Roughly speaking we can divide research on Origen into three stages. Eugène de Faye, Hal Koch and others stressed the philosophical aspects of Origen's teaching and studied his relation to Greek philosophy. These books were valuable, even if at a later date the specific relevance of Middle Platonism was underlined.

The catholic renewal after the last world war led to the discovery of Origen as a churchman. Excellent books of Henri de Lubac, Henri Crouzel and so many other prominent scholars showed that Origen was primarily not a philosopher, but a theologian, whose source of revelation was the Bible. The Dialogue with Heraclides, found at Toura, confirmed this view, because it portrayed Origen as an ecclesiastical "troubleshooter". To this new and enthusiastic approach we owe a renewed awareness of the impact of Origen's exegesis on the tradition of the Church, and even of the reformed churches. But perhaps adherents of this school have sometimes gone too far in their zeal to vindicate the basic orthodoxy of the Alexandrian doctor.

If I am not mistaken, a new stage has already begun, which pays full attention to Origen in so far as he is a Gnostic. This is not to say that this aspect was always and completely neglected in former studies. Hans Jonas was so impressed by the affinities of Plotinus, Origen and Valentinus that he considered all three of them to be Gnostics. But his concept of Gnosis was so vague that under his definition everything written between 0 and 500 A.D. could be labeled gnostic. Much more cautious

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was the approach of Jean Cardinal Daniélou in his *Origène*. There he showed in detail how Origen was influenced at certain points by the strange vertical exegesis of men like Heracleon. Moreover he distinguished between typology, of Jewish origin, presupposing a history of salvation with an aim and purpose and therefore strictly horizontal, and allegory which interprets details of the Sacred text as allusions to pleromatic “happenings”. Even when he found himself under fire, His Eminence maintained his positions, thus paving the way for a more gnostic interpretation of Origen. As a matter of fact I do believe that in this respect Origen is much more a Gnostic than a Platonist. For in his spiritual world all kinds of happenings do take place, whereas among Plato’s ideas nothing happens at all. Nor should we say that such a vertical exegesis is necessarily Greek, because the Stoics too gave allegorical interpretations of Greek mythology. The later Jewish Cabbalists gave a very similar interpretation of the Old Testament. More than alien influences it is a certain gnostic mentality which produces these hermeneutics.

Even if the above mentioned scholars met with stubborn opposition, we must follow the road they indicated. Origen has been studied as an isolated case, but from now on he should be studied in relationship to his intellectual and theological environment. We can and must do this from now on, because so many new texts have been discovered, which elucidate his Alexandrian background. In the first place there are the Bodmer Papyri, especially Papyrus 75, with the text of Luke and John (about 200 A.D.). This is an excellent, scholarly text, anticipating the fourth century codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, made by competent philologists, who learned their job from the traditional Alexandrian pagan text critics. These texts reveal to us the existence of a circle of Hellenistic, but “orthodox” intellectuals in Alexandria before Clement and Origen, who had a certain predelection for Atticism and identified the Christian agapē with the Platonic eros (the Egyptian text, represented by Clement, Pap. 46 c and Vaticanus reads 1 Cor. 13, 5: (ἡ ἀγάπη) οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ μὴ ἑαυτῆς — love does not seek but itself).

This, I guess, was the intellectual climate of Origen’s father Leonides. It has now been shown by Michael Mees that Clement of Alexandria had already this pure, scholarly text before him: whatever deviates in

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