

Origen in Lebanon

The Interpretation of the Foundational Texts: A Challenge for the Inter-religious Dialogue

A Colloquium in Beirut and Tyre
23-25 March 2020

Dear Colleague,

at the initiative of Mrs Kinda Marie Elias (writer-journalist, general director of Musea Charisma), Prof. Marek Cieslik (dean of the Faculté des Sciences Religieuses, Université Saint-Joseph, Beirut), Prof. Michel Fédou sj (Centre Sèvres – Facultés jésuites de Paris) and Prof. Lorenzo Perrone (Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna) a plan was made for the organisation of a conference on «Origen in Lebanon», on 23-25 March 2020.

In his *Fourteenth Homily on Joshua* Origen remembers that «he has spent some time in the region of Sidon». On the other hand, according a tradition going back to Jerome, he died and was buried in Tyre. Such tradition would alone justify the idea to devote a conference to Origen in the land of Lebanon. Besides, a more fundamental reason supports it: since Origen was first of all a reader and an interpreter of the Scriptures, his writings provide a chance for considering how different religions, especially those usually called the «religions of the book», related to their foundational texts. This issue is particularly relevant for a multi-cultural and multi-religious country like Lebanon.

The colloquium will essentially deal with Origen's relation to the foundational sources of his tradition, first of all by examining the hermeneutics of the sacred writings through a many-sided approach, as much as possible of comparative nature. Through it the colloquium aims to promote a reflection on the ways monotheist religions can nowadays develop a respectful and fruitful dialogue regarding the relation to their foundational texts.

In light of this, the communications will address more specific themes (as the «school» of Origen and the role of the master in teaching the Scriptures; Origen's work on the text of the Bible and its different versions; the hermeneutics of the biblical narrative or legislative texts, etc.). They may also illustrate the status Origen conferred to the texts of the Bible and his interpretation of them through his exegesis of scriptural passages.

It will also be possible to compare Origen's method with the way Jewish authors (Philo of Alexandria and others) relate to their foundational writings. Moreover, due to Origen's cultural heritage, it will be possible to examine to what extent texts of Greek antiquity (particularly, the ancient philosophers) can be regarded as foundational for him. Further, it

will be possible to analyze the conflict between Origen and Celsus with regard to their respective relation to the writings of Antiquity.

Other contributions may deal with Origen's posterity and the way his relation to the foundational texts has influenced the spirituality of the later centuries, given also the importance of the Origenian legacy in the Syriac tradition through the mediation of Evagrius.

The proper colloquium will be held on **March 23-24, 2020**, at the seat of the Faculty of Religious Studies of the Saint-Joseph University in Beirut. It will be followed on the **25th of March** (feast of the Annunciation) by a visit to the basilica of Tyre, the laying of a memorial plaque for Origen and by an inter-religious ceremony.

We would like to invite you to give one of the short contributions during the colloquium. The contribution should take 20 minutes and try to deepen the themes traced above. Here are the four main topics that will be discussed during the colloquium :

- 1- Origen and his Biblical theology and the alexandrian interpretation of the Scriptures
- 2- The interpretation of the foundational texts : impact on the relation between Christianity and Cultures
- 3- The mystery of God and the spiritual tradition in the light of Origen's legacy
- 4- The Hermeneutical Challenge for the foundational texts of the three monotheist religions.

Within the wide thematic framework of the conference you are obviously free to choose your own subject. The official languages of the colloquium are French, English and Arabic.

Younger scholars are especially encouraged to attend and contribute to discussions. We have allocated 25 grants which includes the accommodations, meals and transportations during the conference. You can apply through an email sent to the following mail address : contributeurs@origene.fr with your Curriculum vitae attached.

You are kindly requested to send to the organising committee an abstract of the communication you wish to propose before the 31st of August 2019. A response on the acceptance of the proposal will be sent before the 31st of October 2019.

You can have between 18 and 30 % of discount on the Airline tickets with Air France (our official carrier) through our website www.origene.fr.

With friendly regards and best wishes.

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