

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58601-7 - Origen's Doctrine of Tradition
R. P. C. Hanson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ORIGEN'S DOCTRINE OF TRADITION

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58601-7 - Origen's Doctrine of Tradition
R. P. C. Hanson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58601-7 - Origen's Doctrine of Tradition
R. P. C. Hanson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ORIGEN'S
DOCTRINE OF
TRADITION

BY
R. P. C. HANSON, D.D.
Lecturer in Theology in the University of Nottingham

LONDON
S · P · C · K
1954

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58601-7 - Origen's Doctrine of Tradition
R. P. C. Hanson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107586017

© Cambridge University Press 1954

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1954

First paperback edition 2015

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-58601-7 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58601-7 - Origen's Doctrine of Tradition
R. P. C. Hanson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ALEXANDRO R. VIDLER
PRAECLARI INGENII AUCTORI
STUDIORUM IUVENTUTIS INSTIGATORI
CONSTANTI AMICO

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58601-7 - Origen's Doctrine of Tradition
R. P. C. Hanson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page ix</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xii
<i>Introduction</i> The Date and Order of Origen's Works	i
<i>Chapter I</i> The Meaning of Tradition	31
II Origen's Translators	40
III The Bible as the Source of the Church's Tradition in Clement and Origen	48
IV Clement's Doctrine of the Rule of Faith and of Secret Tradition	53
V Origen's Doctrine of Secret Tradition	73
VI Origen's Doctrine of the Rule of Faith	91
VII The Relation of Rule of Faith to Creed in Origen	114
VIII The Canon of Scripture	127
IX Revelation outside the Bible	157
X Institutional Tradition	174
XI Origen's Doctrine of Tradition	182
<i>Bibliography</i>	193
<i>Index of References and Citations</i>	
I Biblical	201
II Patristic	203
<i>Index of Names</i>	211

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements are due to the following for permission to quote from the works indicated:

The Editor of *The Eastern Churches Quarterly* (*E.C.Q.*, Vol. VII, Supplementary Issue).

The Epworth Press (J. Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus*).

Methuen and Co., Ltd. (J. F. Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, 5th ed.).

Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique, Louvain (*R.H.E.*, tom. 19 and tom. 20).

Williams and Norgate, Ltd. (R. B. Tollinton, *Clement of Alexandria*, Vol. II).

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58601-7 - Origen's Doctrine of Tradition
R. P. C. Hanson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFACE

IT is no doubt incumbent upon anybody who produces a work upon Origen's doctrine of tradition to begin by giving some reasons why he should have chosen such a subject, and, as I have spent a good deal of time spared from parochial work and work in a Theological College over eight years in dealing as well as I can with this subject, I have every reason for prefacing the result of this labour with a short justification of my choice.

This study is part of a much larger examination which I hope some day to complete of Origen's interpretation of Scripture. Origen was one of the great Biblical scholars of the early Christian Church, and it should be of interest and indeed of profit to many students and scholars to know how far modern Biblical scholarship has anything in common with one of the best representatives of ancient scholarship, or whether—as some have concluded—the gulf between the Fathers' interpretation of the Bible and ours is unbridgable. But an examination of Origen's interpretation of the Bible cannot be properly undertaken until his attitude to tradition, in its broadest sense, has been fully explored. This study may therefore be considered as a necessary preliminary to a full study of Origen's attitude to the Bible, an establishing of basic assumptions, a pegging-out of positions, so to speak, from which the wider study can proceed. This is the reason why this work is so little concerned with those parts of Origen's theology which usually hold so much interest for those who read him—his doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, his belief in universal salvation, his speculation concerning a pre-mundane fall, his subordination of the Son to the Father, his treatment of the resurrection of the body, and so on. We have been concerned merely to assemble the materials which Origen used in order to build his daring edifice of doctrine, without feeling it necessary ourselves to sketch more than the foundations of that edifice. If the reader finds us much concerned with historical fact and little with theological synthesis, let him think of us as toiling obscurely at a task which is

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58601-7 - Origen's Doctrine of Tradition
R. P. C. Hanson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFACE

humble but necessary if Origen's theology is to be properly articulated and understood.

We call the task necessary, because, for various reasons, nobody has yet attempted it at all fully. Indeed, as far as English scholarship is concerned, Origen is almost unexplored territory. On the Continent the situation is better, because several articles in French and German have appeared dealing partly or entirely with aspects of Origen's doctrine of tradition, and French and German scholars have devoted full-length works to expounding Origen's theology as a whole. But nobody has ever written a book in any language on Origen's doctrine of tradition, and until his doctrine on this point is fairly understood no study of his theology as a whole can be quite complete.

On one point in particular perhaps this study will be of some use, in that I call attention in it, as strongly as I can, to the necessity of using a carefully critical judgement in assessing the value of the Latin translations of Origen's works. This is a point which has been entirely ignored by some scholars, not very highly accounted of by many, and properly appreciated by—I venture to say—very few. And yet it is of indispensable importance for our setting out of the evidence for almost any doctrine in Origen, and not least for his doctrine of tradition.

The question of the development of the doctrine of tradition in the early Church generally is a most interesting one, though it necessarily touches upon several controversial points. As far as I know—but I confess my knowledge does not go very far—it has not attracted the attention of many scholars. Perhaps this study may serve as an introduction, even in its defects, to the study of a Christian Father who has been too long neglected by English scholarship and to a subject which should attract our attention more strongly than it has in the past.

I wish to express my gratitude to the authorities of those libraries which have granted me facilities and shown me kindness and courtesy during the compilation of this work: of the Library of Trinity College, Dublin; of the Library of the Queen's University, Belfast; of the Library of Handsworth Theological College, Birmingham; of the

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-58601-7 - Origen's Doctrine of Tradition
R. P. C. Hanson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFACE

Library of the British Museum; of the Library of the University of Birmingham; and of the National Library, Dublin. I also owe thanks to the Queen's College, Birmingham, and to the Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois, for enabling and encouraging me to give lectures on the Christian Platonists of Alexandria, and thereby giving me the incentive and opportunity to put into shape the material I had collected. Finally I should like to thank the readers of the Cambridge University Press and of S.P.C.K. for many valuable suggestions, and my wife for considerable help in compiling the Indices.

R. P. C. HANSON

ABBREVIATIONS

- E.C.Q.* *The Eastern Churches Quarterly*, Vol. VII, Supplementary Issue.
G.C.S. *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte*.
H.E. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*.
J.T.S. *Journal of Theological Studies*.
P.G. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*.
P.L. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*.

Throughout this work I have referred to that part of Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* which is extant (with the exception of a few fragments) only in Latin, and is usually known as the *Commentariorum Series*, as *Commentary on Matthew*, Part II.

On several occasions I have referred in footnotes to books by the names of their authors instead of by their titles, but on each occasion it is perfectly obvious which book is intended.