

Friends of Fondren Library, Graduate Research Award Submission  
On  
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By  
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In the fall of 2010 I was in my first semester at Rice and enrolled in a course on the history of the devil, entitled “Representations of the Devil.” The course covered various artistic, poetic, and theological depictions of the devil throughout history. The class required a research paper, and although most of the course material was out of my particular area of research, I was fascinated with a brief discussion we had on the devil in the early church. I began researching different theologians from the period and investigating their various theological understandings of demons and the devil, but in the end I settled on Origen. I had written my masters thesis on Origen so I was comfortable with his general theological framework and was interested in pursuing his understanding further. When I began my research for this paper, I entered with an open mind. I approached my professor and told her I wanted to explore Origen’s understanding of the devil’s salvation. I explained that Origen’s position on the devil is an issue of scholarly divide, with some arguing that Origen advocated the devil’s restoration and others arguing that Origen envisioned the devil’s demise. As I began my research, I noticed that those supporting the devil’s salvation often cited from *Peri Archon* (written early in Origen’s career), while those maintaining the devil’s dissolution referred to *Contra Celsum* (written at the very end of Origen’s life). I shared this observation with my professor and explained that I wanted to work through Origen’s writings chronologically to see if Origen had changed his mind, was misunderstood, or perhaps was simply inconsistent. I did not know my conclusion when I began researching this paper.

Although I researched this paper for several months, I did the most valuable work in the first month as I identified and collected materials I would need, or thought might at least be helpful for my research. I began my search with Fondren's current collection on Origen and his theology from the stacks. I searched for these using the Classic Catalog search engine so I could limit my searches by title and author. I was familiar with the major scholars of Origen and began with their works, the most helpful of which was R.P.C. Hanson's, *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition*. When reading this book and the other resources I found, I paid particular attention to the sources these authors cited and made sure that I had access to these materials as well.

As I continued my research, I discovered that Fondren did not have several of the resources I needed to access. To locate these items, I first went to Google Books to see if the books were posted there, and only a few were. For the items not in Google Books, I searched through WorldCat for local libraries that had the materials and then placed Interlibrary Loan requests for the books I needed. Although I knew I did not have to search through WorldCat myself, I found it helpful because I was able to see what libraries consistently had items I wanted to use for my research. There were also a few articles in collected editions of books that Fondren did not have, and so I used ILL to obtain these collections as well. I used ILL frequently for this paper, both for primary and secondary sources. In some cases, I submitted purchase request forms for items that I thought the library should own.

I also searched for articles using Fondren's databases. I first used the ATLA Religion Database through Fondren's online collection. I was able to access most of the articles I needed electronically but for those I could not access online, I either used ILL

or found them in Google Scholar. I also searched through JSTOR and used a similar approach for the few items that were not electronically available. I began my searches generally, with “Origen” and “devil” used as either subject or title headings, but as my research progressed I was able to search more specifically for certain articles and authors. Ultimately, I spent hours using the online databases collecting the specific articles I needed.

My research requires a lot of work with primary languages, and I found that Fondren has an enormous set of resources in this area. I would occasionally have to do further inquiries on a specific Greek word, and I found the reference collection materials were tremendously helpful. Furthermore, the online access for the *Migne Patrologiae Graecae* was incredible. I did not know these items were available online and was thrilled to find that I could access the primary materials, in their original languages, from home. Incidentally, before I knew the items were online, I used the microfiche collection to find the texts I needed. I was very pleased to discover that the online version is much easier to navigate. I also made regular use of the online *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* to conduct word searches and to find other ancient authors who used vocabulary similar to the texts with which I was working.

I did, however, come across several primary writings that were not stored electronically. For these, I used the library scanner to scan the items and email them to myself so that I could access them whether at home or at the library without having to carry around several books. There were times, however, when I had difficulty locating an item or discerning a citation from a book. In these cases, I consulted the Religious Studies Reference Librarian, Jane Segal, or the User Experience Librarian, Debra Kolah.

I found both to be very helpful as they were able to show me different ways of navigating through Fondren's website to isolate specifically what I needed. They also showed me ways of finding more information about the items I needed so that I could order them properly through ILL.

In the end, my research required the use of several of Fondren's resources and options. I regularly accessed many of the online databases, the Interlibrary Loan office, the Classic Catalog, and the reference librarians. I also consulted articles, books, primary sources, and lexical aids that were either in, or accessible through, Fondren's collections. I utilized a wide variety of tools and languages, and it was only through the resources and staff of Fondren Library that I was able to collect everything I needed for my paper.