



Origen and the Origenian tradition on progress

Call for Papers

Rome La Sapienza, May, 14-16

Joint Conference between the “Dipartimento di Storia, Culture, Religioni” of Sapienza University of Rome and the ITN Project Marie Skłodowska-Curie “The History of Human Freedom and Dignity in Western Civilization”.

Research project: *La Wirkungsgeschichte di gnosi e origenismo in età moderna*, Sapienza Università di Roma, resp. Gaetano Lettieri

Deadline for proposals: 8 March 2018.

Προκοπή, *profectus*: in this category it is possible to encompass all the dynamic movement of the theology of Origen of Alexandria. This movement is the natural modality of man, in progress until the apokatastatic restoration of the protological dimension of the pure intelligence to God. Progress implies freedom and the multiple possibilities to convert to the good: the creature has multiple secular cycles to reach his goal, thanks to the universal goodness of the Father. The soul progresses from aeon to aeon due to the progressive divine revelation, which proposes three ascending grades to the limited freedom of man: the Law, the prophets and the Gospels. The progress of the revelation matches the hermeneutical progress, the duty of the believer, who has to progress from the letter to the Spirit. This corresponds to prayer: the true adoration is *ad profectum Spiritus*, a mystical outburst towards a God who is light and fire, a Beloved who reveals himself and eludes the grasp of the lover. Progress is hence in Origen the fundamental posture of man and of Biblical exegete. Even deeper, progress is the key to understanding the Origenian Trinity: the Son is the eternal movement of desire towards the Father.



This conference aims to develop and question this interpretative hypothesis, operating on two levels. A first session will be dedicated to the theme of progress in Origen, in its various nuances and in its relationship with the reflections of his time, with particular attention to the Gnostics. This synchronic analysis will be followed by a wide diachronic portrait, which will follow Origen's *Nachleben*, his path throughout history. The conference aims to underline the productive power of cultural traditions which had found their stimulus and object in the Origenian speculative inheritance; our hypothesis is that this happened primarily in the sense of a continuous relativisation of dogma and in an endless moral and mystical acceleration. The specific object of analysis will be the continuation of the effort to combine Christian faith and Platonic metaphysics, which had had its highest elaboration in the Gnostic Alexandrian schools and in the proto-Catholic schools of Clement and Origen. Therefore, we will follow the powerful catholic recasting made by the Cappadocians in the East and the fortunes and misfortunes of Origen in the West, where he was to be the teacher of mystics and exegesis (just consider Bernard of Clairvaux) but who was also feared as a heretic. The Platonic combination of the Origenism works in history of modern Western thought as a positive metaphysical meta-dogmatic and optimistic option, against the pessimistic and fideistic lines of Augustinism, as the debate between Erasmus and Luther on the freedom of the will testifies. From Cusano to the Florentine Neoplatonism, from Bruno to the Socinians, from the Cambridge Platonists to Leibniz, we endeavor to follow the Origenian inheritance until the present age, in its secularization from the theological to the philosophical.

All paper proposals should include the name, title, affiliation, and email address of the presenter; please submit title and abstract of 250 words maximum. The languages of the conference will be Italian and English. Proposals to be submitted to maria.fallica@uniroma1.it by 8 March 2018.