

Dissertation Abstract:
“The Paschal Mystery as Nuptial Mystery in the Theology of Origen of Alexandria”

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The thesis investigates the confluence, in Origen’s thought, of the paschal mystery, or the mystery of the redemption effected in Christ; and nuptial mystery, or the mystery of the union, which preserves the integrity of creaturely identity, first between the Word and the world he redeems, and finally, between the whole of creation and God. We focus our investigation by asking what this confluence reveals of the meaning and destiny of the perceptible universe. **Chapter 1** will offer a glimpse of the source of this mystery of the redemption: the Word in his pre-existence, which is intra-divine “revelation” but also and immediately the point of opening from which God pours forth himself into the world. In **Chapter 2**, we will see how this Word descends into the world in order to generate in the creature a receptive capacity for himself and to solicit from it an appropriate response. **Chapter 3** will take up the meaning of the term “paschal mystery.” According to Origen, this term refers primarily to Christ’s passage to the Father, which must constantly be repeated in the Christian; but the spiritual reality is made possible by Christ’s coming in the flesh, death and resurrection, which fills creation and brings every type to fulfillment. **Chapter 4** turns to the intended recipient of this action, the Bride who is both the believing soul and the Church, and to the action which is her participation in the mystery accomplished in Christ: the spiritual interpretation of

the Scripture and the world. **Chapter 5** considers how the paschal mystery shapes the existence of the Church and the individual believer, placing him in a continual “exodus” toward his brethren and God. This “passage” that is thus the form of Christian existence is also the form of history (**Chapter 6**), which progresses toward the unending “celestial Pasch.” In **Chapter 7**, we show that Origen’s understanding of the Lord’s Pasch provides an ultimate valuation of things “below,” which are invited to pass over, through fire, into the mystery of union.