

ORIGEN'S THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM IN *ON FIRST PRINCIPLES*

A RECONSIDERATION OF ITS NATURE, RATIONALE, AND OUTLINE☆

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Abstract

This article aims to reconsider Origen's theological system in the light of his treatise *On First Principles*. Was Origen a systematic thinker? If so, what kind of systematicity characterised his theology? Since the reception of the treatise was marked by theological quarrels, it is not possible to isolate its theology from the problems related to the transmission of the text. Therefore, the first part of the article tackles the text of *On First Principles* (I). The second part studies the structure, addressees and aim of the treatise; the paper then moves on to a discussion of the nature of Origen's systematic thinking, and an analysis of the pre-existence of the soul to disclose the theological rationale lying behind *On First Principles* (II). Finally, the article outlines the theology of the treatise with a special focus on the two main features of Origen's systematic thinking: its aspiration to reach coherence and comprehensiveness. To grasp the deep consistency of Origen's thought, it is necessary to contemplate the history of salvation as a whole (III).

This article aims to reconsider Origen's theological system in the light of his treatise *On First Principles* (*Prin*). Was Origen a systematic thinker? If so, what kind of systematicity characterised his theology? Since the reception of the treatise was marked by theological quarrels from its very first circulation, it is not possible to isolate its theology from the problems related to the transmission of the text. Therefore, the first part of the article tackles the text of *On First Principles*, its transmission and trustworthiness (I). The second part of the article studies three elements crucial to understanding the character of the treatise, namely its structure, addressees and aim; the paper then moves on to

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