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Miller, Micah M.: *Origen of Alexandria and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*. – Oxford: OUP 2024. 193 S. (Oxford Early Christian Studies), geb. £ 80,00 ISBN: 978-0-19-889574-9

This volume offers a comprehensive overview of the pneumatology of Origen of Alexandria (185–254 CE) and contributes to the ongoing discussion about the role of the Holy Spirit in his theological speculation, which has been documented by the recent publication of many studies on this issue, e.g. Maureen B. Moser's *Teacher of Holiness: The Holy Spirit in Origen's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005) and Justin J. Lee's *Origen and the Holy Spirit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023).

The book consists of five chap.s, that are preceded by an introduction in which the Author (henceforth, A.) explains his objectives, his methodology, and his relation to the scholarly literature, and are followed by a conclusion in which the A. highlights the main outcomes of his survey, the bibliography, and the indexes (of the ancient sources and of the names quoted). The principal merit of this book is to include a huge collection of texts regarding Origen's doctrine on the Holy Spirit, both from his original Greek writings and from the later Latin translations by Rufinus and Jerome.

The pivotal argument of this research is found in the chap.s one and two (12–83). Here the A. outlines the well-known hierarchical framework of Origen's trinitarian theology and his view of the relation between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: first, the Father is the ultimate source of all beings and possesses his attributes in an essential way and intrinsically, namely, without deriving them from another; secondly, the Son, that is ranked below the Father, participates in the godhead of the Father, takes his own attributes from the Father, and is the Demiurge of all creation, namely, that "through which" (John 1:3) things come into being; finally, as it results from Origen's *On First Principles* (1.3.3) and *Commentary on John* (2.10.73–88), the nature of the Holy Spirit is ambiguous, since on the one hand he is ranked below the Father and the Son and is included among the "all things" which are brought into being by the Son, but on the other hand he is ranked above the created beings and is "more honored" than all things, and possesses his divine attributes in an eternal way. It is worth noting that Origen's conception of the Holy Spirit is in polemic both with the Monarchians, who believe that there is no personal difference between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the Valentinians, who consider the Holy Spirit as one of the agents emitted by the Pleroma following Sophia's transgression, as it is attested, for example, by Irenaeus in his *Against the heresies* (1.2.5–6).

As far as the chap. three is concerned, the A. appeals to the study of Bogdan Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009), who explores the influence of the Jewish angelology on the Christology

and the pneumatology of the early Christians, with a particular attention to the case of Clement of Alexandria, and extends this interpretation to Origen. According to the A. the fundamental debt of Origen to the Jewish angelology lies in his conception of the Holy Spirit at the same time as one and sevenfold, as it is documented by his reading of Isaiah 11:2–3 (*Homilies on Isaiah* 3.1–3); in this respect, the A. examines many passages from Origen's *corpus* in which the Holy Spirit is intended at the same time as one, insofar as he is an individual hypostasis, and sevenfold, insofar as he distributes the spiritual gifts to creatures. As the A. argues, the philosophical category which allows Origen to combine the unity and the multiplicity in the Holy Spirit is that of "power", which has been extensively studied by Michel Barnes in his *The Power of God: Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), expressly quoted by the A., and in the collected volume: *Divine Powers in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Anna Marmodoro and Irini-Fotini Viltanioti (Oxford: OUP, 2017).

In the chap. four the A. focuses on the very activity of the Holy Spirit. In contrast with the majority of scholars who have circumscribed the role and action of the Holy Spirit on the created world to two principal functions, namely, the inspiration of Scripture and the giving of the gift of sanctification, the A. offers an overall analysis of the various activities of the Holy Spirit in the writings of Origen, and demonstrates that, on the one side, they originate from the Father and flow to the Holy Spirit through the Son, and on the other side, that this structure is an expression of the Holy Spirit's dependance upon the Father and the Son. As the A. points out, Origen claims that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are limited to the believers, rather than all the created beings, are the effect of the cooperation between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it results from Origen's exegesis of 1Corinthians 12:4–6 (which is found, e. g., in his *On First Principles* 1.3.7 and *Commentary on John* 2.10.77–78).

The final chap. five concentrates on the role which the Holy Spirit plays in the salvation of human being in Origen's theological reflection; in this respect, the A. pays a particular attention both to the relation between the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, and to the relation between the Holy Spirit and the saints.

In my opinion, there are some aspects of Origen's pneumatology which are mentioned in this book, and which might be taken in consideration by a future survey: first, if and to what extent the philosophical debates in the early imperial period have contributed to Origen's speculation on the nature and activities of the Holy Spirit (Numenius and the *Handbook of Platonism* are explicitly quoted by the A. at pp. 16–18 in relation to Origen's understanding of the so called "auto-X" attributes and their application to the Trinity); secondly, given the persisting controversy of Origen with the Valentinian theology and hermeneutics in his writings, how the polemic with the Gnostic adversaries impacts upon the elaboration of his conception of the Holy Spirit (it is important to consider that the exegesis of the fourth Gospel by the Valentinian Heracleon, who is quoted by the A. at p. 56, stands behind the entire commentary of Origen); finally, to what extent Origen's understanding of the Holy Spirit is related to the various interpretations of the Trinity, and in particular of the Holy Spirit, in the early Christian literature, and which is the originality of Origen's view of the Holy Spirit in comparison with the early Christian theology (at pp. 87–88 the A. mentions the cases of Clement of Alexandria's exegesis of Isaiah 11:2–3 and the *Shepherd of Hermas*).

In conclusion, this book on Origen's pneumatology is a very useful and important publication not only in the field of the early Christian studies and of the scholarly literature on Origen and the

Alexandrian tradition, since it contributes to our knowledge of Origen's interpretation of the Holy Spirit, but also in the field of history of theology, since it sheds light on how Origen has contributed to the theological definition of the notion of Holy Spirit.

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