "an admirable and complete collection and abundance of most excellent contemplations" (*Or. Pan.* 15. 49–50: τὴν θαυμαστὴν καὶ πλήρη τῶν καλλίστων θεαμάτων παρασκευὴν καὶ ἐξουσίαν).⁵⁴

In *Or. Pan.* 8. 8–9 Gregory informs us that Origen dealt not only with particular subjects in his teaching, but studied the first elements (τὰ πρότιστα στοιχεῖα) and the nature of the universe (τὴν τε τῶν ὅλων φύσιν). This is confirmed in the very texts by Origen, who in his Commentary on the Gospel according to John discusses the wisdom of God, identifies it with the Logos and calls it "an incorporeal hypostasis comprised of the various ideas which embrace the principles (λόγοι) of the universe".⁵⁵

We face a testimony of Origen's dealing with the logoi of the universe (τοὺς τῶν ὅλων λόγους), which he places in the animated Logos. Porphyry, negatively disposed towards Origen and his school and at the same time familiar with his ideas, might well have pictured Origen dealing with the logoi of the universe in the image of Thaumasius dealing with the logoi of the universe (τοὺς καθόλου λόγους πράττοντος).⁵⁶ Origen presents the Logos as animate, which is consistent with how Thaumasius tries to prevent the resolution of Porphyry's question about the relation between the body and the soul (*Plot.* 13. 10–11).⁵⁷ The fact that the questions of the relation between body and soul were known at Origen's school is seen in the work attributed to Gregory the Wonderworker, *Ad Tatianum de anima per capita disputatio*,⁵⁸ where the author, without reference to the Scripture, re-

times of Diocletian persecution (*Socr. Schol. Hist. eccl.* 7. 14. 26); finally, there was a monk of this name, the recipient of the letter of Nilus of Ancyra (*Nil. Ancyr. Epist.* 3. 33). Other occurrences (we used the TLG base) are not personal names, but definitions.

⁵⁴ It is curious that in the extant writings of Origen, the words with the element θαυμασι- (according to TLG) occur 120 times, whereas in his teacher Clement there are only 9. Lucian has 48 and Plutarch has 57. Porphyry himself has 5, Plotinus has 0.

⁵⁵ *Orig. Comm. in John.* 1. 34. 234. 1–5 (transl. R. E. Heine).

⁵⁶ For other examples of Origen's consideration of the logoi of Beings see Bradshaw 2013, 12–14.

⁵⁷ That Origen was concerned with the question of the relation between body and soul is evident from *Orig. C. Cels.* 1. 33; 2. 9; 3. 28. 37–51; 3. 29. 7–17; 4. 15–16; 4. 18. 27–37; 4. 58; 5. 29. 45–47; 6. 48. 12–21; 6. 63. 17–25; 7. 5. 1–8.

⁵⁸ The question of the authorship of this work is rather complicated: in Greek manuscripts, it has been attributed either to Gregory of Neocaesarea or to Maximus the Confessor, while Syriac, Arabic and Persian manuscripts attribute it to Aristotle or Avicenna. J. Lebreton supposes that the work was revised and depends on Nemesius of Emesa, but at its core contains the original ideas of Gregory of Neocaesarea. F. Celia, based on parallels and cross-references to passages in the extant works of Porphyry and Alexander of Aphrodisias, suggests that the work depends on *Symmikta Zetemata* of Porphyry (Celia 2016, 178–179). Be that as it may, it shows the openness of the Christian text from Origen's circle to Neoplatonic concerns and Porphyry in particular.

sorting only to rational arguments and syllogisms, clarifies the question of the presence of soul, its nature, corporality, simplicity, immortality and rationality. The theme of the union of soul and body is found in Porphyry in the text *Symmikta Zetemata* and *Ad Gaurum*.⁵⁹ The syllogisms proposed by Gregory are quite similar in form to those seen in Porphyry concerning the Christian doctrine of the Logos, which he criticizes.⁶⁰ The question of the relation of soul and body was essential for Porphyry. It was also polemically sharpened: whereas Origen used the term ἐνωμάτων and criticised μετενωμάτων, Porphyry, when discussing anthropology, never uses them, preferring the terms ἐμψύχων⁶¹ / μετεμψύχων,⁶² which are not typical of his teacher Plotinus (Ramelli 2017, 2).⁶³ Origen, once specifically stipulates that when speaking of “rest in hope” (*Acts* 2:26 KJV), Luke deliberately uses the word σάραξ instead of ἐμψύχων, which also indicates a polemical rejection of the Platonic term.⁶⁴

So, the introduction of the figure of a certain “strange” Thaumasius, whose image is built according to the same model as Porphyry’s description of Origen (Procl. *In Tim.* I. 63. 29–33), which Proclus preserve, suggests that Thaumasius is not a “technical” figure, an accidental participant of a particular episode which actually took place, but an ironic representation of the same Origen in an unattractive form. On chronological grounds, it is impossible to claim that Porphyry’s text actually describes the visit of Origen to Plotinus’ school when Porphyry was at the school. However, nothing prevents us from suggesting that Porphyry introduced in *Plot.* 13. 10–17 an allusion to the Christian scholar, whose portrayal in a similar situation had already been made by him on another occasion. The episode in which Thaumasius appears may be a veiled and polemical allusion to Origen, the “eccentric” who wrote about the logoi of the universe and became a model of philosophy for Christians like Gregory.

In *Plot.* 14. 20–25 Porphyry directly mentions Origen in the episode with the blushing and silent Plotinus. This episode had occurred before Porphyry came to the school, so Porphyry quotes either the teacher’s memories or the testimony of Amelius, the oldest student who was open to the Christian tradition and even interpreted the prologue to the *Gospel of John*. This testimony responds to the negative image of Origen drawn by Porphyry in the person of Thaumasius and in that of Proclus: before such a loud and obstinate opponent, Plotinus wanted to retreat and not get involved in polemics. Plotinus rushes to end the lesson because he is sure that Origen knows what he will say in advance. This indicates that Origen might have heard from Plotinus the same doctrines that he heard at the school of Ammonius. It explains Plotinus’ embarrassment to an older disciple of Ammonius, whose philosophical views diverged from his own.

The episode with Plotinus and Thaumasius is thus a polemical jab at Origen’s followers, who put forward a programme of philosophical renewal alternative to the Platonists;

⁵⁹ *Symmikta Zetemata* is a Neoplatonic propaedeutic writing focusing on questions of the soul. See Dörrie 1959. Cf. also Porph. *Ad Gaurum* 11. 2. 12–14; 13. 7. 1–5; 14. 4. 8–11; *Sentent.* 2, 3, 29.21–22, 33. 49–53, 37. 41–44, 38. 11; *Categ.* 100. 5–6; *De abst.* 2. 47. 10–11; 2. 48. 1–2.

⁶⁰ Porph. *Chr. Fr.* 84 = Theophyl. *Enarr. in Joh.* (Migne. PG. 123, Col. 1141).

⁶¹ Porph. *Ad Gaur.* 2. 4. 3–4; 11. 1. 6; 11. 2. 5; 11. 3. 17.

⁶² Porph. *De abst.* IV. 16. 15 with reference to the authority of Mitra.

⁶³ I. Ramelli notes that ἐμψύχων is only found in *Plot. Enn.* IV. 3. 9. 14, ἐνωμάτων, a term of Origen, does not occur with him, but μετενωμάτων is used twice in *Enn.* II. 9. 6. 13 and IV. 3. 9. 6.

⁶⁴ Orig. *Select. In Psalm.* 12. 1216. 21.

and the very depiction of Plotinus as a “divine man” (θεῖος ἀνὴρ) responds to the image of Origen painted by his followers.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, we have offered a possible model of Porphyry’s original response to the apparently pagan-addressed work by Gregory the Wonderworker *Oratio Panegyrica*. Being acquainted with Origen, Porphyry attends his classes in Caesarea, where he learns the details of Origen’s teaching and doctrine, which he would not have had access to by the mere reading of his treatises. Subsequently, his disagreement with the Christians claim to possess true philosophy prompts him to polemic against the Christians and create a project of a renewed philosophy, based on the texts of Plotinus and in fact opposed to Christianity.

The social and cultural proximity of their disciples’ portrayals of Origen and Plotinus testifies to the intense struggle for the claim to philosophical renewal, the two projects of which are represented in the portraits of the two leading intellectuals of the previous generation. The fact that Porphyry rejected Christianity as a recent unreasonable godlessness, and the fact that Origen, flatteringly portrayed by his disciple Gregory, was characterised as a misguided intellectual, was part of his programme of philosophical renewal, finding its ideal in Plotinus. Origen challenged the dominant Greek philosophical orthodoxy by supplanting the new Christian tradition with its ancient tradition of authoritative texts, teachers and institutions. The true philosophy for Origen was the Christian Platonism of his school.⁶⁵ Eusebius, who called Porphyry his chief enemy,⁶⁶ used Porphyry’s recognition of Origen’s philosophical experience to show that the disciple of Ammonius was a formidable rival to the Platonists: a Christian ascetic who rediscovered the way of salvation by correcting Plato’s errors by the divine revelation given to Moses and revealed in Christ. The same desire for renewal drives Porphyry: he draws on Pythagoras and Plato and, through Numenius, Ammonius and Plotinus, puts into the teacher’s mouth the project of a new philosophy free from the errors of Hellenistic philosophy and the “new heretics”, the Christians.

The *Life of Plotinus*, the hermeneutic key to the *Enneads*, is not just the teacher’s biography, but a text which defends the authority of the scholar precisely in opposition to the competing teachings of Origen’s followers, Gregory and Eusebius.

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⁶⁵ Interestingly, in Euseb. *Praep. eu.* 11–15 Eusebius, following Origen, criticises the Epicureans, Stoics, Academics, and Peripatetics, but not the Platonists, whose founder he considered an outstanding and excellent philosopher (Euseb. *Praep. eu.* 11. 8. 1; 11. 9. 5).

⁶⁶ Euseb. *Praep. eu.* 4. 6. 8–9.

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Философское обновление III в.: полемическая составляющая Vita Plotini Порфирия в отношении Oratio Panegyrica Григория Неокесарийского

Роман Сергеевич Соловьев

Московская духовная академия,
Российская Федерация, 141300, Московская обл., Сергиев Посад, Свято-Троицкая Сергиева Лавра;
solorom@gmail.com

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В статье предложен анализ сходных и параллельно развивающихся проектов создания истинной философии у учеников и последователей Оригена и Плотина. Проанализированы два текста, пронизанных восхвалением схолаха: «Благодарственная речь Оригену» Григория Чудотворца и «Жизнеописание Плотина» Порфирия. Оба автора,

как показано в статье, были учениками Оригена или же, в случае Порфирия, посещали его школу достаточно продолжительное время, чтобы ознакомиться с учением, методами преподавания и личностью схолаха. Автор устанавливает структурную, тематическую и лексическую близость обоих текстов. Текст Григория Чудотворца, хронологически более ранний, стал точкой отталкивания для Порфирия в создании образа идеального схолаха в лице Плотина. Это подтверждают структурный и лексический контраст в описании образа Плотина в *Vita Plotini* и Оригена в сохранившемся у Прокла отрывке (Procl. *In Tim.* I. 63. 29–33). Кроме того, на этот негативный образ Оригена откликается в *Vita Plotini* 13. 10–17 фигура Фавмасия, недовольного затянувшимся спором Плотина и Порфирия, что редко обращает на себя внимание. Нигде более не упомянутый, Фавмасий чаще всего предстает некоей проходной фигурой: он либо сам «практиковал общие рассуждения и речи» (пер. Армстронга), либо же он требует от Плотина «рассуждений на книжный манер» (пер. Брейе, Вестерманна). Автор выдвигает гипотезу, что это не имя собственное, а нарицательное. Это наводит на мысль, что Фавмасий — не некий случайный участник конкретного эпизода, реально имевшего место, а ироническое представление в неприглядном виде философского конкурента неоплатоников — теолога Оригена. Таким образом, искусственно выстроенный эпизод с Плотинем и Фавмасием является полемическим уколом в сторону последователей Оригена, выдвинувшего программу философского обновления, альтернативную платоникам; а само изображение Плотина как «божественного мужа» (θεῖος ἀνὴρ) откликается на образ Оригена, нарисованный его последователями. Предполагаемые намеки в *Vita Plotini* 13, 5–17, свидетельствуют об открытости римской неоплатонической школы уже сформированному христианскому изводу философии, в силу чего Порфирий и решил изобразить некую ситуацию, в которой Плотин проявил внимание и терпение при толковании сложных философских вопросов в течение трех дней, тогда как Ориген в сходной ситуации проявил нетерпение и раздражительность.

Ключевые слова: неоплатонизм, Порфирий, *Жизнеописание Плотина*, Фавмасий, Григорий Неокесарийский, *Благодарственная речь Оригену*, Ориген.

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