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*Marta Przyszychowska*

# WE WERE ALL IN ADAM

THE UNITY OF MANKIND IN ADAM IN THE TEACHING  
OF THE CHURCH FATHERS



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Translation: Elżbieta Puławska

Managing Editor: Katarzyna Tempczyk

Language Editor: Wayne Smith

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## List of Abbreviations

- ANF – *Ante-Nicene Fathers. The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 1-10, ed. A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, A. Cleveland Coxe, Buffalo, New York 1885-1897.
- CCL – *Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina*, Turnhout, since 1954.
- CSEL – *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Wien, since 1866.
- GCS – *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller*, Leipzig, since 1987.
- GNO – *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, ed. W. Jaeger, Leiden, since 1958.
- NPNF – *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Series I, vol. 1-14, ed. Ph. Schaff; Series II, vol. 1-14, ed. Ph. Schaff, T. Wace, Edinburgh, New York 1886-1900.
- PG – *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca*, vol. 1-161, ed. J.P. Migne, Paris 1857-1866.
- PL – *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, vol. 1-222, ed. J.P. Migne, Paris 1878-1890.
- SCh – *Sources Chrétiennes*, Paris, since 1942.



## Foreword

Even Catholic writers sometime happen to assert that the teaching on the original sin was first formulated by St. Augustine. This assertion may be even found in some theological manuals and encyclopaedias. It is worth noting, however, that it is a repetition of a charge put to St. Augustine by his chief Pelagian opponent, Julian of Eclanum, which he himself refuted as groundless.

In fact, responding to his polemist the Bishop of Hippo presented the entire anthology of statements on our participation in Adam's sin which may be found in the writings of earlier and his contemporary Fathers of the Church, both from the West and from the East.<sup>1</sup> Most of the works that Augustine derived those accounts from have been preserved and there is no doubt Augustine quoted them accurately. In a word, it was not Augustine but the Pelagians who tried to distort the traditional faith of the Church.

The purpose of this book is to cover the Patristic issue of our unity in Adam – the problem which is of paramount importance for the Christian faith since Christ the Lord is a new Adam, in whom a new mankind is shaped, made up of those who *were born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God* (Jn 1:13). In the perspective of this subject the authoress could have left the Pelagian controversy aside; she did not have to devote more attention to St. Augustine than to other Fathers, either. The problem of participation of all people in the sin of the first parents appears in her quest because the Church Fathers aligned themselves with the thesis that all of mankind constitutes a unity in Adam.

Marta Przyszychowska is superbly prepared to do this difficult job. Despite her relatively young age she is indisputably the most eminent Polish expert in the writings and theology of St. Gregory of Nyssa. Suffice it to recall that she has given us – so far – as many as five books with Polish translations of Gregory's texts. I say "so far" because personally I hope that she will also undertake (and as soon as possible) the translation of the perhaps most-important theological work of Nyssen, namely his *Contra Eunomium*. Apart from that, Marta Przyszychowska has authored numerous patristic studies devoted chiefly to the thought of Gregory of Nyssa, first of all, a book about his teaching on grace.

In this book, one should admire the synthetic talent of the authoress and her resolution to put forth hypotheses which, although awaiting their eventual verification, even now will greatly help researchers navigate the jungle of a multitude of interpretations of the unity of people in Adam as proposed by the Fathers. The authoress believes that the jungle may be divided into four interpretive groups with regards to "the unity of mankind in Adam" by which "the East and the West speak together and in exceptional concert, although individual Fathers give this idea a

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<sup>1</sup> They may be found in the book written in 423: St. Augustine, *Against Julian* I 5-34.

slightly different meaning irrespective, however, of where they lived and subject rather to their own sensitivity and ingenuity.”

This exceptionally concerted speaking on our unity in Adam and our community in his sin refers also to the diachronic perspective. This is how this subject is presented in the contemporary *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (no. 404). Both St. Thomas Aquinas, who is quoted in this text, as well as the Council of Trent are undoubtedly heirs to the teaching of the Fathers, so magnificently recalled and discussed by Marta Przyszychowska.

How did the sin of Adam become the sin of all his descendants? The whole human race is in Adam *sicut unum corpus unius hominis* - as one body of one man.<sup>2</sup> By this unity of the human race all are implicated in Adam’s sin, as all are implicated in Christ’s justice. Still, the transmission of original sin is a mystery that we cannot fully understand, but we do know by Revelation that Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all human nature. By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed *a personal sin*, but this sin affected *human nature* that they would then transmit in a fallen state.<sup>3</sup> It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice. And that is why original sin is called sin only in an analogical sense: it is a sin *contracted* and not *committed* – a state and not an act.

Jacek Salij OP

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de malo* IV 1.

<sup>3</sup> The Council of Trent, *Decretum de peccato originali*, canones 1-2.



# 1 Introduction

I have been fascinated by the idea of the unity of human nature for a long time. Throughout many years of studying the writings of Gregory of Nyssa now and again I have been faced with this problem, which on one hand seems to be the key to comprehending Gregory's teaching, and on the other is extremely challenging and requires additional investigations. I wanted to make the concept of the unity of human nature a subject of my book or possibly consider it in the context of the physical (mystical) theory of redemption according to which by assimilating Himself with the entire human nature as a unity Christ deified it. Quite independently, The Rev. Father Jacek Salij urged me to investigate original sin as seen by the Church Father before Augustine, pointing out that the subject has been neglected and nobody is interested in confronting it, and – what is worse – starting the discussion of the history of the development of the idea of original sin with Augustine modern theology distorts the reality and cuts the dogma off from its roots. Therefore, I had to choose between what was needed and what I was profoundly interested in. I chose what was needed as I was aware that the book that was to provide a basis for my habilitation had to be published. And if it was to be published, it should be addressed to a broader public.

To my great astonishment I soon discovered that there were so many accounts of the Church Fathers writing before Augustine on the topic of original sin that I had to delimit the subject somehow. I tried to adopt geographical or chronological frameworks, but they all seemed artificial to me. Finally, I discovered that there were several Fathers to whom the vision of Adam's fall and its consequences was radically different from the concept that I considered to be Augustine's idea: first, it has a common denominator; second, it has not been elaborated anywhere, and third, it is fascinating. Unexpectedly, the idea of the unity of human nature turned out to be the common denominator of that concept. With time, I discovered that many Fathers spoke about the unity of mankind in Adam, including Augustine himself! Not all of their elucidations are based on the conviction of a real unity of human nature, though all are underlain by the belief of solidarity, or even more – unity of all people in Adam. Each Father in turn in whom I discovered that idea is in a sense a proof of the correct interpretation of the teaching of other Fathers. The point is not whether and to what extent they knew and used the writings of the others. It is the general climate of those times, the universal convictions so deeply instilled in the way of thinking of the people who lived then that frequently nobody even explained them. I am deeply convinced that ALL or almost all Fathers believed in the unity of mankind in Adam because the belief of the unity of humankind was at that time self-evident. And it was not implanted by Christianity, but had existed a long time before. The universal belief in the unity of mankind or even the entire universe is manifested in ancient philosophical conceptions, primarily Neoplatonism and Stoicism. Both systems are based on the conviction of organic unity of everything – it is hard for me to imagine that they arose from nothing. They were invented by the people whose everyday lives

were pervaded by the profoundly intuitive and universal conviction that everything was related with everything, of the unity of the world, and therefore also of the unity of all people. That such thinking was widespread is confirmed by the thought of the unity of mankind in Adam explicitly formulated by both Greek and Latin Fathers. When working on this book I discovered with genuine astonishment that the rift between Greek and Latin theology as regards original sin was probably formed by us – people born over a dozen centuries later, breathing a totally different air: the air of individualism. I do not negate the fact that Eastern and Western theology significantly differ from each other. It turns out, however, that the difference is not all that great, and as regards to their respective concepts of Adam's sin, they both base their views on the common conviction that was widespread at that time: that the humanity had been united in the first man.

I should probably briefly explain why in that case I do not write about all Fathers. I do not aspire for my work to be an exhaustive study of mankind's solidarity with Adam. I focused primarily on major ideas, on how to explain this solidarity, with special consideration of the teaching of those Fathers who said most on this subject. It would like my work to contribute to the emphasis on the significance of this issue. Although it may seem incredible, nobody has, to date, written any study on this subject in the languages I am familiar with. Luckily, in many studies concerning an individual Father I found confirmation for my intuition, which reassured me that this subject is neither an illusion nor a fantasy.

A few words here about what I will leave out from my work. The discussion whether the Fathers I deal with here knew the concept of original sin as formulated by the Council of Trent is, undoubtedly, extremely interesting, though for my purposes totally unnecessary. My personal opinion is that it is much better to start from the other side, i.e. not to ask about the teaching of the Fathers from the later perspective, but on the contrary – to ask about future teaching from the viewpoint of the Fathers. To do so it is necessary to get to know those Fathers first, to look at the entirety of their teachings on human nature, try to understand their concept of human solidarity with Adam, and, finally, to find whether or not there exist any potential points in common with dogmatic statements. For me, a model example of such proceedings is the brilliant work by Leo Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde: von der Schrift bis Augustinus*, Freiburg 1981. As an example, I refer here to his interpretation of the teaching of Irenaeus. He rightly notes that Irenaeus does not speak about inheriting sin, but in analogy to human solidarity with Christ - about the unity of mankind with Adam. Scheffczyk sees that the gist of the dogma is that Adam's deed changed the inner situation of everyone's salvation, as a result of which everyone needs to be saved by Christ. This idea is to be found in Irenaeus' teaching on the unity of mankind

in Adam because of which inner loss of grace (happiness, salvation) was extended to all people.<sup>4</sup>

I do not intend to investigate whether and which Fathers spoke of original sin in the meaning used by Augustine (*peccatum originale originatum*). My objective is excellently described by the statement Jean Laporte made about Origen, though for me it concerns all Fathers. Origen's notion of original sin might, by the variety of its aspects, help modern believers and theologians to look into an early Christian tradition for more than one way to conceive of our sinful origin, and to accept one answer without rejecting the others. Certainly, sin is as old as mankind, and its beginnings in ourselves is beyond remembrance. The story of Adam and Eve remains a powerful symbol of this mysterious reality.<sup>5</sup>

The writings of the Fathers contain concepts which at first glance may be deemed contrary to or contradictory with later official teaching of the Church. Nevertheless, those ideas are very interesting, or straight fascinating. And although they do not correspond with dogmatic formulas they do speak, however, about the first sin, Adam's sin which affected all of his descendants. As I have mentioned above, in my work I shall focus on an extremely interesting concept, namely that the whole of humanity in a way formed a unity with Adam. In various Fathers this idea assumes various colours, though in most cases is based on the assumption that human nature is indivisible and, therefore, Adam's sin affects it in its entirety. It is very difficult to define the nature of this unity. It may be perceived in the spirit of Platonic realism as an idea, or rather interpreted as a mystic entity. It is undoubtedly worth looking more closely at this forgotten teaching not to accuse it of heresy but to learn the great wealth of the teachings of the Church Fathers whose remarkable concepts frequently deviate from our set schemes and trite statements we have become accustomed to.

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<sup>4</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde: von der Schrift bis Augustinus*, Freiburg 1981, 65.

<sup>5</sup> J.P. Laporte, *Models from Philo in Origen's Teaching on Original Sin*, "Laval théologique philosophique" 44 (1988), 203.

## 2 General Issues

### 2.1 State of Research

It is a tell-tale fact that the monumental 568 pages-long *Dogmatik* by Harald Wagner does not contain either a single chapter, or even a subchapter or section on the doctrine of original sin. To find any mention of this topic I had to look for it in the subject index. And I found only a single reference to original sin: when the author briefly discusses Augustine's teaching on grace. Another textbook totally dissociates itself from the traditional teaching on original sin describing it as a supra-individual compound which acts in each individual and in which everyone affects others. Although so conceived, hereditary sin has its historical origin in personal sin it may not be reduced exclusively to the guilt of the first people (Adam and Eve) as it happened in Western theology, based on the authority of Augustine.<sup>6</sup>

After all, as Wincenty Granat rightly put it:

The dogma of original sin is one of the chief truths of the Christian faith and logically it is very closely linked with the idea of redemption; negation or any other explanation of that truth reaches to the very core of Christianity and connects with the truth of the Mystical Body of Christ and the communion of evil. Negation of original sin immediately suggests a thought that Christ does not free us from the state of sin but only gives us an example how we are to free ourselves from personal sins. The mystical communion of evil would be then only a chimera and the sacrament of baptism would also be then unnecessary, especially for children before they use reason.<sup>7</sup>

Contrary to a common conviction, original sin is one of the fundamental patristic issues because it is a starting point of Christian and also patristic anthropology. Obviously, the Fathers before Augustine did not use the term *original sin*, but described its reality. The first summary of their statements on that subject was compiled by Augustine himself in the work *Against Julian*.<sup>8</sup> There are also several contemporary (in the broad meaning of the term) studies on the subject. It is fitting to start with the work by Frederick Robert Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, Cambridge 1903, a reprint of which has been published quite recently. Although merely two chapters have been devoted to the teaching of the Fathers, but many of his analyses are extremely comprehensive and the conclusions are worth noting. Another great work on the history of the idea of original sin is Norman Powell Williams' *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin: A Historical and Critical Study*, Oxford 1924. And again, only a small part of that volume refers to the Fathers, with Williams chiefly focusing

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<sup>6</sup> G. Langemeyer, *Einleitung in die Dogmatik - theologische Erkenntnislehre. Theologische Anthropologie*, Paderborn 1995.

<sup>7</sup> W. Granat, *Dogmatyka Katolicka*, vol. 2: *Bóg Stwórca, Aniołowie, człowiek*, Lublin 1961, 362.

<sup>8</sup> Augustine, *Contra Julianum* I 5-34.

on and elaborating the teaching of Augustine. Nevertheless, he analysed the texts of the Fathers with astonishing openness, emphasizing the diversity of their teachings. The first work almost wholly devoted to the Fathers was published as late as in 1960. It was Julius Gross' *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Problems vom Ursprung des Übels. Bd. 1, Entstehungsgeschichte des Erbsündendogmas. Von der Bibel bis Augustinus*. Gross' work, in keeping with its title and intentions of the author, concentrates on searching for the sources of the dogma of original sin, that is identifies in the teachings of the Fathers such statements which are exactly the same as those of the Council. Other researchers have differing opinions on its merits. Maurizio Flick and Zoltan Alszegehy<sup>9</sup> believe that this is the best summary of the sources, but the methodology of their interpretation is faulty. Alfred Vanneste<sup>10</sup> blames Gross for having focused on the superficial meaning of theological formulas and missing their actual sense. I personally consider Gross' work to be excellent. Despite his initial assumptions which should have a restricting effect, Gross very extensively analyses patristic texts and notices and comments on the many concepts of the Fathers which go beyond dogmatic formulations, such as, for instance, the idea of the unity of mankind in Adam – just as does the author of another great work on original sin as seen by the Fathers – Leo Scheffczyk. His work *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde: von der Schrift bis Augustinus* is very thorough and detailed. Scheffczyk's conclusions are well-documented with texts, though written in an exceptionally hermetic and difficult language.

Beside those excellent works, two other less-significant and comprehensive essays - rather than analyses of patristic texts have been published: Stanislas Lyonnet, *De peccato originali, Rom 5, 12-21. Ad usum privatum auditorium*, Romae 1960, and Emmanuele Testa, *Il peccato di Adamo nella Patristica*, Gerusalemme 1970. Worth mentioning is also Tathy Wiley's *Original Sin. Origins, Developments, Contemporary Meanings*, New York 2002. Although it is full of generalisations and poorly documented with original texts, its great value is found in a chapter on the Church Fathers that has been included in a study of original sin throughout history – but that is all with regards to general studies. Apart from that, a large number of articles have been written, and many studies concerning individual Fathers contain chapters on the theology of original sin. It is impossible to mention them all here. As a resource, I recommend the bibliography or footnotes in individual chapters.

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<sup>9</sup> M. Flick, Z. Alszegehy, *Fondamenti di una antropologia teologica*, Firenze 1970, 152.

<sup>10</sup> A. Vanneste, *L'histoire du dogme du péché originel*, "Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses" 38 (1962), 896.



## 2.2 East and West – Difference or Similarity?

Let us start perhaps with the opinion that is set in the scheme of the division of the theology of Eastern and Western Christianity into two different realms. Brooks Otis believes that even in the 4<sup>th</sup> century the ideological gap between the East and the West was enormous. To him the main reason is the difference in two fields' respective knowledge of Greek, which was waning in the West, an example of which is Augustine who had not read Greek at all until he was quite old, and even later without comprehension, and Ambrose, who did read Greek texts, especially those by Athanasius and Basil, although – as Otis claims – Ambrose failed to embrace the true gist of their teachings.<sup>11</sup> When we go deeper into the subject, however, it turns out that differences are by no means so serious.

The researchers of the patristic teaching of original sin unanimously acknowledge that the teaching was as popular in the East as in the West. Tennant actually claims that the key ideas of Augustine's theory were formulated in the East as early as in the West.<sup>12</sup> Lyonnet points out the similarity of the ideas despite terminological differences. He reminds that many classical works on original sin suggest that only Latin authors acknowledged original sin, whereas Greeks talked only about hereditary death. He himself notes, however, that all depends on the sense we ascribe to those terms. The terminology of the Greek Fathers does not echo that of the Council of Trent or the Latin Fathers, but the doctrine seems to be identical.<sup>13</sup>

And indeed, as Flick and Alszeghy note, Christian writers already during the first three centuries perceived that the humanity is burdened with hereditary corruption (*corruzione ereditaria*) because of which it differs from its original condition and which descends from Adam's disobedience, causes humanity to multiply its sins and submits it to eternal death. However, the term *sin* was generally reserved for personal sins.<sup>14</sup> This conviction is shared by David L. Balás. In his opinion there is a widespread view that the Eastern Fathers do not mention *peccatum originale originatum* (original sin in us). However, in the pre-Augustine teaching of those Fathers a two-fold conviction can be found: that the fall of the first man separated him from unity with God and that in some way all people participated in that fall.<sup>15</sup> John Norman D. Kelly stressed that the Greek Fathers

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11 B. Otis, *Cappadocian Thought as a Coherent System*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 12 (1958), 122.

12 F.R. Tennant, *The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin*, Cambridge 1903, 345.

13 S. Lyonnet, *Le péché originel et l'exégèse de Rom. 5, 12-14*, "Recherches de Science Religieuse" 44 (1956), 61.

14 M. Flick, Z. Alszeghy, *Fondamenti di una antropologia teologica*, 196.

15 D.L. Balás, *Plenitudo Humanitatis: The Unity of Human Nature in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa*, in: *Disciplina nostra: essays in memory of Robert F. Evans*, Cambridge 1979, 124.

have the greatest possible feeling for the mystical unity of mankind with its first ancestor. This is the ancient doctrine of recapitulation, and in virtue of it they assume without question that our fall was involved in Adam's. Again, their tendency is to view original sin as a wound inflicted on our nature.<sup>16</sup>

Raised in the theology of the Western tradition I approached my studies with a conviction that the main goal of my work would be to show the profound gap between Greek and Latin Christianity, and primarily to present the concept of original sin alternative to that of Augustine's. To my surprise I discovered that the Fathers speak in one voice regardless of whether they speak Latin or Greek and that Augustine also sings in this choir of the Fathers!

### 2.3 Types of Explanations by the Fathers

Actually, the only attempt to systematize the teaching on original sin of the Fathers before Augustine was made by N.P. Williams. The main indicator of his perspective is the manner of interpretation of what happened in the Garden of Eden: allegorical and literal. On this basis he divides the Fathers into two groups: the first as the Hellenic and the second one being the African option. The Hellenic idea tends to allegorize the story of Eden, sees universal man in Adam, moves the paradise to the extra-terrestrial sphere. The consequences of evil pass to the descendants partly as a result of *social heritage*, because children learn evil from their parents, and partly as a psychological heritage, because humankind is perceived as organically united with Adam, its head and forefather. However, the main source of sin lies in the free will of everyone. The African idea treats the paradise story literally, as seen in Tertullian. He ascribes the original guilt and responsibility to all, which is close to Irenaeus' idea of the seminal identity of humankind with the first parent. The beginnings of that current lie in the writings of Origen and Tertullian.<sup>17</sup> Further on, despite renouncing the geographical division,<sup>18</sup> Williams includes the following Fathers in the Hellenic option: Methodius of Olympus, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus. Within the African option, he places: Cyprian, Lactantius, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose, Ambrosiaster.

That division basically emphasized the difference between the Eastern (Greek) and Western (Latin) approach to the problem. Most surprising is the fact that in his detailed discussion of the writings Williams himself traces both Greek and Latin concepts back to Irenaeus. This intuition of his seems to be the rightest one to me. Although probably in many aspects of the study of the first sin two different

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<sup>16</sup> J.N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, London 1968, 350.

<sup>17</sup> N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin: A Historical and Critical Study*, Oxford 1924, 246-248.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

approaches may be distinguished, namely Eastern and Western, as regards the issue of the unity of human nature the East and the West speak with one voice, which is first to be found in Irenaeus' works.

To my mind the teaching of the Fathers may be arranged into four thematic groups of four ways of interpreting the unity of people in Adam. The first group includes three Fathers: Irenaeus, Methodius of Olympus and Gregory of Nyssa. We can be almost certain that each of them new his predecessor and drew on their accomplishments. Therefore, we have a model example of the development of a doctrine all stages of which are well documented.

As regards the second group, mutual influence is also possible, although it is widely assumed that Augustine did not read Origen. But, it seems obvious to me that Augustine must have read Origen either in the Greek original, or in Rufinus' translations. Origen and Augustine developed an idea that mankind was formed in the loins of Adam, based on this fragment of Hbr 7:9-10: *And as I may so say, Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.* None of the other Fathers connects this fragment with the concept of the unity of mankind in Adam, that is why I put together the teaching of those two seemingly totally different writers.

The third group includes two Fathers whose teachings I connected with the Stoic vision of the unity of nature. I am personally convinced that it is impossible to indicate the philosophical sources of the thoughts of any of the Fathers, though in the case of those two there is a broad consensus for putting them in the Stoic current. From the Stoic perspective, man forms a unity with the universe primarily because of having originated from the same substance – matter. It is true that the Stoics recognized existence of many types of matter and some of its forms may be actually identified with what other systems call spiritual reality. After all, Origen and probably Gregory of Nyssa also deemed all creatures, also the spiritual ones, as material. Was it an aftermath of Stoicism? Maybe. However, it is not materialism that determines inclusion of Tertullian and Ambrose in the Stoic current but their conviction of the natural, literally physical unity of the entire humankind, and in the case of Ambrose the entire universe. It may not be excluded, however, that their conviction did not come from their fascination with philosophy but from Irenaeus and his concept of *plasmatio Adae*. In general, all Fathers place an astonishingly great emphasis on the material physical dimensions of mankind's unity. They all lived in an ambiance saturated with Stoic ideas, especially – as Marian Plezia notes – since the first century before Christ the Stoic doctrine became as if the official philosophy of the Roman state.<sup>19</sup>

The fourth group includes three very different Fathers, who lived and wrote in very different environments, though at a similar time: Didymus the Blind, Ambrosiaster

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<sup>19</sup> M. Plezia, *Greckie koncepcje człowieka w dobie hellenistycznej*, "Roczniki Filozoficzne" 2/3 (1949), 231-250.

and Gregory of Nazianus. All of them devoted little attention to the concept of the unity of human nature and although it evidently underlies their thinking on Adam's sin they do not try to explain it more thoroughly. Nevertheless, it may be concluded that they considered Adam to be a representative of the entire humankind.

The division into four groups I presented above is not meant as artificial categorization. Many ideas may be traced in the teachings of all Fathers, such as e.g. emphasis on the physical unity of human nature or recognizing Adam as a representative of the entire humankind. That division is to be a suggestion as to how to decipher sometimes very enigmatic statements of the Fathers, i.e. is their interpretation. Another very important objective is to overcome what I think is an artificial juxtaposition of the Christian East and West. Including Origen and Augustine in the same group not only may but should shock anyone who – like me – long lived in a conviction that the East meant ontology and mysticism, and the West – law and moral theology. It turns out that as regards the unity of mankind in Adam the East and the West speak together and in exceptional concert, although individual Fathers give this idea a slightly different meaning irrespective, however, of where they lived but subject rather to their own sensitivity and ingenuity.

## 2.4 Methodological Issues

The specificity of the subject allowed me to make full use of my interdisciplinary interests and multidisciplinary education. The starting point for my deliberations was the analysis of the sources, i.e. the writing of the Church Fathers, which I would not be able to do without the philological background. An outcome of that part of my work are the translations and linguistic analyses. I revised existing English translations of the quoted excerpts, sometimes correcting them; I added my own translations if an English translation was lacking or was inaccurate. In order to facilitate the Reader's contact with the Fathers fragments have been quoted from both translations and original versions. The Reader will have the best opportunity to realize how many of the originals are missing and that we know some of the Greek Fathers' writings only from translations: into Latin (Irenaeus of Lyon, Origen) or Old Slavonic (Methodius of Olympus).

A subsequent step in my endeavours was an historical analysis. Each of the texts of the Fathers was written at a specific time and in specific circumstances - without this background I would not be able to recognize correctly the context of the statements I am interested in, their connections with the texts of other Early Christian writers and philosophical systems of those times.

The third stage of my work consisted in theological analysis of the collected material. The issue I have raised is deeply rooted in complicated theological problems, such as the creation and the original condition of man, original sin in the sense of both Adam's sin as well as its consequences for the entire humanity, and even

partially the mystery of Redemption; although the latter is merely a certain point of reference for the main current of my research, it is, nevertheless, extremely significant and indispensable.

Thanks to synthesis of the results of those three stages of the analysis, the division into four chapters corresponding with the four ways of interpreting the issue of the unity of mankind with Adam has been revealed. Therefore, this work is presented as interdisciplinary, drawing upon the disciplines of classical philology, history and theology.

As I have already mentioned, so far no work on this subject has been done in any of the major European languages, so in the course of my analyses I had to tread virgin paths in the jungle of Patristic texts. I made use, however, of many studies concerning Patristic theology, the history of those times, and thoughts of individual Fathers and ancient philosophy. For every patrologist the French or Italian language are absolutely necessary and simply obvious, and it is impossible to investigate freely the issue of original sin without the knowledge of German. I also wished to take into account frequently omitted works in Spanish, which many a time suggested unexpected ideas and solutions, in particular the deliberations of José Vives on Irenaeus and Gregory of Nyssa, as well as the now classical works of Antonio Orbe on Irenaeus' anthropology.

## 2.5 Acknowledgements

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### 3 Real Unity of Human Nature

The first group of Fathers who were concerned with the unity of mankind in Adam includes three writers: Irenaeus of Lyon, Methodius of Olympus and Gregory of Nyssa. This is the most cohesive of all groups as it is known almost for certain that each later Fathers knew the accomplishments of his predecessor, and perhaps even - as in the case of Gregory of Nyssa - predecessors. Actually Irenaeus of Lyon should form as a stand-alone since in my opinion his thoughts became the foundation for all later reflections on the solidarity of mankind in Adam both in the East and in the West. However, it is no accident that he was put in the same group with Methodius of Olympus and Gregory of Nyssa. The latter two thinkers most fully seized, and even developed, Irenaeus' teaching on the real unity of human nature. Other Fathers, whose teaching will be discussed later in this work, were less firm and consistent in their descriptions of people's relation to Adam. It is true that they tended to acknowledge that mankind had been, in fact, connected to the first parent by way of a mystical unity or according to the law of reproduction/propagation rather than thanks to the real unity of human nature.

#### 3.1 Irenaeus of Lyon

Irenaeus of Lyon was not the first Christian writer; was not even the first who could be named a theologian. However, his work, which the commentators classify as the first Christian dogmatics,<sup>20</sup> is invaluable. And even this first systematized digest of Christian truths contains the elaborate concept of the sin of the first man and its consequences for the entire humanity. Irenaeus had no intention of expounding on the subject of sin, but rather focused on Christology, and specifically the polemic with Gnostics, who negated the corporality of the incarnated Son of God, and Ebionites, who regarded Him as only a human. Both theories stood against the Christian concept of redemption.<sup>21</sup> Irenaeus puts the subject of Adam's sin in such a Christological perspective.

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<sup>20</sup> A. Verrièle, *Le plan du salut d'après saint Irénée*, "Revue des sciences religieuses" 14 (1934), 494-495; A. Benoît, *Saint Irénée: introduction à l'étude de sa théologie*, Paris 1960, 1.

<sup>21</sup> A. Orbe, *Antropología de San Ireneo*, Madrid 1969, 282.

### 3.1.1 Adam as a Type of Christ

The starting point of Irenaeus' teaching of the solidarity of mankind with Adam is the conviction that all people were united in Christ. The negation of the unity of people in Adam and our participation in his sin and death would be tantamount to negating our unity in Christ and our participation in redemption.<sup>22</sup> Irenaeus sees Adam as a type of Christ, and Christ as the fulfilment of Adam's deeds on the basis of the antithesis, a reverse. That is why it was so important to him that all details of the life and passion of Christ corresponded with what happened in paradise. Irenaeus focuses on details to such an extent that he maintains that Christ died on the same day of the week as Adam:

Si quis velit diligenter discere qua die ex septem diebus mortuus est Adam, inveniet ex Domini dispositione. Recapitulans enim universum hominem in se ab initio usque ad finem, recapitulatus est et mortem ejus. Manifestum est itaque quoniam in illa die mortem sustinuit Dominus obaudiens Patri in qua mortuus est Adam inobaudiens Deo. In qua autem mortuus est, in ipsa et manducavit. Dixit enim Deus: *In qua die manducabitis ex eo, morte moriemini*. Hunc itaque diem recapitulans in semetipsum Dominus, venit ad passionem pridie ante sabbatum, quae est sexta conditionis dies, in qua homo plasmatus est, secundam plasmationem ei, eam quae est a morte, per suam passionem donans.

If anybody seeks diligently to learn upon what day out of the seven it was that Adam died, he will find it by examining the dispensation of the Lord. For by summing up in Himself the whole man from the beginning to the end, He has also summed up his death. From this it is clear that the Lord suffered death, in obedience to His Father, upon that day on which Adam died while he disobeyed God. Now he died on the same day in which he did eat. For God said, *In that day on which ye shall eat of it, ye shall die by death* (Gen 2:17). The Lord, therefore, recapitulating in Himself this day, underwent His sufferings upon the day preceding the Sabbath, that is, the sixth day of the creation, on which day man was created; thus granting him a second creation by means of His passion, which is that [creation] out of death.<sup>23</sup>

It may be astonishing how much Irenaeus focused on details of the history of Adam and Christ. Only after having shown this perfect similarity, Irenaeus speaks about our participation in both events:

<sup>22</sup> H. Lassiat, *Pour une théologie de l'homme. Création... Liberté... Incorruptibilité. Insertion du thème anthropologique de la jeune tradition Romaine dans l'oeuvre d'Irenée de Lyon*, vol. 2, Strasbourg 1971, 521.

<sup>23</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 23, 2; SCh 153, 290-292; transl. ANF 1, 551.

Et non solum autem per ea quae praedicta sunt et Patrem et semetipsum manifestavit Dominus, sed etiam per ipsam passionem. Dissolvens enim eam quae ab initio in ligno facta fuerat hominis inobaudientiam, *obaudiens factus est usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis*, eam quae in ligno facta fuerat inobaudientiam per eam quae in ligno fuerat obaudientiam sanans. Non autem per eadem venisset exsolvere eam quae fuerat erga Plasmatorem nostrum inobaudientiam, si alterum annuntiabat Patrem. Quoniam autem [per haec] per quae non obaudivimus Deo et non credidimus ejus verbo, per haec eadem obaudientiam introduxit et eam quae esset erga verbum ejus assensionem, [per quae] manifeste ipsum ostendit Deum, quem in primo quidem Adam offendimus, non facientes ejus praeceptum, in secundo autem Adam reconciliati sumus, obaudientes usque ad mortem facti. Neque enim alteri cuidam eramus debitores, sed illi cujus et praeceptum transgressi fuimus ab initio.

And not by the aforesaid things alone has the Lord manifested Himself, but [He has done this] also by means of His passion. For doing away with that disobedience of man which had taken place at the beginning in a tree, *He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross* (Php 2:8); rectifying that disobedience which had occurred by reason of a tree, through that obedience which was [wrought out] upon the tree [of the cross]. Now He would not have come to do away, by means of that same, the disobedience which had been incurred towards our Maker if He proclaimed another Father. But inasmuch as it was by these things that we disobeyed God, and did not give credit to His word, so was it also by these same that He brought in obedience and consent as respects His Word; by which things He clearly shows forth God Himself, whom indeed we had offended in the first Adam, when he did not perform His commandment. In the second Adam, however, we are reconciled, being made obedient even unto death. For we were debtors to none other but to Him whose commandment we had transgressed at the beginning.<sup>24</sup>

Irenaeus is so much focused on details because he wants to demonstrate that Adam was a type of Christ. Gnostics juxtaposed the Old and New Testaments as well as God the Father and God who sent Jesus Christ. To undermine those beliefs Irenaeus demonstrates that what happened in paradise not only foretold the coming of the Lord in a general sense, but that each and every detail of that first story is a prophecy and forecast of redemption.

This equilibrium or correspondence of events requires that our participation in Christ's redemption tallied with our participation in Adam's sin. None of those principles may be deemed more important<sup>25</sup> – one would not be able to exist without the other. The doctrine of recapitulation assumes that Jesus Christ is the sum total and representative of renewed humanity, and the analogy requires Adam to be similarly the type and totality of mankind.<sup>26</sup> However, as Vives correctly noted, recapitulation must not be understood as a return to the original condition. Irenaeus related the verb 'to recapitulate' to Jesus Christ as the second Adam, who recapitulates the first Adam – to recapitulate means here to unite under one head and denotes antithetical and reversed symmetry between Jesus Christ and Adam as two heads of humanity; one

<sup>24</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 16, 3; SCH 153, 218-220; transl. ANF 1, 544.

<sup>25</sup> H. Rondet claims that the principle of solidarity which unites us with Christ – the second Adam is more important than our bond with the first Adam and his sin; cf. *Le péché originel dans la tradition patristique et théologique*, Paris 1967, 62.

<sup>26</sup> F.R. Tennant, *The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin*, 288.



head recapitulates the other. Sometimes Christ recapitulates all – in such situations symmetry and parallelism of two heads disappears, and recapitulation consists in fulfilment, crowning, full sense of everything. In this sense, recapitulation is the culmination of evolution of development of man.<sup>27</sup> Adam was created as destined for development until full possession by God, lost that purpose through sin, but recovered it thanks to redemption. Christ came not to renew the original condition of Adam, but his purpose that man is to aspire to through evolution/development.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, recapitulation is not a repetition of summing up of Old Testament events in Christ, but rather a capacious typology embracing various personae, including also the Eve-Mary, not only Adam-Christ typology.<sup>29</sup> This is why Irenaeus does not hesitate to talk about similarity of the Mother of Christ to the first woman:

Manifeste itaque in sua propria veniente Domino, et sua propria eum bajulante conditione quae bajulatur ab ipso, et recapitulationem ejus quae in ligno fuit inobaudientiae per eam quae in ligno est obaudientiam faciente, et seductione illa soluta qua seducta est male illa quae jam viro destinata erat virgo Eva per veritatem [qua] evangelizata est bene ab angelo jam sub viro Virgo Maria - quemadmodum enim illa per angelicum sermonem seducta est ut effugeret Deum praevaricata verbum ejus, ita et haec per angelicum sermonem evangelizata est ut portaret Deum obaudiens ejus verbo; et sicut illa seducta est ut [non] obaudiret Deo, sic et haec suasa est obaudire Deo, uti virginis Evae virgo Maria fieret advocata; et quemadmodum adstrictum est morti genus humanum per virginem, solum est per virginem, aequa lance disposita virginali inobaudientia per virginalem obaudientiam, - adhuc etiam protoplasti peccato per correptionem primogeniti emendationem accipiente, et serpentis prudentia devicta in columbae simplicitate, vinculis autem illis resolutis per quae alligati eramus morti.

That the Lord then was manifestly coming to His own things, and was sustaining them by means of that creation which is supported by Himself, and was making a recapitulation of that disobedience which had occurred in connection with a tree, through the obedience which was [exhibited by Himself when He hung] upon a tree, [the effects] also of that deception being done away with, by which that virgin Eve, who was already espoused to a man, was unhappily misled, - was happily announced, through means of the truth [spoken] by the angel to the Virgin Mary, who was [also espoused] to a man. For just as the former was led astray by the word of an angel, so that she fled from God when she had transgressed His word; so did the latter, by an angelic communication, receive the glad tidings that she should sustain God, being obedient to His word. And if the former did disobey God, yet the latter was persuaded to be obedient to God, in order that the Virgin Mary might become the patroness of the virgin Eve. And thus, as the human race fell into bondage to death by means of a virgin, so is it rescued by a virgin; virginal disobedience having been balanced in the opposite scale by virginal obedience. For in the same way the sin of the first created man receives amendment by the correction of the First-begotten, and the coming of the serpent is conquered by the harmlessness of the dove, those bonds being unloosed by which we had been fast bound to death.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> J. Vives, *Pecado original y progreso evolutivo del hombre en Ireneo*, “Estudios Eclesiásticos” 43 (1968), no. 167, 583-584.

<sup>28</sup> J. Vives, *Pecado original*, 586-587.

<sup>29</sup> G.T. Armstrong, *Die Genesis in der Alten Kirche*, Tübingen 1962, 74.

<sup>30</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 19, 1; Sch 153, 248-250; transl. ANF 1, 547.

### 3.1.2 Born in Captivity

Although Irenaeus notes that after Adam's sin people committed sins again and again,<sup>31</sup> it may not be claimed that in Adam's sin he sees merely an exemplary incident in the history of mankind. Adam's sin caused a disastrous change for the worse for humanity which affected people in a mental, moral and existential dimension.<sup>32</sup> Irenaeus calls this condition the fetters of sin:

<p>In carceribus enim peccati eramus, no[bis] et per culpam natis et [sub] morte[m] lapsis].</p>	<p>For we were imprisoned by sin, being born in sinfulness and living under death.<sup>33</sup></p>
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To describe this condition, Irenaeus does not hesitate to use an image of captivity by which Adam had been seized and in which we were all born:

Hic est autem Adam, si oportet uerum dicere, primiformis ille homo de quo Scriptura ait dixisse Deum: *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*. Nos autem omnes ex ipso; et quoniam sumus ex ipso, propterea quoque ipsius hereditauimus appellationem. Cum autem saluetur homo, oportet saluari eum qui prior formatus est homo. Quoniam nimis irrationabile est illum quidem qui uehementer ab inimico laesus est et prior captiuitatem passus est dicere non eripi ab eo qui uicerit inimicum, ereptos uero filios eius quos in eadem captiuitate generauit. Nec uictus quidem adhuc parebit inimicus, ipsis ueteribus spoliis manentibus apud eum. Quemadmodum si hostes expugnauerint quosdam et uinctos duxerint captiuos et multo tempore in seruitute possederint eos ita ut generent apud eos, et aliquis dolens pro his qui serui facti sunt eosdem hostes expugnet, non tamen iuste faciet si filios quidem eorum qui captiui ducti sunt liberet de potestate eorum qui in seruitutem deduxerant patres eorum, ipsos uero qui captiuitatem sustinuerunt subiectos relinquat inimicis propter quos et ultionem fecit, consecutis

But this is Adam, if the truth should be told, the first formed man, of whom the Scripture says that the Lord spake, *Let Us make man after Our own image and likeness* (Gen 1:26); and we are all from him: and as we are from him, therefore have we all inherited his name. But inasmuch as man is saved, it is fitting that he who was created the original man should be saved. For it is too absurd to maintain, that he who was so deeply injured by the enemy, and was the first to suffer captivity, was not rescued by Him who conquered the enemy, but that his children were, those whom he had begotten in the same captivity. Neither would the enemy appear to be as yet conquered, if the old spoils remained with him. To give an illustration: if a hostile force had overcome certain [enemies], had bound them, and led them away captive, and held them for a long time in servitude, so that they begat children among them; and somebody, compassionating those who had been made slaves, should overcome this same hostile force; he certainly would not act equitably, were he to liberate the children of those who had been led captive, from the sway of those who had enslaved their fathers, but

<sup>31</sup> Irenaeus, *Demonstratio apostolicae praedicationis* 18.

<sup>32</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 62.

<sup>33</sup> Irenaeus, *Demonstratio apostolicae praedicationis* 37; SCh 406, 134; transl. J. Armitage Robinson, 103.

libertatem filiis ex causa paternae uindicationis, sed [non] relictis ipsis patribus qui ipsam captiuitatem sustinuerunt. Neque enim infirmus est Deus neque iniustus qui opitulatus est homini et in suam libertatem restaurauit eum.

should leave these latter, who had suffered the act of capture, subject to their enemies, those, too, on whose very account he had proceeded to this retaliation, the children succeeding to liberty through the avenging of their fathers' cause, but not so that their fathers, who suffered the act of capture itself, should be left [in bondage]. For God is neither devoid of power nor of justice, who has afforded help to man, and restored him to His own liberty.<sup>34</sup>

Irenaeus takes up the problem of salvation of the first man in connection with Tatian's statement that people, indeed, do become saved, though not Adam who brought evil and sin to the world.<sup>35</sup> Thus, he shows that Christ came to lead us out of captivity into which we were taken in Adam and together with Adam:

Omnia ergo recapitulans, recapitulatus est et aduersus inimicum nostrum bellum, provocans et elidens eum qui initio in Adam captivos duxerat nos et calcans ejus caput.

He has therefore, in His work of recapitulation, summed up all things, both waging war against our enemy, and crushing him who had at the beginning led us away captives in Adam and trampled upon his head.<sup>36</sup>

### 3.1.3 Adam Means Humanity

The salvation of Adam is a key issue in Irenaeus' teaching. His exclusion from salvation would mean only ostensible redemption of the humanity of which Irenaeus writes forthrightly and bluntly:

Mentiuntur ergo omnes qui contradicunt eius saluti, semper seipsos excludentes a uita in eo quod non credant inuentam ouem quae perierat: si enim illa non est inuenta, adhuc possidetur in perditione omnis hominis generatio.

All therefore speak falsely who disallow his (Adam's) salvation, shutting themselves out from life for ever, in that they do not believe that the sheep which had perished has been found. For if it has not been found, the whole human race is still held in a state of perdition.<sup>37</sup>

The key to understanding Irenaeus' reasoning is the meaning he attaches to Adam. For Irenaeus the term *Adam* is in most cases a collective noun and stands for man or humanity.<sup>38</sup> Adam is at the same time conceived in a general sense – man, and in an

<sup>34</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* III 23, 2; SCh 211, 448-450; transl. ANF 1, 456.

<sup>35</sup> A. Orbe, *Parabolas Evangelicas in San Ireneo*, vol. 2, Madrid 1972, 163-164.

<sup>36</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 21, 1; SCh 153, 260-262; transl. ANF 1, 548.

<sup>37</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* III 23, 8; SCh 211, 466; transl. ANF 1, 457.

<sup>38</sup> J. Vives, *Pecado original y progreso evolutivo del hombre en Ireneo*, 564, footnote 6.

individual sense *this* man. This dual meaning of Adam allows Irenaeus to pass from detailed to general perspective; from a person to human nature.<sup>39</sup> This dual meaning is best seen in the fragment below:

Et sicut per virginem inobaudientem prostratus est homo et cadens mortuus est, sic et per Virginem, quae obaudivit verbo Dei, denuo accensus homo vita recepit vitam. Venit enim Dominus perditam ovem requirere. Perierat autem homo. Et propter hoc aliud plasma quoddam non factus est, sed, ex illa ea quae ab Adam genus habebat [nascens], similitudinem plasmationis servavit: oportebat et conveniebat enim recapitulari Adam in Christum, ut absorptum deglutiretur mortale ab immortalitate, et Evam in Mariam, ut Virgo virginis advocata facta solveret et evacuaret virginalem inobaudientiam per virginalem obaudientiam. Et ea quae per lignum transgressio erat soluta est per ligni obaudientiam, qua obaudiens Deo Filius hominis clavis adfixus est ligno, mali (quidem) scientiam evacuens, boni autem scientiam introducens et adtribuens: malum est autem inobaudire Deo, sicut obaudire Deo bonum est.

And just as through a disobedient virgin man was stricken down and fell into death, so through the Virgin who was obedient to the Word of God man was reanimated and received life. For the Lord came to seek again the sheep that was lost; and man it was that was lost: and for this cause there was not made some other formation, but in that same which had its descent from Adam He preserved the likeness of the (first) formation. For it was necessary that Adam should be summed up in Christ, that mortality might be swallowed up and overwhelmed by immortality; and Eve summed up in Mary, that a virgin should be a virgin's intercessor, and by a virgin's obedience undo and put away the disobedience of a virgin. And the trespass which came by the tree was undone by the tree of obedience, when, hearkening unto God, the Son of man was nailed to the tree; thereby putting away the knowledge of evil and bringing in and establishing the knowledge of good: now evil it is to disobey God, even as hearkening unto God is good.<sup>40</sup>

On one hand, in this instance Adam means the concrete first man, and on the other hand Adam is more than merely an individual. Irenaeus almost always speaks about man in the singular, as if there was only one man, especially when he speaks about the steps of salvation planned by God. This is not merely a rhetorical figure, but reference to a live and organic unity that is formed by all human beings.<sup>41</sup>

If it is so, if the humanity forms a live unity in Adam, then Christ, by incorporating Adam, incorporated all of humanity.<sup>42</sup> To describe this reality, Irenaeus uses an extremely suggestive comparison of the creation of Adam with the healing of the blind man by Jesus. The aim of this statement is to show that the same God who created the world at the beginning is now redeeming it, but as if by the way we learn that Irenaeus saw in Adam the entire humanity (us who were lost), that is the lost sheep that was found by Christ.

<sup>39</sup> Y. de Andia, *Incorruptibilité et divinisation de l'homme selon Irénée de Lyon*, Paris 1986, 118.

<sup>40</sup> Irenaeus, *Demonstratio apostolicae praedicationis* 33; SCh 406, 128-130; transl. J. Armitage Robinson, 99-100.

<sup>41</sup> H. Lassiat, *Pour une théologie de l'homme*, vol. 2, 511.

<sup>42</sup> T. Dekert, *Teoria rekapitulacji Ireneusza z Lyonu w świetle starożytnych koncepcji na temat Adama*, Kraków 2007, 38-39.

Et propterea interrogantibus eum discipulis qua ex causa caecus natus esset, utrumne sua an parentum culpa, ait: *Neque hic peccavit neque parentes ejus, sed ut manifestentur opera Dei in ipso*. Opera autem Dei plasmatio est hominis. Hanc enim per operationem fecit, quemadmodum Scriptura ait: *Et sumpsit Deus limum de terra, et plasmavit hominem*. Quapropter et Dominus exspuit in terram et fecit lutum et superlinivit illud oculis, ostendens antiquam plasmationem quemadmodum facta est, et manum Dei manifestans his qui intellegere possint, per quam e limo plasmatus est homo. Quod enim in ventre plasmare praetermisit artifex Verbum, hoc in manifesto adimplevit, *uti manifestarentur opera Dei in ipso* nec jam alteram requireremus manum per quam plasmatus est homo neque alterum Patrem, scientes quoniam quae plasmavit nos initio et plasmat in ventre manus Dei, haec in novissimis temporibus perditos exquisivit nos, suam lucrificans et super humeros assumens ovem perditam et cum gratulatione in cohortem restituens vitae.

And therefore, when His disciples asked Him for what cause the man had been born blind, whether for his own or his parents' fault, He replied, *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him* (Jn 9:3). Now the work of God is the fashioning of man. For, as the Scripture says, He made [man] by a kind of process: *And the Lord took clay from the earth, and formed man* (Gen 2:7). Wherefore also the Lord spat on the ground and made clay, and smeared it upon the eyes (Jn 9:6), pointing out the original fashioning [of man], how it was effected, and manifesting the hand of God to those who can understand by what [hand] man was formed out of the dust. For that which the artificer, the Word, had omitted to form in the womb, He then supplied in public, *that the works of God might be manifested in him*, in order that we might not be seeking out another hand by which man was fashioned, nor another Father; knowing that this hand of God which formed us at the beginning, and which does form us in the womb, has in the last times sought us out who were lost, winning back His own, and taking up the lost sheep upon His shoulders (Lk 15:4-6), and with joy restoring it to the fold of life.<sup>43</sup>

Christ, in the work of redemption “took the entire humanity upon his shoulders”. H. Lassiât underlines that truth for the tradition as a logical conclusion stemming from the concept of common man. Because mankind forms a live unity, its development is subject to the laws that are common to all living individuals. In a live being each cell occupies its rightful place. Similarly in the humanity: each individual has its specific place provided for by God; everyone has a unique function. Christ’s function is that of the head. As the head embraces the entire body, Christ, the head of the humanity, embraces it all. Both in Greek and in Latin the term recapitulation is derived from the word “head” (*recapitulatio* from *caput*, ἀνακεφαλαίωσις from ἡ κεφαλή or τὸ κεφάλαιον). Irenaeus does not need any lengthy arguments to explain this special place of Christ. Considering the fact that Adam is the beginning of the whole of humanity, it is sufficient for Irenaeus to show that Christ recapitulated Adam and all people in Adam. What is true of our common father is also true of all those descendant from him.<sup>44</sup> Scheffczyk adds that for the first time in the history of theology and dogmas the biblical and Pauline understanding of

<sup>43</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 15, 2; SCh 153, 204-206; transl. ANF 1, 543.

<sup>44</sup> H. Lassiât, *Pour une théologie de l’homme*, vol. 2, 574.

the significance of original sin was voiced so acutely, though at the same time with a new emphasis. Irenaeus puts the entire burden of sin on Adam and the humanity incorporated in Adam. He is able to make such identification thanks to assumptions other than those of the Apostle Paul. Irenaeus acknowledges that not only Christ but also Adam was a *real* incarnation of mankind (*Adamseinheit der Menschheit*).<sup>45</sup>

### 3.1.4 We Offended God in Adam

H. Lassiat perceives three fragments of Irenaeus' writings as containing clear-cut statements that humanity partakes in original sin, namely: *Adversus haereses* V 16, 3, *Adversus haereses* V 17, 1 and *Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching* 37.<sup>46</sup> I shall, of course, quote those statements forthwith, but I would like to note that it already follows from the above mentioned concept of mankind as a unity in Adam that we all in a way participated in Adam's sin, just as we all participate in the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ. Let us now have a look at those completely overt statements made by Irenaeus. Here is the first one, which has been already cited:

Manifeste ipsum ostendit Deum, quem in primo quidem Adam offendimus, non facientes ejus praeceptum, in secundo autem Adam reconciliati sumus, obaudientes usque ad mortem facti. Neque enim alteri cuidam eramus debitores, sed illi cujus et praeceptum transgressi fuimus ab initio.

He clearly shows forth God Himself, whom indeed we had offended in the first Adam, when he did not perform His commandment. In the second Adam, however, we are reconciled, being made obedient even unto death. For we were debtors to none other but to Him whose commandment we had transgressed at the beginning.<sup>47</sup>

It is not by incident that Irenaeus uses the phrase *in Adam*. This means that Adam stands here for the humanity as a whole. As Irenaeus understood it, Adam's sin itself and the associated loss of happiness (i.e. loss of salvation) had to encompass all of humanity. Thus, Adam's personal sin became a sin of entire human *nature*.<sup>48</sup> Irenaeus does not mention the succession of sin, though - as rightly pointed out by Lassiat - the notion of original sin is not restricted to simple passing of physical and mental consequences of the fall but also assumes participation and responsibility for sin itself.<sup>49</sup> In this sense we were in Adam; we offended God in Adam. Here is another statement in which Irenaeus more extensively elaborates on the same subject:

<sup>45</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 63-64.

<sup>46</sup> H. Lassiat, *Promotion de l'homme en Jésus-Christ d'après Irénée de Lyon témoin de la tradition des apôtres*, Paris 1974, 253-254.

<sup>47</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 16, 3; Sch 153, 220; transl. ANF 1, 544.

<sup>48</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 63.

<sup>49</sup> H. Lassiat, *Pour une théologie de l'homme*, vol. 2, 513.

Est autem hic Demiurgus, qui secundum dilectionem quidem Pater est, secundum autem virtutem Dominus, secundum autem sapientiam Factor et Plasmator noster, cujus et praeceptum transgredientes inimici facti sumus ejus. Et propter hoc in novissimis temporibus in amicitiam restituit nos Dominus per suam incarnationem, *mediator Dei ei hominum factus*, propitiatus quidem pro nobis Patrem in quem peccaveramus et nostram inobaudientiam per suam obaudientiam consolatus, nobis autem donans eam quae est ad Factorem nostrum conversationem et subjectionem. Quapropter et in oratione dicere nos docuit: *Et remitte nobis debita nostra*, utique quoniam hic est Pater noster, cujus eramus debitores, transgressi ejus praeceptum. Quis est autem hic? Utrumne incognitus aliquis et nulli unquam praeceptum dans Pater? An vero qui a Scripturis praedicatur Deus, cui et debitores eramus, transgressi ejus praeceptum? Datum est autem praeceptum homini per Verbum: *Audivit enim*, ait, *Adam vocem Domini Dei*. Bene igitur Verbum ejus ad hominem dicit: *Remittuntur tibi peccata*, idem ille in quem peccaveramus in initio remissionem peccatorum in fine donans. Aut si alterius quidem transgressi sumus praeceptum, alius autem erat qui dicit: *Remittuntur tibi peccata tua*, neque bonus neque verax neque justus est hujusmodi. Quomodo enim bonus, qui non ex suis donat? Aut quomodo justus, qui aliena rapit? Quomodo autem vere remissa sunt peccata, nisi ille ipse in quem peccavimus donavit remissionem *per viscera misericordiae Dei nostri in quibus visitavit nos* per Filium suum?

Now this being is the Creator, who is, in respect of His love, the Father; but in respect of His power, He is Lord; and in respect of His wisdom, our Maker and Fashioner; by transgressing whose commandment we became His enemies. And therefore in the last times the Lord has restored us into friendship through His incarnation, having become *the Mediator between God and men* (1Tim 2:5); propitiating indeed for us the Father against whom we had sinned, and cancelling our disobedience by His own obedience; conferring also upon us the gift of communion with, and subjection to, our Maker. For this reason also He has taught us to say in prayer, *And forgive us our debts* (Mt 6:12); since indeed He is our Father, whose debtors we were, having transgressed His commandments. But who is this Being? Is He some unknown one, and a Father who gives no commandment to any one? Or is He the God who is proclaimed in the Scriptures, to whom we were debtors, having transgressed His commandment? Now the commandment was given to man by the Word. For Adam, it is said, *heard the voice of the Lord God* (Gen 3:8). Rightly then does His Word say to man, *Thy sins are forgiven thee* (Mt 9:2); He, the same against whom we had sinned in the beginning, grants forgiveness of sins in the end. But if indeed we had disobeyed the command of any other, while it was a different being who said, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*; such an one is neither good, nor true, nor just. For how can he be good, who does not give from what belongs to himself? Or how can he be just, who snatches away the goods of another? And in what way can sins be truly remitted, unless that He against whom we have sinned has Himself granted remission *through the bowels of mercy of our God, in which He has visited us* (Lk 1:78) through His Son?<sup>250</sup>

Irenaeus conceives a prayer seeking absolution of our sins as a request for forgiveness of the sin committed in Adam with no regard to the fact that the text of the Gospel provides for the plural. The motivation for which Irenaeus omits individual sins and makes us ask for forgiveness of Adam's sin is the parallel between Adam's sin and redemption made by Jesus Christ.<sup>51</sup>

This parallel is even more sharply visible in the third fragment mentioned by Lassiat:

Sic ergo magnifice operabatur salutem nostram et (eam quae) patribus (facta erat) promissionem adimplebat et antiquam inobaudientiam exsolvebat Filius Dei filius David et filius Abrahae factus [est]. Haec enim perficiens et recapitulans in seipsum, ut nobis praestaret vitam, Verbum Dei caro factum est propter Virginis dispensationem, ad solvendam mortem et vivificandum hominem: in carceribus enim peccati eramus, no[bis] et per culpam natis et [sub] morte[m] lapsis].

Thus then He gloriously achieved our redemption, and fulfilled the promise of the fathers, and abolished the old disobedience. The Son of God became Son of David and Son of Abraham; perfecting and summing up this in Himself, that He might make us to possess life. The Word of God was made flesh by the dispensation of the Virgin, to abolish death and make man live. For we were imprisoned by sin, being born in sinfulness and living under death.<sup>52</sup>

In all Irenaeus' statements quoted above, in the forefront is the concept of mankind as a living unity. As H. Lassiat correctly noted, God could have created people as independent individuals, but if we were not in unity with Adam, we could not be in unity with Jesus Christ. God created one man – man-mankind, so as to give man access to indestructibility in His Son. That man-mankind forms the living and organic unity, in which the first Adam was an embryo, and whose head is to be Jesus Christ – the second Adam.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.1.5 *Plasmatio Adae*

One other aspect of the concept of the unity of mankind in Adam, perhaps the most difficult one, remains to be discussed. In his works now and again Irenaeus uses the Latin term *plasmatio*, an equivalent to Greek πλάσμα, which is actually impossible to be correctly translated into modern languages. The noun *plasmatio* is derived from the verb *plasmō*, -are, and πλάσμα from πλάσσω, which mean “create, form”, so *plasmatio* and πλάσμα would mean “anything formed or moulded”. However, Irenaeus uses this word in a somewhat different deeper meaning. I think in the English language it is

<sup>51</sup> A. Orbe, *Antropologia de San Ireneo*, 292-293.

<sup>52</sup> Irenaeus, *Demonstratio apostolicae praedicationis* 37; SCh 406, 134; transl. J. Armitage Robinson, 103.

<sup>53</sup> H. Lassiat, *Pour une théologie de l'homme*, vol. 2, 517.



mostly expressed as “formation” as it supposedly should have been translated in the following excerpt:

Si autem ob alteram quandam dispositionem Dominus incarnatus est et ex altera substantia carnem attulit, non ergo in semetipsum recapitulatus est hominem: adhuc etiam nec caro quidem dici potest. Caro enim vere primae plasmationis e limo factae successio. Si autem ex alia substantia habere eum oportuit materiam, ab initio ex altera substantia Pater operatus fuisset fieri conspersionem ejus. Nunc autem quod fuit qui perierat homo, hoc salutare factum est Verbum, per semetipsum eam quae esset ad eum communionem et exquisitionem salutis ejus efficiens. Quod autem perierat sanguinem et carnem habebat. Limum enim de terra accipiens Deus plasmavit hominem, et propter hunc omnis dispositio adventus Domini. Habuit ergo et ipse carnem et sanguinem, non alteram quandam, sed illam principalem Patris plasmationem in se recapitulans, exquires id quod perierat.

But if the Lord became incarnate for any other order of things, and took flesh of any other substance, He has not then summed up human nature in His own person, nor in that case can He be termed flesh. For flesh has been truly made [to consist in] a transmission of that thing moulded originally from the dust. But if it had been necessary for Him to draw the material [of His body] from another substance, the Father would at the beginning have moulded the material [of flesh] from a different substance [than from what He actually did]. But now the case stands thus, that the Word has saved that which really was [created, viz.,] humanity which had perished, effecting by means of Himself that communion which should be held with it, and seeking out its salvation. But the thing which had perished possessed flesh and blood. For the Lord, taking dust from the earth, moulded man; and it was upon his behalf that all the dispensation of the Lord’s advent took place. He had Himself, therefore, flesh and blood, recapitulating in Himself not a certain other, but that original formation<sup>54</sup> of the Father, seeking out that thing which had perished.<sup>55</sup>

As I have already mentioned, it is not a precise translation because there is no apt equivalent to this word in English. For the lack of an appropriate term I shall try to describe the meaning given to this word by Irenaeus. Its significance was correctly noted by A. Orbe, who started his deliberations with a statement that Irenaeus distinguished *corpus* and *caro*. *Corpus* (σῶμα) is a generic term referring to both the substance of the soul and the body. According to Irenaeus the soul is carnal,<sup>56</sup> it possesses a mental body. *Caro* (σάρξ) on the other hand has a specific meaning and refers to the flesh made of earthly destructible substance. πλάσμα would be therefore *corpus carnis*.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> In the ANF translation there is a term: “handiwork”.

<sup>55</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 14, 2; Sch 153, 186-188; transl. ANF 1, 541.

<sup>56</sup> Ireneusz z Lyonu, *Adversus haereses* II 34, 1.

<sup>57</sup> A. Orbe, *San Ireneo y la doctrina de la reconciliación*, “Gregorianum” 61 (1980), 17.

Ysabel de Andia gives a somewhat different definition. In her opinion πλάσμα means “moulded work” (*ouvrage modelé*).<sup>58</sup> At the same time she makes the following distinction between:

- a) “moulded work” (πλάσμα) or the flesh (*caro*), which without the Spirit is mortal and which upon death is decomposed into body and soul;
- b) the soul which is immortal but may be spiritual or carnal depending whether it is united with the Spirit or not;
- c) finally, man who, being composed of flesh and soul, is mortal by nature; here she makes a reference to *Adversus haereses* V 3, 1.<sup>59</sup>

Therefore, *caro* means the same as πλάσμα – “moulded work”.<sup>60</sup>

A. Orbe explains that in today’s economy stress is always on the flesh (*caro*) of man; πλάσμα emulates the Spirit of God, errs and dies. πλάσμα bear the burden of conciliation, as well as the burden of enmity with God. It was *caro* that sinned in Adam, seducing psyche. Irenaeus is not very interested in the soul; he is primarily concerned with the fate of man understood as πλάσμα,<sup>61</sup> which is well illustrated by the following fragment:

Propter hoc et Dominus semetipsum Filium hominis confitetur, principalem hominem illum, ex quo ea quae secundum mulierem est plasmatio facta est, in semetipsum recapitulans, uti, quemadmodum per hominem victum descendit in mortem genus nostrum, sic iterum per hominem victorem ascendamus in vitam, et quemadmodum accepit palmam mors per hominem adversus nos, sic iterum nos adversus mortem per hominem accipiamus palmam.

And therefore does the Lord profess Himself to be the Son of man, recapitulating in Himself that original man out of whom the formation born from woman was made, in order that, as our race went down to death through a vanquished man, so we may ascend to life again through a victorious one; and as through a man death received the palm [of victory] against us, so again by a man we may receive the palm against death.<sup>62</sup>

For the sake of defending the effectiveness of redemption Irenaeus so frequently and strongly underlines that *plasmatio*/πλάσμα assumed by the Son of God was the same as Adam’s (*plasmatio Adae*). *Plasmatio*/πλάσμα cannot be translated as “flesh” or as “creation”, as both terms would distort the sense of Irenaeus’ deliberations. Therefore, what remains for us is the term “formation” with a reservation that it is not the shape that is important but the same substance, though not the matter understood as something that a mould would put in an appropriate form, but the moulded substance.

<sup>58</sup> Y. de Andia, *Incorruptibilité et divinisation de l’homme selon Irénée de Lyon*, Paris 1986, 17.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 124-125.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>61</sup> A. Orbe, *San Ireneo y la doctrina de la reconciliación*, 45.

<sup>62</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 21, 1; Sch 153, 264; transl. ANF 1, 549 with alterations.

Having the above in mind, we may now scrutinize what Irenaeus said about the *flesh* of Christ:

Et quoniam in protoplasto Adam omnes implicati-adligati sumus morti per inobaudientiam, oportebat et conveniebat per obaudientiam (eius qui) propter nos homo factus (est) solvi (nos) [a] mor[te]. Quoniam mors in carnem regnavit, per carnem oportebat et conveniebat destructionem accipientem (eam) dimittere hominem a potentatu suo. Igitur *Verbum caro factum est*, ut per quam carnem invaluit et possedit et dominatum est peccatum, per hanc evacuatum non iam sit in nobis. Et propter hoc eandem protoplasto carnationem suscepit Dominus noster, ut [certans] luctaretur pro patribus et vinceret in Adam (eum) qui in Adam adlisisit nos.

And, because in the progenitor - Adam all of us were tied and bound up with death through his disobedience, it was right that through the obedience of Him who was made man for us we should be released from death: and because death reigned over the flesh, it was right that through the flesh it should lose its force and let man go free from its oppression. So the Word was made fleshy that, through that very flesh which sin had ruled and dominated, it should lose its force and be no longer in us. And therefore our Lord took that same original flesh, so that He might draw near and contend on behalf of the fathers, and conquer in Adam that which in Adam had stricken us down.<sup>63</sup>

In this very fragment the term *plasmatio*/πλάσμα is not used, but the sense of the entire statement is similar. It is confirmed by what Irenaeus says further on:

Et sicut per virginem inobaudientem prostratus est homo et cadens mortuus est, sic et per Virginem, quae obaudivit verbo Dei, denuo accensus homo vita recepit vitam. Venit enim Dominus perditam ovem requirere. Perierat autem homo. Et propter hoc aliud plasma quoddam non factus est, sed, ex illa ea quae ab Adam genus habebat [nascens], similitudinem plasmationis servavit.

And just as through a disobedient virgin man was stricken down and fell into death, so through the Virgin who was obedient to the Word of God man was reanimated and received life. For the Lord came to seek again the sheep that was lost; and man it was that was lost: and for this cause there was not made some other formation, but in that same which had its descent from Adam He preserved the likeness of the (first) formation.<sup>64</sup>

And in another place:

Propter hoc et Dominus semetipsum Filium hominis confitetur, principalem hominem illum, ex quo ea quae secundum mulierem est plasmatio facta est, in semetipsum recapitulans.

And therefore does the Lord profess Himself to be the Son of man, comprised in Himself that original man out of whom the formation born from woman was fashioned.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Irenaeus, *Demonstratio apostolicae praedicationis* 31; Sch 406, 128; transl. J. Armitage Robinson, 98.

<sup>64</sup> Irenaeus, *Demonstratio apostolicae praedicationis* 33; Sch 406, 128-130; transl. J. Armitage Robinson, 99-100.

<sup>65</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 21, 1; Sch 153, 264; transl. ANF 1, 549 with alterations.

A similar meaning is attributed to the term πλάσμα by Philo of Alexandria. Although he usually used this word to denote a mythological figure (πλάσμα μύθου), in one place he described Adam as τὸ πλάσμα τῆς γυναικὸς.<sup>66</sup> However, in Irenaeus the meaning is deeper than in Philo.

Similarly to when Irenaeus emphasized the correspondence of the details of the Old and New Testament events, the same here. The defence of the identity of Adam's and Christ's plasmatio/πλάσμα is aimed at evidencing that the redemption of man really took place. Here is how Irenaeus himself explains this:

Vani enim sunt qui putative dicunt eum apparuisse: non enim putative haec, sed in substantia veritatis fiebant. Si autem cum homo non esset apparebat homo, neque quod erat vere perseveravit, Spiritus Dei, quoniam invisibilis est Spiritus, neque veritas quaedam erat in eo, non enim illud erat quod videbatur. Praediximus autem quoniam Abraham et reliqui prophetae prophetice videbant eum, id quod futurum erat per visionem prophetantes. Si igitur et nunc talis apparuit, non existens quod videbatur, prophetica quaedam visio facta est hominibus, et oportet alium expectare adventum ejus, in quo talis erit qualis nunc visus est prophetice. Ostendimus autem quoniam idem est putative dicere eum visum et nihil ex Maria accepisse: neque enim esset vere sanguinem et carnem habens, per quam nos redemit, nisi antiquam plasmationem Adae in semetipsum recapitulasset. Vani igitur qui a Valentino sunt, hoc dogmatizantes, uti excludant salutem carnis et reproben plasmationem Dei.

Vain indeed are those who allege that He appeared in mere seeming. For these things were not done in appearance only, but in actual reality. But if He did appear as a man, when He was not a man, neither could He remain what He really was – the Spirit of God, as the Spirit is invisible; nor would there be any degree of truth in Him, for He would not be that what He seemed to be. But I have already remarked that Abraham and the other prophets beheld Him after a prophetic manner, foretelling in vision what should come to pass. If, then, such a being has now appeared in outward semblance different from what he was in reality, there has been a certain prophetic vision made to men; and another advent of His must be looked forward to, in which He shall be such as He has now been seen in a prophetic manner. And I have proved already, that it is the same thing to say that He appeared merely to outward seeming, and [to affirm] that He received nothing from Mary. For He would not have been one truly possessing flesh and blood, by which He redeemed us, unless He had summed up in Himself the ancient formation of Adam. Vain therefore are the disciples of Valentinus who put forth this opinion, in order that they may exclude the flesh from salvation, and cast aside what God has moulded.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Quaestiones in Genesim* 1, fr. 28.

<sup>67</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 1, 2, Sch 153, 22-24; transl. ANF 1, 527 with alterations.

A. Orbe goes, I think, too far in his interpretation. His starting point is correct. He claims that without being overt Irenaeus assumes that enmity with God directly affected the *plasma de Adán*, not his person. Therefore, *plasma* – as a human substance (*humana substancia*) – should be reconciled with God so as to embrace also individuals. In the face of the sin of nature (*pecado de natura*), reconciliation of nature.<sup>68</sup> This is not all, however. Later, he claims that the human psyche was not shaped by the hand of God or, in itself, was not sealed with the image and likeness of God, and God’s wisdom is revealed only in the formation of human *plasma*.<sup>69</sup> Insofar as I can accept the suggestion that Irenaeus’ emphasis on the role of *plasmatio*/πλάσμα indicated his conviction that sin affected more nature rather than person, even the slightest hint that Irenaeus apparently claimed that the soul had not been shaped by the hand of God puts him on the level with the Gnostics with whom he so heatedly polemicized. It was in his polemic with gnostic dualism he claims that the soul is the same creature as all others.<sup>70</sup>

Cum ergo in ventre a Verbo plasmemur, idipsum Verbum ei qui a nativitate caecus fuerat formavit visionem, eum qui in abscondito Plasmator noster est in manifesto ostendens, quoniam ipsum Verbum manifestum hominibus factum fuerat, et antiquam plasmationem Adae disserens, et quomodo factus est et per quam plasmatus est manum, ex parte totum ostendens: qui enim visionem formavit Dominus, hic est qui universum hominem plasmavit, voluntati Patris deserviens. Et quoniam in illa plasmatione quae secundum Adam fuit in transgressione factus homo indigebat lavacro regenerationis, posteaquam linivit lutum super oculos ejus dixit ei: *Vade in Siloam et lauare*, simul et plasmationem et eam quae est per lavacrum regenerationem restituens ei. Et propter hoc lotus venit videns, ut et suum cognosceret Plasmatorem et disceret Dominum eum qui donavit ei vitam.

As, therefore, we are by the Word formed in the womb, this very same Word formed the visual power in him who had been blind from his birth; showing openly who it is that fashions us in secret, since the Word Himself had been made manifest to men: and declaring the original formation of Adam, and the manner in which he was created, and by what hand he was fashioned, indicating the whole from a part. For the Lord who formed the visual powers is He who made the whole man, carrying out the will of the Father. And inasmuch as man, in that formation which was after Adam, having fallen into transgression, needed the laver of regeneration, [the Lord] said to him, after He had smeared his eyes with the clay, *Go to Siloam, and wash* (Jn 9:7); thus restoring to him both formation, and that regeneration which takes place by means of the laver. And for this reason when he was washed he came seeing, that he might both know Him who had fashioned him, and that man might learn [to know] Him who has conferred upon him life.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> A. Orbe, *San Ireneo y la doctrina de la reconciliación*, 28.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>70</sup> H. Lassiati, *L'anthropologie d'Irénée*, “Nouvelle Revue Theologique” 100 (1978), no. 3, 401.

<sup>71</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 15, 3; SCh 153, 208-210; transl. ANF 1, 543 with alterations.

The entire work of Irenaeus is principally aimed at showing that there is one God the Creator of everything and, what is more, it is the same God who performs man's salvation so it may not be claimed that any creation or its part are not God's handiwork.

### 3.1.6 Mystical or Real Unity?

Almost all researchers agree that Irenaeus speaks about the mystical unity of human nature. A. Orbe notes that the same solidarity is in place both in evil and in good: if it was in place in the fall brought about by the misconduct of the moulded work (*plasma*), it has to be in place in the triumph of its salvation. He claims, however, that triumph is not to be ascribed to individuals since guilt has not been divided among Adam and his children. It was not the individual that was lost and not the individual that is found. It is *man* that was lost and it is *man* that is found. The great guilt of humankind, the only one that is taken away by Christ, was the guilt of Adam. Concrete persons exist only in the perspective of the lamb that was lost in Adam and found in Christ.<sup>72</sup>

Scheffczyk claims that Irenaeus does not speak about inheriting sin but, as in the case of Christ, the mystical unity of mankind with Adam. Nevertheless, the dogma tells in principle that Adam's deed changed the inner situation of salvation of each man, as a result of which everyone needs to be saved by Christ. This idea is contained in *Adamseinheit*, because Irenaeus clearly acknowledges inner loss of grace (i.e. loss of happiness, salvation) by humanity.<sup>73</sup> L. Scheffczyk also asks how Irenaeus understood the unity of mankind in Adam – whether Adam is the universal man or the general man – as in Philo, or he speaks about a transcendental relations of Adam and the humanity – in this case interpretation of Irenaeus' thought does not require the help of philosophy. Reference to the relation of mankind to Christ as a mystical unity seems to him to be relatively the best interpretation.<sup>74</sup>

Kelly is of the opinion that Irenaeus nowhere formulates a specific account of the connection between Adam's guilty act and the rest of mankind. He clearly presupposes some kind of mystical solidarity, or rather identity, between the father of the human race and all of his descendants. At the time of the Fall they somehow already existed in him and the subsequent multiplication of the race can be viewed as the subdivision of the original Adam into myriads of individuals who were thus at once responsible for the ancient act of transgression and the victims of its fatal consequences.<sup>75</sup>

Tennant believes that although according to Irenaeus the Fall is the collective deed of the race this phrase cannot be interpreted literally or realistically, but rather

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<sup>72</sup> A. Orbe, *Antropologia de San Ireneo*, 287.

<sup>73</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 65.

<sup>74</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 64.

<sup>75</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 172.

figuratively.<sup>76</sup> In *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* Auguste Gaudel also states that according to Irenaeus we form a mystical unity (*une unité mystique*) with our parents in the Fall just as we form a mystical unity with Christ for salvation.<sup>77</sup>

There is, however, also another explanation of mankind's unity in Adam. J. Gross acknowledges that Irenaeus recognized that entire humanity was contained both in Adam and in Christ – which reminds Philo's speculations about the generic man (*generisch Mensch*) and Platonic realism. The conviction that human nature is a kind of a specific reality in one man embracing all individuals is perceived in Irenaeus not as a philosophy but rather religious/mystical speculation within the theory of recapitulation referring to Paul. Such generic realism may be found also in Athanasius and – in the clearest form – in Gregory of Nyssa in the service of his physical theory of redemption.<sup>78</sup>

For me, the most radical theory proposed H. Lassiat seems to be most convincing, however. According to him the unity of mankind in two Adams exists on a physical and moral (spiritual) plane and it is real unity (*l'unité réelle*). In this perspective each man personally partakes in Adam's sin and its consequences on the same basis on which they participate in Christ in redemption and resurrection. Thus, people form a real, live and organic unity and have a somehow supra-individual personality (*une personnalité supra-individuelle*) in two Adams.<sup>79</sup> The concept proposed by Gross who in human nature sees something reminding the Platonic idea well explains the unity of nature, though does not take the idea of *plasmatio* into account. The latter clearly refers to the Stoic material monism, although for Irenaeus it is not about the unity and homogeneity of the entire world but only the unity of human nature.

A very similar concept which is associated with both Stoicism (common substance of all individuals) and the generally conceived Platonic traditions (supra-individual personality) may be found also in other Church Fathers. At the first glance, this theory seems to have its sources in philosophy, though it is very close to the biblical spirit. In response to the teaching of gnosis which looked for an explanation of the problem of evil on the individual level (great importance of the metempsychosis theory) Irenaeus provides a justification which emphasizes the communal dimension.<sup>80</sup>

H. Lassiat's theory also best explains how man who is mortal by nature achieves immortality. Since man has a communal dimension each person represents one Man, Man-Adam, Man-Mankind. It is he who possesses certain permanence. In each man it is the soul which partakes in this communal dimension thanks to participation in the life and permanence of Man-Adam and although it is temporal because it has been created it significantly surpasses individual permanence of the flesh. That is why

<sup>76</sup> F.R. Tennant, *The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin*, 290.

<sup>77</sup> A. Gaudel, *Péché originel*, in: *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, vol. 12, Paris 1933, 326.

<sup>78</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 92.

<sup>79</sup> H. Lassiat, *Pour une théologie de l'homme*, vol. 2, 527.

<sup>80</sup> H. Lassiat, *Promotion de l'homme*, 251.

each individual soul persists despite the death of the flesh. The end of each individual soul to which the carnal dimension has been restored thanks to universal resurrection should correspond with the end of the “temporal” growth of Man-Adam it is a part of, that is, the end of the world. After the coming of the second Adam – concurrently God and human – everyone who voluntarily perseveres in Him will partake in the indestructibility of His Spirit.<sup>81</sup>

## 3.2 Methodius of Olympus

Methodius of Olympus is most frequently omitted by researchers though at the same time an extremely important link in the development of theology, placed between Irenaeus and Origen on one side and the Cappadocian Fathers on the other. Insofar as everyone heard about the impact of Origen on the latter and all of later theology, very few, including titled patrologists, know anything about Methodius of Olympus. Anyway, there are hardly any studies about him, certainly by far not enough with a view to the significance of his teaching.<sup>82</sup> Perhaps such a state of affairs is due to the fact that only one of his writings (*Symposion*) has come down to us complete in a Greek text and the rest mainly in translation into the Old Slavonic. There is not only the problem of the language. The most important writing by Methodius, namely *De resurrection*, has been edited by Gottlieb Nathaniel Bonwetsch (GCS 27) in such a way that he edited the part that remained in Greek in the original, but the part that remained in Old Slavonic was published only in the German translation. So we have no edition of that entire work. In order to find the Old Slavonic version one has to refer to manuscripts.

### 3.2.1 We lived in paradise

In his polemic with Origen’s speculations as to the beginning of sin Methodius deliberately returned to Irenaeus’ tradition and continued the teaching on the solidarity of people, and in a certain aspect made it even stricter.<sup>83</sup> And this does not concern merely repeating what Irenaeus said, but a return to his realism.<sup>84</sup> Methodius

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<sup>81</sup> H. Lassiât, *L’anthropologie d’Irénée*, 415-416.

<sup>82</sup> B. Otis calls Methodius the most neglected Father, especially with a view to the influence exerted by his teaching; cf. *Cappadocian Thought as a Coherent System*, 118.

<sup>83</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 85.

<sup>84</sup> As noted by L.G. Patterson, Methodius rarely quotes his sources – like the majority of his contemporaries – though he tends to paraphrase or even literally quotes Plato and Christian writers, which makes it possible to determine his sources; cf. *Methodius of Olympus. Divine Sovereignty, Human Freedom and Life in Christ*, Washington 1997, 7.



is very explicit about our life in paradise and at that not only in Adam, but in both first parents.

τὸ γὰρ “ἐγὼ δὲ ἔζων” λεχθὲν αὐτῷ “χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ” ἄνω τὴν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ, καθάπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὑπεθέμεθα, πρὸ τῆς ἐντολῆς, οὐκ ἐκτὸς σώματος, ἀλλὰ μετὰ σώματος ἡμῶν ἐν τοῖς πρωτοπλάστοις διαγωγῆν παρεγγυᾷ, ἐπειδὴ πρὸ τοῦ δοθῆναι τὴν ἐντολήν “χοῦν ὁ θεὸς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς λαβῶν ἔπλασε τὸν ἄνθρωπον”, ἐκτὸς δὲ ἐπιθυμίας διήγομεν, οὐ γινώσκοντες ὅλως ἐπιθυμίας ἀλόγου προσβολᾶς, βιαζομένης ἡμᾶς ἑλκτικαῖς ἡδονῶν περιαιωγαῖς πρὸς ἀκρασίαν.

For this saying of his, *I was alive without the law once* (Rom 7:9) refers to the life which was lived in paradise before the law, not without a body, but with a body, by our first parents, since before giving the law *God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it* (Gen 2:7), we lived without concupiscence, being altogether ignorant of its assaults, forcing us to lose our self-control by alluring manoeuvres of pleasure.<sup>85</sup>

Referring to that fragment J. Gross claims that Methodius identifies us with our forebear,<sup>86</sup> though he would have to identify us with both progenitors, and thanks to a reference to both of them it is clear that when he speaks about Adam he has in mind the entire human race as a unity.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, it is not identification that is important here but showing the unity of all mankind. The following statement has a similar meaning:

ἸΑΚΟ ΠΡΕΣΤΟΥΠΙΒΗΣΕΜΕ ΝΑΜΕ Ὡ ΑΔΑΜῚ  
ΖΑΠΟΒΕῚΔΕ ΤΒΟΙ.

In Adam we transgressed Your  
commandment.<sup>88</sup>

It does not mean merely that Adam is to express or symbolize us in any way but the fact that through the real unity of mankind we actually were in paradise and partook in the first sin. We have already encountered similar statements in Irenaeus. Methodius does not stop there, however. In order to picture our participation in and responsibility for the events in paradise he talks about the first temptation of Satan as if it concerned him personally:

Δοθείσης γὰρ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἔσχε λαβὴν διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς ὁ διάβολος κατεργάσασθαι ἐν ἐμοὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν, παραρμήσας με καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος ἐντέχνως εἰς ὄρεξιν καταπεσεῖν τῶν κεκωλυμένων.

After the commandment had been given, the devil had an opportunity to stir up concupiscence in me through the commandment as he aroused me and provoked to desire what was prohibited.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *De resurrectione* II 1, 1; GCS 27, 329-330; transl. ANF 6, 370 with alterations.

<sup>86</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 111.

<sup>87</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 85.

<sup>88</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *De resurrectione* III 23, 2; manuscript Petersburg Q.I.265, folio 166. I would like to thank Mirosław Mejnzer for providing me the photo of the required card of the manuscript and correcting my notation of the quotation.

<sup>89</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *De resurrectione* II 2, 1; GCS 27, 331; transl. MP.

He also assumes personal responsibility for the disobedience that took place in paradise:

ἡ γὰρ παραίνεις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παραγγελία  
ἡ δοθεῖσά μοι αὐτῇ εἰς ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν,  
ἵνα πειθόμενος αὐτῇ καὶ κατ'αὐτὴν βιοῦς  
ἀπλήμονα καὶ μακαριστότατον δι' αἰῶνος καὶ αἰεὶ  
θάλλοντα πρὸς ἀθανασίαν βίον ἔχω καὶ χαρὰν,  
ἀθετήσαντί μοι αὐτὴν εἰς θάνατον ἀνέβη καὶ  
καταδίκην, ἐπειδὴ ὁ διάβολος, ὃν ἁμαρτίαν  
νῦν οὗτος ἐκάλεσε διὰ τὸ δημιουργὸν αὐτὸν  
ἁματίας ὑπάρχειν καὶ εὐρετὴν, διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς  
ἀφορμὴν λαβὼν πρὸς παρακοὴν ἐξηπάτησέ  
με καὶ ἀπατήσας ἀπέκτεινε, ὑπεύθυνον τῷ  
“ἢ δ' ἂν ἡμέρα φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, θανάτῳ  
ἀποθανεῖσθε.”

The exhortation and promise of God which was given to me for life and incorruption, so that obeying it I might have ever-blooming life and joy unto incorruption, turned out for me - as I had rebelled - the death and the death sentence, when the devil, whom the Apostle calls sin, because he is the author of sin, taking occasion by the commandment to deceive me to disobedience, deceived and killed me, as I was responsible for, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die* (Gen 2:17).<sup>90</sup>

In view of such overt statements may it be recognized, as K. Bracht did, that Methodius understood the first people as an embodiment of the race and does not assume any spiritual unity of Adam with other people but sees Adam as an example of the fate of all people? In such interpretation the phrase *all in Adam* would mean an example (*in einem exemplarischen Sinne*).<sup>91</sup> In my opinion such interpretation of Methodius' teaching is erroneous for two reasons: the first, direct, stems from omitting two fragments that have been just quoted above in which Methodius expresses his personal responsibility for Adam's sin (how could he be responsible for someone's example?); the other reason is not taking into account the source of Methodius' concept, namely the texts of Irenaeus. We should also recognize then that similar statements by Irenaeus mean that Adam is an example of sin for others – this has surely been shown to be impossible. Therefore, what remains to be done is to acknowledge that Methodius echoes Irenaeus: *in Adam* the entire human race heard God's commandment and trespassed against it together with Adam. As Theodor Badurina observed: together with him we turned out to be unruly as if we were a single person (*sicuti una persona*).<sup>92</sup>

### 3.2.2 Consequences of Adam's Sin in Us

Commenting on the fragment of Romans 7:18, *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh* Methodius refers to the first sin although it would seem that

<sup>90</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *De resurrectione* II 2, 4; GCS 27, 331-332; transl. ANF 6, 371.

<sup>91</sup> K. Bracht, *Vollkommenheit und Vollendung: Zur Anthropologie des Methodius von Olympus*, Tübingen 1999, 102-103.

<sup>92</sup> T. Badurina, *Doctrina S. Methodii de peccato originali et de eius effectibus*, Romae 1942, 58-59.

those words could be explained by referring only to universal sinfulness of people. Here is the literal statement made by Methodius:

ὅθεν ὁ ἀπόστολος “οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί, τουτέστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, τὸ ἀγαθόν” λέγων τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς παραβάσεως διὰ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας εἰσοικισθεῖσαν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀμαρτίαν βούλεται μνηνεῖν, ἧς δὴ καθάπερ βλαστήματα νέα καὶ κλώνες οἱ φιλήδονοι περὶ ἡμᾶς ἀεὶ λογισμοὶ συνίστανται.

When the Apostle says, *for I know that in me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing*, by which words he means to indicate that sin dwells in us, from the [first] transgression, through lust, out of which, like young shoots, the imaginations of pleasure rise around us.<sup>93</sup>

That fragment has earned diametrically different comments among researchers. L. Scheffczyk perceives in it a multiplied realism of Irenaeus, on the basis of which Methodius can speak about sin *in us*. He adds, however, that at a closer look it can be seen that Methodius understands sin primarily as lust which is the source of sinful thoughts. From this it follows that Methodius does not acknowledge the solidarity of Adam and the humanity in passing the original sin. The only thing Methodius admits is the fact that through original sin all people partake in the imaginations of pleasure. That is why Scheffczyk sees here the application of solidarity which is more restricted than in Irenaeus. He believes that Methodius took realistic statements made by Irenaeus but filled them with different content. First of all, he made a distinction between sin and lust, with a reservation that in the Hellenic meaning only a free deed may be a sin.<sup>94</sup>

This statement of Methodius is similarly explained by Bracht. According to her Methodius does not profess the teaching of original sin in the sense of inheriting lust from Adam but rather notices that lust is present in everyone, not explaining the reason why, however.<sup>95</sup>

However, I am inclined to accept the interpretation which is based on the perception in Methodius of the idea of solidarity borrowed from Irenaeus. On this basis it may be ascertained that the first sin hurt not only Adam but the entire human race. As Badurina explains in some sense (*sensu quodam*) all people lived in Adam and participated in his transgression (*soldurii erant*). That is why it was human nature itself that has been hurt by the sad consequences of the first sin.<sup>96</sup> Tennant explains Methodius' concept along similar lines and claims that he took from Irenaeus a certain type of realism and professed solidarity of the entire humanity with Adam.<sup>97</sup> Otis formulates this problem as follows: for Methodius humanity is in fact an organic unity which needs its every part, that is every man to be perfect. By the way, Otis notes that a logical outcome of such reasoning is the idea of universal salvation which, however,

<sup>93</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *De resurrectione* II 6, 4; GCS 27, 340; transl. ANF 6, 372.

<sup>94</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 85-86.

<sup>95</sup> K. Bracht, *Vollkommenheit und Vollendung*, 102.

<sup>96</sup> T. Badurina, *Doctrina S. Methodii de Olympio de peccato originali*, 62.

<sup>97</sup> F.R. Tennant, *The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin*, 310.

Methodius – unlike Gregory of Nyssa – does not profess.<sup>98</sup> It should be added here that like Irenaeus Methodius had a different starting point than Gregory. It has become customary to define recapitulation as repetition and renewal of everything in Christ,<sup>99</sup> which means that its definition is very similar to Gregory of Nyssa’s apokatastasis which is restoration to the original or primordial condition. J. Vives confronted such a vision of recapitulation with Irenaeus’ theory of the creation of man as a child. Adam was created as destined for development until full possession by God, but he lost that purpose through sin. A similar interpretation may be found in Methodius of Olympus. He believes that man was not created perfect but had to aspire at perfection. Sin interrupted that process, but the incarnation of the Word made it again possible for man to attain the likeness to God:

Τὸ δὲ παλαιὸν οὐδέπω τέλειος ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἦν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὸ τέλειον οὐδέπω χωρῆσαι τὴν παρθενίαν ἴσχυεν. Ἐτι γὰρ ἔχρηζε “κατ’ εἰκόνα” θεοῦ γεγωνὸς καὶ τὸ “καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν” ἀπολαβεῖν· ὅπερ τελεσιουργῆσαι καταπεμφθεὶς ὁ λόγος εἰς τὸν κόσμον τὴν ἡμετέραν μορφήν πρότερον ἀνέλαβε πολλοῖς ἁμαρτήμασι κατεστιγμένην ἵνα δὴ τὴν θεϊαν ἡμεῖς, δι’ οὗς αὐτὸς ἐφόρεσε, πάλιν χωρῆσαι δυνηθῶμεν. Καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν γὰρ ἀκριβωθῆναι τότε πάρεστι θεοῦ, ὅποτε δὴ τοὺς αὐτοὺς αὐτῷ χαρακτήρας τῆς κατὰ ἄνθρωπον πολιτείας ζωγράφων δίκην ἐπιστημόνων ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐκτυπωσάμενοι ἀσινεῖς κατέχωμεν, ἦν αὐτὸς ἐφάνέρωσε μαθητεύοντες τριβόν. Ταύτη γὰρ ἡρετίσατο τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἐνδύσασθαι σάρκα θεὸς ὢν, ὅπως ὡσπερ ἐν πίνακι θεῖον ἐκτύπωμα βίου βλέποντες ἔχωμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς τὸν γράψαντα μιμεῖσθαι.

In antiquity man was not yet perfect and hence did not have the capacity to comprehend the perfect, that is, virginity. For being made in the image of God, man had yet to receive that which was according to His likeness. And this was precisely what the Word was sent into the world to accomplish. He took upon himself our form, which He bore for our sake, spotted and stained as it was by our many sins, in order that we might be able to receive in turn the divine form. For then is it possible for us truly to fashion ourselves in the likeness of God when like skilled painters we express His features in ourselves [as on a panel], and thus possess them in innocence, learning to follow the path He showed to us. This was why, although He was God, He chose to put on human flesh, that, by looking upon God’s representation of our life as in a painting, we might be able to imitate Him who painted it.<sup>100</sup>

Christ came not to renew the original condition of Adam, but his purpose that man is to aspire to through evolution/development.<sup>101</sup> This very significant clarification explains, I think, why, despite the assumptions which should lead them to the theory

<sup>98</sup> B. Otis, *Cappadocian Thought as a Coherent System*, 120.

<sup>99</sup> A. d’Alès, *La doctrine de la récapitulation chez St. Irénée*, “Recherches de Science Religieuse” 6 (1916), 189; E. Scharl, *Der Rekapitulationsbegriff des hl. Irenäus und seine Anwendung auf die Körperwelt*, “Orientalia Christiana Periodica” 6 (1940), 396; A. Benoît, *Saint Irénée: introduction a l’étude de sa théologie*, Paris 1960, 226; J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 134; K. Leśniewski, *Adam – Christ Typology in St. Irenaeus of Lyons*, “Roczniki Teologiczne” 41 (1994), vol. 7, 64, footnote 7; T. Dekert, *Teoria rekapitulacji Ireneusza z Lyonu*, 38.

<sup>100</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *Convivium decem virginum* I 4; Sch 95, 62-64; transl. H. Musurillo, 46-47.

<sup>101</sup> J. Vives, *Pecado original y progreso evolutivo del hombre en Irene*, 586-587.

of apokatastasis,<sup>102</sup> neither Irenaeus nor Methodius of Olympus do not arrive at a conclusion of universal salvation of entire human nature. Although redemption is in a large measure accomplished in the very act of Incarnation, renewal of human nature does not mean restitution of the perfect image of God but making it possible to aspire at such a goal.

### 3.2.3 Christ Lived in Adam

What remains for us to do is to analyse the most astonishing and difficult statements from Methodius' *Symposium* where he describes how Christ became *the same as Adam*. In the first fragment Methodius seems to refer to Irenaeus' statement of *plasmatio Adae*:

[Τοῦτο γὰρ εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν, ἄνθρωπον ἀκράτῳ θεότῃ καὶ τελείᾳ πεπληρωμένον·] ἦν γὰρ πρεπωδέστατον τὸν πρεσβύτατον τῶν αἰώνων καὶ πρῶτον τῶν ἀρχαγγέλων, ἀνθρώποις μέλλοντα συνομιλεῖν, εἰς τὸν πρεσβύτατον καὶ πρῶτον τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος ἄνθρωπον εἰσοικισθῆναι τὸν Ἀδάμ. Ταύτη γὰρ ἀναζωγραφῶν τὰ ἐξ ὑπαρχῆς καὶ ἀναπλάσσων αὐθις ἐκ παρθένου καὶ πνεύματος τεκταίνεται τὸν αὐτόν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ κατ' ἀρχὰς οὕσης παρθένου τῆς γῆς ἔτι καὶ ἀνηρότου λαβῶν χοῦν τὸ λογικώτατον ἐπλάσατο ζῶον ἀπ' αὐτῆς ὁ θεὸς ἄνευ σποράς.

For this was Christ: man filled with the pure and perfect Godhead, and God comprehending man. Most fitting was it that the eldest of the Aeons, the first among archangels, when about to mingle with men, took up His abode in the first and eldest man of humankind-Adam. For thus, in remodelling what was from the beginning and moulding it all over again of the Virgin and the Spirit, He fashioned the same Man; just as in the beginning when the earth was virgin and unfilled, God had taken dust from the earth and formed, without seed, the most rational being from it.<sup>103</sup>

Taking abode in the eldest man means not so much that in the act of incarnation Christ assumed the reanimated body of Adam,<sup>104</sup> but that the body of Christ was moulded of the same substance as the body of Adam. Such interpretation is confirmed by what Methodius says next recalling the image of God as a potter and Adam as unhardened clay:

<sup>102</sup> A. d'Alès, *La doctrine de la récapitulation chez St. Irénée*, 199-200.

<sup>103</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *Convivium decem virginum* III 4; SCh 95, 98; transl. H. Musurillo, 61.

<sup>104</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 85.

Καί μοι ἐχέγγυος μάρτυς καὶ σαφὴς ὁ προφήτης Ἰερεμίας παρίτω, “καὶ κατέβην εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ κεραμέως” λέγων “καὶ ἰδοὺ αὐτὸς ἐποίει ἔργον ἐπὶ τῶν λίθων. Καὶ διέπεσε τὸ ἀγγεῖον, ὃ αὐτὸς ἐποίει ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ. Καὶ πάλιν ἐποίησεν αὐτὸ ἀγγεῖον ἕτερον, καθὼς ἤρεσεν ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ τοῦ ποιῆσαι.” Ἐτι γὰρ πληρουρούμενον τὸν Ἀδάμ, ὡς ἔστιν εἰπεῖν, καὶ τηκτὸν ὄντα καὶ ὕδαρῃ καὶ μηδέπω φθάσαντα δίκην ὀστράκου τῆ ἀφθαρσίᾳ κραταιωθῆναι καὶ ἀποπετρωθῆναι, ὕδαρ ὡσπερ καταλειβομένη καὶ καταστάζουσα διέλυσεν αὐτὸν ἢ ἁμαρτία. Διὸ δὴ πάλιν ἄνωθεν ἀναδεύων καὶ πηλοπλαστῶν τὸν αὐτὸν “εἰς τιμὴν” ὁ θεός, ἐν τῇ παρθενικῇ κραταιώσας πρῶτον καὶ πῆξας μήτρα καὶ συνενώσας καὶ συγκεράσας τῷ λόγῳ, ἄτηκτον καὶ ἀθραυστον ἐξήγαγεν εἰς τὸν βίον ἵνα μὴ πάλιν τοῖς τῆς φθορᾶς ἔξωθεν ἐπικλυθεῖς ρεύμασιν τηκεδὸνα γεννήσας διαπέσῃ.

Now let there come to my support the prophet Jeremias as a trustworthy and clear witness: *And I went down, he says, into the potter's house; and behold he was doing a work on the stones. And the vessel which he was making with his hands fell; and he made it again another vessel, as it seemed good in his eyes to make it* (Jer 18:3-4). So while Adam was still as it were on the potter's wheel, still soft and moist and not yet, like a finished vessel, strengthened and hardened in incorruptibility, he was ruined by sin dripping and falling on him like water. And so God, moistening His clay once again and modelling the same man again unto honor, fixed and hardened it in the Virgin's womb, united and mingled it with the Word, and finally brought it forth dry and unbreakable into the world, that it might never again be drowned by the floods of external corruption and collapse into putrefaction.<sup>105</sup>

Methodius significantly modifies here Irenaeus' idea. Insofar as for the latter Adam was a moulded work, for Methodius Adam is merely soft clay hardened only in Incarnation. Nevertheless, both thinkers have in mind here not so much Adam as a person but his carnal nature, or rather, substance. This is the sense of the poetically-sounding sentence of Methodius that the Lord put Adam on Himself:

ἐπειδὴ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὡς ἀληθῶς ἦν τε καὶ ἔστιν, ἐν ἀρχῇ ὢν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ θεὸς ὢν, ὁ ἀρχιστράτηγος καὶ ποιμὴν τῶν κατ' οὐρανόν, ὃ πάντα πείθονται καὶ ὁμαρτοῦσι τὰ λογικά, καὶ ποιμαίνων εὐτάκτως καὶ ἀριθμῶν τὰ πλήθη τῶν μακαρίων ἀγγέλων. Οὗτος γὰρ ἴσος καὶ τέλειος ἀριθμὸς ἀθανάτων ζώων κατὰ γένη καὶ φύλα διηρημένων, συμπαραληφθέντος ἐνταῦθα τῆ ποιμνῆ καὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Δεδημιουργητο γὰρ δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔξω φθορᾶς, ἵνα τὸν βασιλεῖα γεραίρη πάντων καὶ ποιητὴν ἀντίφθογγα μελωδῶν ταῖς τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐξ οὐρανοῦ φερομέναις βοαῖς. Ἄλλ' ἐπεὶ συνέβη παρεληλυθότα τὴν ἐντολὴν ὀλέθριον πτῶμα καὶ δεινὸν πεσεῖν εἰς θάνατον ἀναστοιχειωθέντα, διὰ τοῦτό φησιν ὁ κύριος ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸν βίον ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐληλυθέναι καταλειπιότα τὰς τάξεις καὶ τὰ στρατόπεδα τῶν ἀγγέλων. Ἀπεικονιστέον γὰρ

For Christ really was and is, being in the beginning with God and being Himself God, the Commander-in-Chief and the Shepherd of all that is in the heaven, while He marshals in orderly ranks and numbers the multitudes of the blessed angels, He to whom all rational creatures pay homage and obey. Now this constituted the even and perfect number of immortal creatures, distributed by race and tribe, the fact that man was also included in this flock; for he too had been created in incorruptibility that he might celebrate the King and Creator of all things in a song which would be an antiphon to the angelic voices wafted from heaven. But then it happened that he transgressed the Commandment and suffered a terrible and destructive Fall and was transformed into death: for this reason, the Lord tells us, He came from the heavens into the world, leaving the ranks and the hosts of the

<sup>105</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *Convivium decem virginum* III 5; SCh 95, 98-100; transl. H. Musurillo, 61-62.

τὰ μὲν ὄρη τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, τὰ δὲ ἐνενήκοντα πρόβατα καὶ ἐννέα ταῖς δυνάμεσι καὶ ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐξουσίαις, ἃς καταλέλοιπεν ἀναζητήσαι κατελθὼν τὸ ἀπολωλὸς ὁ στρατηγὸς καὶ ποιμὴν. Ἔλειπε γὰρ ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὸν ὄμιλον ἐγκαταλεχθῆναι τούτων ἔτι καὶ τὸν ἀριθμὸν βαστάσαντος αὐτὸν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἀμφιασαμένου ἵνα δὴ μὴ πάλιν ταῖς τρικυμiais, ὡς ἔφην, καὶ ταῖς ἀπάταις τῆς ἡδονῆς περικλυσθεὶς καταποντωθῆ. Ταύτη γὰρ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἀνείληφεν ὁ λόγος ὅπως δὴ δι' αὐτοῦ καταλύσῃ τὴν ἐπ' ὀλέθρῳ γεγονυῖαν καταδίκην, ἡττήσας τὸν ὄφιν. Ἡρμοῖζε γὰρ μὴ δι' ἑτέρου νικηθῆναι τὸν πονηρὸν ἀλλὰ δι' ἐκείνου, ὃν δὴ καὶ ἐκόμπαζεν ἀπατήσας αὐτὸν τετυραννηκένα· ὅτι μὴ ἄλλως τὴν ἀμαρτίαν λυθῆναι καὶ τὴν κατάκρισιν δυνατὸν ἦν, εἰ μὴ πάλιν ὁ αὐτὸς ἐκεῖνος ἄνθρωπος, δι' ὃν εἶρητο τό “γῆ εἶ καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύσῃ”, ἀναπαλαίσας ἀνέλυσε τὴν ἀπόφασιν τὴν δι' αὐτὸν εἰς πάντας ἐξενηγεμένην ὅπως, καθὼς ἐν τῷ Ἀδάμ πάντες πρότερον ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτω δὴ πάλιν καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀνειληφῶτι Χριστῷ τὸν Ἀδάμ πάντες ζωοποιηθῶσιν.

angels. Thus the mountains are to symbolize the heavens, and the ninety-nine sheep the principalities and powers which the Shepherd and Commander left when He came down to look for His lost sheep. Man remained to be included in this number and multitude: the Lord put him on Himself and carried him back that he might not again, as I have said, be overwhelmed and submerged by the mounting waves and deceptions of pleasure. This was the reason why the Word assumed the man,<sup>107</sup> that He might through Himself defeat the Serpent and destroy the condemnation that existed for man's ruin. It was indeed fitting that the Evil One should be defeated by no one else but by him whom the Devil boasted he ruled since he first deceived him. For it was impossible otherwise to destroy the state of sin and condemnation unless the same man because of whom the words, *Earth thou art, and unto earth thou shalt return* (Gen 3:19), were spoken, should renew the contest and undo the sentence that had been passed against all men because of him. Thus, just as in Adam all men die, so also in Christ, who assumed Adam, all were made to be alive.<sup>107</sup>

In the opinion of such commentators as Bonwetsch,<sup>108</sup> Methodius shows that Adam was an earlier incarnation of Logos. Also Bracht speaks about Adam filled with Logos, who before the Fall was in the state of first creation, before time, immortal and perfect.<sup>109</sup> However, as Szczerba rightly notes, it seems hardly probable considering the problem of original sin<sup>110</sup> (whose presence in Methodius both of the above mentioned authors do not acknowledge). It seems, therefore, that Methodius thought of the incarnation of the Word into Christ as the only one.<sup>111</sup> As Patterson explains, the difficult statement that Christ became the same as Adam does not mean that Adam was the first incarnation of the Word but rather reflects Methodius' assumption based on the teaching of Irenaeus that *the Word [becomes] related to Adam's flesh* and that the Incarnation means that the Word assumed *our present human nature*. From this perspective Adam may be conceived as an anticipation of the incarnation of Christ.

<sup>106</sup> Musurillo τὸν ἄνθρωπον translated here as “human nature”.

<sup>107</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *Convivium decem virginum* III 6; Sch 95, 100-102; transl. H. Musurillo, 62-63 with alteration.

<sup>108</sup> N. Bonwetsch, *Die Theologie des Methodius von Olympus*, Berlin 1903, 92.

<sup>109</sup> K. Bracht, *Vollkommenheit und Vollendung*, 141.

<sup>110</sup> W. Szczerba, *A Bóg będzie wszystkim we wszystkim... Apokatastaza Grzegorza z Nyssy. Tło, źródła, kształt koncepcji*, Kraków 2008, 161.

<sup>111</sup> L.G. Patterson, *Methodius of Olympus*, 78.

Such a perception of Incarnation is reminiscent of using the term ἐνανθρώπησις by Origen.<sup>112</sup>

It seems, therefore, that the assumption of Adam by the Son of God is a version of the Adam-Christ typology, which is an excellent example how Irenaeus' concept of Divine Economy was re-worked in the light of the Alexandrine vision of the perfection of humanity which is its ultimate goal.<sup>113</sup> Methodius sums up his own deliberations as follows:

Προγεγύμνασται γὰρ μετὰ συστάσεων οὐκ εὐκαταφρονήτων ἐκ τῆς γραφῆς ὡς ἄρα ὁ πρωτόπλαστος οἰκείως εἰς αὐτὸν ἀναφέρεσθαι δύναται τὸν Χριστόν, οὐκέτι τύπος ὢν καὶ ἀπεικασία μόνον καὶ εἰκὼν τοῦ μονογενοῦς, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο σοφία γεγονώς καὶ λόγος. Δίκην γὰρ ὕδατος ὁ ἄνθρωπος συγκερασθεὶς τῇ σοφίᾳ καὶ τῇ ζωῇ τοῦτο γέγονεν, ὅπερ ἦν αὐτὸ τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐγκατασηψαν ἄκρατον φῶς. Ὅθεν ὁ ἀπόστολος εὐθυβόλως εἰς Χριστόν ἀνηκόντισε τὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἀδάμ.

We have now established, by means of Scriptural arguments that are not to be ignored, the fact that the first man may properly be referred to Christ Himself inasmuch as he is not merely a figure and representation and image of the Only-Begotten, but precisely this has he become - Wisdom and the Word. For the man<sup>113</sup> mingled like water with Wisdom and Life has become one with that pure light which inundated it. Hence the Apostle could apply directly to Christ, as arrows to their mark, all that was said of Adam.<sup>113</sup>

### 3.3 Gregory of Nyssa

#### 3.3.1 Definition of Nature

As far as I know, Gregory of Nyssa was the first Father of the Church who defined nature. Although his definition was elaborated during his polemics with Eunomius regarding the unity of God's nature, there is no doubt it applies as well to human nature, because Gregory compares God's nature to the human one and he considers the comparison clear to listeners/readers. This comparison is to explain Gregory's Trinitarian deliberations. Here there is the definition of nature, presented in his small work *To Ablabius*:

<sup>112</sup> L.G. Patterson, *Methodius of Olympus*, 133.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-79.

<sup>114</sup> Again, Musurillo translated here ὁ ἄνθρωπος as "human nature."

<sup>115</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *Convivium decem virginum* III 8; Sch 95, 106; transl. H. Musurillo, 65 with alteration.



ἡ δὲ φύσις μία ἐστίν, αὐτὴ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἠνωμένη καὶ ἀδιάτμητος ἀκριβῶς μονάς, οὐκ αὐξανομένη διὰ προσθήκης, οὐ μειουμένη δι' ὑφαιρέσεως, ἀλλ' ὅπερ ἐστίν ἐν οὐσα καὶ ἐν διαμένουσα κἂν ἐν πλήθει φαίνεται, ἄσχιτος καὶ συνεχῆς καὶ ὁλόκληρος καὶ τοῖς μετέχουσιν αὐτῆς τοῖς καθ' ἕκαστον οὐ συνδιαουμένη.

Nature is one, at union in itself, and an absolutely indivisible monad, not capable of increase by addition or of diminution by subtraction, but it is the same being and continually remaining one, inseparable even though it appears in plurality, continuous, complete, and not divided with the individuals who participate in it.<sup>116</sup>

In other works Gregory also talks about one body of our nature (παντὸς τοῦ τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν σώματος)<sup>117</sup> and compares our nature to one vivid being (καθάπερ ἐνόστινος ὄντος ζῶου πάσης τῆς φύσεως).<sup>118</sup> These statements are based on his definition of human nature considered as an indivisible unit/monad. In *To Ablabius* Gregory explains his concept:

τὸ τῆς φύσεως ὄνομα ἡμαρτημένως ἢ συνήθεια εἰς πλήθους σημασίαν ἀνάγει, οὔτε μειώσεως οὔτε αὐξήσεως κατὰ τὸν ἀληθῆ λόγον προσγινομένης τῆ φύσει, ὅταν ἐν πλείοσιν ἢ ἐλάττοσι θεωρῆται. μόνα γὰρ κατὰ σύνθεσιν ἀριθμεῖται, ὅσα κατ' ἰδίαν περιγραφὴν θεωρεῖται· ἡ δὲ περιγραφὴ ἐν ἐπιφανείᾳ σώματος καὶ μεγέθει καὶ τόπῳ καὶ τῇ διαφορᾷ τῆ κατὰ τὸ σχῆμα καὶ χρῶμα καταλαμβάνεται· τὸ δὲ ἔξω τούτων θεωρούμενον ἐκφεύγει τὴν διὰ τῶν τοιούτων περιγραφὴν.

Since according to true reasoning neither diminution nor increase attaches to any nature, when it is contemplated in a larger or smaller number. For it is only those things which are contemplated in their individual circumscription which are enumerated by way of addition. Now this circumscription is noted by bodily appearance, and size, and place, and difference of figure and colour, and that which is contemplated apart from these conditions is free from the circumscription which is formed by such categories.<sup>119</sup>

Gregory tries to introduce Ablabius to his thought by comparing nature to gold:

ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸν χρυσὸν φαμεν, κἂν εἰς πολλοὺς διακερατίζηται τύπους, ἕνα καὶ εἶναι καὶ λέγεσθαι· πολλὰ δὲ νομίσματα καὶ πολλοὺς στατήρας ὀνομάζομεν, οὐδένα τῆς φύσεως τοῦ χρυσοῦ πλεονασμὸν ἐν τῷ πλήθει τῶν στατήρων εὐρίσκοντες, διὸ καὶ πολὺς ὁ χρυσὸς λέγεται, ὅταν ἐν ὄγκῳ πλείονι ἢ σκεύεσιν ἢ νομίμασι θεωρῆται, πολλοὶ δὲ οἱ χρυσοὶ διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῆς ὕλης οὐκ ὀνομάζονται· εἰ μὴ τις οὕτω λέγοι, χρυσὸς πολλοὺς, ὡς τοὺς δαρεικοὺς ἢ τοὺς στατήρας, ἐφ' ὧν οὐχ ἡ ὕλη

We say that gold, even though it be cut into many figures, is one, and is so spoken of, but we speak of many coins or many staters, without finding any multiplication of the nature of gold by the number of staters; and for this reason we speak of gold, when it is contemplated in greater bulk, either in plate or in coin, as much, but we do not speak of it as many golds on account of the multitude of the material—except when one says there are many gold pieces (darics, for

<sup>116</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Ablabium, quod non sint tres dei*, GNO 3/1, 41; transl. NPNF II 5, 332 with alterations.

<sup>117</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *In illud: Tunc et ipse Filius*, GNO 3/2, 16.

<sup>118</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica* 32; GNO 3/4, 78.

<sup>119</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Ablabium, quod non sint tres dei*, GNO 3/1, 53; transl. NPNF II 5, 335.

ἀλλὰ τὰ κέρματα τὴν τοῦ πλήθους σημασίαν ἐδέξατο. κυρίως γὰρ ἔστιν οὐχὶ χρυσοῦς ἀλλὰ χρυσεὺς τούτους εἰπεῖν. ὡσπερ τοίνυν πολλοὶ μὲν οἱ χρῦσειοι στατήρες, χρυσὸς δὲ εἷς, οὕτω καὶ πολλοὶ μὲν οἱ καθ' ἕκαστον ἐν τῇ φύσει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου δεικνύμενοι, οἷον Πέτρος καὶ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης, εἷς δὲ ἐν τούτοις ὁ ἄνθρωπος.

instance, or staters), in which case it is not the material, but the pieces of money to which the significance of number applies: indeed, properly, we should not call them gold but golden. As, then, the golden staters are many, but the gold is one, so too those who are exhibited to us severally in the nature of man, as Peter, James, and John, are many, yet the man in them is one.<sup>120</sup>

Gregory considers nature to be one substance (οὐσία). In the homily *To the words: in the image and resemblance* he compares the way in which three first human beings were created to the relation between three divine persons and he calls these first three people three heads of entire human nature (τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος). Then, he calls them consubstantial (ὁμοούσιοι) as they follow the example of the Trinity, in whose image they were created.<sup>121</sup> Similarly in the treatise *Concerning the difference between essence and hypostasis* he calls men consubstantial (ὁμοούσιοι).<sup>122</sup> In another work he explains that thought as follows:

οὐδὲ Πέτρον καὶ Παῦλον καὶ Βαρνάβαν φαμέν τρεῖς οὐσίας· μία γὰρ καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ τῶν τοιούτων προσώπων ἡ οὐσία.

We do not call Peter, Paul and Barnabas three substances, for the essence (οὐσία) is one and the same for such persons.<sup>123</sup>

On this basis Gregory draws a conclusion that we do not speak about many human beings properly as actually only one man exists:

τὸ αὐτὸ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ἐν καὶ πολλὰ οὐ δύναται εἶναι· ἔστι δὲ Πέτρος καὶ Παῦλος καὶ Βαρνάβας ὁμολογουμένως κατὰ τὸ ἄνθρωπος εἷς ἄνθρωπος· κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ἄρα, τουτέστι κατὰ τὸ ἄνθρωπος, πολλοὶ οὐ δύνανται εἶναι. λέγονται δὲ πολλοὶ ἄνθρωποι καταχρηστικῶς δηλονότι καὶ οὐ κυρίως.

Something that is one in and of itself cannot become at the same time one and many. It is then clearly obvious that Peter, Paul and Barnabas are one man in respect of the notion of a man, so in that sense, i.e. in respect of the notion of a man, they are not many. They are called many men improperly and not in a proper sense.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Ablabium, quod non sint tres dei*, GNO 3/1, 53-54; transl. NPNF II 5, 335.

<sup>121</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De eo, quid sit, ad imagiem Dei et ad similitudinem*, PG 44, 1329.

<sup>122</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De differentia essentiae et hypostaseos*, PG 32, 325.

<sup>123</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Graecos ex communibus notionibus*, GNO 3/1, 21; transl. D. Stramara, 382; cf. *Contra Eunomium* I 495; *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* 59.

<sup>124</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Graecos ex communibus notionibus*, GNO 3/1, 25, transl. MP; cf. *Contra Eunomium* III 4, 55.

As in reference to divine nature we talk about one substance (οὐσία) and three hypostases, similarly in reference to human nature we deal with one substance (οὐσία) and many hypostases.

πολλὰς γὰρ ὑποστάσεις τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου καὶ  
τρεις ὑποστάσεις τοῦ ἑνὸς θεοῦ φαμεν δικαίως.

We rightly say many hypostases of the one  
man and three hypostases of the one God.<sup>126</sup>

Πέτρος γὰρ καὶ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης ἐν μὲν  
τῷ λόγῳ τῆς οὐσίας οἱ αὐτοὶ ἦσαν ἀλλήλοις  
(ἄνθρωπος γὰρ τούτων ἕκαστος), ἐν δὲ τοῖς  
ιδιώμασι τῆς ἑκάστου αὐτῶν ὑποστάσεως  
ἀλλήλοις οὐ συνεφέροντο.

Peter, James and John were the same in the  
sense of substance, because each of them  
was a man, but in the characteristics of their  
respective hypostases they were not alike.<sup>126</sup>

Does Gregory really treat divine οὐσία and human οὐσία equally? It seems that the only difference he discerns is that divine persons are not separated from each other by time and place and human persons, whose number is as well specified as the number of divine persons, do not appear simultaneously and at the same place. He believes that this is a reason why we have a way of talking about many man instead of talking properly about one man:

οὔτε γὰρ χρόνῳ διήρηται ἀλλήλων τὰ  
πρόσωπα τῆς θεότητος οὔτε τόπῳ, οὐ βουλῇ,  
οὐκ ἐπιτηδεύματι, οὐκ ἐνεργείᾳ, οὐ πάθει,  
οὐδενὶ τῶν τοιούτων· οἷαπερ θεωρεῖται ἐπὶ  
τῶν ἀνθρώπων· ἢ μόνον, ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ πατήρ  
ἐστι καὶ οὐχ υἱὸς καὶ ὁ υἱὸς υἱὸς ἐστι καὶ οὐ  
πατήρ, ὁμοίως καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον οὔτε  
πατήρ οὔτε υἱὸς. διόπερ οὐδεμία ἀνάγκη  
παρακρούει ἡμᾶς τρεῖς θεοὺς εἶπεν τὰ  
τρία πρόσωπα, ὥσπερ ἐφ' ἡμῶν πολλοὺς  
ἀνθρώπους φαμέν τὰ πολλὰ πρόσωπα διὰ τὰς  
εἰρημένας αἰτίας.

The persons of Divinity are not separated  
from one another either by time or place, not  
by will or by practice, not by activity or by  
passion, not by anything of this sort, such as  
is observed with regard to human beings. This  
alone is observed, that the Father is Father  
and not Son, and the Son is Son and not  
Father; and, likewise, the Holy Spirit is neither  
Father nor Son. For this very reason there is  
absolutely no necessity for anyone to trick us  
into calling the three persons three gods; just  
as we call many human beings many persons  
according to the aforesaid reasons.<sup>127</sup>

Although human persons live in different times, human nature remains immutable despite the flow of time:

<sup>125</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Graecos ex communibus notionibus*, GNO 3/1, 29, transl. MP.

<sup>126</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I 227; GNO 1, 93, transl. MP.

<sup>127</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Graecos ex communibus notionibus*, GNO 3/1, 25; transl. D. Stramara, 385.

τί ἔλαττον εἶχε τοῦ Ἀβραάμ κατὰ τὸν τῆς οὐσίας λόγον ὁ μετὰ δεκατέσσαρας γενεὰς ἀναδειχθεὶς Δαβίδ; ἄρά τι μετεποιήθη τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος ἐπὶ τούτου καὶ ἦττον ἄνθρωπος ἦν, ὅτι τῷ χρόνῳ μεταγενέστερος; καὶ τίς οὕτως ἡλίθιος ὥστε τοῦτο εἰπεῖν; εἷς γὰρ ἐφ' ἑκατέρων τῆς οὐσίας ὁ λόγος, οὐδὲν τῇ παρόδῳ τοῦ χρόνου συναλλοιούμενος, οὐδ' ἂν τις εἴποι τὸν μὲν μᾶλλον ἄνθρωπον εἶναι διὰ τὸ προήκειν τῷ χρόνῳ, τὸν δὲ ἔλαττον μετέχειν τῆς φύσεως, ὅτι μεθ' ἑτέρους τῇ ζωῇ ἐπεδήμησεν, ὥσπερ ἢ προαναλωθείσης ἐν τοῖς προλαβοῦσιν τῆς φύσεως, ἢ τοῦ χρόνου τὴν δύναμιν ἐν τοῖς παρωχηκόσι προδαπανήσαντος, οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῷ χρόνῳ ἔστιν ἀφορίζειν ἐκάστῳ τὰ μέτρα τῆς φύσεως, ἀλλὰ αὐτὴ μὲν ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς μένει διὰ τῶν ἐπιγινομένων ἑαυτὴν συντηροῦσα· ὁ δὲ χρόνος φέρεται κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον τρόπον εἴτε περιέχων εἴτε καὶ παραρρέων τὴν φύσιν παγίαν καὶ ἀμετάθετον ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις μένουσαν ὅροις.

What disadvantage, on the score of notion of essence, as compared with Abraham, had David who lived fourteen generations after? Did human nature changed in him; was he less a human being, because he was later in time? Who would be so foolish as to assert this? The definition of the essence is the same for both: the lapse of time does not change it. No one would assert that the one was more a man for being first in time, and the other less because he sojourned in life later; as if humanity had been exhausted on the first, or as if time had spent its chief power upon the deceased. For it is not in the power of time to define the measures of nature, but nature abides self-contained, preserving herself in succeeding generations: and time has a course of its own, whether surrounding, or flowing by this nature, which remains firm and immutable within her own limits.<sup>128</sup>

All sorts of scholars understand that unity of human nature in different ways and they recognize in it influences of different philosophical ideas. The main difference between scholars lies in admitting or not the transcendence of human nature, that is its being separated from human individuals. The school that finds in Gregory's teaching Platonic influence admits, of course, the transcendence. Harold Fredrik Cherniss considered human nature the Platonic idea and he thought that human beings participate in it as in an idea. He even claimed that thanks to the concept of participation Gregory solves the problem of the one and the many in all dimensions. Although the concept cannot be applied to the Trinity, Cherniss maintained that it really could be drawn from Gregory's teaching, though would be rejected if spoken directly.<sup>129</sup> A Polish specialist in ancient philosophy, Maciej Manikowski explains that the concept of human nature contains the Platonic theory of the participation of sensual things in ideas and of things in being. We could say that the essence (οὐσία) is a carrier of substantial characteristics and a hypostasis needs to participate in the essence and in the unity provided by the essence in order to become an individual carrier of substantial characteristics.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>128</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* I 173-175; GNO 1, 78; transl. MP.

<sup>129</sup> H.F. Cherniss, *The Platonism of Gregory of Nyssa*, Berkeley 1930, 38.

<sup>130</sup> M. Manikowski, *Filozofia w obronie dogmatu. Argumenty antytryteistyczne Grzegorza z Nyssy na tle tradycji*, Wrocław 2002, 192.

The second group of scholars finds in Gregory's teaching a Stoic influence. The crucial work of that trend was a book by Hans Urs von Balthasar *Présence et pensée*. He claims that human nature as spiritual constitutes a concrete universal perfectly one (*un universel concret parfaitement un*) and as material it is the same concrete universal participated by innumerable individuals (*ce même universel concret participé par d'innombrables individus*).<sup>131</sup> He explains afterwards that the basis for that concept lies in the Stoic idea of καθόλον, compound by specific parts. That concrete totality (*totalité concret*) is not only a concentration of the connected parts. It constitutes a real, organic and living whole, immanently contained in its parts, that makes them similar and related to the entirety.<sup>132</sup>

Probably another Polish scholar, Tomasz Grodecki, fits into that group as he claims that a hypostasis (person) means a concrete way of being of an essence. The one and indivisible substance exists only as a concrete number of hypostases; the hypostases exist *in it* – Gregory calls a hypostasis something that exists in an essence (ένούσιον).<sup>133</sup>

There are also a few scholars that understand Gregory in the Neoplatonic way. Arthur Hilary Armstrong, while stressing that it is very difficult to determine the philosophical source of Gregory's thought, claims that Gregory comprehends humanity in the way Plotinus did: as a concrete, living spiritual unity; its basis lies in the shared intellect and life, one for all men and at the same time really individual for everyone.<sup>134</sup> He explains afterwards a difference between the concepts of Gregory and Plotinus, stressing an influence of two Neoplatonic philosophers: Iamblichus and Proclus on Gregory. David L. Balás gives a similar meaning to the unity of human nature. He emphasizes that according to Gregory the unity of human nature is based not on a material substratum (*Contra Eunomium* III 5, 22), but on a spiritual unity. Gregory speaks about not only logical, but real unity of the nature, which does not exist independently and above individuals, but only in them. These concepts seem to be an original Christian transformation of Neoplatonic (of Porphyry) logic and ontology.<sup>135</sup>

It does not seem correct to insist that Gregory used concepts of only one philosophical school. Eclecticism or syncretism was very popular already in the 2<sup>nd</sup>

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131 H.U. von Balthasar, *Présence et Pensée. Essai sur la philosophie religieuse de Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1988, 24.

132 H.U. von Balthasar, *Présence et Pensée*, footnote (1), 27.

133 T. Grodecki, *Wprowadzenie*, in: Grzegorz z Nyssy, *Drobne pisma trynitarnie*, Kraków 2001, 14.

134 A.H. Armstrong, *Platonic elements in St Gregory of Nyssa's doctrine of man*, "Dominican Studies" 1 (1948), 117.

135 D.L. Balás, *The Unity of Human Nature in Basil's and Gregory of Nyssa's Polemics against Eunomius*, "Studia Patristica" 14 (1976), 279-280.

century and it soon became a dominating trend.<sup>136</sup> A lot of original concepts, typical for concrete schools, with time became a universal wisdom. Actually, also new systems arisen after the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. drew from the teachings of their antecedents without limiting themselves to only one tradition. Gregory himself never quoted any philosopher as a source of his teaching, so it is very difficult to determine which one exerted an influence on him. Besides, he was an independent thinker, who despite drawing from others frequently worked out his own solutions of the problems. That is why I am personally convinced that, as Christopher Stead said,<sup>137</sup> in his concept of the unity of human nature Gregory did not follow any philosophical school, but – as often – he created his original theory.

### 3.3.2 Double Creation

The concept of the unity of human nature is the basis if not for the entire theology of Gregory, certainly for the major parts thereof. It underlies the entire theological anthropology, including the teaching on grace.<sup>138</sup> Also based on the concept of unity of the mankind are soteriology and eschatology (but they are beyond my interest at the moment). Let us then return to anthropology. Already Gregory's teaching on creation is pervaded with the idea of the unity of human nature. Gregory believes that God created man in two stages/acts.<sup>139</sup> In the first one God created the only indivisible genderless human nature and only thereafter in the second act He created an individual human being characterized by concrete gender. Gregory originally solves a seemingly irresolvable aporia where does the division into genders come from if man was created in the likeness of God and there is not such division in God. Gregory concluded that in the act of second creation God created humans endowed with gender because of His *foreknowledge* of the fall which was to come. The literal explanation is as follows:

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<sup>136</sup> G. Reale, *Storia della filosofia antica*, vol. 3, Milano 1987, 523.

<sup>137</sup> Ch. Stead, *Individual personality in Origen and Cappadocian Fathers*, in: *Arché e Telos: l'antropologia di Origene e di Gregorio di Nissa: analisi storico-religiosa: atti del colloquio, Milano, 17-19 maggio 1979*, Milano 1981, 190-191.

<sup>138</sup> M. Przyszychowska, *Nauka o łasce w dziełach św. Grzegorza z Nyssy*, Kraków 2010.

<sup>139</sup> I discussed this problem in detail in the article: *Koncepcja podwójnego stworzenia jako próba wyjaśnienia genezy świata zmysłowego. Filon z Aleksandrii, Orygenes, Grzegorz z Nyssy*, "Vox Patrum" 23 (2003), vol. 44-45, 203-220.

ὁ εἰδὼς τὰ πάντα πρὶν γενέσεως αὐτῶν, καθὼς φησιν ἢ προφητεία, ἐπακολουθήσας, μᾶλλον δὲ προκατανοήσας τῇ προγνωστικῇ δυνάμει, πρὸς ὃ τι ῥέπει κατὰ τὸ αὐτοκρατέες τε καὶ αὐτεξούσιον τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης προαιρέσεως ἢ κίνησις, ἐπειδὴ τὸ ἐσόμενον εἶδεν, ἐπιτεχνᾶται τῇ εἰκόνι τὴν περὶ τὸ ἄρρην καὶ θῆλυον διαφορὰν, ἣτις οὐκ ἐτι πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀρχέτυπον βλέπει, ἀλλὰ καθὼς εἴρηται, τῇ ἀλογωτέρᾳ προσωφκείωται φύσει. [...] Εἰπὼν ὁ λόγος ὅτι ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, τῷ ἀορίστῳ τῆς σημασίας ἅπαν ἐνδείκνυται τὸ ἀνθρώπινον. Οὐ γὰρ συνωνομάσθη τῷ κτίσματι νῦν ὁ Ἀδάμ, καθὼς ἐν τοῖς ἐφεξῆς ἡ ἱστορία φησίν· ἀλλ' ὄνομα τῷ κτισθέντι ἀνθρώπῳ οὐχ ὁ τίς, ἀλλ' ὁ καθόλου ἐστίν. Οὐκοῦν τῇ καθολικῇ τῆς φύσεως κλήσει τοιοῦτόν τι ὑπονοεῖν ἐναγόμεθα, ὅτι τῇ θεῖα προγνώσει τε καὶ δυνάμει πᾶσα ἡ ἀνθρωπότης ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ κατασκευῇ περιείληπται.

He Who, as the prophetic writing says, *knows all things before they be* (Dn 13:42), following out, or rather perceiving beforehand by His power of foreknowledge what, in a state of independence and freedom, is the tendency of the motion of man's will, – as He saw, I say, what would be, He devised for His image the distinction of male and female, which has no reference to the Divine Archetype, but, as we have said, is an approximation to the less rational nature. [...] In saying that *God created man* (Gen 1:27) the text indicates, by the indefinite character of the term, entire human nature<sup>141</sup>; for was not Adam here named together with the creation, as the history tells us in what follows; yet the name given to the man created is not the particular, but the general name: thus we are led by the employment of the general name of nature to some such view as this – that thanks to the Divine foreknowledge and power all humanity is included in the first creation.<sup>141</sup>

Gregory gives other qualities of human nature. He believes that it is defined in the sense that from the moment of creation it contains within it potentially a strictly defined number of people who will be born throughout the history of the Earth.

Χρὴ γὰρ Θεῷ μηδὲν ἀόριστον ἐν τοῖς γεγενημένοις παρ' αὐτοῦ νομίζειν· ἀλλ' ἐκάστου τῶν ὄντων εἶναι τι πέρασ καὶ μέτρον, τῇ τοῦ πεποικηκότος σοφίᾳ περιμετρούμενον. Ὡσπερ τοίνυν ὁ τίς ἄνθρωπος τῷ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα ποσῷ περιείργεται, καὶ μέτρον αὐτῷ τῆς ὑποστάσεως ἢ πηλικότης ἐστίν, ἢ συναρταριζομένη τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τοῦ σώματος· οὕτως οἶμα καθάπερ ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι ὅλον τὸ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος πλήρωμα τῇ προγνωστικῇ δυνάμει παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν ὄλων περιοχεθῆναι, καὶ τοῦτο διδάσκειν τὸν λόγον τὸν εἰπόντα, ὅτι καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ κατ' εἰκόνα Θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν. Οὐ γὰρ ἐν μέρει τῆς φύσεως ἢ εἰκῶν, οὐδὲ ἐν τινὶ τῶν καθ' αὐτὸν θεωρουμένων ἢ χάρις· ἀλλ' ἐφ' ἅπαν τὸ γένος ἐπίσης ἢ τοιαύτη διήκει δύνამις.

For it is fitting for God not to regard any of the things made by Him as unspecified, but that each existing thing should have some limit and measure prescribed by the wisdom of its Maker. Now just as any particular man is limited by his bodily dimensions, and the peculiar size which is conjoined with the superficies of his body is the measure of his separate existence, so I think that the entire plenitude of human nature was included by the God of all, by His power of foreknowledge, as it were in one body, and that this is what the text teaches us which says, *God created man, in the image of God created He him* (Gen 1:27). For the image is not in part of our nature, nor is the grace in any one of the things found in that nature, but this power extends equally to all the race.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>140</sup> In the translation by P. Schaff there is an expression – wrong in my opinion – “all mankind”.

<sup>141</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De officio hominis* 16; PG 44, 184-185; transl. NPNF II 5, 406 with alterations.

<sup>142</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De officio hominis* 16; PG 44, 185D; transl. NPNF II 5, 406.

It seems that the second creation was needed exactly in order for human nature to attain this plenitude. If it were not for sin the anticipated number of people would come to the world in the angelical (mysterious) way. Therefore, sexual reproduction is not only some kind of punishment for the sin (which was to occur in the future), but first of all a way – alternative to the angelical one – for human nature to reach its God-intended fullness (πλήρωμα).

Ὁ γὰρ τὰ πάντα παραγαγὼν εἰς τὸ εἶναι, καὶ ὅλον ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ θελήματι τὸν ἄνθρωπον πρὸς τὴν θείαν εἰκόνα διαμορφώσας, οὐ ταῖς κατ' ὀλίγον προσθήκαις τῶν ἐπιγινομένων ἀνέμεινεν ἰδεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ ἴδιον πλήρωμα τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν ψυχῶν τελειούμενον· ἀλλ' ἄθρόως αὐτῷ πληρώματι πᾶσαν τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν διὰ τῆς προγνωστικῆς ἐνεργείας κατανοήσας, καὶ τῆ ὑψηλῆ τε καὶ ἰσαγγέλῳ λήξει τιμήσας, ἐπειδὴ προεῖδε τῆ ὀρατικῆ δυνάμει μὴ εὐθυποροῦσαν πρὸς τὸ καλὸν τὴν προαίρεσιν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τῆς ἀγγελικῆς ζωῆς ἀποπίπτουσιν· ὡς ἂν μὴ κολοβωθεῖ τὸ τῶν ψυχῶν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πλῆθος, ἐκπεσὼν ἐκείνου τοῦ τρόπου, καθ' ὃν οἱ ἄγγελοι πρὸς τὸ πλῆθος ἠὺξήθησαν· διὰ τοῦτο τὴν κατάλληλον τοῖς εἰς ἁμαρτίαν κατολισθήσασιν τῆς αὐξήσεως ἐπίνοιαν ἐγκατασκευάζει τῆ φύσει, ἀντὶ τῆς ἀγγελικῆς μεγαλοφυΐας τὸν κτηνώδη τε καὶ ἄλογον τῆς ἐξ ἀλλήλων διαδοχῆς τρόπον ἐμφυτεύσας τῆ ἀνθρωπότητι. [...] Ὅντως γὰρ κτηνώδης ἐγένετο ὁ τὴν ῥώδη ταύτην γένεσιν τῆ φύσει παραδεξάμενος, διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ ὑλῶδες ῥοπήν.

He Who brought all things into being and fashioned man as a whole by His own will to the Divine image, did not wait to see the number of souls made up to its proper fullness by the gradual additions of those coming after; but while looking upon the nature of man in its entirety and fullness by the exercise of His foreknowledge, and bestowing upon it a lot exalted and equal to the angels, since He saw beforehand by His all-seeing power the failure of their will to keep a direct course to what is good, and its consequent declension from the angelic life, in order that the multitude of human souls might not be cut short by its fall from that mode by which the angels were increased and multiplied,—for this reason, I say, He formed for our nature that contrivance for increase which befits those who had fallen into sin, implanting in mankind, instead of the angelic majesty of nature, that animal and irrational mode by which they now succeed one another. [...] For he truly became animal, who received in his nature the present mode of transient generation, on account of his inclination to material things.<sup>143</sup>

Thus, the history of the creation of man is as follows: in the act of the first creation God created human nature understood as an ontic unity. It has its fullness intended by God; this fullness will be realized after all people throughout the history of the world come into physical existence. Human nature was designed for a life similar to those of the angels but God, in His foresight of the fall of man that was to come, in the act of the second creation divided human nature into sexes. As a result of the second creation the first individual man – Adam – was created. However, apart from the division into sexes Adam did not yet experience any other consequence of the sin (foreknown by God). All other consequences of his disobedience occurred only after the act of sin.

<sup>143</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De opificio hominis* 17; PG 44, 189-192; NPNF II 5, 407 with alterations.



All qualities that we attribute to the present condition of people, that is primarily carnality in the form we are familiar with, susceptible to the passage of time, mortality and passions, Gregory calls the animal aspect of life. When he talks about the consequences of sin he refers to the image of the garments of skin (Gen 3:21), interpreting them allegorically. The reasonable human nature gifted with supernatural life put on an element that was foreign to it and that we will get rid of only upon resurrection.

ἡμῶν ἀποδυσασμένων τὸν νεκρὸν ἐκείνον καὶ εἰδεχθῆ χιτῶνα, τὸν ἐκ τῶν ἀλόγων δερμάτων ἡμῖν ἐπιβληθέντα (δέρμα δὲ ἀκούων τὸ σχῆμα τῆς ἀλόγου φύσεως νοεῖν μοι δοκῶ, ὃ πρὸς τὸ πάθος οἰκειωθέντες περιεβλήθημεν), πάντα ὅσα τοῦ ἀλόγου δέρματος περὶ ἡμᾶς ἦν ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ χιτῶνος συναποβαλλόμεθα. Ἔστι δὲ ἃ προσέλαβεν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀλόγου δέρματος, ἡ μίξις, ἡ σύλληψις, ὁ τόκος, ὁ ῥύπος, ἡ θηλή, ἡ τροφή, ἡ ἐκποίησις, ἡ κατ' ὀλίγον ἐπὶ τὸ τέλειον αὔξησις, ἡ ἀκμὴ, τὸ γῆρας, ἡ νόσος, ὁ θάνατος.

When we have put off that dead and ugly garment which was made for us from irrational skins (when I hear “skins” I interpret it as the form of the irrational nature which we have put on from our association with passion), we throw off every part of our irrational skin along with the removal of the garment. These are things which we have received from the irrational skin: sexual intercourse, conception, childbearing, dirt, lactation, nourishment, evacuation, gradual growth to maturity, the prime of life, old age, disease, and death.<sup>144</sup>

Therefore, all of those aspects of life came to be shared by people only after the first sin, were lent to human nature as something external, foreign; they are not an integral element of not only the first (which is obvious) but also the second creation. Although they occurred as a result of the second creation, Adam was no longer similar to God because of the fact that his gender had been specified, he did not experience other afflictions of animal nature yet.

### 3.3.3 Human Nature as the Lost Sheep

Talking about the first sin Gregory compares the fall of human nature to the lost sheep Jesus mentioned in the parable (Lk 15:1-7). This comparison very suggestively shows the unity of human nature which is so real that human nature may be considered as a single organism.

ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντως ἐσμέν, ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις, τοῦτο τὸ πρόβατον, ὃ διὰ τοῦ γενέσθαι πρωτότοκος ὁ ἀγαθὸς ποιμὴν ἀνεσώσατο.

We, the human race, are surely that sheep, which the Good Shepherd has rescued by becoming Firstborn.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De anima et resurrectione*, GNO 3/3, 113-114, PG 46, 148-149; transl. C.P. Roth, 114.

<sup>145</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* III 2, 49; GNO 2, 68; transl. S.G. Hall, 81; cf. *In canticum canticorum*, hom. XII; GNO 6, 364.

ὁ ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας ἡμῶν ὡς ποιμὴν τὸ πεπλανημένον πρόβατον μέτεισιν; ἡμεῖς δὲ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐσμὲν ἐκεῖνο τὸ πρόβατον, οἱ τῆς λογικῆς ἑκατοντάδος ἀποβουκοληθέντες διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

The agent of our salvation looks for the lost sheep. We, people are this lost sheep separated by sin from the flock of a hundred rational sheep.<sup>147</sup>

Gregory believes that before the sin human nature persisted in the unity with angels forming a sort of a flock; in another place he compares this unity to a chorus which sings a harmonious chant.

τὸ γὰρ Μαελεθ ὄνομα διὰ χορείας τὴν ἐρμηνείαν ἔχει, οἷον δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς νίκης τοῦ Δαβὶδ διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας ἔγνωμεν ὅτι πεσόντος τοῦ Γολιάθ ἐν τῇ μονομαχίᾳ τοῦ νέου θεραπεύουσι τὸν ἐναγώνιον αὐτοῦ πόνον ὑπαπαντῶσαι διὰ χορείας αἱ νεάνιδες· οὕτως πᾶσαν νίκην ἰδρωτὶ τε καὶ πόνῳ κατὰ τῶν ἀντιπάλων κατορθουμένην ἢ περὶ τοῦ Μαελεθ ἐπιγραφὴ εὐφροσύνην λέγει καὶ χοροστασίαν ἐκδέχασθαι, πάσης τῆς νοητῆς κτίσεως ἑαυτὴν καθάπερ ἐν χοροῦ συμφωνίᾳ τοῖς νικηταῖς συναρμολογῶσιν. ἦν γὰρ ὅτε μία τῆς λογικῆς φύσεως ἦν ἡ χοροστασία πρὸς ἓνα βλέπουσα τὸν τοῦ χοροῦ κορυφαῖον, καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἐκεῖθεν ἐνδιδομένην αὐτοῦ τῇ κινήσει διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἁρμονίαν τὸν χορὸν ἀνελίσσουσα. ἐπειδὴ δὲ τὴν ἔνθεον ἐκείνην διέλυσε τοῦ χοροῦ συνωδίαν παρεμπεσοῦσα ἡ ἁμαρτία καὶ τοῖς ποσὶ τῶν πρώτων ἀνθρώπων τῶν ταῖς ἀγγελικαῖς δυνάμεσι συγχορευόντων τὸν τῆς ἀπάτης ὄλισθον ὑποχέασα πτώμα ἐποίησεν, ὅθεν διεσπᾶσθη τῆς πρὸς τοὺς ἀγγέλους συναφείας ὁ ἄνθρωπος, τοῦ πτώματος τὴν συμβολὴν διαλύσαντος τούτου χάριν πολλῶν ἰδρωτῶν χρεῖα τῷ πεπτωκότῳ καὶ πόνῳ, ἵνα τὸν ἐπικείμενον αὐτοῦ τῷ πτώματι καταγωνισάμενός τε καὶ ἀνατρέψας πάλιν ἀνορθωθῇ, γέρας τῆς κατὰ τοῦ παλαίοντος νίκης τὴν θεῖαν χοροστασίαν δεξάμενος.

The inscription about Maeleth says that rejoicing and dancing await every victory over the adversaries which is achieved by sweat and labour, since the entire spiritual creation joins in an harmonious choral chant, as it were, with the victors. For there was a time when the dance of the rational nature was one, and looked to the one leader of the chorus, and, in its movement in relation to his command, interpreted the choral song in relation to the harmony exhibited thence. But later, when sin occurred, it put an end to that divine concord of the chorus, when it poured the slipperiness of deceit at the feet of the first humans who used to sing in chorus with the angelic powers and caused the fall, wherefore man was separated from connection with the angels. Because the fall put an end to this conjunction, there is the necessity of many hardships and labours by the one who has fallen, that he might again be restored, once he has prevailed against and overthrown the sentence that was imposed upon him by the fall, and has received the divine dance as a prize of his victory over the opponent.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarem*, GNO 3/1, 152; transl. MP.

<sup>147</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *In inscriptions psalmodum*, hom. II; GNO 5, 86; transl. R. Heine, 138-139.

Sin destroyed that unity and harmony, pulled human nature down from the heights towards the animal way of life.

ἦν ποτε καὶ τὸ καθ' ἡμᾶς τῷ παντὶ ἐναρίθμιον· συνετελοῦμεν γὰρ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς τὴν ἱερὰν τῶν λογικῶν προβάτων ἑκατοντάδα. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀπεβουκολήθη τῆς οὐρανοῦ διαγωγῆς τὸ ἐν πρόβατον ἢ ἡμετέρα φύσις διὰ κακίας πρὸς τὸν ἀλμυρὸν τοῦτον καὶ αὐχμῶντα τόπον κατασπασθεῖσα, οὐκέτι ὁ αὐτὸς ἀριθμὸς ἐπὶ τοῦ ποιμνίου τῶν ἀπλανῶν μνημονεύεται, ἀλλ' ἐνενήκοντα καὶ ἐννέα κατονομάζονται.

Once our nature too was counted within the totality of existence; for we too went to make up the sacred hundred sheep, the rational beings. But when the one sheep – our nature – was led astray from the heavenly way by evil, and was dragged down to this parched salty place, the flock which had not strayed did not add up to the same number as before, but are said to by ninety-nine (Mt 18:12-13).<sup>148</sup>

Just as the whole nature fell, the whole was healed thanks to the fact that the Word took it upon itself, that is became incarnated.

ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν τὸ κεφάλαιον τῆς συμφορᾶς ἡμῶν τοῦτο ἦν, τὸ ἐξοικειωθῆναι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ πατρὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπινον καὶ τῆς θείας ἐπόψεώς τε καὶ κηδεμονίας ἔξω γενέσθαι, διὰ τοῦτο ὁ πᾶσαν τὴν λογικὴν κτίσιν ποιμαίνων καταλιπὼν ἐν τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς τὴν ἀπλανῆ τε καὶ ὑπερκόσμιον ποιμνὴν τὸ πεπλανημένον πρόβατον, τὴν ἡμετέραν λέγω φύσιν, ὑπὸ φιλανθρωπίας μετέρχεται. πολλοστὸν γὰρ ἐστὶ καὶ ἐλάχιστον μέρος, εἰ πρὸς τὸ πᾶν κρίνοιτο, ἢ ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσιν ἢ μόνῃ κατὰ τὸ τῆς παραβολῆς αἶνιγμα τῆς λογικῆς ἑκατοντάδος διὰ τῆς κακίας ἀποφοιτήσασα.

It was therefore because the chief feature of our calamity was that human nature had lost its kinship with the good Father and come to be outside the divine supervision and care, that the Shepherd of the whole rational creation, leaving on the heights the unerring and supernal flock, for love of humanity pursued the lost sheep, I mean, our nature; for human nature is the last and least fraction, the race which in the figure of the parable was the only one of the rational hundred that went astray through evil (Mt 18:12).<sup>149</sup>

In the above quoted texts Gregory nowhere refers to Adam but speaks exclusively about human sin. This has become a basis for claiming that Gregory does not refer to Adam's sin at all but speaks generally about human sin understood as the sum total of sins of all people.<sup>150</sup> This is not true, however. In at least one place Gregory speaks about the sheep – human nature going astray with clear reference to Adam:

<sup>148</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *In Ecclesiasten*, hom II, GNO 5, 304-305; transl. S.G. Hall, R. Moriarty, 52 with alteration.

<sup>149</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* III 10, 11; GNO 2, 293; transl. S.G. Hall, 222 with alterations.

<sup>150</sup> J. Vives, *El pecado original en San Gregorio di Nisa*, in: *Pecado original; XXIX Semana Española de Teología*, Madrid 1970, 176.

οὐκοῦν πολλὰς ἐτῶν ἑκατοντάδας ἐπεβίω μετὰ τὴν παρακοὴν ὁ πρωτόπλαστος, ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐψεύσατο εἰπὼν Ἐν ἡ ἡμέρᾳ φάγητε, θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε. διὰ γὰρ τοῦ ἀλλοτριωθῆναι αὐτὸν τῆς ὄντως ζωῆς αὐθημερὸν ἐκυρώθη κατ' αὐτοῦ ἢ τοῦ θανάτου ἀπόφασις, μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ χρόνοις ὕστερον καὶ ὁ σωματικὸς τῷ Ἀδὰμ ἐπικολούθησε θάνατος, ὁ τοίνυν διὰ τοῦτο ἐλθὼν, ἵνα ζητήσῃ καὶ σῶσῃ τὸ ἀπολωλὸς, ὅπερ ἐν τῇ παραβολῇ ὁ ποιμὴν πρόβατον ὀνομάζει, καὶ εὗρισκει τὸ ἀπολωλὸς καὶ ἀναλαμβάνει ἐπὶ τῶν ἰδίων ὤμων ὅλον τὸ πρόβατον, οὐ μόνην τὴν τοῦ προβάτου δοράν, ἵνα ἄρτιον ποιήσῃ τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπον, διὰ ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος ἀνακραθέντα πρὸς τὴν θεότητα.

Accordingly the first man lived many hundred years after his disobedience, and yet God lied not when He said, *In the day that ye eat thereof ye shall surely die* (Gen 2:17). For by the fact of his alienation from the true life, the sentence of death was ratified against him that self-same day: and after this, at a much later time, there followed also the bodily death of Adam. He therefore Who came for this cause that He might seek and save that which was lost, (that which the shepherd in the parable calls the sheep), both finds that which is lost, and carries home on His shoulders the whole sheep, not its skin only, that He may make the man of God complete, united to the deity in body and in soul.<sup>151</sup>

It seems, therefore, that the moment of the fall of human nature which Gregory calls the separation of the sheep from the flock of reasonable creatures is the historic sin of the first man – Adam. On the other hand, all participants in human nature were one way or the other involved in that sin, but this will be discussed later.

### 3.3.4 We Were Expelled from Paradise

Many a time, as we saw above – Gregory speaks about the sin of human nature which went astray as if it were a single body – a sheep. He also makes multiple remarks about the sin of Adam, the first parent, and claims that we were also together with him expelled from paradise that is we have our part in the consequences of that sin, which is primarily breaking the communion with God. In *On Virginity* Gregory calls upon all to return to the beginning saying that we were all expelled together with the first parent:

<sup>151</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* 175; GNO 2, 385-386; transl. NPNF II 5, 127.

Εἰ οὖν αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπίνοια τῆς τοῦ  
ζητουμένου εὐρέσεως, ἡ τῆς θείας εἰκόνας εἰς  
τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀποκατάστασις τῆς νῦν ἐν τῷ τῆς  
σαρκὸς ῥύπῳ κεκαλυμμένης, ἐκεῖνο γενώμεθα,  
ὃ ἦν παρὰ τὴν πρώτην ζωὴν ὁ πρωτόπλαστος.  
Τί οὖν ἐκεῖνος ἦν; Γυμνὸς μὲν τῆς τῶν νεκρῶν  
δερμάτων ἐπιβολῆς, ἐν παρρησίᾳ δὲ τὸ τοῦ  
θεοῦ πρόσωπον βλέπων, οὐπω δὲ διὰ γέυσεως  
καὶ ὄρασεως τὸ καλὸν κρίνων, ἀλλὰ μόνον  
«τοῦ κυρίου κατατρυφῶν» καὶ τῆ δοθείσῃ  
βοηθῶ πρὸς τοῦτο συγχρώμενος, καθὼς  
ἐπισημαίνεται ἡ θεία γραφή, ὅτι οὐ πρότερον  
αὐτὴν ἔγνω, πρὶν ἐξορισθῆναι τοῦ παραδείσου  
καὶ πρὶν ἐκεῖνην ἀντὶ τῆς ἀμαρτίας, ἦν  
ἀπατηθεῖσα ἐξήμαρτε, τῆ τῶν ὠδίνων τιμωρία  
κατακριθῆναι. Δι' ἧς τοίνυν ἀκολουθίας ἔξω  
τοῦ παραδείσου γεγόναμεν τῷ προπάτορι  
συνεκβληθέντες, καὶ νῦν διὰ τῆς αὐτῆς ἔξεστιν  
ἡμῖν παλινδρομήσασιν ἐπανελθεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν  
ἀρχαίαν μακαριότητα.

This concern, then, for the finding of what  
is lost is the restoration to the original state  
of the divine image which is now covered by  
the filth of the flesh. Let us become what the  
first being was during the first period of his  
existence. But what was he? Liberated from  
the threat of death, looking freely upon the  
face of God, not yet judging the beautiful by  
taste and sight, but only the Lord and using  
the helpmate given to him for this purpose,  
as Holy Scripture tells us, because he did not  
know her earlier, before he was driven out  
of paradise, and before she was condemned  
to the punishment of the pains of childbirth  
for the sin which she committed, having  
been deceived. Through this sequence of  
events, we, together with our first father, were  
excluded from paradise, and now, through  
the same sequence, it is possible for us to  
retrace the steps and return to the original  
blessedness.<sup>152</sup>

In the homily *Against Those Who Delay Baptism* he persuades people to return to paradise through baptism.

Ἔξω τοῦ παραδείσου τυγχάνεις, ὁ  
κατηχούμενος, κοινωνῶν τῆς ἐξορίας τῷ  
Ἀδάμ τῷ προπάτορι. Νῦν δέ σοι τῆς θύρας  
ὑπανοιγομένης, εἴσελθε ὄθεν ἐξῆλθες, καὶ  
μὴ βραδύνης, μήπου θάνατος παρεμπεσῶν  
ἀποφράξῃ τὴν εἴσοδον.

You are outside paradise, catechumen,  
because you participate in the expulsion of  
your progenitor Adam. So now when the door  
stands wide open enter whence you came from  
and do not procrastinate so that death does  
not surprise you and hinder your entrance  
there.<sup>153</sup>

In *The Homily on the Day of Lights* he again speaks about return to paradise identifying Adam's joy with ours.

<sup>152</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De virginitate* 12, 4; GNO 8/1, 302; transl. V. Woods Callahan, 45-46.

<sup>153</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Adversus eos, qui baptismum differunt*, GNO 10/2, 359; transl. MP.

σὺ γὰρ ἀληθῶς ὑπάρχεις δέσποτα καθαρὰ καὶ ἀέναος τῆς ἀγαθωσύνης πηγῆ, ὃς ἀπεστράφησ ἡμᾶς δικαίως καὶ ἠλέησας φιλανθρώπως, ἐμίσησας καὶ διηλλάγησ, κατηράσω καὶ εὐλόγησας, ἐξώρισας τοῦ παραδείσου καὶ πάλιν ἀνεκαλέσω, ἐξέδυσας τὰ φύλλα τῆσ σικκῆσ τὴν ἀσχήμονα σκέπην καὶ περιέβαλεσ ἱμάτιον πολυτίμητον, ἦνοιξας τὸ δεσμοτήριον καὶ ἀφήκασ τοὺσ κατακεκρυμένουσ, ἐρράντισασ ὕδατι καθαρῷ καὶ τῶν ῥύπων ἐκάθαρασ, οὐκέτι καλούμενοσ παρά σου ὁ Ἄδὰμ αἰσχυνθήσεται οὐδὲ παρά τοῦ συνειδότοσ ἐλεγχόμενοσ ἐγκαλύψεται ὑπὸ τῆ λόχημ τῶ παραδείσου κρυπτόμενοσ οὔτε μὴν ἡ φλογίνη ῥομφαία κυκλώσει τὸν παράδεισον ἀπρόσιτον τοῖσ ἐγγίζουσι ποιούσα τὴν εἴσοδον, πάντα δὲ ἡμῖν τοῖσ κληρονόμοισ τῆσ ἀμαρτίας μετεσκεύασθη πρὸσ εὐφροσύνην. καὶ βατὸσ μὲν ἀνθρώπω παράδεισοσ καὶ οὐρανὸσ αὐτόσ, συνηρμόσθη δὲ εἰσ φιλίαν ἢ κτίσισ ἢ ἐγκόσμιόσ τε καὶ ὑπερκόσμοισ πάλαι πρὸσ ἑαυτὴν στασιάζουσα καὶ ἄνθρωποι τοῖσ ἀγγέλοισ ἐγενόμεθα σύμφωνοι τὴν αὐτὴν ἐκείνοισ εὐσεβοῦντεσ θεολογίαν.

For Thou verily, O Lord, art the pure and eternal fount of goodness, Who didst justly turn away from us, and in loving kindness didst have mercy upon us. Thou didst hate, and wert reconciled; Thou didst curse, and didst bless; Thou didst banish us from Paradise, and didst recall us; Thou didst strip off the fig-tree leaves, an unseemly covering, and put upon us a costly garment; Thou didst open the prison, and didst release the condemned; Thou didst sprinkle us with clean water, and cleanse us from our filthiness. No longer shall Adam be confounded when called by Thee, nor hide himself, convicted by his conscience, cowering in the thicket of Paradise. Nor shall the flaming sword encircle Paradise around, and make the entrance inaccessible to those that draw near; but all is turned to joy for us that were the heirs of sin: Paradise, yea, heaven itself may be trodden by man: and the creation, in the world and above the world, that once was at variance with itself, is knit together in friendship: and we men are made to join in the angels' song, offering the worship of their praise to God.<sup>154</sup>

In the homilies on The Lord's Prayer Gregory clearly states that every man participates in Adam's exile because of the very fact of sharing human nature:

ἐν τούτοισ οὖν ὄντεσ κατὰ τὸν ἄσωτον ἐκείνον μετὰ τὴν μακρὰν ταλαιπωρίαν, ἦν τοὺσ χόιφοουσ πομαίνων ὑπέμεινε, ἐπειδὴν εἰσ ἑαυτοῦσ ἐπανελέθωμεν, ὡσπερ κάκεῖνοσ, καὶ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πατρός ἔννοιαν λάβωμεν, καλῶσ κεχρήμεθα ταῖσ τοιαύταισ φωναῖσ ὅτι, "Ἀφεσ ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡστε, κὰν Μωϋσῆσ τισ ἦ καὶ Σαμουὴλ, κὰν ἕτεροσ τισ τῶν δι' ἀρετῆσ ἐξεχόντων, οὐδὲν ἦττον ἀρμόζουσαν ἠγεῖται ταύτην, καθὰ ἀνθρωπόσ ἐστιν, ἑαυτῷ τὴν φωνὴν, ὁ κοινωνῶν τῆσ φύσεωσ τοῦ Ἄδὰμ, κοινωνῶν δὲ καὶ τῆσ ἐκπτώσεωσ. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ, καθὼσ φησιν ὁ ἀπόστολοσ, ἐν τῷ Ἄδὰμ πάντεσ ἀποθνήσκομεν, κοινήν εἶναι προσήκει τὴν τῷ Ἄδὰμ ἐπὶ τῆ μετανοία πρέπουσαν φωνὴν πάντων τῶν ἐκείνω συντεθηκότων, ὡσ ἂν τῆσ ἀμνηστίας ἡμῖν τῶν πλημμελημάτων δοθείησ χάριτι πάλιν ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου σωθῆμεν, καθὼσ φησιν ὁ ἀπόστολοσ.

Having been wrapped up in these things, let us imitate the Prodigal Son after he had endured the long affliction of feeding the swine. When, like him, we return to ourselves and remember the Heavenly Father, we may rightly use these words: *Forgive us our debts*. Hence, even though one be a Moses or a Samuel, or any other man of outstanding virtue, in so far as he is a man, he does not consider these words less fitting for himself, seeing that he shares Adam's nature and participates in his exile. For since, as the Apostle says, *in Adam we all die* (1Cor 15:22), the words that are suited to Adam's penance are rightly applied to all who have died with him, so that after we have been granted the remission of our sins we may again be saved by the Lord through grace, as says the Apostle.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>154</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *In diem luminum (vulgo In baptismum Christi oratio)*, GNO 9, 240-241; transl. NPNF II 5, 524.

<sup>155</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica orationes V*, hom. V; GNO 7/2, 66; transl. H.C. Graef, 77.

In the same work a symptomatic statement is uttered, namely that we bear the consequences of the first sin as if Adam lived in us:

Ὡς γὰρ ζῶντος ἐν ἡμῖν τοῦ Ἀδάμ πάντες οἱ καθ' ἕκαστον ἄνθρωποι, ἕως ἂν τοὺς δερματίνους τούτους χιτῶνας περὶ τὴν ἑαυτῶν βλέπωμεν φύσιν, καὶ τὰ πρόσκαιρα ταῦτα φύλλα τῆς ὕλικῆς ταύτης ζωῆς, ἅπερ τῶν αἰδίων τε καὶ λαμπρῶν ἐνδυμάτων γυμνωθέντες κακῶς ἑαυτοῖς συνερράψαμεν, τρυφᾶς καὶ δόξας καὶ τὰς ἐφημέρους τιμὰς καὶ τὰς ὠκυμόρους τῆς σαρκὸς πληροφορίας ἀντὶ τῶν θείων περιβολαίων μετενδυσάμενοι, καὶ μέχρις ἂν τὸν τῆς κακώσεως βλέπωμεν τόπον, ἐν ᾧ κατεδικάσθημεν παροικεῖν.

For since Adam is, as it were, living in us, we see each and all these garments of skin round our nature, and also the transitory fig leaves of this material life which we have badly sewn together for ourselves after being stripped of our own resplendent garments. For instead of the Divine garments we have put on luxuries and reputation, transitory honours and the quickly passing satisfactions of the flesh, at least as long as we look at this place of distress in which we have been condemned to sojourn.<sup>156</sup>

Speaking about resurrection Gregory calls it a return to the beginning, but what he means is not the return of Adam himself but of entire human nature.

Ἡ δὲ τῆς ἀναστάσεως χάρις οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἡμῖν ἐπαγγέλλεται, ἢ τὴν εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῶν πεπτωκότων ἀποκατάστασιν. Ἐπάνοδος γὰρ τίς ἐστιν ἐπὶ τὴν πρώτην ζωὴν ἢ προσδοκωμένη χάρις, τὸν ἀποβληθέντα τοῦ παραδείσου πάλιν εἰς αὐτὸν ἐπανάγουσα.

Now the resurrection promises us nothing else than the restoration of the fallen to their ancient state; for the grace we look for is a certain return to the first life, bringing back again to Paradise him who was cast out from it.<sup>157</sup>

In the homilies on The Lord's Prayer Gregory speaks about exile from paradise as if it were his own experience.

Τίς μοι τὴν γῆν ὑπεστόρεσεν; τίς βάσιμον δι' ἐπινοίας τὴν ὑγρὰν φύσιν ἐποίησεν; τίς ἐπηξέν μοι τὸν οὐρανὸν ὡς καμάραν; τίς δαδουχεῖ μοι τὴν τοῦ ἡλίου λαμπάδα; τίς ἀποστέλλει πηγὰς ἐν φάραξιν; τίς ἠτοίμασεν τοῖς ποταμοῖς τὰς διόδους; τίς μοι τὴν τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων ὑπηρεσίαν ὑπέξευξεν; τίς με κόνιν ἄψυχον ὄντα ζωῆς τε καὶ διανοίας μετέχειν ἐποίησεν; τίς τὸν πηλὸν τοῦτον κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ θείου χαρακτήρος ἐμόρφωσεν; τίς συγχεθεῖσαν ἐν ἐμοὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τὴν θείαν εἰκόνα πάλιν εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἐπανήγαγε χάριν; τίς

Who has spread the earth under my feet? Whose wisdom has made water passable? Who has set up the vault of the sky? Who carries the sun before me like a torch? Who causes the springs to come forth from ravines? Who has given the rivers their beds? Who has subjected the animals to my service? Who, when I was but lifeless ashes, gave me both life and a mind? Who fashioned this clay in the image of the Divine? And, when this Divine Image had been tarnished by sin, did not He restore it

<sup>156</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica orationes V*, hom. V, GNO 7/2, 65; transl. H.C. Graef, 76.

<sup>157</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De opificio hominis* 17; PG 44, 188; NPNF II 5, 407.

ἐξοικισθέντα με τοῦ παραδείσου, καὶ τοῦ ξύλου  
τῆς ζωῆς ἔξω γενόμενον, καὶ τῷ βαράθρῳ τῆς  
ύλικῆς ζωῆς συγκαλυφθέντα ἐπὶ τὴν πρώτην  
ἔλκει μακαριότητα.

to its former beauty? When I was exiled from  
Paradise, deprived of the tree of life, and  
submerged in the gulf of material things, was  
it not He who brought me back to man's first  
beatitude?<sup>158</sup>

All of the above quoted texts constitute evidence that speaking about sin which occurred in paradise Gregory makes no distinction between Adam and his progeny. Gross notes that this is understandable given his generic realism (*Gattungsrealismus*): the consequences of sin affect entire human nature and thus also all individuals who share it.<sup>159</sup>

Jérôme Gaith interprets Gregory's statements differently. In his opinion each man is true Adam in the strict sense. Therefore, the following words are synonyms: man, first man, Adam, pleroma of mankind, human race. However, Adam, who is guilty just like all others, chronologically, ontically and morally is the source of the fall. For Gregory the first sin ascribed to Adam is the first experience of evil. It was Adam who first destroyed natural harmony and experienced passion. The whole of mankind was pulled in him and with him (*en lui et avec lui*).<sup>160</sup>

Ernest McClear is right when he says that Gregory identifies our fate with that of Adam's, our original gifts with his, our loss with his, or our return to paradise with his. In some way Adam's sin was ours.<sup>161</sup> However, the problem whether this participation is done as sharing common nature or inheriting guilt or its consequences remains open.

### 3.3.5 Sin of Nature or Inherited Sin?

It would seem that Gregory speaks so clearly about the sin of nature that there are no doubts that he understands people's participation in Adam's sin as sharing one nature. However, he happens to speak also about inheriting sin. In the already quoted homily *On the Day of Lights* he describes people as heirs of sin (ἡμῖν τοῖς κληρονόμοις τῆς ἀμαρτίας).<sup>162</sup> In the homily *In illud: Tunc ipse Filius subjecietur oratio* he seems to indicate the inheritance of sin (and grace) thanks to the succession of generations even more clearly.

<sup>158</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica orationes V*, hom. I; GNO 7/2, 10; transl. H.C. Graef, 25-26.

<sup>159</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 153.

<sup>160</sup> J. Gaith, *La conception de la liberté chez Grégoire de Nysse*, "Études de Philosophie médiévale" 43 (1953), 116.

<sup>161</sup> E. McClear, *The Fall of Man and Original Sin in the Theology of Gregory of Nyssa*, "Theological Studies" 9 (1948), 193.

<sup>162</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *In diem luminum (vulgo In baptismum Christi oratio)*, GNO 9, 240-241.



Δείξας τοίνυν ἐν τοῖς πρὸς αὐτοὺς λόγοις ὅτι, τοῦ πρώτου ἀνθρώπου εἰς γῆν διὰ τῆς ἀμαρτίας ἀναλυθέντος καὶ διὰ τοῦτο χοϊκοῦ κληθέντος, ἀκόλουθον ἦν κατ' ἐκείνον καὶ τοὺς ἐξ ἐκείνου γενέσθαι πάντας χοϊκοὺς καὶ θνητοὺς τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ τοιοῦτου φύντας, ἀναγκαίως ἐπήγαγεν καὶ τὴν δευτέραν ἀκολουθίαν δι' ἧς ἀναστοιχειοῦται πάλιν ἐκ τοῦ θνητοῦ πρὸς ἀθανασίαν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὁμοιοτρόπως λέγων τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐγγεγενῆσθαι τῇ φύσει ἐξ ἐνὸς εἰς πάντας χεόμενον, ὡσπερ καὶ τὸ κακὸν δι' ἐνὸς εἰς πλῆθος ἐχέθη τῇ διαδοχῇ τῶν ἐπιγινομένων συμπλατυνόμενον.

Therefore, in the text Paul showed that the first man was dissolved into the earth through sin and was therefore regarded as being of the earth. It followed that all who took their origin from this first man became earthly and mortal. Another consequence necessarily resulted by which man is renewed once again from mortality into immortality. Similarly, the good begotten in human nature was bestowed upon every person as one entity, just as evil was poured into a multitude of persons by one man through succeeding generations.<sup>163</sup>

In the *Homilies on the Beatitudes* he presents our lives as starting and growing in passion and clearly points to being born that is inhering as the cause of evil being passed from parents to their offspring:

Εὐθὺς ἐκ πάθους ἡμῖν ἡ γένεσις ἄρχεται, καὶ διὰ πάθους ἡ αὔξησις πρόεισιν, καὶ εἰς τὸ πάθος ἡ ζωὴ καταλήγει, καὶ ἀνακέκραταί πως τὸ κακὸν πρὸς τὴν φύσιν, διὰ τῶν ἐξ ἀρχῆς παραδεξαμένων τὸ πάθος, τῶν διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς εἰσοικισαμένων τὴν νόσον. Ὡσπερ δὲ τῇ διαδοχῇ τῶν ἐπιγινομένων καθ' ἕκαστον εἶδος, τῶν ζώων ἡ φύσις συνδιεξέρχεται, ὡς ταῦτόν εἶναι τὸ γενόμενον κατὰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως λόγον, τοῦ ἐξ οὗ γέγονεν· οὕτως ἐξ ἀνθρώπου ἄνθρωπος γίνεται, ἐξ ἐμπαθοῦς ἐμπαθῆς, ἐξ ἀμαρτωλοῦ τοιοῦτος. Οὐκοῦν συνυφίσταται τρόπον τινὰ τοῖς γινομένοις ἡ ἀμαρτία, συναποκτικτομένη τε καὶ συναύξουσα, καὶ τῷ τῆς ζωῆς ὄρω συγκαταλήγουσα.

At the outset it is from passion we get our origin, with passion our growth proceeds, and into passion our life declines; evil is mixed up with our nature through those who from the first allowed passion in, those who by disobedience gave house-room to the disease. Just as with each kind of animal the species continues along with the succession of the new generation, so that what is born is, following a natural design, the same as those from which it is born, so from man is generated, from passionate, from the sinful its like. Thus in a sense sin arises together with those who come into existence, brought to birth with them, growing with them, and at life's end ceasing with them.<sup>164</sup>

Similarly, when he speaks about death he claims that it passes from generation to generation:

<sup>163</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *In illud: Tunc ipse Filius subjecietur oratio*, GNO 3/2, 11; transl. C. McCambley, 16.

<sup>164</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Orationes VIII de beatitudinibus*, hom. VI; GNO 7/2, 145; transl. S.G. Hall, 71.

ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν ἀποστὰς τῆς τῶν ἀγαθῶν  
παγκαρπίας ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ φθοροποιοῦ  
καρποῦ διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς ἐνεπλήσθη (ὄνομα  
δὲ τοῦ καρποῦ τούτου ἡ θανατοποιὸς  
ἀμαρτία), εὐθύς ἐνεκρώθη τῷ κρείττονι βίῳ  
τὴν ἄλογον καὶ κτηνώδη ζωὴν τῆς θειοτέρας  
ἀνταλλαζόμενος, καὶ καταμιχθέντος ἅπαξ  
τοῦ θανάτου τῇ φύσει συνδιεξήλθε ταῖς τῶν  
τικτομένων διαδοχαῖς ἡ νεκρότης.

Now the human being who had turned away from the rich assortment of fruits that are good was filled, because of this disobedience, with the fruit that works corruption (whose name is *sin the death-dealer*); and for this reason humanity was straightway done to death as far as the higher existence is concerned, having taken on the non-rational and brutish life in place of the more divine. And once death had been mingled with human nature, deadness in step with the successions of offspring to parents, made its way everywhere.<sup>165</sup>

Gregory evokes also the picture of evil which spreads like a deluge from the first people to their successors:

οὐκοῦν ἡ ἐξουδένωσις ἡ ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ  
ἀνυπαρξία ἐστίν. αὐτὴ δὲ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρξαντας  
τῆς κακίας, τουτέστιν ἐπὶ τοὺς πρώτους  
ἀνθρώπους ἐλθοῦσα καθάπερ τι ῥεῦμα  
πονηρὸν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ἐπιγινομένων  
διαδοχὴν ἐξεχέθη.

Disregard, therefore, is non-existence in the good. And this was poured out upon the princes of evil, that is, it came upon those first men and their successors like an evil stream.<sup>166</sup>

However, it is Gross who is right when he claims that like two other Cappadocian Fathers Gregory says nothing about the transfer or passing of Adam's sin on his descendants. It is true that Gross excludes also the sin of nature; he says that it would be logical if on the basis of his generic realism Gregory saw the deed of Adam as a common generic sin as Irenaeus did. Gross claims that Gregory did not arrive at such a conclusion because he could be stopped by his concept of sin as a defect which cannot exist outside of the free will of the sinner.<sup>167</sup> Therefore, it seems that Gross excludes both possibilities: inheritance of sin and sin of nature. So why are we the lone lost sheep if we were exiled from paradise together with Adam?

Gaith tries to explain this by saying that each sin has an universal meaning because each life is conditioned by the lives of the predecessors and affects the successors. In this sense sin is durable and passed onto others. However, Gregory says nothing about inheriting guilt as he considers sin to be a personal act. We are all tied with Adam's sin because we share its consequences, but we do not take part in the sin as such.<sup>168</sup>

Vives is on the other extreme. He claims that the original sin of man or human nature does not seem to be – as in later Western theology – a sin historically

<sup>165</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *In canticum canticorum*, hom. XII; GNO 6, 350-351; transl. R.A. Norris, 371.

<sup>166</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *In inscriptiones psalmodum* I 8; GNO 5, 63; transl. R.E. Heine, 118.

<sup>167</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 154-155.

<sup>168</sup> J. Gaith, *La conception de la liberté chez Grégoire de Nyse*, 116-117.

committed by the first parent and passed in a hardly comprehensible manner onto his descendants, but is a sin of the entire pleroma, human nature in its plenitude. Sin is also a kind of a pleroma, which contains sins from the first to the last one. Just like the pleroma of human nature is more than the sum total of individuals, the pleroma of sin is something more than the sum total of sins. Original sin is something like the cause of all current sins.<sup>169</sup> Vives notes that Gregory did not try to resolve the problem of the relation of individuals to human nature which is real because he was occupied with defending the unity of nature and multitude of people.<sup>170</sup> Despite this ahistorical conception of original sin Vives considers original sin to be the sin of nature in the sense that it is shared by or transferred to all members of nature due to their participation in nature per se, though only to the extent they are able to participate in this nature – intellectually and freely. Therefore, an embryo possesses human nature in its embryonic stage, a child – juvenile, and an adult – mature.<sup>171</sup>

Also other researchers of Gregory's thought see original sin as the sin of nature. McClear believes that when Adam sinned in paradise, it was human nature that sinned.<sup>172</sup> He adds that Gregory might have had the Platonic vision of human nature. In such concept not only Adam but entire human nature as embodied in Adam turned away from God. McClear treats this solution as a hypothesis, but he does not provide any other.<sup>173</sup>

Balás says that in the first man who represented all of the humanity entire human nature was somehow separated from God.<sup>174</sup>

Scheffczyk sees the basis of Gregory's teaching on passing sin in the Platonic and Stoic idea of the generic unity of mankind.<sup>175</sup> Like Vives, also Scheffczyk notes the fact that Gregory says as little on the contact of an individual with Adam's sin as on the division of human nature into many individuals. Ultimately, he concludes, however, that where the idea of universal human nature dominates and the concept of dissemination of Adam's sin onto the entire world exists, the scheme of transferring (passing) of sin is not necessary.<sup>176</sup>

I decidedly opt for those latter interpretations that speak about Gregory's teaching on original sin as the sin of nature. After all, it is Gregory himself who speaks about the fall of *human nature*:

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169 J. Vives, *El pecado original en San Gregorio di Nisa*, 176.

170 *Ibid.*, 166-167.

171 *Ibid.*, 189.

172 E. McClear, *The Fall of Man and Original Sin in the Theology of Gregory of Nyssa*, 192.

173 *Ibid.*, 199.

174 D.L. Balás, *Plenitudo Humanitatis*, 124.

175 L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 147.

176 *Ibid.*, 149.

πεσούσης ἡμῶν εἰς ἁμαρτίαν τῆς φύσεως,  
μη περιδεῖν τὸν θεὸν τὴν πτώσιν ἡμῶν  
ἀπρονόητον.

After our nature fell into sin God did  
not disregard our fall and withhold his  
providence.<sup>177</sup>

A question remains, however, what did Gregory have in mind when he talked about heirs and inheriting sin. I think that talking about inheriting Gregory meant participation in common nature. That is why we may talk at the same time about the fall of nature as if it were *one* sheep that went astray and exile of us all from paradise. I believe that the key to understanding Gregory's reasoning is the concept of double creation. As a result of the first creation *entire* human nature was formed, although it will be fulfilled only when the last man is born. Then nature will truly attain its fullness (πλήρωμα), which was, however, defined by God already at the time of the creation.<sup>178</sup>

Therefore, each of us *somehow* already existed at the very beginning of the world, and in any case was already intended by God. As a matter of fact it is really difficult to grasp Gregory's thought on participation of individuals in nature because he was not specifically interested in this. Gregory was primarily interested in the unity of human nature, real unity which causes that in a mysterious way we are all participants in the events in paradise and their consequences. An explanation of sorts of this participation may be the comparison of human nature to a *single* ear of wheat that Gregory uses in the dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection*:

Στάχυς γὰρ ὄντες καταρχὰς τρόπον τινὰ  
καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἐπειδὴ τῷ καύσωνι τῆς κακίας  
κατεξηράνημεν, ὑπολαβοῦσα ἡμᾶς ἡ γῆ διὰ  
τοῦ θανάτου λυθέντας, πάλιν κατὰ τὸ ἔαρ τῆς  
ἀναστάσεως στάχυν ἀναδείξει τὸν γυμνὸν  
τοῦτον κόκκον τοῦ σώματος, εὐμεγέθη τε καὶ  
ἀμφιλαφεῖ καὶ ὄρθιον, καὶ εἰς τὸ οὐράνιον ὕψος  
ἀνατεινόμενον, ἀντὶ καλᾶμης ἢ ἀνθέρικος τῆ  
ἀφθαρσίας καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς τῶν θεοπρεπῶν  
γνωρισμάτων ὠραϊζόμενον. «Δεῖ γὰρ τὸ  
φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν.»  
Ἡ δὲ ἀφθαρσία, καὶ ἡ δόξα, καὶ ἡ τιμὴ,  
καὶ ἡ δύναμις, ἴδια τῆς θείας φύσεως εἶναι  
ὁμολογεῖται, ἅπερ πρότερόν τε περὶ τὸν κατ'  
εἰκόνα γενόμενον ἦν, καὶ εἰσαῦθις ἐλπίζεται.  
Ὁ γὰρ πρῶτος στάχυς ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἦν  
'Αδάμ. Ἄλλ' ἐπειδὴ τῆ τῆς κακίας εἰσόδῳ εἰς  
πλήθος ἡ φύσις κατεμερίσθη, καθὼς γίνεται ὁ  
καρπὸς ἐν τῷ στάχυϊ· οὕτως οἱ καθ'

For we also were in some manner the ear  
at the beginning. When we are dried up by  
the hot summer of evil, the earth, which  
receives us dissolved by death, in the spring  
of the resurrection will reveal this bare seed  
of the body again an ear, large, abundant,  
upright, and reaching to the height of heaven,  
adorned not with a stalk or a beard but with  
incorruptibility and the rest of the godlike  
qualities; for he says, *This corruptible nature  
must put on incorruptibility* (1Cor 15:53).  
Incorruptibility, glory, honor, and power,  
which are agreed to be characteristic of the  
divine nature, formerly belonged to the one  
made in God's image, and are expected to be  
ours once again. The first ear was the first  
man, Adam. Since at the entrance of evil our  
nature was split up into a multitude like the  
kernels in the ear, each of us, denuded of

177 Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis II* 45; GNO 7/1, 45; transl. A.J. Malherbe, E. Ferguson, 43.

178 M. Przyszychowska, *The plenitude (πλήρωμα) of human nature according to Gregory of Nyssa*, "Eos. Commentarii Societatis Philologiae Polonorum" 104 (2017), 97-106.

ἕκαστον γυμνωθέντες τοῦ κατὰ τὸν στάχυν  
ἐκεῖνον εἴδους, καὶ τῆ γῆ καταμιχθέντες, πάλιν  
ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει κατὰ τὸ ἀρχέγονον κάλλος  
ἀναφύομεθα, ἀντὶ ἑνὸς τοῦ πρώτου στάχους  
ἀνάπειροι μυριάδες τῶν ληΐων γενόμενοι.

the form of that first ear and mixed with the  
earth, at the resurrection will spring up again  
in the archetypal beauty. Instead of the one  
first ear, however, we shall have become the  
innumerable myriads of the wheatfield.<sup>179</sup>

This text suggests that the split-up of the unity of human nature in itself is an effect of sin. Of course, this is not what Gregory wanted to say here. As intended by God human nature was to generate a multitude of individuals although it was to do it in the angelical not animal way, that is not through sexual reproduction. And indeed, also here he speaks about thousands of kernels which will spring up upon resurrection. The image of Adam as one ear from which thousands of kernels originate is symptomatic, however. It helps us comprehend Gregory's intuition that *somehow* we were all in Adam when he sinned because we are members of one nature.

<sup>179</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De anima et resurrectione*, GNO 3/3, 120-121, PG 46, 156-157; transl. C.P. Roth, 119.

## 4 Mankind in Adam's Loins

The second group includes the Fathers who – it would seem – have little in common. I think, however, that Augustine must have read Origen, either in Rufin's translation or in the original, and from him borrowed the idea of the presence of mankind in Adam's loins based on the fragment of Hebrews 7:9-10: *And as I may so say, Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.* What is interesting, many Fathers knew and commented that verse though none of them but Origen and Augustine used the phrase "in the loins" to describe the relation of mankind to Adam. That is why, although for both of them this is only one of the ways to explain the first fall, I grouped those Fathers together.

### 4.1 Origen

All those who study Origen's teachings in principle agree with only one statement, namely that his teaching is extremely ambiguous and full of contradictions. Very few are now trying to level those contradictions by force and make up a cohesive system out of Origen's theories. In the past, there was a widespread conviction that the source of incoherencies in Origen's writings was his development and the resultant change of views.<sup>180</sup> At present, the majority of scholars follow the explanation of Henri Crouzel who introduced the term *a research theology* to the description of Origen's accomplishments.<sup>181</sup> In line with this concept the theories presented by Origen are merely suggestions for the readers, from each anyone should choose the most preferable.

The jungle of Origen's ideas contains also such which are based on the participation of the entire human race in Adam's deed and the unity of mankind in Adam. However, I cannot confine myself to those concepts only as it would not reflect the wealth of Origen's teaching. Hence many issues that I take up here shall provide background for the subject of my interest.

#### 4.1.1 The Fall of Minds in Pre-existence

The concept of the fall of minds in pre-existence, which is most recognizable and associated with Origen, was to explain inequalities between people with a view to

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<sup>180</sup> F.R. Tennant, *The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin*, 296-306; N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 228-229.

<sup>181</sup> H. Crouzel, *Origène*, Paris 1985, 216-223.

Gnostics' claiming that the inequality had been given by God. As Origen explains in *The Principles*, in the beginning all intellectual natures were created equal and occupied themselves with contemplating God. That some of them became angels, others became demons, and still others – human beings is a consequence of their free choice.

Vnde superest ut in omni creatura sui operis suorumque motuum fuerit quod uirtutes istae, quae uel principatum agere in aliis uel potestatem exercere uel dominationem uidentur, ex merito, et non per conditionis praerogatiuam praelatae sint et superpositae his, quibus praeesse uel his, in quos potestatem exercere dicuntur.

We conclude, then, that the position of every created being is a result of his own work and his own motives, and that the powers above mentioned, which appear as holding sway or exercising authority or dominion over others, have gained this superiority and eminence over those whom they are said to govern or on whom they exercise their authority, not by some privilege of creation but as the reward of merit.<sup>182</sup>

Some of the minds deserved to be thrown down and clad in heavy cold flesh.<sup>183</sup> This is what people are. Therefore, the cause of the present order of the world is the fall of rational beings which took place because they had been from the beginning and still are gifted with free will.

Est et illud definitum in ecclesiastica praedicatione, omnem animam esse rationabilem liberi arbitrii et uoluntatis; esse quoque ei certamen aduersum diabolum et angelos eius contrariasque uirtutes, ex eo quod illi peccatis eam onerare contendunt, nos uero si recte consulteque uiuamus, ab huiusmodi labe exuere nos conemur. Vnde et consequens est intellegere, non nos necessitati esse subiectos, ut omni modo, etiamsi nolimus, uel mala uel bona agere cogamur. Si enim nostri arbitrii sumus, impugnare nos fortasse possint aliquae uirtutes ad peccatum et aliae iuuare ad salutem, non tamen necessitate cogimur uel recte agere uel male; quod fieri arbitrantur hi, qui stellarum cursum et motus causam dicunt humanorum esse gestorum, non solum eorum, quae extra arbitrii accidunt libertatem, sed et eorum, quae in nostra sunt posita potestate.

This also is laid down in the Church's teaching, that every rational soul is possessed of free will and choice; and also, that it is engaged in a struggle against the devil and his angels and the opposing powers; for these strive to weigh the soul down with sins, whereas we, if we lead a wise and upright life, endeavour to free ourselves from such a burden. There follows from this the conviction that we are not subject to necessity, so as to be compelled by every means, even against our will, to do either good or evil. For if we are possessed of free will, some spiritual powers may very likely be able to urge us on to sin and others to assist us to salvation; we are not, however, compelled by necessity to act either rightly or wrongly, as is thought to be the case by those who say that human events are due to the course and motion of the stars, not only those events which fall outside the sphere of our freedom of will but even those that lie within our own power.<sup>184</sup>

<sup>182</sup> Origen, *De principiis* I 5, 3; SCh 252, 182; transl. G.W. Butterworth, 47; cf. *De principiis* I 8, 4; SCh 252, 232; II 8, 3-4; SCh 252, 342-348.

<sup>183</sup> *De principiis* III 5, 4; SCh 268, 224-226.

<sup>184</sup> Origen, *De principiis* I, preface, 5; SCh 252, 82-84; transl. G.W. Butterworth, 4.

A question obviously arises: What role in the so conceived fall was played by the first man and whether at all his guilt was more important than the individual sin of each mind? An interesting interpretation of the unity of mankind in the idea of the fall in pre-existence was given by N.P. Williams. However, it is not the unity in Adam which is the primary object of my research, but as Williams correctly notes also the hypothesis of the fall of minds assumes a unity of the human race. In this concept the unity is not the cause of the participation of all in the fall but its effect: the unity is formed by those who share the same sinful fate.<sup>185</sup>

Further on I shall indicate places where Origen spoke of a special role Adam played at times as a symbol of the humanity, and at other times as the ancestor from whom all people descend. Only afterwards I shall be able to deal with the problem of congruity or contradiction of those concepts with the idea of the fall in pre-existence.

#### 4.1.2 Humanity as the Lost Sheep

Although in the hypothesis of the fall of minds in pre-existence each mind makes a choice and then takes a suitable position, though sometimes Origen attributes a communal dimension to the fall of the humanity. In his *Homilies on Genesis* Origen refers to the parable of the lost sheep in which he sees mankind understood as a unity.

Trecenti ter centeni sunt, centenarius autem numerus plenus in omnibus et perfectus ostenditur et totius rationabilis creaturae continens sacramentum, sicut in Euangeliis legimus, ubi dicit quia *habens quis centum oves, ex quibus cum perisset una, relictis nonaginta nouem in montibus descendit quaerere eam quae perierat quamque inuentam humeris suis reportauit, et posuit cum illis nonaginta nouem quae non perierant*. Hic ergo centenarius totius creaturae rationabilis numerus, quoniam non ex semetipso subsistit, sed ex Trinitate descendit et longitudinem uitae, hoc est immortalitatis gratiam, ex Patre per Filium ac Spiritum sanctum suscepit, idcirco triplicatus ponitur, utpote qui ad perfectionem per gratiam Trinitatis augetur et qui ex centenario per ignorantiam lapsus per agnitionem Trinitatis restituatur in trecentos.

Three hundred is three one hundreds. Now the number one hundred is shown to be full and perfect in everything and to contain the mystery of the whole rational creation, as we read in the Gospels where it says that a certain man *having a hundred sheep, when he lost one of them, left the ninety-nine in the mountains and descended to seek that one which he had lost and when it was found he carried it back on his shoulders and placed it with those ninety-nine which had not been lost* (Lk 15:4-5; Mt 18:12-13). This hundred, therefore, is the number of the whole rational creation, since it does not subsist from itself but has descended from the Trinity and has received the length of its life, that is the grace of immortality, from the Father through the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is stated as tripled in as much as it is this which is increased to perfection by the grace of the Trinity and which, by knowledge of the Trinity, may restore to the three hundred the one fallen by ignorance from the one hundred.<sup>186</sup>

<sup>185</sup> N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 216.

<sup>186</sup> Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim* II 5; SCh 7 bis, 100; transl. R.E. Heine, 82-83.



As noted by A. Orbe, through this parable Origen presents his favourite idea: the primeval equality of rational beings before they were hierarchized as a result of the sin. In the beginning, perfect equality prevailed symbolized by the number 100. While angels remained in the heights (mountains), man fell into matter.<sup>187</sup> The unity of mankind that Origen speaks about on this occasion has, however, a totally different dimension than the unity from the teachings of Irenaeus, Methodius and Gregory of Nyssa. This is a mystical unity

οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐν σώμᾳ ἔσμεν καὶ ἐν πρόβατον·  
ὁ μὲν τίς ἐστι πούς, ὁ δὲ κεφαλή, ὁ δὲ ἄλλο  
τι, ὁ δὲ ποιμὴν ἐλθὼν συνήγαγεν ὅστέον  
πρὸς ὅστέον καὶ ἄρμονίαν πρὸς ἄρμονίαν καὶ  
ἐνώσας ἀνέλαβεν ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν αὐτοῦ. ἡ δὲ  
ἐνότις γίνεται δι' ἀγάπης καὶ ἀληθείας καὶ  
προαιρέσεως ἀγαθῆς. τῷ ἰδίῳ μὲν οὖν λόγῳ  
πάντας ἦνωσεν.

since we are all one body and one sheep.  
One man is a foot, another is the head, still  
another a different part of the body, and the  
Shepherd when he came gather bone to bone  
and ligament to ligament (Ezk 37:7-8), and  
having gathered all in one whole took it to  
His country. Unity grows out of love, truth  
and good intention, so He united all with His  
word.<sup>188</sup>

Here mankind is not a real ontic unity but a spiritual unity which we attain thanks to the communion with Christ.

#### 4.1.3 Adam as a Symbol of Mankind

Origen's numerous hypotheses include also such statements in which when he talks about the first man or the first fall he assumes that Adam symbolizes or represents entire mankind. In the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, pondering the problem whether God created man as a perfect creature he also talks about the loss of perfection and coming of the Saviour. Origen does not specify whether the need for the Saviour is due to universal sinfulness arising from individual sins or the fall of Adam in some way contaminated all of the humanity, but the Saviour certainly did not come for Adam only. Thus, it may be recognized that the first perfect creature symbolizes here all of the perfect humanity.

<sup>187</sup> A. Orbe, *Parabolas Evangelicas in San Ireneo*, vol. 2, 160.

<sup>188</sup> Origen, *Fragmenta in Jeremiam* 28; GCS 6, 212-213; transl. MP.

Ἦγοῦμαι δὴ ἐν τοῖς τόποις βαθύτερόν τι ἐναποκεῖσθαι μυστήριον· τάχα γὰρ οὐ πάντῃ ἀτελὲς τὸ λογικὸν ἦν ἅμα τῷ τεθεῖσθαι ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ. Πῶς γὰρ ἂν τὸ πάντῃ ἀτελὲς ἐτίθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτὸν καὶ φυλάσσειν; ὁ γὰρ δυνάμενος ἐργάζεσθαι “ξύλον ζωῆς” καὶ πάντα δὲ ἃ ἐφύτευσεν ὁ θεὸς καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐξανέτειλεν, οὐκ ἂν εὐλόγως λέγοιτο ἀτελής. Μήποτε οὖν τέλειος ὦν πῶς ἀτελής διὰ τὴν παρακοὴν γέγονεν καὶ ἐδεήθη τοῦ τελειώσοντος αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀτελείας, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐπέμφθη ὁ σωτήρ.

I think indeed some deeper mystery is stored up in these passages. For perhaps the rational creature was not altogether imperfect at the time he was placed in paradise. For how would God have placed what was altogether imperfect in paradise to work and guard it? For he who is capable of tending *the tree of life* and everything that God planted and caused to spring up afterwards, would not reasonably be called imperfect. Perhaps, then, although he was perfect, he became imperfect in some way because of his transgression, and was in need of one to perfect him from his imperfection. And perhaps the Savior was sent for the following reasons.<sup>189</sup>

In the *Homilies on Leviticus* Origen speaks about skin tunics that God gave Adam, to pass immediately to a different perspective calling the one who was clothed in tunics of skin generally the sinner, and then advise the audience to wash themselves of these.

Sed priusquam de specie ipsa indumentorum dicere incipiamus, velim conferre illa infelicia indumenta, quibus primus homo, cum peccasset, indutus est, cum his sanctis et fidelibus indumentis. Et quidem illa dicitur Deus fecisse: *Fecit enim* - inquit - *Deus tunicas pellicias, et induit Adam et mulierem eius*. Illae ergo tunicae de pellibus erant ex animalibus sumptae. Talibus enim oportebat indui peccatorem, pellicias, inquit, tunicis, quae essent mortalitatis, quam pro peccato acceperat, et fragilitatis eius, quae ex carnis corruptione veniebat, indicium. Si vero iam lotus ab his fueris et purificatus per legem Dei, induet te Moyses indumento incorruptionis, ita ut nusquam *appareat turpitudine tua et ut absorbeatur mortale hoc a vita*.

But before we begin to say something about this kind of garment I want to compare those miserable garments, with which the first man was clothed after he had sinned, with these holy and faithful garments. Indeed, it is said that God made those. *For God made skin tunics and clothed Adam and his wife* (Gen 3:21). Therefore, those were tunics of skins taken from animals. For with such as these, it was necessary for the sinner to be dressed. It says, *with skin tunics* of the mortality which he received because of his skin and of his frailty which came from the corruption of the flesh. But if you have been already washed from these and purified through the Law of God, then Moses will dress you with a garment of incorruptibility so that *your shame may never appear* (Ex 20:26) and *that this mortality may be absorbed by life* (2Cor 5:4).<sup>190</sup>

Therefore, it is clear that the garments received by Adam are also the garments of all of us and Adam is here a symbol or representative of each of us. Even more clearly Origen presents this idea in *Contra Celsum*. He refers to the meaning of the name Adam, which is the Hebrew word for *man* and on this basis sees in Adam the embodiment of the entire human race.

<sup>189</sup> Origen, *Commentarius in Iohannem* XIII 37, 239-241; Sch 222, 158-160; transl. R.E. Heine, 117-118.

<sup>190</sup> Origen, *Homiliae in Leviticum* VI 2; Sch 286, 276-278; transl. G.W. Barkley, 120 with alteration.

Ἐπὴν δὲ φάσκη ὡς ἄρα ἀνοσιώτατα τὸν θεόν, εὐθύς καὶ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἀσθενοῦντα καὶ μηδ' ἓνα ἄνθρωπον, ὃν αὐτὸς ἐπλασε, πείσαι δυνάμενον, εἰσήγαγεν ὁ Μωϋσέως λόγος, καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο φησομεν ὅτι ὁμοίον ἐστὶ τὸ λεγόμενον, ὡς εἴ τις ἐνεκάλει ἐπὶ τῇ τῆς κακίας συστάσει, ἦν οὐδὲ ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου δεδύνηται κωλύσαι ὁ θεός, ὥστε κἂν ἓνα τινα ἄνθρωπον εὐρεθῆναι ἀρχῆθεν ἄγευστον κακίας γεγενημένον. Ὡς γὰρ περὶ τούτου οἷς μέλει ἀπολογεῖσθαι περὶ προνοίας ἀπολογοῦνται οὐ δι' ὀλίγων οὐδὲ δι' εὐκαταφρονήτων, οὕτω δὲ καὶ περὶ τοῦ Ἀδάμ καὶ περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας αὐτοῦ φιλοσοφῆσουσιν οἱ ἐγνωκότες ὅτι καθ' ἑλλάδα φωνῆν ὁ Ἀδάμ ἄνθρωπός ἐστι, καὶ ἐν τοῖς δοκοῦσι περὶ τοῦ Ἀδάμ εἶναι φυσιολογεῖ Μωϋσῆς τὰ περὶ τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσεως. Καὶ “γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδάμ”, ὡς φησιν ὁ λόγος, “πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσι”, καὶ κατεδικάσθησαν ἐν “τῷ ὁμοιώματι τῆς παραβάσεως Ἀδάμ”, οὐκ οὕτως περὶ ἐνός τινος ὡς περὶ ὄλου τοῦ γένους ταῦτα φάσκοντος τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου. Καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῇ τῶν λεγομένων ὡς περὶ ἐνός ἀκολουθία ἡ ἀρὰ τοῦ Ἀδάμ κοινὴ πάντων ἐστὶ· καὶ τὰ κατὰ τῆς γυναικὸς οὐκ ἐστὶ καθ' ἧς οὐ λέγεται. Καὶ ὁ ἐκβαλλόμενος δὲ ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου ἄνθρωπος μετὰ τῆς γυναικὸς, τοὺς “δερματίνους” ἠμφιεσμένος “χιτῶνας”, οὐς διὰ τὴν παράβασιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησε τοῖς ἁμαρτήσασιν ὁ θεός, ἀπόρρητόν τινα καὶ μυστικὸν ἔχει λόγον, ὑπὲρ τὴν κατὰ Πλάτωνα κάθοδον τῆς ψυχῆς, πτερορρουούσης καὶ δεῦρο φερομένης, “ἕως ἂν στερεοῦ τινος λάβηται”.

When he asserts that the narrative of Moses represents God most impiously, making Him into a weakling right from the beginnings and incapable of persuading even one man whom He had formed to this also we will reply that his remark is much the same as if one were to object to the existence of evil because God has been unable to prevent even one man from committing sin in order that just one individual might be found who has had no experience of evil from the beginning. Just as in this matter those who are concerned to defend the doctrine of providence state their case at great length and with arguments of considerable cogency, so also the story of Adam and his sin will be interpreted philosophically by those who know that Adam means anthropos (man) in the Greek language, and that in what appears to be concerned with Adam Moses is speaking of the nature of man. For, as the Bible says, *in Adam all die* (1Cor 15:22), and they were condemned *in the likeness of Adam's transgression* (Rom 5:14). Here the divine Word says this not so much about an individual as of the whole race. Moreover, in the sequence of sayings which seem to refer to one individual, the curse of Adam is shared by all men. There is also no woman to whom the curses pronounced against Eve do not apply. And the statement that the man who was cast out of the garden with the woman was clothed with *coats of skins*, which God made for those who had sinned on account of the transgression of mankind, has a certain secret and mysterious meaning superior to the Platonic doctrine of the descent of the soul which loses its wings and is carried hither *until it finds some firm resting-place* (Plato, *Phaedrus* 25, 246 BC).<sup>191</sup>

Basing on the etymology Adam=man Origen relates what the Scripture says about our ancestor to the entire humankind. Adam symbolizes and represents the whole of mankind. However, Manlio Simonetti notes that Origen does not explain how does this happen – whether it is because all people descend from Adam or for any

<sup>191</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum* IV 40; SCh 136, 288-290; transl. H. Chadwick, 216-217.

other reason.<sup>192</sup> This concept does not tie in with the idea of the fall in pre-existence; however, I think, it may be accepted that in the above statements Origen recognizes Adam as a prototype<sup>193</sup> or symbol of the humanity, although Simonetti believes that seeing Adam as a symbol of all fallen souls goes too far.<sup>194</sup>

#### 4.1.4 We Were in Adam's Loins

There is a group of texts in which Origen does not treat Adam as a type or symbol of humanity but speaks about a much deeper unity. The most explicit statement Origen made on this subject is a fragment of the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* where he claims that all people were in the loins of Adam.

Si ergo Leui qui generatione quarta post Abraham nascitur in lumbis Abrahae fuisse perhibetur, multo magis omnes homines qui in hoc mundo nascuntur et nati sunt in lumbis erant Adae cum adhuc esset in paradiso et omnes homines cum ipso uel in ipso expulsi sunt de paradiso cum ipse inde depulsus est; et per ipsum mors quae ei ex praeuaricatione uenerat consequenter et in eos pertransiit qui in lumbis eius habebantur.

If then Levi, who is born in the fourth generation after Abraham, is declared as having been in the loins of Abraham, how much more were all men, those who are born and have been born in this world, in Adam's loins when he was still in paradise. And all men who were with him, or rather in him, were expelled from paradise when he was himself driven out from there; and through him the death which had come to him from the transgression consequently passed through to them as well, who were dwelling in his loins.<sup>195</sup>

Elsewhere, when he mentions the curse which afflicted the earth for the sin of the first man he speaks about the grief of man *who dies in Adam* and about the life of man *who was exiled from paradise in Adam*. Origen means here all people, that is everyone who comes to this world and because of Adam's transgression in which they participated in a mysterious way they toil until death.

<sup>192</sup> M. Simonetti, *Alcune osservazioni sull'interpretazione origeniana di Genesi 2, 7 e 3, 21*, "Aevum" 36 (1962), 374.

<sup>193</sup> H. Lassiat, *Pour une théologie de l'homme*, vol. 1, 183.

<sup>194</sup> M. Simonetti, *Alcune osservazioni sull'interpretazione origeniana di Genesi 2, 7 e 3, 21*, 374.

<sup>195</sup> Origen, *Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos V 1, 12*; SCh 539, 364-366; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 311

οὐχ ὁρών ὅτι Μωϋσῆς, ὁ πολλῶν καὶ τῶν ἑλληνικῶν γραμμάτων ἀρχαιότερος, εἰσήγαγε τὸν θεὸν ἐπαγγελόμενον τὴν ἁγίαν γῆν καὶ ἀγαθὴν καὶ πολλήν, ῥέουσαν γάλα καὶ μέλι τοῖς κατὰ τὸν νόμον ἑαυτοῦ βιώσασιν, οὐδ' ὡς οἴονται τινες τὴν ἀγαθὴν, τὴν κάτω νομιζομένην Ἰουδαίαν, κειμένην καὶ αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇθεν κατηραμένη ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ Ἀδάμ γῆ. Τὸ γὰρ “ἐπικατάρατος ἡ γῆ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις σου· ἐν λύπαις φαγῆ αὐτὴν πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς σου” περὶ ὅλης εἴρηται τῆς γῆς, ἣν ἐν λύπαις, τουτέστι πόνους, ἐσθίει πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῷ Ἀδάμ ἀποθανών, καὶ ἐσθίει πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ζωῆς. Καὶ ὡς ἐπικατάρατος πᾶσα ἡ γῆ ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους ἀνατελεῖ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἐν τῷ Ἀδάμ ἐκβληθέντος ἀπὸ τοῦ παραδείσου, καὶ ἐν ἰδρώτι τοῦ προσώπου ἑαυτοῦ ἐσθίει πᾶς ἄνθρωπος τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἄρτον, ἕως ἐπιστρέψει εἰς τὴν γῆν, ἐξ ἧς ἐλήφθη.

He fails to see that Moses, who is far earlier even than the Greek alphabet, taught that God promised a pure earth, which was good and large, flowing with milk and honey, to those who lived in accordance with His law. And the good land was not, as some think, the earthly land of Judaea, which indeed lies in the earth which was cursed from the beginning by the works of Adam's transgression. For the saying, *Cursed is the earth by thy works; in grief shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life* (Gen 3:17), refers to the entire earth, of which every man who has died in Adam eats in grief, that is in troubles; and it is so that he eats all the days of his life. And because it is cursed, all the earth will bring forth thorns and thistles all the days of the life of the man who, in Adam, was cast out of paradise; and every man eats his bread by the sweat of his brow until he returns to the earth from which he was taken.<sup>196</sup>

In the *Homilies on Ezekiel* Origen explicitly speaks about *our* sin and *our* transgression. We could, of course, think that he means the sins of concrete people, but the subsequent reference to mortality which is a consequence of Adam's sin, makes us see the phrases *our sin* and *our transgression* as alluding to the event in paradise.

*Ego dixi: dii estis et filii Altissimi omnes. Non ait: quidam dii estis et quidam non estis, verum omnes dii estis. Si autem peccaveritis, auscultate quid sequitur: Vos vero ut homines moriemini. Non est hic culpa vocantis ad salutem, non ipse est causa mortis qui invitavit ad divinitatem et ad caelestis naturae adoptionem, sed in nostro peccato et in nostro scelere consistit quod dicitur: Vos autem ut homines moriemini, et quasi unus de principibus cadetis. Multi principes erant, et unus ex iis corrui, de quo et in Genesi scribitur: Ecce, Adam factus est, non quasi nos, sed quasi unus ex nobis. Ergo quando peccavit Adam, tunc factus est quasi unus cadens.*

*I said, You are gods, and you are all children of the Most High* (Ps 81:6). He does not say, *Some of you are gods, and some are not*, but rather, *you are all gods*. If you sin, however, listen to what follows: *But you will die like human beings* (Ps 81:7). This result is not the fault of the one who calls us to salvation: the one who summons us to divinity and to the adoption of heavenly nature is not himself the cause of death. Rather, the statement, *But you will die like human beings, and like one of the rulers you will fall* (Ps 81:7), rests on our wickedness and our sin. There were many rulers, and one of them fell, with reference to whom it is also written in Genesis, *Behold! Adam has become* - not like us, but - *like one of us* (Gen 3:22). Therefore, when Adam fell, he became like the one who fell.<sup>197</sup>

<sup>196</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum* VII 28; Sch 150, 78; transl. H. Chadwick, 417.

<sup>197</sup> Origen, *Homiliae in Ezechielem* I 9; Sch 352, 74-76; transl. M. Hooker, 45.

The unity we formed in Adam was a harbinger of our unity in Christ. What is more, already our unity in Adam was possible only thanks to Christ:

Καὶ ἐφαρμοστέον γε διὰ τὸ ἀκρογωνιαῖον εἶναι λίθον τὸν Χριστὸν τῷ ἡνωμένῳ παντὶ σώματι τῶν σφριζομένων τὸ παράδειγμα τὸ πάντα γὰρ καὶ ἐν πᾶσι Χριστὸς ὁ μονογενής, ὡς μὲν ἀρχὴ ἐν ᾧ ἀνείληφεν ἀνθρώπῳ, ὡς δὲ τέλος ἐν τῷ τελευταίῳ τῶν ἁγίων δηλονότι τυγχάνων καὶ ἐν τοῖς μεταξὺ, ἢ ὡς μὲν ἀρχὴ ἐν Ἀδάμ, ὡς δὲ τέλος ἐν τῇ ἐπιδημίᾳ, κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον· “Ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν”. Πλὴν τοῦτο τὸ ῥητὸν ἐφαρμόσει καὶ τῇ ἀποδόσει τοῦ “πρῶτος καὶ ἔσχατος”.

And because the Christ is the *chief cornerstone* we must indeed adapt the illustration to the whole united body of the saved, for Christ the only begotten is also all in all, for example, he is the beginning in the man which he assumed, but the end in the last of the saints—being, of course, also in those in between—, or, he is the beginning in Adam, but the end in his sojourn among us, according to the saying, *The last Adam became a life-giving spirit* (1Cor 15:45). But this saying will apply also to the interpretation of *first and last*.<sup>198</sup>

#### 4.1.5 Stain of Birth

Notwithstanding the concept of the fall in pre-existence the effect of which is the heavy and cold body that we have in this life Origen speaks about the stain of sin – *sordes peccati* with which all come to this world. Tennant noted that he changed his views concerning original sin when he encountered the practice of the baptism of children in Caesarea.<sup>199</sup> Even when we do not accept that concept of Origen’s changing his views, we might concur that the encounter with the customs of the Church in Caesarea had an impact on the occurrence of new ideas in his writings. The subject of children’s baptism is completely non-existent in *The Principles*, though in later works it occurs frequently, beside other hypotheses, of course, also those that we have seen earlier.

Origen writes the following on the pollution experienced by man by the very fact of being born:

<sup>198</sup> Origen, *Commentarius in Iohannem* I 31, 225; SCh 120, 170; transl. R.E. Heine, 78.

<sup>199</sup> F.R. Tennant, *The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin*, 299.

Quod si placet audire, quid etiam alii sancti de ista nativitate senserint, audi David dicentem: *In iniquitatibus – inquit – conceptus sum, et in peccatis peperit me mater mea*, ostendens quod quaecumque anima in carne nascitur, iniquitatis et peccati sorde polluitur; et propterea dictum esse illud, quod iam superius memoravimus quia: *Nemo mundus a sorde, nec si unius diei sit vita eius*. Addi his etiam illud potest, ut requiratur, quid causae sit, cum baptisma Ecclesiae pro remissione peccatorum detur, secundum Ecclesiae observantiam etiam parvulis baptismum dari; cum utique, si nihil esset in parvulis, quod ad remissionem deberet et indulgentiam pertinere, gratia baptismi superflua videretur.

But if it pleases you to hear what other saints also might think about this birthday, hear David speaking, *In iniquity I was conceived and in sins my mother brought me forth*, (Ps 50:7) showing that every soul which is born in flesh is polluted by the filth of iniquity and sin; and for this reason we can say what we already have recalled above, *No one is pure from uncleanness even if his life is only one day long* (Jb 14:4-5). To these things can be added the reason why it is required, since the baptism of the Church is given for the forgiveness of sins, that, according to the observance of the Church, that baptism also be given to infants; since, certainly, if there were nothing in infants that ought to pertain to forgiveness and indulgence, then the grace of baptism would appear superfluous.<sup>200</sup>

*Sordes peccati* are sometimes interpreted in the light of the theory of guilt in pre-existence. In such perspective the very contact with matter injures the soul and its entering the body stains it. Therefore, baptism cleanses children of the stain which is formed by the combination of soul and body.<sup>201</sup> Baptism of children is necessary because our body is the body of sin and everyone who is born comes to this world stained with sin by the very fact that the soul enters the body. Gross sees the source of this concepts in Platonic dualism.<sup>202</sup> Let us have a look at other texts by Origen on this subject:

Quod frequenter inter fratres quaeritur, loci occasione commotus retracto. Parvuli baptizantur in remissionem peccatorum. Quorum peccatorum? vel quo tempore peccaverunt? aut quomodo potest illa lavacri in parvulis ratio subsistere, ni iuxta illum sensum, de quo paulo ante diximus: *nullus mundus a sorde, nec si unius quidem diei fuerit vita eius super terram*? Et quia per baptismi sacramentum nativitatis sordes deponuntur, propterea baptizantur et parvuli: *nisi enim quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et spiritu, non poterit intrare in regnum caelorum*.

The passage from the Scripture read today encourages me to treat it again. Little children are baptized for the remission of sins. Whose sins are they? When did they sin? Or how can this explanation of the baptismal washing be maintained in the case of small children, except according to the interpretation we spoke of a little earlier? *No man is clean of stain, not even if his life upon the earth had lasted but a single day* (Jb 14:4). Through the mystery of baptism, the stains of birth are put aside. For this reason, even small children are baptized. For, *unless a man be born again of water and spirit, he will not be able to enter into the kingdom of heaven* (Jn 3:5).<sup>203</sup>

<sup>200</sup> Origen, *Homiliae in Leviticum* VIII 3; Sch 287, 20; transl. G.W. Barkley, 157-158.

<sup>201</sup> A. Orbe, *Antropologia de San Ireneo*, 306-307.

<sup>202</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 106.

<sup>203</sup> Origen, *Homiliae in Lucam* XIV 5; Sch 87, 222; transl. J.T. Lienhard, 58-59.

L. Scheffczyk claims that when Origen speaks about washing *sordes peccati* in the baptism of children he does not mean sin as such but the sinful weakness all people have because of carnality.<sup>204</sup> Such an interpretation does not force-tie two seemingly separate hypotheses. It is also symptomatic that talking about washing the stain of birth Origen refers to the Old Testament cleansing.

Omnis qui ingreditur hunc mundum, in quadam contaminatione effici dicitur. Propter quod et Scriptura dicit: *Nemo mundus a sorde nec si unius diei fuerit vita eius*. Hoc ipsum ergo quod in vulva matris est positus et quod materiam corporis ab origine paterni seminis sumit, *in patre et matre contaminatus* dici potest. Aut nescis quia, cum quadraginta dierum factus fuerit puer masculus, offertur ad altare, ut ibi purificetur, tamquam qui pollutus fuerit in ipsa conceptione vel paterni seminis vel uteri materni? Omnis ergo homo *in patre et in matre pollutus est*, solus vero Iesus Dominus meus in hanc generationem mundus ingressus est, in matre non est pollutus. Ingressus est enim corpus incontaminatum.

Everyone who enters this world is said to be made with a certain contamination. This is also why Scripture says, *No one is clean from filth even if his life were only one day* (Jb 14:4). Therefore, from the fact that he is placed in the womb of his mother and that he takes the material of the body from the origin of the paternal seed, he can himself be called *contaminated in his father and mother* (Lev 21:11). Or do you not know that when a male child is forty days old, he is offered at the altar that he may be purified there as if he were polluted in this conception either by the paternal seed or the uterus of the mother? Therefore, every man *was polluted in his father and mother*, but only Jesus my Lord came pure into the world in this birth and was not polluted in his mother. For he entered an uncontaminated body.<sup>205</sup>

A similar reasoning is found in *Contra Celsum*:

οἱ δὲ προφῆται, αἰνιττόμενοι ὅ τι περὶ τῶν γενέσεως πραγμάτων σοφόν, θυσίαν περὶ ἁμαρτίας λέγουσιν ἀναφέρεσθαι καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄρτι γεγενημένων ὡς οὐ καθαρῶν ἀπὸ ἁμαρτίας. Φασὶ δὲ καὶ τό· “Ἐν ἀνομίαις συνελήφθην, καὶ ἐν ἁμαρτίαις ἐκίσησέ με ἡ μήτηρ μου.” Ἄλλὰ καὶ ἀποφαίνονται ὅτι “Ἀπηλλοτριώθησαν οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἀπὸ μητρῶν”, παραδόξως λέγοντες καὶ τό· “Ἐπλανήθησαν ἀπὸ γαστρῶν, ἐλάλησαν ψευδῆ.”

But the prophets, giving obscure expression to some wise doctrine on the subject of becoming, say that a sacrifice for sin is to be offered even for new-born babes because they are not pure from sin. They also say *I was conceived in iniquity and in sins my mother bore me* (Ps 50:7). Moreover, they declare that sinners have been estranged from the womb, and utter the startling saying, *They were in error from the womb, they spoke lies* (Ps 57:4).<sup>206</sup>

<sup>204</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 81.

<sup>205</sup> Origen, *Homiliae in Leviticum* XII 4; Sch 287, 178; transl. G.W. Barkley, 223-224.

<sup>206</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum* VII 50; Sch 150, 130-132; transl. H. Chadwick, 437.



L. Scheffczyk's elucidations are confirmed by yet another fragment from the *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. Origen explicitly says that the stain of birth has nothing in common with previous sins of the souls but means sinfulness arising from corporeality.

Corpus ergo peccati est corpus nostrum quia nec Adam scribitur cognouisse Eam uxorem suam et genuisse Cain nisi post peccatum. Denique et in lege pro paruulo qui natus fuerit iubetur offerri hostia *par turturum aut duo pulli columbini, ex quibus unus pro peccato et alius in holocaustoma*. Pro quo peccato offertur unus hic pullus? Numquid nuper editus paruulus peccare potuit? Et tamen habet peccatum pro quo hostia iubetur offerri a quo mundus negatur quis esse nec si unius diei sit uita eius. De hoc ergo etiam Dauid dixisse credendus est illud quod supra memorauimus quia *in peccatis concepit me mater meam*. Secundum historiam enim nullum matris eius declaratur peccatum. Pro hoc et ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit etiam paruulis baptismum dare; sciebant enim illi quibus mysteriorum secreta commissa sunt diuinorum quia essent in omnibus genuinae sordes peccati quae per aquam et spiritum ablui deberent, propter quas etiam corpus ipsum corpus peccati nominatur; non ut putant aliqui eorum qui metensomatosin introducunt pro his quae in alio corpore posita anima deliquerit, sed pro hoc ipso quod in corpore peccati et corpore mortis atque humilitatis effecta est.

Therefore our body is the body of sin, for it is not written that Adam knew his wife Eve and became the father of Cain until after the sin. After all, even in the law it is commanded that sacrifice be offered for the child who was born: *a pair of turtle doves or two young doves; one of which was offered for sin and the other as a burnt offering* (Lev 12:8). For which sin is this one dove offered? Was a newly born child able to sin? And yet it has a sin for which sacrifices are commanded to be offered, and from which it is denied that anyone is pure, even if his life should be one day long. It has to be believed, therefore, that concerning this David also said what we recorded above, *in sins my mother conceived me* (Ps 50:7). For according to the historical narrative no sin of his mother is declared. It is on this account as well that the Church has received the tradition from the Apostles to give baptism even to little children. For they to whom the secrets of the divine mysteries were committed were aware that in everyone was sin's innate defilement, which needed to be washed away through water and the Spirit. Because of this defilement as well, the body itself is called the body of sin; it is not because of sins the soul committed when it was in another body, as they who introduce the doctrine of μετενσωμάτωσις imagine. But because the soul was fashioned into the body of sin, and the body of death and lowliness.<sup>207</sup>

In conclusion, one may repeat after Tennant that Origen nowhere precisely defines what he means by *sordes peccati* with which man is born, but for sure distinguishes it from sin as such (*peccatum*).<sup>208</sup>

<sup>207</sup> Origen, *Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos* V 9, 12; Sch 539, 496-498; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 366-367.

<sup>208</sup> F.R. Tennant, *The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin*, 300-301.

#### 4.1.6 Are There People Without Sin?

Origen very explicitly states the universality of sin, although the reason for this universality may be heredity of sin or bad example. Origen himself gives both reasons without juxtaposing them and without excluding any of them.

Quod autem excepit certos quos in quibus mors regnauerit cum dicit *regnauit mors in eos qui peccauerunt in similitudine praeuaricationis Adae*, non mihi uidetur dici absque mysterii alicuius indicio. Ne forte ergo fuerint aliqui usque ad illud tempus quo sub lege uelut sub pedagago homines habebantur qui tale aliquid egerint quale Adam in paradiso egisse describitur et contigisse ex ligno sciendi bonum et malum et erubuisse nuditatem suam acque habitatione paradisi decidisse. Aut magis simpliciter accipiendum uidetur et similitudo praeuaricationis Adae absque aliqua discussione recipienda ut hoc sermone omnes qui ex Adam praeuaricatore nati sunt indicari uideantur et habere in semet ipsis similitudinem praeuaricationis eius non solum ex semine eius sed et ex institutione susceptam. Omnes enim qui in hoc mundo nascuntur non solum nutriuntur a parentibus sed et imbuuntur et sunt non solum filii peccatorum sed et discipuli. Vbi uero aetas adoleuerit et agendi quae sentit libertas accesserit, ibi iam aut pergit quis in uiam patrum suorum sicut de nonnullis regibus scribitur, aut certe incedit in uia Domini Dei sui.

But the fact that [Paul] has made particular mention of certain ones in whom death exercised dominion when he says, *Death exercised dominion in those who sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression* (Rom 5:14), does not seem to me to be said without reference to a certain mystery. Perhaps there were some, up to that time when men were living under law as under a pedagogue, who performed something similar to what Adam is said to have performed in Paradise, to touch the tree of knowledge of good and evil and to be ashamed of his own nakedness and to fall away from the dwelling in Paradise. Or perhaps it seems this ought to be interpreted in a simpler way and the likeness of Adam's transgression is to be received without any further discussion. This would mean that everyone who is born from Adam, the transgressor, seems to be indicated and retain in themselves the likeness of his transgression, taken not only by descent from him but also by instruction. For all who are born in this world are not only raised by their parents but instructed as well; and not only are they sins' children but also sins' pupils. But when a person matures and the freedom of doing what one likes comes around, a poison either goes the way of his fathers, as is written of several kings – or he advances along the road of his Lord God.<sup>209</sup>

In the text that has been just quoted one sees a considerable tension between the conviction of universality of sin and the equally profound belief in the existence of intact free will in each human being. Defending free will Origen does not forget, however, about Adam's transgression which brought about for *all* a condemning sentence, all the more so that the participation of all in Adam's transgression is paralleled by the participation of all in the redemption by Christ.

<sup>209</sup> Origen, *Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos* V 1, 33-34; SCh 539, 392; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 323-324

Cum iudicium habitum sit de Adam ex uno ipso delinquente condemnatio in omnes homines uenerit, e contrario uero per Christum ex multis delictis quibus omne genus hominum tenebatur iustificatio data sit in omnes, ut sicut mors per unum regnauerat in delictis ita et per unius oboedientiam uita regnaret per iustitiam.

When judgment comes from Adam's single act of transgressing the result is that condemnation came to all men. In contrast, however, justification was given to all through Christ from many transgressions, in which the whole human race was being held so that, just as death had exercised its dominion in transgressions through the one, so also through the obedience of the one, life would reign through righteousness.<sup>210</sup>

For the above reason Origen does not stop at the statement that Adam's sin brought about death for all people but he emphasizes that the gift of Christ which embraces all was preceded by the condemnation of *all* for Adam's transgression.

Illud tamen obseruandum est quod sicut dixit: *In omnes homines in iustificationem uitae*; non ita dixit et: *In omnes homines in condemnationem mortis*, sed tantummodo *in condemnationem*, quo scilicet in omnibus probet multo abundantius donum esse quam delictum. Quomodo sane uel quae condemnatio in omnes homines uenerit uidendum est. Et sufficere forsitan potest secundum simplicem expositionem ut dicamus condemnationem esse delicti communem hanc mortem, quae omnibus uenit et ueniet etiam si iusti uideantur. Quod si forte aliquis obiciat de Enoc et Helia qui translati sunt ne uiderent mortem, hoc modo excusabitur quod non continuo falsa uidebuntur ea quae de omnibus dicuntur si aliqua dispensatio Dei in uno uel duobus hominibus tacta est. Sed et illud quis competenter ut arbitrator proferet in loco quia cum deliquisset Adam scriptum est quod eiecit eum Dominus Deus de paradiso et constituit eum in terra hac contra paradisum deliciarum, et haec fuit delicti eius condemnatio quae in omnes homines sine dubio peruenit. Omnes enim in loco hoc humiliationis et in conuallibus fletus effecti sunt; siue quod in lumbis Aadae fuerunt omnes qui ex eo nascuntur et cum ipso pariter eieci sunt, siue alio qualibet

Nevertheless it should be noted that he has not said *the condemnation of death came unto all men* like he said *the justification of life comes unto all men* (Rom 5:18). On the contrary, he said merely *condemnation* in order, obviously, to demonstrate how much more abundant the gift to all is than the transgression. How, or rather which, condemnation would come to all men must of course be seen. Perhaps it can suffice us according to the simple interpretation to say that the condemnation of transgression is that common death which comes to all and will come to all, even if they seem righteous. But if perhaps anyone would object to this over the cases of Enoch and Elijah, who were translated so as to not see death this will be disposed of in the following manner: things that are said about all men shall not immediately be deemed false if any dispensation of God has been made in the case of one or two men. But someone could reasonably, as I judge, suggest in this place, that when Adam had transgressed it is written that the Lord God expelled him from paradise and established him in that land opposite to the paradise of delights. And this was the condemnation for his transgression which doubtless spread to all men. For everyone was fashioned in that place

<sup>210</sup> Origen, *Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos V 2, 1*; Sch 539, 406; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 329.

inenarrabili modo et soli Deo cognito unusquisque de paradiso trusus uidetur et excepisse condemnationem.

of humiliation and in the valley of tears; whether because all who are born from him were in Adam's loins and were equally expelled with him or, in some other inexplicable fashion known only to God, each person seems to be driven out of paradise and to have received condemnation.<sup>211</sup>

In the latter text Origen betrays his favourite method of professing theology: he gives two seemingly contradictory explanations without resolving which of them he considers to be right. He says that the universality of sin may originate from the presence of all in the loins of Adam or may be an effect of the example given by Adam and which was voluntarily followed by everyone. The fact that he leaves the problem open in this way has – in my opinion – a very important goal. It is to focus our attention not on the question *how*, but on the statement of the universality of sin which Origen treats as an incontestable fact.

#### 4.1.7 Man's Freedom and Universality of Sin

It seems obvious to us that the heredity of sinfulness or sin must be somehow contrary to the concept of free will. Since if man is to decide voluntarily about his fate he cannot be in any way determined by nature and all the more so by the deeds of his ancestor. However, for Origen those two assumptions are not contradictory. In the same text he speaks about “the soul which being free by means of sin leads itself to slavery”, and several sentences further he mentions the things it “lost through Adam”.

Quod ergo ait: *Vnius delicto mors regnavit per unum* ostendit quia per delictum mortis regnum datur nec potest regnare in aliquo nisi ius regni accipiat ex delicto. Per quod indicari uidetur quod cum libera a Deo creata sit anima ipsa se in seruitutem redigat per delictum et uelut chirografa immortalitatis suae quae a creatore suo acceperat morti tradat. *Anima enim quae peccat ipsa morietur*. Ipsa denique anima clamat per prophetam dicens: *In puluerem mortis deduxisti me*. Quod utique ei nisi ex delicto non potuisset accidere; unde euidenter apparet eam per delictum chirografa sui conscripsisse cum morte ut libertate immortalitatis amissa iugum peccati et

Well then, what he says, *By the transgression of the one, death exercised dominion through the one* (Rom 5:17), shows that dominion is granted to death through transgression; it cannot exercise dominion in anyone unless it receives the right to rule from transgression. What seems to be made known in this is that since a soul created by God is itself free, it leads itself into slavery by means of transgression and hands over to death, so to speak, the IOU of its own immortality which it had received from its own Creator. *For the soul that sins will die* (Ezk 18:4). That soul, after all, cries out through the prophet, saying, *You have led me down to the dust of death* (Ps 21:16). This assuredly could

<sup>211</sup> Origen, *Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos* V 4, 1-3; SCh 539, 430-432; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 340-341.

regnum mortis exciperet. Volens igitur apostolus ostendere quanto maiora per Christum anima receperit quam amiserat per Adam frequentat istos sermones ut dicat *multo magis et abundantiam gratiae et doni iustitiae et regnabunt per unum Iesum Christum*, quae omnia utique declarant multo abundantiora esse dona quam damna.

not have come to pass to the person except as a result of transgression. Therefore it seems plain that the soul had composed its own IOU with death by means of transgression, so that, having lost the freedom of immortality, it took up the yoke of sin and the dominion of death. Because the Apostle wanted to show how much more a soul has received through Christ than it had lost through Adam, he repeats these expressions to say, *much more surely, the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, and they shall reign through the one, Jesus Christ* (Rom 5:17), all of which most certainly declare how much more abundant the gifts are than the losses.<sup>212</sup>

It is true that Origen nowhere explains how free will and the universality of sin can exist simultaneously. He only stresses that this is how our present reality looks like as if the question of coexistence of those two facts was of lesser interest to him whatsoever, or perhaps he himself did not know how to reconcile those two contradictions. I have an impression that the divergent concepts in the writings of Origen have their source in his deep conviction, first, of the free will of rational beings and, secondly, the universal sinfulness of people. The idea of the fall of minds in pre-existence is to defend free will against suspicions of any determinism, while the concept of mankind in the loins of Adam is to explain the cause of the universality of sin.

Researchers of Origen's teaching tried different ways to reconcile or connect those two threads in his writings. H. Crouzel's theory of quest according to which Origen very frequently proposed several interpretation of the same fragment, oftentimes mutually exclusive, and left the freedom of choice to the reader, is the most popular one.<sup>213</sup> Crouzel underlines that Origen did not want to speak about theology in a dogmatic way. Instead, he proposed something similar to exercises, so in order to extract any "system" from his teachings over one half of what Origen says should be thrown away.<sup>214</sup>

Joseph P. Laporte explains that at present it is believed that the picture of the pre-existence of the souls and "cooling" of the *nous* into *psyche* is one of many that Origen used to describe the fall and regeneration of man.<sup>215</sup> He underlines that Origen was not a taxonomist and had no problem with seeing the source of our sinfulness concurrently in human condition as such (i.e. the body) and in the fall of Adam.<sup>216</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Origen, *Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos* V 3, 2; SCh 539, 422-424; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 336-337

<sup>213</sup> M. Simonetti, *Alcune osservazioni sull'interpretazione origeniana di Genesi 2, 7 e 3, 21*, 381.

<sup>214</sup> H. Crouzel, *Origène*, 75.

<sup>215</sup> J.P. Laporte, *Models from Philo in Origen's Teaching on Original Sin*, 194.

<sup>216</sup> J.P. Laporte, *Théologie liturgique de Philon d'Alexandrie et d'Origène*, Paris 1995, 229-300.

Although in the chapter on original sin in Origen Laporte speaks about the fall in pre-existence, he does not try to inscribe it in any way into the history of mankind which begins with Adam. What is interesting is that, he sees in the teaching of Origen yet another explanation of the sources of sin, namely the natural development of man occurring in several stages from childhood to old age – in the concept the focus is on the example of others and education, also as a way of passing of sin.<sup>217</sup>

Giulia Sfameni Gasparo and Paola Pisi distinguish two falls: one in pre-existence and the other in Adam, and they claim that the fall of Adam is a metaphor for the fall of intelligent creatures in pre-existence. They believe that Adam has two meanings: he symbolizes creatures that fell in pre-existence and also a concrete person, the first parent with whom the long history of mankind begins.<sup>218</sup> Mariusz Szram admits that this concept is hard to be accepted as an axiom because one might as well recognize that in his exegetic and homiletic works Origen withdrew from the hypothesis of the fall in pre-existence and leaned towards the traditional understanding of Adam's sin. In any case, there is no doubt that as described in the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* the first sin was a transgression of the first man and not only of the pre-existing rational creature.<sup>219</sup>

G. Teichtweiter links the fall of pre-existing souls with Adam differently. He believes that Adam is only one of the fallen people or pre-existing minds, and whoever falls – like Adam – does it of his own free will.<sup>220</sup>

According to another theory by Gross which tries to combine the concept of free will with the universality of sin Origen was to speak about Adam's transgression which opened the entry into the world for sin and its consequences, but the original sin was to be only an example or the model cause for future sins, while death was to be the punishment for personal sins.<sup>221</sup>

Scheffczyk puts the idea of free will to the forefront and explains that although in the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* 5, 1 undoubtedly reiterates Irenaeus' image of including mankind in Adam and solidarity with him, one must not overlook the fact that Origen does not take the traditional position: he does not speak about passing of sin onto the entire human race but about passing of death. He reads this statements in the light of Origen's chief idea, i.e. that sin comes from man's free will. For Origen sin or punishment which are not personally culpable are impossible. That

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**217** J.P. Laporte, *Théologie liturgique de Philon d'Alexandrie et d'Origène*, 202-205.

**218** G.S. Gasparo, *Doppia creazione e peccato di Adamo nel Peri Archon di Origene: Fondamenti biblici e presupposti platonici dell'esegesi origeniana*, in: *La doppia creazione dell'uomo negli Alessandrini, nei Capadoci e nella gnosi*, Roma 1978, 67-68 and P. Pisi, *Peccato di Adamo e caduta dei NOES nell'esegesi origeniana*, in: *Origeniana Quarta*, Innsbruck 1987, 322-335.

**219** M. Szram, *Nauka o grzechu Adama w Komentarzu do Listu św. Pawła do Rzymian Orygenes*, in: *Grzech Pierworodny*, Kraków 1999, 48-49.

**220** G. Teichtweiter, *Die Sündenlehre des Origenes*, Regensburg 1958, 98.

**221** J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 108.

is why Scheffczyk believes he so often underlines the fact that no man is free from personal sin even if he were to live only for one day.<sup>222</sup>

Scheffczyk also puts forth a hypothesis that certain concepts were addressed to the ignorant and others to the initiated. He asks whether it is possible, however, that such a "taxonomist" approved of the side-by-side existence of two contradictory ideas, namely the hypothesis of pre-existence and the hypotheses of all being in the loins of Adam. Therefore, he suggests that Origen recognized pre-existence as a hypothesis, while the historical story of the original condition of man as a prevailing version. He claims that although Origen gave simple explanations or an alternative to common people, he himself believed in the spiritual explanation.<sup>223</sup>

Szram also underlines the role of personal sins. Although he sees Origen's statements that all people partake in the consequences of Adam's sin, namely mortality and the stain of sin passed by way of fleshly propagation, he does not accept the declarations of the solidarity of all in sin with Adam and inheriting his guilt. He puts to the forefront those texts in which Origen speaks about voluntary personal sins of each man.<sup>224</sup>

Joseph Turmel tries to explain the universality of sin basing on the idea of the fall of minds in pre-existence and claims that the original sin Origen believes in is an ensemble of falls that occurred to our souls in previous life.<sup>225</sup>

Pier Franco Beatrice provides the following arguments in favour of the statement that the traditional teaching on sin is found in Origen's texts: first, Origen accepts baptism of children; second, he would not talk about it, at least not in homilies, where he was not to introduce any novel concepts. Nevertheless, it is true that in the dogmatic writings he departs from the schemes used in the homilies to defend human freedom against gnostic heresy in a more philosophical manner.<sup>226</sup> Further on, Beatrice introduces a theory that the concept of free will was a result of the fact that Origen was saturated with the Greek culture but accepted the truth of the original sin when he was presbyter closely tied with the community of the faithful and daily experience of believers.<sup>227</sup>

Gaudel claims that Origen had his elaborated teaching and hypotheses. Unlike Irenaeus, Origen nowhere claims that all people transgressed in Adam. He claims that everyone sinned separately. Also in order to explain death he writes about individual sins.<sup>228</sup> According to him beside this axiom Origen presents also hypotheses: original

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**222** L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 79-80.

**223** *Ibid.*, 77-78.

**224** M. Szram, *Nauka o grzechu Adama w Komentarzu do Listu św. Pawła do Rzymian Orygenesesa*, 63.

**225** J. Turmel, *Histoire des dogmes*, vol.1: *Le péché originel. La rédemption*, Paris 1931, 46.

**226** P.F. Beatrice, *Tradux peccati: alle fonti della dottrina agostiniana del peccato originale*, Milano 1978, 216.

**227** P.F. Beatrice, *Tradux peccati*, 219.

**228** A. Gaudel, *Péché originel*, in: *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique XII*, Paris 1933, 334.

sin occurred in the spiritual world; sin consisted in merging souls with bodies; we were all in Adam's loins. That latter hypotheses is an anticipations of Augustine's theory.<sup>229</sup> Further on in his analysis Gaudel underlines that Origen's teaching contains elements that are characteristic of Paul's teaching and the universal conviction of the Church, that is the belief of the original stain (*une souillure originelle*) and the need of baptism to remove it. To explore the dogma Origen presents hypotheses which under the influence of Plato and Plotinus depart from the tradition and combine the conviction of the descent of souls into bodies with the Christian idea of the solidarity of all in Adam.<sup>230</sup> Thus, Gaudel's thesis is similar to that of Beatrice's – they both emphasize the tension between personal conviction of Origen and his faith resulting from participation in the community of the Church.

Byard Bennet sees two ideas in Origen's concept that the hereditary stain affects material bodies begotten by souls which descended toward the earth. The first one links the history of the present world with the events in the previous one; the other – historical – tells about a series of events in the earthly reality in which we live. They differ as regards acknowledgment of Adam's identity and importance, whereas they are in agreement when it comes to the understanding of Adam's first sin as an event that took place at the time preceding the present life. The first idea considers Adam to be a symbol of all those who were separated from good and deserved to be born in matter; the other one treats Adam as the first man in the earthly reality. As a result of Adam's transgression his body was subject to decay and death, while the soul surrendered to irrational passions. Since Adam started to reproduce only after the sin, the bodies of his descendants are similar to his.<sup>231</sup>

Let us also remember the theories I have already mentioned which claim that the source of incongruities in Origen writings was his change of views.<sup>232</sup> F.R. Tennant underlines that the theory of the fall in pre-existence excludes that sinfulness in any way derives from Adam. However, this is not all that Origen teaches on sin. Other theories, contradictory to this one, appear in his later works. With a view to the attempt to remove those contradictions Tennant calls for explaining rather than removing them.<sup>233</sup> He himself believes that Origen changed his views and teaching on Adam when he encountered the practice of the baptism of children in Caesarea.<sup>234</sup>

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**229** *Ibid.*, 336-337.

**230** *Ibid.*, 339.

**231** B. Bennet, *The Soiling of Sinful Flesh: Primordial Sin, Inherited Corruption and Moral Responsibility in Didymus the Blind and Origen*, "Adamantius. Annuario di Letteratura Cristiana Antica e di Studi Giudeoellenistici" 11 (2005), 81-82.

**232** F.R. Tennant, *The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin*, 296-306; N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 228-229.

**233** F.R. Tennant, *The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin*, 298.

**234** *Ibid.*, 299.



N.P. Williams offers a similar interpretation of Origen's teaching. He believes that Origen's writings may be divided into two groups: those written in the Alexandrian period and those written in the Caesarean period, and that chronological division corresponds with the significant differences in the writings themselves.<sup>235</sup> In the initial Alexandrian period Origen put forward a hypothesis of the fall in pre-existence; later on, after he encountered the practice of the baptism of children, he wrote about the stain of birth in connection with what happened in paradise and Adam's transgression, ultimately to combine both theories (in *Contra Celsum*) talking about Adam as man in the general sense.<sup>236</sup>

C.P. Bammel claims that a change of position between writing the *Commentary on Genesis* and *The Principles* and later works must not be excluded, although the return to the exegesis of the description of the creation of the world and the story of Adam from the *Commentary on Genesis* in *Contra Celsum* from 248-249 renders any significant change improbable.<sup>237</sup> Bammel notes that there may be more than one underlying cause for the human condition. Human soul may enter life laden with its own sin and here encounter the condition which is an effect of Adam's sin. Nonetheless, it is important than in none of the preserved writings Origen does not invoke such a scheme. His aim was not to systematise or put a corset on the biblical message, but give justice to the diversity of biblical communications on Adam, human nature and the fall.<sup>238</sup>

One may also repeat after Scheffczyk that everyone is born with the propensity to sin, but sin as such is a decision of an individual man.<sup>239</sup> It does not seem sufficiently precise, however. Origen states for sure that all people are sinful, all need to be baptised and redeemed by Christ. How this stain of sin occurred: does mankind constitute a unity or everyone commits sin oneself remains an open issue to him. He also states with all certainty that man was endowed with free will from the beginning and retained it even after sin. Those two facts – free will and universality of sin – are for him indisputable and he focuses on showing their co-existence. Explaining them seems of secondary importance to him.

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235 N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 210.

236 *Ibid.*, 216-229.

237 C.P. Bammel, *Adam in Origen*, in: *The Making of Orthodoxy. Essays in honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. R. Williams, Cambridge 1989, 63-64.

238 *Ibid.*, 85.

239 L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 80.

## 4.2 Augustine of Hippo

Despite significant changes in Augustine's teaching on original sin as a result of the Pelagian controversy,<sup>240</sup> a conviction of the unity of mankind in Adam is present in all of his writings from the very beginning, initially only as a hypothesis,<sup>241</sup> but then as a significant and indisputable part of his teaching on original sin. When we go deeper into this issue it turns out that Augustine's teaching on passing of original sin is no so unequivocal and obvious as it would seem. And this is not only my intuition; it has been also articulated by the author of one of the largest monographs on the history of the teaching on original sin, Leo Scheffczyk.<sup>242</sup> It seems to me that as in the case of Origen we deal here with different hypotheses rather than a definitive solution of the problem. However, all of those concepts I am going to present below are based on Augustine's deep conviction that all people were somehow united with Adam at the time of sin. This conviction is based on the belief in real redemption of all thanks to communion with Christ. The fundamental argument of Augustine consists in the confession of the universality of redemption. The entire New Testament teaches us that Christ came to save all people without exception. Therefore, it should be assumed that all people are in a fundamental situation of sin. Our communion with Christ is real, ontic, not only legal or moral. Is the solidarity in Adam the same? Adam was in us, and we were in him – in what sense? Henri Rondet believes that according to Augustine our bodies come from Adam by way of procreation. Corporal procreation is the anti-type of spiritual revival in baptism and communion with Christ. That the unity with the head (*le chef*) of the humankind assumes solidarity of souls, of people. The words: *In Adam eramus omnes* stipulate real solidarity of all people with the first man.<sup>243</sup> The statement that the unity with Adam is based only on carnal descent from Adam is – as I will shortly demonstrate – an oversimplification of Augustine's teaching, nevertheless the universality of redemption is really the basis of his teaching on original sin.<sup>244</sup>

Having analysed different Augustine's texts we may draw one of the following conclusions: either Augustine put forward different hypotheses as Origen did, or his views were transformed in the course of a polemic, first of all with Pelagians. Having in mind recurrence of certain ideas at various moments of Augustine's life

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**240** However, not all agree with the statement that Augustine underwent such a change. B. Leeming puts this as follows: Augustine changed his views around 397, though not under the influence of the polemic with Pelagians but semi-Pelagian, and not on original sin or *massa damnata*, but on *initium fidei*, cf. *Augustine, Ambrosiaster and massa perditionis*, "Gregorianum" 11 (1930), 83.

**241** Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* III, XX, 56-58.

**242** L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 215.

**243** H. Rondet, *Le Christ novel Adam dans la théologie de s. Augustin*, "Etudes Mariales" 13 (1955), 35-36.

**244** L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 213.

I would personally opt for the former. Several different concepts may be found in his works virtually side by side. Williams divides Augustine's teaching on passing of sin into two main currents: original sin understood as *vitium* is passed through biological procreation (the sexual act constitutes a *nexus*, through which the heritage of passion is passed from the parent to the child), while passing of sin understood as *reatus* from Adam onto his descendants is explained according to the theory of seminal identity.<sup>245</sup> Gross enumerates the following views of the problem: sometimes Augustine sees Adam's sin as the common sin of entire mankind because we were all in Adam when he transgressed, other times as the sin of nature because all of human nature sinned in Adam, or the original transgression passed through propagation, that is original sin proper (*eigentliche Erbsünde*).<sup>246</sup>

In my opinion, this division should be expanded and made more precise. Augustine presents several difficult theories that are hard to be reconciled with one another, which are aimed at explaining how all of mankind participated in Adam's sin. The first one consists in the recognition of Adam as a representative of the humanity in the sense that he was somehow all of mankind. The second is the recognition of Adam's sin as the sin of nature – in line with that concept everyone who partakes in nature shares the sin. The third is the idea of *massa peccati* or *massa damnata*; I think this is either continuation of or intuition convergent with Irenaeus' vision of *plasmatio Adae*. The fourth theory of seminal participation is commonly mistaken for the concept of hereditary sin. Let us have a closer look at those theories one by one.

#### 4.2.1 Adam Means the Human Race

Augustine refers to the solidarity of mankind with Adam in order to explain the universality of sin thanks to the idea of quasi cooperation of all in the first fall. However, it would be a grave mistake to consider this solidarity as a solely moral one.<sup>247</sup> Already the first explanation of the participation of mankind in Adam's transgression shows a profound, virtually ontic sense of that solidarity. Augustine uses several types of statements here. Sometimes he claims that every man is Adam suggesting that Adam is a symbol or a representative of the entire mankind:

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<sup>245</sup> N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 372.

<sup>246</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 367.

<sup>247</sup> J. de Blic, *Le péché originel selon saint Augustin*, "Recherches de Science Religieuse" 17 (1927), 526.

Expertus ergo malum Adam: omnis autem homo Adam; sicut in his qui crediderunt omnis homo Christus, quia membra sunt Christi: expertus ergo malum quod non debuit experiri, si crederet dicenti, *Noli tangere*.

But Adam experienced what was bad for him, and every man is Adam, just as everyone who has believed is Christ, for all are members of Christ. Adam, however, chose to experiment with evil, which he had no business to do, and would not have done if he believed the one who had said, *Do not touch* (Gen 2:17).<sup>248</sup>

Augustine happens to speak about Adam as a symbol of sinners in opposition to new people reborn in Christ:

Ad hoc enim pertinet, fratres, totum id quod dicit Apostolus, de exuendo veterem hominem. *Iracimini, et nolite peccare: sol non occidat super iracundiam vestram: neque locum detis diabolo: vetus ergo dabat locum, novus non det. Qui furabatur, jam non furetur: vetus ergo furabatur, novus non furetur. Ipse homo est, unus homo est: Adam erat, Christus sit: vetus erat, novus sit.*

Everything the Apostle says about taking off the old man teaches the same lesson: *be angry, but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your wrath, and do not give the devil an opportunity*. The old self did; the new must not. *Let anyone who was a thief steal no more* (Eph 4:26-28). The old self did steal, but the new must not. It is the same person; it is one person: one who was Adam, but must now be Christ. What was old must now be new.<sup>249</sup>

He also uses the name Adam for infants who are from birth encumbered with original sin:

Non videmus quid aliud possit intelligi, nisi unumquemque parvulum non esse nisi Adam et corpore et anima, et ideo illi Christi gratiam necessariam. Aetas quippe illa in seipsa nihil egit vel boni vel mali; proinde ibi anima innocentissima est, si ex Adam propagata non est: unde quomodo possit juste ire in condemnationem, si de corpore sine Baptismo exierit, quisquis istam sententiam de anima tenens potuerit demonstrare, mirandus est.

Each child is Adam in body and soul, and therefore the grace of Christ is necessary for him. At that age the infant in his own person has done no good or evil, and thus his soul is perfectly innocent if it has not descended from Adam. Consequently, it will be an extraordinary achievement if the person who holds that the soul has not descended from Adam's soul is able to show how the soul of an infant can be justly condemned if it goes forth from the body without baptism!<sup>250</sup>

In other of his statements it is clearly seen that recognizing Adam for a symbol of mankind or sinners is far not enough. Augustine says that the entire human race was somehow comprised in the first parents:

<sup>248</sup> J. de Blic, *Le péché originel selon saint Augustin*, "Recherches de Science Religieuse" 17 (1927), 526.

<sup>249</sup> Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 25, II, 4; PL 36, 190, CCL 38, 144; transl. M. Boulding, vol. 1, 260 with alteration.

<sup>250</sup> Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* X 11, 19; PL 34, 416, CSEL 28, 308-309; transl. J. Hammond Taylor, vol. 2, 110.

In illis enim duobus hominibus totum genus humanum: inde propago mortis, inde et in parvulis debita, delicta.

In these two original humans [Adam and Eve] our whole race was comprised. From them was death propagated and from them the debt of sin in babies.<sup>251</sup>

And elsewhere even more clearly:

Creatum est in primo homine genus humanum.

In the beginning the human race was created in the first man.<sup>252</sup>

Talking about God's punishment for sin he addresses all of us as follows:

Sed fortasse injuste tibi Deus iratus est, o Adam, o genus humanum, injuste iratus est Deus!

Perhaps, Adam, o human race, God has been unjustly angry with you!<sup>253</sup>

A consequence of such a vision of the unity of whole mankind in Adam is Augustine's conviction that all those who are born throughout centuries are somehow Adam and thus share his guilt and punishment for sin.

De ira Dei enim mortales sumus, et de ira Dei in ista terra in egestate et labore vultus nostri manducamus panem. Hoc enim audivit Adam, quando peccavit; et Adam ille omnes nos eramus, quia in Adam omnes moriuntur: quod ille audivit, secutum est et nos. Non enim eramus jam nos, sed eramus in Adam: ideo quidquid evenit ipsi Adam, secutum est et nos, ut moreremur; omnes quippe in illo fuimus.

As a consequence of God's anger we are mortal, and in consequence of his anger we eat our bread on this earth in poverty and the laborious of our faces. This is the sentence Adam heard when he sinned, and we are all Adam, for in Adam all die. What he heard concerns us equally. In our persons we did not yet exist, but we were present in Adam, and therefore whatever befell Adam was our fate too. We too therefore had to die, inasmuch as we were in him.<sup>254</sup>

Augustine also believes that the suffering we experience in life is somehow a punishment for Adam's sin as he writes that when we suffer Adam is whipped – Adam that is the entire human race:

<sup>251</sup> Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 103, IV, 6; PL 37, 1381, CCL 40, 1525; transl. M. Boulding, vol. 5, 171 with alteration.

<sup>252</sup> Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 77, 4; PL 36, 985, CCL 39, 1069; transl. MP.

<sup>253</sup> Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 37, 7; PL 36, 400, CCL 38, 387-388; transl. M. Boulding, vol. 2, 152.

<sup>254</sup> Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 84, 7; PL 37, 1072, CCL 39, 1165; transl. M. Boulding, vol. 4, 208.

Fratres mei, videte ex quo vapulamur. In omnibus qui ab initio generis humani nati sunt, in omnibus qui nunc sunt, in omnibus qui postea nascentur, Adam vapulat. Vapulat Adam, id est, genus humanum; et multi sic obdurerunt, ut nec plagas suas sentiant.

Consider when our whipping began, my brothers. Adam has endured a whipping in all those who have been born since the dawn of the human race; Adam is whipped in all who are alive today; and his whipping will continue in all who come after us. Adam is the human race under the whip, and many have so hardened themselves that they do not even feel their lacerations.<sup>255</sup>

Jacques E. Ménard deems such an idea of Adam to be Gnostic. He claims that for Gnostics Adam is the universal Soul which comprises all individual souls into which it passes. He sees in Augustine the idea of a superior Adam (*un Adam supérieur*), comprising the entire human race, whose limbs are currently scattered but will be gathered again together in Christ, a second Adam.<sup>256</sup> It is true that Augustine nowhere expounds on this concept more extensively. However, to me it seems closer to the idea of the existence of mankind in the loins of Adam which I discuss below than the Gnostic concept of the universal Adam. Therefore, its sources are primarily biblical rather than Gnostic.

#### 4.2.2 Sin of Nature

Let us begin with Augustine's most general statements. Almost all of the fragments that have been quoted above come from *Enarrationes in Psalmos*. In *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* Augustine returns to the subject of the participation of all in Adam's transgression:

*Sic enim per unum hominem peccatum intravit in mundum, et per peccatum mors; et ita in omnes homines pertransiit, in quo omnes peccaverunt. Per unius illius voluntatem malam omnes in eo peccaverunt, quando omnes ille unus fuerunt, de quo propterea singuli peccatum originale traxerunt.*

*For so it was that through one man sin entered the world, and through sin death, and in that way it was passed on to all human beings, in whom all have sinned (Rom 5:12). Through the bad will of that one man all sinned in him, when all were that one man and on that account each individual contracted from him original sin.*<sup>257</sup>

<sup>255</sup> Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 122, 6; PL 37, 1635, CCL 40, 1819; transl. M. Boulding, vol. 6, 36.

<sup>256</sup> J.E. Ménard, *Le péché originel: pensée grecque, polygénisme et monogénisme biblique*, in: *Pecado original; XXIX Semana Española de Teología*, Madrid 1970, 70.

<sup>257</sup> Augustine, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* II 5, 15; PL 44, 444; CSEL 42, 266-267; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians II*, 61.

Most deliberations on the voluntariness of original sin and sin of nature are found in *Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem*. Augustine starts out with a statement that original sin which is shared by all is someone else's fault but led to the damage of the whole of human nature.

Inobedientia quidem unius hominis non absurde utique delictum dicitur alienum, quia nondum nati nondum egeramus aliquid proprium, sive bonum, sive malum: sed quia in illo qui hoc egit, quando id egit, omnes eramus, tantumque fuit ac tale delictum, ut eo natura universa vitaretur humana; quod satis indicat etiam ipsa generis humani tam manifesta miseria; hoc delictum alienum obnoxia successione fit nostrum.

The disobedience of the one human being is, of course, not absurdly said to be the sin of someone else, because when we were not yet born, we did no action of our own, whether good or bad, but we were all in that one who committed this sin when he committed it, and that sin was so great and so powerful that the whole of human nature was damaged by it. The quite obvious misery of the human race is sufficient proof of this. And this sin of someone else becomes ours through the succession of generations subject to it.<sup>258</sup>

In the next book of the same work he returns to this matter and repeats his thesis:

Et illud libera voluntate commissum est ejus, in quo natura humana damnata est, ex qua homines damnationi nascuntur obnoxii, nisi renascantur in eo, qui non est natus obnoxius.

That sin was committed by the free will of the one in whom human nature was condemned, and from that nature human beings are born subject to condemnation if they are not reborn in the one who was not born subject to it.<sup>259</sup>

The problem of voluntariness of original sin was one of the major arguments of Pelagians against Augustine's teaching so the fact that he returns to it again is by no means surprising. He states again that voluntary sin of the first man caused damage to the whole of human nature.

Dicimus autem et nos, non posse esse sine libera voluntate peccatum; nec ideo tamen, ut dicis, nostrum dogma consumitur, cum asserimus esse originale peccatum: quia et ad hoc peccati genus ex libera voluntate perventum est, non ejus propria qui nascitur, sed ejus in quo omnes originaliter fuerunt, quando communem naturam mala voluntate vitavit. Non habent ergo parvuli tempore conceptus vel ortus sui peccandi voluntatem: sed ille tempore praevaricationis suae

We, however, also say that sin cannot exist without free will, and our teaching, nonetheless, is not destroyed on this account, as you say, when we say that there is original sin. For this kind of sin also came about as a result of free will, not as a result of the personal free will of the one who is born, but as a result of the will of Adam in whom we all originally existed when he damaged our common nature by his evil will. The little ones, then, do not have at the time of their conception or birth a will for sinning,

<sup>258</sup> Augustine, *Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem* II 163; PL 45, 1210-11; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians III*, 236.

<sup>259</sup> Augustine, *Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem* III 3; PL 45, 1249; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians III*, 286.

magnum illud peccatum libera voluntate commisit, a qua originalis peccati contagium sic humana natura contraxit, ut verissime diceret sanctus, *In iniquitatibus conceptus sum*.

but that man at the time of his transgression committed that great sin by his free will, from which human nature contracted the infection of original sin so that the holy psalmist might say with complete truth, *I was conceived in iniquities* (Ps 50:7).<sup>260</sup>

Augustine also fights against the statement that people share Adam's sin through imitating it. He believes that at the time when Adam committed sin we were all one man. He also refers to the communion of the faithful with Christ to explain the participation of all in the first sin:

Si enim peccatum intellexeris, quod per unum hominem intravit in mundum, in quo omnes peccaverunt: certe manifestum est alia esse propria cuique peccata, in quibus hi tantum peccant, quorum peccata sunt; aliud hoc unum, in quo omnes peccaverunt; quando omnes ille unus homo fuerunt. Si autem non peccatum, sed ille unus homo intelligitur, in quo uno homine omnes peccaverunt, quid etiam ista est manifestatione manifestius? Nempe legimus justificari in Christo qui credunt in eum, propter occultam communicationem et inspirationem gratiae spiritualis, qua quisquis haeret Domino unus spiritus est, quamvis eum et imitentur sancti ejus: legatur mihi tale aliquid de iis, qui sanctos ejus imitati sunt, utrum quisquam dictus sit justificatus in Paulo aut in Petro, aut in quolibet horum, quorum in populo Dei magna excellit auctoritas; nisi quod in Abraham dicimur benedici, sicut ei dictum est: *Benedicentur in te omnes gentes*: propter Christum qui semen ejus est secundum carnem. Quod manifestius dicitur, cum hoc idem ita dicitur: *Benedicentur in semine tuo omnes gentes*. Dictum autem quemquam divinis eloquiis, peccasse vel peccare in diabolo, cum eum iniqui et impii omnes imitentur, nescio utrum quisquam reperiat: quod tamen cum Apostolus de primo homine

For if you have here understood the sin that entered the world through the one man in which sin all have sinned, it is certainly clear that personal sins of each person by which they alone sinned are distinct from this one in which all have sinned, when all were that one man. But if you have understood, not the sin, but that one man, in which one man all have sinned, what could be clearer than that clear statement? For we read that those who believe in him are justified in Christ on account of the hidden communication and inspiration of spiritual grace, which makes whoever clings to the Lord one spirit. Even though his saints also imitate him, I would like to find something of the sort said of those who have imitated his saints. Has anyone been said to have been justified in Paul or in Peter or in anyone else of those who have an eminent authority among the people of God? We are, of course, said to be blessed in Abraham in accord with God's words to him, *All the nations will be blessed in you* (Gen 12:3), on account of Christ who is called his offspring according to the flesh. This is stated more clearly, when the same idea is put as follows, *All the nations will be blessed in your offspring* (Gen 22:18). I doubt that anyone will find it stated in the words of God that someone has sinned or sins in the devil, though all sinful and evil persons imitate him. But with regard

<sup>260</sup> Augustine, *Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem* IV 90; PL 45, 1392; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians III*, 457.



dixerit, *In quo omnes peccaverunt*, adhuc de peccati propagine disceptatur, et nescio quae nebula imitationis opponitur.

to the words of the Apostle concerning the first man, *in whom all have sinned* (Rom 5:12), they continue to resist the propagation of sin and raise in objection the idea of imitation to cloud over the issue.<sup>261</sup>

In the fragment above Augustine strongly emphasises the phrase *in Adam* as parallel to the phrase *in Christ*. The participation in both Adam's sin and Christ's redemption takes place through sharing and unity rather than emulation. Adam's sin had consequences not only for him, but also for all people because somehow it touched upon the whole nature that we share:

Deus enim creavit hominem rectum, naturarum auctor, non utique vitiorum: sed sponte depravatus justeque damnatus, depravatos damnatosque generavit. Omnes enim fuimus in illo uno, quando omnes fuimus ille unus, qui per feminam lapsus est in peccatum, quae de illo facta est ante peccatum. Nondum erat nobis singillatim creata et distributa forma, in qua singuli viveremus; sed jam natura erat seminalis, ex qua propagaremur: qua scilicet propter peccatum vitiata, et vinculo mortis obstricta, justeque damnata, non alterius conditionis homo ex homine nasceretur. Ac per hoc a liberi arbitrii malo usu series hujus calamitatis exorta est, quae humanum genus origine depravata, velut radice corrupta, usque ad secundae mortis exitium, quae non habet finem, solis eis exceptis qui per gratiam Dei liberantur, miseriarum connexione perducit.

For God, who is the author of nature, and certainly not of vices, created man righteous. Man, however, depraved by his own free will and justly condemned, produced depraved and condemned children. For we were all in that one man, since we all were that one man who fell into sin through the woman who was made from him before they sinned. The particular form in which we were to live as individuals had not yet been created and distributed to us; but the seminal nature from which we were to be propagated already existed. And, when this was vitiated by sin and bound by the chain of death and justly condemned, man could not be born of man in any other condition. Thus, from the evil use of free will there arose the whole series of calamities by which the human race is led by a succession of miseries from its depraved origin, as from a corrupt root, even to the ruin of the second death, which has no end, and from which only those who are redeemed by the grace of God are exempt.<sup>262</sup>

In the texts that are quoted above Augustine talks about contamination of nature rather than the sin of nature. However, on occasions he explicitly says that it was human nature that sinned in Adam:

<sup>261</sup> Augustine, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* I 10, 11; PL 44, 115-116, CSEL 60, 12-13; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians*, 39-40.

<sup>262</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XIII 14; PL 41, 386-387, CCL 48, 395-396; transl. R.W. Dyson, 555-556.

Et ut manifestum sit, non sanctificato spiritui, sed carnali luto ista dici, vide quid sequitur: *Aut non habet potestatem figulus luti ex eadem conspersione facere aliud quidem vas in honorem, aliud in contumeliam?* Ex quo ergo in paradiso natura nostra peccavit, ab eadem divina providentia, non secundum coelum, sed secundum terram, id est, non secundum spiritum, sed secundum carnem mortali generatione formamur, et omnes una massa luti facti sumus, quod est massa peccati.

And, so that it may be clear that this is not being said to a sanctified spirit but to fleshly clay, look at what follows: *Or does not the potter have the power to make one vessel for honor and another for shame out of the same lump?* (Rom 9:21) Inasmuch as our nature sinned in paradise, then, we are formed by mortal generation by the same divine providence not along the lines of heaven but along those of earth (that is, not in accordance with the spirit but in accordance with the flesh), and we have all been made from one mass of clay, which is a mass of sin.<sup>263</sup>

Scheffczyk claims that Augustine is close to the concept of the sin of nature, although he would consider it as Manichean.<sup>264</sup> Gross, on the other hand, acknowledges that Augustine speaks about the sin of nature which turns all of mankind into a sinful mass; all people sinned in Adam in the full sense of the word. Augustine unconditionally assimilates the idea of Adam's sin as the sin of nature.<sup>265</sup> On the basis of the above texts I would rather agree with Gross since Augustine accepts real participation of all in Adam's transgression, not only in its consequences. He acknowledges that not only and solely an individual man sinned in paradise, but the entire *massa*, the whole nature.

#### 4.2.3 *Massa Peccati*

In my opinion the concept of *massa peccati* has two sources. In the case of just quoted *De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII* 68, 3 it derives from Augustine's belief in the sin of nature and the resultant contamination of the entire human race, which from that time on forms a single large lump of sin. In this context Augustine uses the term *massa* to describe mankind's solidarity with Adam and participation in sin.<sup>266</sup> One might even say that Augustine sums up his concept of original sin in the idea of *massa damnata*.<sup>267</sup> Scheffczyk perceives this as a concept of the unity of human nature based on Platonic generic realism,<sup>268</sup> although – as I have written earlier – it is extremely difficult to trace the philosophical sources of Fathers' thoughts. There is a

<sup>263</sup> Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII* 68, 3; PL 40, 71, CCL 44A, 177; transl. B. Ramsey, in: *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions*, New York 2008, 117.

<sup>264</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 215.

<sup>265</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 271.

<sup>266</sup> A. Gaudel *Péché originel*, 382.

<sup>267</sup> S. Lyonnet, *Rom. V, 12 chez s. Augustin*, in: *L'homme devant Dieu*, vol. 1: *Exégèse et patristique: mélanges offerts au Père Henri de Lubac*, Paris 1963, 329.

<sup>268</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 215.

group of texts, however, which cannot be interpreted in the Platonic spirit. Augustine talks therein about *massa peccati* in conjunction with Rom 9:21: *Does the potter not indeed have the power to make from the same lump of clay one vessel for honor and another for reproach?* In those texts Augustine stresses the carnal dimension of *massa*, which one irrefutably associates with Stoicism. Whatever the sources of this concept (undoubtedly to some extent biblical) it is important that Augustine recognizes human nature as one and – what is significant – carnal substance: *massa peccati*. Augustine presents this concept most extensively in *On Diverse Questions to Simplicianus*. He starts with a simple statement that all constitute a kind of single *massa peccati*:

Sunt igitur omnes homines - quandoquidem, ut Apostolus ait, *in Adam omnes moriuntur*, a quo in universonum genus humanum origo ducitur offensionis Dei - una quaedam *massa peccati*, supplicium debens divinae summaeque iustitiae.

Therefore, all human beings - since, as the Apostle says, *all die in Adam* (1Cor 15:22), from whom the origin of the offense against God spread throughout the whole human race - are a kind of single mass of sin owing a debt of punishment to the divine and loftiest justice.<sup>269</sup>

Further on, he directly refers to Rom 9:21. However, he does not focus on the aspect of choosing certain vessels and rejecting others, but on clay, which constitutes a material substrate, a single lump or mass comprising all people within.

*Numquid dicit figmentum ei qui se finxit, Quare me sic fecisti? Aut non habet potestatem figulus luti, ex eadem conspersione facere aliud quidem vas in honorem, aliud in contumeliam?* Eo ipso fortasse satis ostendit se homini carnali loqui; quoniam hoc limus ipse significat, unde primus homo formatus est: et quia omnes, ut jam commemoravi, secundum eundem Apostolum in Adam moriuntur, unam dicit esse consersionem omnium.

*Or does the potter not indeed have the power to make from the same lump of clay one vessel for honor and another for reproach?* (Rom 9:21) With those very words he seems to show with sufficient clarity that he is speaking to fleshly man, because the mire itself alludes to that from which the first man was formed. And since, as I have already noted, according to the same Apostle, all die in Adam, he says that there is a single lump for all.<sup>270</sup>

Without quoting Rom 11:16 (*If the first handful of dough is holy, the whole batch of dough is holy*), Augustine refers to that fragment of the Scripture. Although in the Latin text the word *massa* is used (*Quod si primitiae sanctae sunt et massa*), but in this case *massa* means dough and Augustine calls us also single *consersio* – bread dough.

<sup>269</sup> Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* II 16; PL 40, 121, CCL 44, 41-42; transl. B. Ramsey, in: *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions*, 198.

<sup>270</sup> Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* II 17; PL 40, 121-122, CCL 44, 43; transl. B. Ramsey, in: *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions*, 198-199.

*Quos et vocavit nos, inquit, non solum ex Judaeis, sed etiam ex Gentibus: id est, vasa misericordiae quae praeparavit in gloriam. Non enim omnes Judaeos, sed ex Judaeis: nec omnes omnino homines Gentium, sed ex Gentibus. Una est enim ex Adam massa peccatorum et impiorum, in qua et Judaei et Gentes remota gratia Dei ad unam pertinent conspersionem. Si enim figulus luti ex eadem conspersione facit aliud vas in honorem, aliud vas in contumeliam; manifestum est autem quod et ex Judaeis sunt alia vasa in honorem, alia in contumeliam, sicut ex Gentibus: sequitur ut ad unam conspersionem omnes pertinere intelligantur.*

*Us whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the gentiles (Rom 9:24)—that is, the vessels of mercy which he has prepared for glory. For those [who are called] are not all Jews, but they are from the Jews; nor are they absolutely all the peoples of the gentiles, but they are from the gentiles. For from Adam has come a single mass of sinners and wicked persons; it is far from God's grace, and both Jews and gentiles belong to the one lump of it. For if from the same lump the potter makes one vessel for honor and another for reproach, and if it is obvious that from the Jews, as from the gentiles, some vessels are for honor and some are for reproach, it follows that they should all be understood to belong to one lump.<sup>271</sup>*

Later on Augustine combines three terms in his discussion: *solum, -i/* ground; *massa, -ae/* lump, mass and *conspersio, -onis/* bread dough, substance. In this way he emphasises that creation had a carnal aspect and likewise our unity or solidarity in sin has its physical dimension.

*Et omnes homines de solo, et ex terra Adam creatus est. In multitudine disciplinae Dominus separavit eos, et immutavit vias eorum. Et ex ipsis benedixit et exaltavit, et ex his sanctificavit et ad se applicavit, et ex ipsis maledixit et humiliavit: et convertit illos ad dissensionem illorum. Quasi lutum figuli in manu ipsius plasmare illud et disponere, omnes viae ejus secundum dispositionem ejus; sic homo in manu illius qui se fecit, et reddet illi secundum judicium suum. Contrarium malo bonum est, et contra mortem vita est; sic et contra virum justum peccator. Et sic intueri in omnia opera Altissimi: duo, duo; unum contra unum. Primo hic commendata est disciplina Dei: In multitudine, inquit, disciplinae Dominus separavit eos: unde, nisi a beatitudine paradisi? Et immutavit vias eorum, ut jam tanquam mortales viverent. Tunc facta est una massa omnium, veniens de traduce peccati et de poena mortalitatis, quamvis Deo*

*All human beings come from the ground, and from the earth Adam was created. In the abundance of discipline the Lord separated them and changed their ways. Some he blessed and exalted, and these he sanctified and brought to himself. Some he cursed and humbled and turned to dissension. Like clay in a potter's hand, for shaping and forming, all its ways according to his plan, so is man in the hands of the one who made him, the one who deals with him according to his judgment. In contrast to evil there is good, and opposed to death there is life, in the same way the sinner is opposed to the righteous man. Look thus upon the work of the Most High, in twos, one opposed to the other (Sir 33:10-15). The first thing that is mentioned here is God's discipline. In the abundance of discipline, it says, the Lord separated them—from what if not from the blessedness of paradise?—and changed their ways (Sir 33:11), so that they would now live as*

<sup>271</sup> Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* II 19; PL 40, 124, CCL 44, 47-48; transl. B. Ramsey, in: *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions*, 201-202.

formante et creante quae bona sunt. [...] Sed concupiscentia carnalis de peccati poena jam regnans, universum genus humanum tanquam totam et unam conspersionem originali reatu in omnia permanente confuderat.

mortals. Then a single mass was made of all of them, which came from the seedling of sin and the punishment of mortality, although, thanks to God's forming and creating what is good. [...] But the fleshly desire that results from the punishment for sin has, because of the original guilt, cast abiding confusion into everything, and now it presides over the whole human race as one complete lump.<sup>272</sup>

When analysing the above fragments interpreters of Augustine's thought focus on the teaching on grace, for me the most interesting is, however, his starting point. Indeed, he mentions that some are chosen and others rejected, but before it happens we all constitute a single lump / mass/ substance – *massa*. Augustine does not have here in mind only that we all share one nature or the entire human race is included in Adam, but the carnal, physical communion of all.

Putas hominem non posse dici solum hominis corpus: cum scias ipsum Filium Dei unicum, Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, sub Pontio Pilato crucifixum, et sepultum, sicut tota ejus Ecclesia confitetur, et haereses multae, in quibus et vestra est; et tamen solum corpus Christi sepultum est. Debuit ergo secundum te Jesus Christus Filius Dei unicus Dominus noster non dici sepultus; quoniam non ex solo corpore, sed ex Verbo Dei et anima rationali et corpore est Christus Dei Filius unicus Dominus noster: sed cum venisset ad haec verba confessio *Sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est* subjici debuit, et corpus ejus sepultum. Nec de ipso primo homine, de quo agitur, dicere Scriptura debuit, *Finxit Deus hominem pulverem terrae*: quia solum hominis corpus ex terra est. [...] Quia ergo *fuit Adam, et in illo fuimus omnes*<sup>273</sup>, quod ante nos catholici doctores secundum Scripturas sanctas in sancta Ecclesia didicerunt, atque docuerunt; ideo dixi, *Omnes ille unus fuerunt*; quia et illi duo, masculus et femina, non jam duo erant, sed una caro. Et ego de omnibus genitis dixi, quoniam quando peccatum est, omnes ille unus fuerunt: nondum quippe inde fuerat ullus in matrem seminatione transfusus; et

You think that one cannot call just the body of a human being a human being, though you know that the only Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried, as his whole Church confesses and many heresies too, of which yours is one. And yet only the body of Christ was buried. According to you, we ought not to say that Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord, was buried since Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord, is not the body alone, but the Word of God and the rational soul and the body, and when the confession of faith came to these words: *He was crucified under Pontius Pilate*, it ought to have added, *And his body was buried*. Nor should scripture have said of the first man who is under discussion, *God formed man from the dust of the earth* (Gen 2:7), because only the human body comes from the earth. [...] Because, then, *Adam existed, and all of us existed in him*, as Catholic teachers before us learned and taught in the holy Church in accord with the holy scriptures, I said, *All were that one*, because even those two, the man and the woman, were then no longer two, but one flesh. And I said about all their offspring that, when the sin was committed, they all

<sup>272</sup> Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* II 20; PL 40, 125-126, CCL 44, 51-52; transl. B. Ramsey, in: *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions*, 203-204 with alterations.

<sup>273</sup> Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* VII 234; PL 15, 1762, CCL 14, 295.

utique filii a viris transfunduntur in feminas. Et qualibet ergo, et quantalibet parte, omnes qui ex illo nati sunt, ille unus fuerunt, sive secundum solum corpus, sive secundum utramque hominis partem.

were that one. None of them was, of course, as yet poured from him into the womb of the mother by the sowing of the seed, and children are surely poured by the men into the women. In whatever manner and to whatever extent, all who have been born after him were one, whether only in terms of the body or in terms of both parts of the human being.<sup>274</sup>

Our entanglement in original sin is not a result from the fact that we are born as members of the human community (because Christ does not share sin) but because of the solidarity with Adam that we had from the very first day, the fact that we were to receive a body from him through a series of consecutive generations. Therefore, our solidarity with Adam is physical.<sup>275</sup>

#### 4.2.4 The Unity in Adam and Inheriting Sin

Scheffczyk is mistaken when he claims that Augustine replies to Pelagius that Adam's sin cannot be transmitted solely by way of imitation but he does not give any other theological explanation.<sup>276</sup> On the contrary, Augustine spends a lot of time on explaining in what way all people share Adam's sin. What is more, Gross adds that this issue caused many problems for him, although the very fact of inheriting sin remains unquestionable for Augustine.<sup>277</sup> Apart from the above explanations – that Adam stands for the whole of mankind, that Adam's sin was the sin of nature, that all people form a physical unity (*massa*) – there is also another one, perhaps most frequent, that we participate in Adam's sin through propagation. At this point it is the heredity of sin is mentioned, although – as we shall see in a moment – the concept of transmitting sin through propagation should not be called *inheriting*. Augustine claims that all people committed sin *together* with Adam as they were in him in the sense of semen (*per rationem seminis*) or in the sense of the force of propagation.<sup>278</sup> It would seem that Augustine very explicitly speaks about inheriting sin, for instance in *Retractationes*:

<sup>274</sup> Augustine, *Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem* II 178; PL 45, 1219; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians III*, 244-245

<sup>275</sup> J. de Blic, *Le péché originel selon saint Augustin*, 528-529.

<sup>276</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 217.

<sup>277</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 334.

<sup>278</sup> J. Gross, *Das Wesen der Erbsünde nach Augustinus*, in: *Augustinus magister: Congrès International Augustinien Paris, 21 - 24 septembre 1954*, vol. 2, Paris 1954, 775.

Et illud quod in parvulis dicitur originale peccatum, cum adhuc non utantur arbitrio voluntatis, non absurde vocatur etiam voluntarium, quia ex prima hominis mala voluntate contractum, factum est quodammodo haereditarium.

And what is called original sin in infants, for they do not as yet use free choice of the will, is not improperly called voluntary also, because, inherited from man's first evil will, it has become, in a certain sense, hereditary.<sup>279</sup>

In *Against Julian* Augustine speaks about our responsibility for Adam's sin because of our descent from sinful parents and about the transgression that we inherit:

Enumeras quae fides vere non dubitet christiana; in quibus ea commemoras, quae pene omnia praedicamus et nos, et de quibus nullo modo dubitandum esse censemus; usque adeo ut etiam illud quod dicis, "Sine opere liberi arbitrii nullum hominis esse posse peccatum," verum esse fateamur. Non enim et hoc esset peccatum, quod originale traheretur, sine opere liberi arbitrii, quo primus homo peccavit, per quem *peccatum intravit in mundum, et in omnes homines pertransiit*. Quod autem dicis, "Alienis peccatis alterum obnoxium non teneri;" interest quatenus recte possit intelligi. Neque nunc ago, quod peccavit David, et pro peccato ejus tot hominum millia ceciderunt; et quod de anathemate contra interdictum quia usurpavit unus, in eos qui hoc non fecerant, nec factum fuisse noverant, vindicta processit: alia disputatio est, neque nunc tenere nos debet, de hoc genere peccatorum sive poenarum. Parentum autem peccata modo quodam dicuntur aliena, et rursus modo quodam reperiuntur et nostra: aliena quippe proprietate sunt actionis, nostra sunt autem contagione propaginis. Quod si falsum esset, profecto grave jugum super filios Adam, a die exitus de ventre matris eorum, nullo modo iustum esset.

You list points which the Christian faith truly does not doubt; we too preach almost all of those which you mention, and we are convinced that there should be no doubt about them whatsoever. Hence, we admit as true even your statement that "without the act of free choice there can be no human sin." After all, that which is contracted from our origin would not be a sin without the act of free choice by which the first human being sinned, through whom *sin entered the world, and was passed on to all human beings* (Rom 5:12). But your statement that "one person is not held subject to the sins of another" is interesting since it can be correctly interpreted. I am not at present speaking about the fact that David sinned and so many thousands died because of his sin. Nor am I talking about the fact that, because against the prohibition one man took for himself something under the ban, vengeance came down upon those who did not do this and who did not even know that it had been done. The question about this kind of sins or punishments is a separate one, and it should not detain us now. But the sins of our parents are in one sense called sins of others, and in another sense they are found to be our sins as well. They are the sins of others because the action was theirs, but they are ours because their offspring have been infected. If this were false, the heavy yoke upon the children of Adam from the day they emerge from the womb of their mother would surely in no way be just.<sup>280</sup>

<sup>279</sup> Augustine, *Retractationes* I 13, 5; PL 32, 604, CCL 57, 38; transl. M.I. Bogan, 54.

<sup>280</sup> Augustine, *Contra Julianum* IV 10, 28; PL 44, 838-839; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians* II, 495.

According to Augustine sin is not “transmitted” by birth or procreation. On the contrary, the natural law of birth causes that all people who were ever to be born from him in a mysterious way were in Adam. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between participation in sin and physical reproduction, but sin is not inherited. We were all genuine participants in the transgression by the very fact that we have been born from Adam. This participation is as real as the participation of Levi in the tithe Abraham paid to Melchizedek described in the Epistle to the Hebrews 7:9-10. Levi paid the tithe because he had been in the loins of Abraham. Being gifted with fertile imagination Augustine wonders how is it possible that the semen from which all people were to be born throughout the history of the world fitted in the loins of one man. Of course, it did not. The phrase *in the loins* means the real presence of the progeny in the parents but it is the presence under the law of birth or propagation as the term *lex propaginis* should be perhaps translated. However, N.P. Williams is wrong when he writes that all people sinned in Adam in the sense that at the moment of the transgression they were infinitely small particles of Adam who sinned.<sup>281</sup> Augustine himself says clearly that it was impossible:

Haec propaginis naturalia jura fecerunt, ut idem populus decimaretur in Abraham, non ob aliud, nisi quia in lumbis ejus erat, quando decimatus est ipse propria voluntate, ille autem populus non propria voluntate, sed naturali propaginis jure. Quomodo autem idem populus fuerit in lumbis Abrahae, non solum ex illo usque ad tempus quod scriptum est in Epistola ad Hebraeos, verum etiam ex ipso usque ad hoc tempus, et ab hoc usque in finem saeculi, quosque filii Israel alii ex aliis generantur; quomodo ergo esse potuerit in lumbis unius hominis tam innumerabilis hominum multitudo, quis eloquendo explicet, quis saltem inveniatur cogitando? Neque enim semina ipsa, quorum est quantitas corporalis, licet singula sint exigua, ex quibus singuli quique nascuntur, si congesta essent ex quibus tot homines nati sunt atque nascuntur, et in finem usque nascentur, potuissent lumbis unius hominis contineri. Vis ergo nescio quae invisibilis et incontractabilis secretis naturalibus insita est, ubi jura propaginis naturalia delitescunt, propter quam vim

These natural laws of propagation are the reason why the same people paid the tithe in the person of Abraham, precisely because that people was in his loins when he paid the tithe by his own will, but that people paid the tithe, not by their own will, but by the natural law of propagation. Who, however, will explain in words, who will at least discover in thought how the same people was in the loins of Abraham, not only from his time up to the time mentioned in the Letter to the Hebrews, but from his time up to the present time and from now to the end of the world, as long as children of Israel are born, generation after generation? How, then, could there be in the loins of one man so countless a multitude of human beings? For if the seeds themselves from which so many human beings have been and are being and will be born up to the end were massed together, since they have a corporeal size, though the individual seeds from which each individual is born are small, they could not have been held in the loins of one man. Some sort of invisible and intangible power, then, is located in the secrets of nature where the

<sup>281</sup> N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 372.



tamen non utique mendaciter in lumbis illius patris fuisse dicuntur, quotquot ex illo uno potuerunt generationum successibus et multiplicationibus propagari. Non solum autem ibi fuerunt, verum etiam illo sciente et volente decimato, et ipsi sunt decimati neque scientes neque volentes, quoniam nondum exstiterant qui scire ac velle potuissent.

natural laws of propagation are concealed, and on account of this power as many as were going to be able to be begotten from that one man by the succession and multiplication of generations are certainly not untruthfully said to have been in the loins of that father. They not only were there, but when he knowingly and willingly paid the tithe, they too paid the tithe, though not knowingly and not willingly, because they did not yet exist as persons who could have known and willed this.<sup>282</sup>

Then Augustine transfers his thoughts about Levi and Abraham onto Adam and his transgression. He discerns an analogy between Levi's tithe and our participation in Adam's sin – both those realities exist on the basis of the same law of propagation – *lex propaginis*.

Hoc autem quando factum est, in lumbis ejus erat genus humanum. Unde secundum illa, quae praelocuti sumus, nimis occulta et multum valentia naturalia jura propaginis, consequens erat ut qui erant in lumbis ejus per concupiscentiam carnis venturi in hoc saeculum, simul damnarentur; sicut consequens erat ut qui eo jure propaginis et ratione seminis erant in lumbis Abrahae, simul decimarentur. Omnes itaque filii Aadae in illo aspersi sunt contagione peccati et mortis conditione devincti. Ac per hoc quamvis sint parvuli, et bonum quidquam vel malum non agant voluntate; tamen quia induti sunt illo, qui voluntate peccavit, trahunt ab illo peccati reatum, mortisque supplicium: sicut parvuli qui Christo induuntur, quamvis nihil boni fecerint sua voluntate, sumunt ab illo participationem justitiae, et vitae praemium sempiternae.

But when this happened, the human race was in his loins. Hence, in accord with those previously mentioned natural laws of propagation, which are quite hidden, but very powerful, it followed that those who were in his loins and were destined to enter this world through concupiscence of the flesh were condemned at the same time, just as it followed that those who were in the loins of Abraham by that law of propagation and by the nature of the seed paid the tithe at the same time. All the children, then, of Adam were in him infected by the contagion of sin and bound by the condition of death. And for this reason, although they are little ones and do nothing either good or evil by their will, they, nonetheless, contract from him the guilt of sin and the punishment of death, because they have been clothed by that one who sinned with the will. In the same way the little ones who are clothed with Christ receive from him a share in righteousness and the reward of everlasting life, though they have done nothing good by their will.<sup>283</sup>

<sup>282</sup> Augustine, *Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem* VI 22; PL 45, 1552; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians III*, 658.

<sup>283</sup> Augustine, *Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem* VI 22; PL 45, 1554; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians III*, 660.

Augustine uses different terms to denote the same – as he himself says – mysterious force thanks to which all people existed in Adam. In the same work he talks about the reason or right of semen – *ratio seminis*:

Sed poterat Ambrosius hoc intelligere, quod tu non potes, non hoc dici propter arbitrium singulorum, sed propter originem seminis, unde omnes futuri erant: secundum quam originem omnes in illo uno erant, et hi omnes unus ille erant, qui in se ipsis nulli adhuc erant. Secundum hanc originem seminalem, etiam Levi in lumbis patris sui Abraham fuisse dicitur, quando a Melchisedech decimatus est Abraham: unde et ipse Levi tunc decimatus ostenditur, non in se ipso, sed in illo in cuius fuit lumbis: nec voluit, nec noluit decimari; quoniam nulla ejus voluntas erat, quando secundum substantiam suam nec ipse adhuc erat; et tamen secundum rationem seminis, non mendaciter, nec inaniter dictum est, quod ibi fuit, et decimatus est. Unde ab hac decimatione filiorum Abrahae, qui erant in lumbis ejus, quando Melchisedech sacerdoti decimas dedit, ille solus sacerdos exceptus est, cui dictum est: *Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech*. [...] Imo desine vana garrere, et omnes qui nondum nati nihil per proprias voluntates agere poterant boni vel mali, in uno potuisse peccare, in quo per rationem seminis erant, quando ille propria voluntate peccatum illud grande peccavit, naturamque in se vitiauit, mutavit, obnoxiauit humanam; excepto uno homine, qui ex ipso quidem semine, non tamen seminali ratione procreatus est, si potes, intellige; si non potes, crede.

But Ambrose had been able to understand this idea which you cannot, namely, that this was not said on account of the choice of each individual, but on account of the origin of the seed from which all were going to come. In accord with this origin all were in that one man, and all these who were still nothing in themselves were that one man. In accord with this origin of the seed, Levi is also said to have been in the loins of his forefather Abraham, when Abraham paid the tithe to Melchizedek, and because of that Levi himself is shown to have paid the tithe, not in himself, but in that one in whose loins he was. He neither willed nor refused to pay the tithe, because he had no will when in terms of his own substance he did not yet exist, and yet in accord with the nature of the seed Scripture said neither falsely nor foolishly that he was there and paid the tithe. For this reason the only exception from this paying of the tithe by the sons of Abraham who were in his loins when he paid the tithe to the priest Melchizedek was that priest to whom it was said: *You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek* (Ps 110:4). [...] Stop chattering foolishly, and understand that all those who, since they were not yet born, could do nothing either good or bad by their own wills could have sinned in that one man in whom they existed by means of seed, when by his own will he committed that great sin and damaged, changed, and subjugated in himself human nature, with the exception of that one man who, though his descendant was not procreated by means of seed. And if you cannot understand this, believe it.<sup>284</sup>

Such explanation makes it possible for Augustine to distance himself from the discussion on the origin of the soul because for him it is genuinely immaterial whether souls are created directly by God or they come from parents. Actually, the body is a

<sup>284</sup> Augustine, *Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem* IV 104; PL 45, 1399-1401; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians III*, 466-467.

“carrier” of the law of propagation and it is also a habitat of sin. Although Augustine hesitated between creatianism and traducianism it was clear to him that all sinned in Adam.<sup>285</sup> From such a viewpoint the origin of the soul is of secondary importance and that is why Augustine leaves it open:

Et qualibet ergo, et quantalibet parte, omnes qui ex illo nati sunt, ille unus fuerunt, sive secundum solum corpus, sive secundum utramque hominis partem.

In whatever manner and to whatever extent, all who have been born after him [Adam] were that one, whether only in terms of the body or in terms of both parts of the human being.<sup>286</sup>

For Augustine the opposite to the passing of sin through coming of all from Adam is the imitation of his sin. The invariably significant argument is for him the fact that Adam was not the first sinner who could be imitated by the subsequent generation, because Satan was the first to have sinned. Therefore, if people sin by imitation they imitate Satan rather than Adam. Therefore, it is pointless to talk about Adam as the first sinner and the origin of sin.

*Per unum, inquit, hominem peccatum in hunc mundum intravit, et per peccatum mors; et ita in omnes homines pertransiit, in quo omnes peccaverunt. Quod isti si catholicis auribus mentibusque perciperent, adversus fidem gratiamque Christi rebelles animos non haberent, neque conarentur inaniter, ad suum proprium et haereticum sensum haec apostolica verba tam dilucida et tam manifesta convertere, asserentes hoc ideo dictum esse, quod Adam peccaverit primum, in quo de caetero quisquis peccare voluit, peccandi invenit exemplum; ut peccatum scilicet non generatione ab illo uno in omnes homines, sed illius unius imitatione transiret. Cum profecto, si Apostolus imitationem hic intelligi voluisset, non per unum hominem, sed per diabolum potius in hunc mundum peccatum intrasse, et per omnes homines pertransisse dixisset. De diabolo quippe scriptum est, *Imitatur autem eum, qui sunt ex parte ipsius*. Sed ideo per*

*Through one man sin entered this world, and through sin death, and in that way it was passed on to all human beings, in whom all have sinned (Rom 5:12). If these people would hear this with Catholic ears and minds, they would not have minds in rebellion against the faith and grace of Christ, and they would not vainly try to twist these perfectly clear and evident words of the Apostle to their own heretical sense. They claim that he said this because Adam was the first to sin, and thereafter anyone who chose to sin found in him an example of sinning. In that way sin was passed on to all human beings, not by generation from that one man, but by imitation of that one man. And yet, if the Apostle had wanted us to understand imitation in this passage, he would not have said that sin entered the world through one man. Rather, he would have said that it entered the world through the devil and was passed on by all human beings. In fact,*

<sup>285</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 321.

<sup>286</sup> Augustine, *Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem* II 178; PL 45, 1219; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians III*, 245.

unum hominem dixit, a quo generatio utique, hominum coepit, ut per generationem doceret isse per omnes originale peccatum.

Scripture says of the devil, *But those who are on his side imitate him* (Wis 2:24-25). But said, *through one man*, from whom the generation of the human race began, so that he might teach that original sin was passed on to all though generation.<sup>287</sup>

Elsewhere, Augustine makes a distinction between sinning *after someone* and sinning *in someone*. His concept of the passing of sin by propagation is deeply rooted in other explanations of the unity of human nature that I presented above. It is linked with the concept of Adam as human nature (to sin with someone) and the idea of *massa peccati*; it is explicitly illustrated by the fragment *Sermo* 294, 15, in which Augustine combines and intermingles those concepts:

*Peccatum per unum hominem intravit, et per peccatum mors; et ita in omnes homines pertransiit, in quo omnes peccaverunt.* Propter imitationem dicis, quia primus peccavit Adam. Respondeo prorsus: Non primus peccavit Adam. Si primum peccatorem requiris, diabolum vide. Sed humani generis massam volens ostendere Apostolus de origine venenatam, ideo cum posuit unde nati sumus, non eum quem imitati sumus. [...] Aliud est illo praecedente et seducente peccare, aliud in illo peccare. Quia secundum propaginem carnis in illo eramus omnes, antequam nati essemus, tanquam in parente, tanquam in radice ibi eramus: sic venenata est ista arbor, ubi eramus. Nam quia ad diabolum, hoc est, principem peccati, et vere primum peccatorem, non pertinet origo, sed imitatio; cum de illo Scriptura loqueretur, *Invidia*, inquit, *diaboli, mors intravit in orbem terrarum: imitantur autem eum, qui sunt ex parte ipsius.* Imitando eum fiunt ex parte ipsius. Numquid dictum est, *In illo peccaverunt?* Cum vero de Adam diceretur, propter originem, propter posteritatem, propter propaginem viscerum, *In quo omnes*, inquit, *peccaverunt.* [...] Quare Christus quaeritur, nisi quia in Adam damnata est generatio, in Christo quaeritur regeneratio?

*Through one man sin entered into the world—and through sin death; and thus it passed into all men—in whom all sinned* (Rom 5:12). You say on account of imitation, because Adam was the first to sin. I answer straightaway: Adam was not the first to sin; if you're looking for the first sinner, look at the devil. But the Apostle wished to show the whole mass or lump of the human race poisoned from its origin, and that's why he mentioned the one from whom we were born not the one whom we imitated. [...] It's one thing to sin with him going ahead and leading astray, another to sin in him. Because in terms of the propagation of the flesh we were all in him, before we were born; as in a parent, as in a root, we were there; thus the tree where we were was poisoned. Because as for the devil, that is the author of sin, and indeed the first sinner, it's not origin, but imitation that relates us to him, seeing that Scripture was talking about him where it says, *By the envy of the devil death entered into the whole world; but those who are of his party imitate him* (Wis 2:24). It's by imitating him that they belong to his party; it didn't say, did it, *In him they sinned?* When, however it was a question of Adam, then on account of our origin, on account of his posterity, on account of the offspring of his loins, it said *in whom all sinned.* [...] Why is Christ required, if not because human generation and birth was condemned in Adam, regeneration and rebirth is to be sought in Christ?<sup>288</sup>

<sup>287</sup> Augustine, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* II 27, 45; PL 44, 462, CSEL 53, 288-289; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians II*, 81.

<sup>288</sup> Augustine, *Sermo* 294, 14-15; PL 38, 1344-1345; transl. E. Hill, 190.

In another text the idea of the law of propagation (*lex propaginis*) was linked with the vision of the sin of nature:

Clamat Apostolus: *Per unum hominem peccatum intravit in mundum, et per peccatum mors; et ita in omnes homines pertransiit, in quo omnes peccaverunt.* Unde nec illud liquide dici potest, quod peccatum Adae etiam non peccantibus nocuit, cum Scriptura dicat, *in quo omnes peccaverunt.* Nec sic dicuntur ista aliena peccata, tanquam omnino ad parvulos non pertineant: siquidem in Adam omnes tunc peccaverunt, quando in ejus natura illa insita vi qua eos gignere poterat, adhuc omnes ille unus fuerunt: sed dicuntur aliena, quia nondum ipsi agebant vitas proprias, sed quidquid erat in futura propagine, vita unius hominis continebat.

The Apostle cries out: *Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin death, and thus it was passed on to all human beings in whom all have sinned* (Rom 5:12). Hence, one cannot simply say that Adam's sin did not harm those who did not sin, since scripture says, *in whom all have sinned*. And these sins are not called those of another, as if they did not belong to the little ones. For they all sinned then in Adam, when they were all still that one man in virtue of that power implanted in his nature by which he was able to beget them. They are, rather, called the sins of another, because the little ones themselves were not yet living their own lives, but the life of one human being contained whatever was in his future posterity.<sup>289</sup>

Williams sums up Augustine's thoughts as follows: Through his sin Adam entered into guilt and was condemned to eternal damnation. When he was transgressing he comprised in the strictly physiological sense the entire human race, countless myriads of those who existed from his loins. Or, if we prefer a more metaphysical expression, Adam was a universal of human nature and as such subsumed in himself each and every man who was born since.<sup>290</sup> As we could see above Augustine's explanations are even more diverse and he himself excluded the possibility of the physical existence in Adam's loins of semen of which all people are to be born; nevertheless Williams rightly pointed out in his text the real and physical side of the unity of mankind with Adam.

Moreover, Augustine declared that sin destroyed unity, and the return to it is possible thanks to the inclusion of all people into the Body of Christ being a single head that unites all.

<sup>289</sup> Augustine, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* III 7, 14; PL 44, 194, CSEL 60, 141; transl. R.J. Teske, in: *Answer to the Pelagians*, 129.

<sup>290</sup> N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 372.

Quia enim ab uno vero Deo et summo per impietatis iniquitatem resilientes et dissonantes defluxeramus, et evanueramus in multa, discissi per multa et inhaerentes in multis: oportebat nutu et imperio Dei miserantis, ut ipsa multa venturum conclamarent unum; et a multis conclamatus veniret unus, et multa contestarentur venisse unum; et a multis exonerati veniremus ad unum, et multis peccatis in anima mortui, et propter peccatum in carne morituri, amaremus sine peccato mortuum in carne pro nobis unum; et in resuscitatum credentes, et cum illo per fidem spiritu resurgentes, justificaremur in uno justo facti unum: nec in ipsa carne nos resurrecturos desperaremus, cum multa membra intueremur praecessisse nos caput unum; in quo nunc per fidem mundati, et tunc per speciem redintegrati, et per Mediatorem Deo reconciliati haereamus uni, fruamur uno, permaneamus unum.

By wickedness and ungodliness with a crashing discord we had bounced away and flowed and faded away from the one supreme true God into the many, divided by the many, clinging to the many. And so it was fitting that at the beck and bidding of a compassionate God the many should themselves acclaim together the one who was to come, and that acclaimed by the many together the one should come, and that the many should testify together that the one had come, and that we being disburdened of the many should come to the one; and that being dead in soul through many sins and destined to die in the flesh because of sin, we should love the one who died in the flesh for us without sin, and that believing in him raised from the dead, and rising ourselves with him in spirit through faith, we should be made one in the one just one; and that we should not despair of ourselves rising in the flesh when we observed that we the many members had been preceded by the one head, in whom we have been purified by faith and will then be made completely whole by sight, and that thus fully reconciled to God by him the mediator, we may be able to cling to the one, enjoy the one, and remain forever one.<sup>291</sup>

In the fragment above Augustine sums up the history of mankind by way of the opposition of one and many. Initially mankind was created as an entity by one God and it was sin that introduced multiplicity to human nature. Leading mankind to unity is the purpose and the ultimate effect of the coming of the Son of God and it is also a challenge for all people as long as they live.

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<sup>291</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate* IV 2, 11; PL 42, 895-896, CCL 50, 175-176; transl. E. Hill, 160-161.

## 5 Unity in the Stoic Sense

Although it is impossible to establish with utmost certainty what were the philosophical sources of the teaching of any of the Fathers, in the case of Tertullian and Ambrose it is commonly accepted that they drew from the Stoic current. It is very probable that despite its materialism Stoicism exerted a much greater impact on the thoughts of the first Christian than it is commonly believed. It could have been direct or indirect impact through Neoplatonism, which, after all, was derived from the combination of Platonism and Stoicism. Both those philosophical systems accepted that the entire nature constitutes oneness because it was formed from a single matter (Stoicism) or derives from the One (Neoplatonism). The conviction of the natural, virtually physical unity of the entire humankind and even the entire universe is particularly strongly voiced by Tertullian and Ambrose. It may not be excluded that their conviction did not come from their fascination with philosophy but from Irenaeus and his concept of *plasmatio Adae*, and most probably it had not one but several sources. The title of this chapter is not meant to exclude other possibilities: it should rather lead to thinking about the natural physical unity which in the first place is associated with the Stoic thought.

### 5.1 Tertullian

The idea of the unity of mankind in Adam undoubtedly is neither a major nor even a distinctive concept in Tertullian's work. Nonetheless, we do have several fragments which must not be omitted and which may be interpreted as stating that all people took part in Adam's transgression. Usually *De anima* 40 is quoted as the most important text:

Ita omnis anima eo usque in Adam censeatur, donec in Christo recenseatur; tamdiu immunda, quamdiu recenseatur: peccatrix autem, quia immunda, recipiens ignominiam ex carnis societate.

Every soul, then, by reason of its birth, has its nature in Adam until it is born again in Christ; moreover, it is unclean all the while that it remains without this regeneration; and because unclean, it is actively sinful, and suffuses even the flesh (by reason of their conjunction) with its own shame.<sup>292</sup>

Invoking that excerpt Scheffczyk acknowledges that Tertullian sees the affiliation of every man with Adam and takes this as the basis of his understanding of the

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<sup>292</sup> Tertullian, *De anima* 40; PL 2, 719, CSEL 20, 367; transl. ANF 3, 220.

communion of Christ with the humanity.<sup>293</sup> This is undoubtedly a significant statement but without the context of entire Tertullian's teaching this sentence cannot be interpreted that far. Therefore, we should start with the Stoic roots of Tertullian and his conviction about the physical unity of the entire human nature.

Igitur ex uno homine tota haec animarum redundatia agitur, observante scilicet natura Dei edictum: *Crescite, et in multitudinem proficite*. Nam et in ipsa praefatione operis unius: *Faciamus hominem*, universa posteritas pluraliter praedicata est: *Et praesint piscibus maris*. Nihil mirum, repromissio segetis in semine.

Accordingly from the one (primeval) man comes the entire outflow and redundancy of men's souls—nature proving herself true to the commandment of God, *Be fruitful, and multiply* (Gen 1:28). For in the very preamble of this one production, *Let us make man*, man's whole posterity was declared and described in a plural phrase, *Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea* (Gen 1:26). And no wonder: in the seed lies the promise and earnest of the crop.<sup>294</sup>

Tertullian's realistic historical description of the primal state of Adam includes also consideration of the idea of the unity of mankind in Adam. He reveals here the propensity to realistic thinking which in his case is marked by cosmological ideas of Stoicism and points to the biological origin of unity.<sup>295</sup> In such context the preceding text on regarding every soul as *being in Adam* takes on different hues since Tertullian recognizes that all people – both as regards the body and the soul – physically descend from Adam.

Intelligat et infantia ligni; quo magis hominis, cujus anima, velut surculus quidam ex matrice Adam in propaginem deducta, et genitalibus foeminae foveis commendata cum omni sua paratura, pullulabit tam intellectu quam et sensu?

Even the infancy of a log, then, may have an intellect (suitable to it): how much more may that of a human being, whose soul (which may be compared with the nascent sprout of a tree) has been derived from Adam as its root, and has been propagated amongst his posterity by means of woman, to whom it has been entrusted for transmission, and thus has sprouted into life with all its natural apparatus, both of intellect and of sense!<sup>296</sup>

Referring to the above fragment Kelly expresses a conviction that for Tertullian all souls that actually or potentially exist were contained in Adam since all have to be ultimately separated particle of the soul given to him by God. Therefore, Tertullian

<sup>293</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 95.

<sup>294</sup> Tertullian, *De anima* 27; PL 2, 696, CSEL 20, 346; transl. ANF 3, 208.

<sup>295</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 94.

<sup>296</sup> Tertullian, *De anima* 19; PL 2, 681-682, CSEL 20, 331; transl. ANF 3, 200.



speaks about the quasi-physical identity of all souls with Adam.<sup>297</sup> It seems to me, however, that this interpretation goes too far and is based on a specific translation of the following fragment of *De testimonio animae*:

Satanam denique in omni aversatione pronuntias, quem nos dicimus malitiae angelum, totius erroris artificem, totius saeculi interpolatorem, per quem homo a primordio circum ventus, ut praeceptum Dei excederet, et propterea in mortem datus, exinde totum genus de suo semine infectum, suae etiam damnationis traducem fecit.

In expressing vexation, contempt, or abhorrence, thou hast Satan constantly upon thy lips; the very same we hold to be the angel of evil, the source of error, the corrupter of the whole world, by whom in the beginning man was entrapped into breaking the commandment of God. And (the man) being given over to death on account of his sin, the entire human race, tainted in their descent from him, were made a channel for transmitting his condemnation.<sup>298</sup>

Kelly translates the phrase *de suo semine*, translated above as “in their descent from him”, as “by his seed”,<sup>299</sup> which seems grammatically dubious. Tertullian speaks here rather of the entire race coming *from his seed*. Williams claims that since in Tertullian both the body and the soul come from the parents as if a sapling from a tree it leads us to Irenaeus’ and Origen’s theory on seminal identity, according to which Adam is the sum total of his descendants. Since all souls are the severed particles of the first soul (Adam) they all must have sinned in Adam and are responsible for the fall.<sup>300</sup> Ménard goes even further acknowledging that Tertullian professes the Gnostic teaching about a superior Adam, comprising the entire human race, whose limbs are currently scattered but will be gathered again together in Christ, a second Adam.<sup>301</sup>

It is hard to find any confirmation of this theory in Tertullian’s writings. He undoubtedly speaks about the physical descent of all people from Adam and - what is interesting, as Alès notes, specifically from Adam and not from the first couple because Adam is the *principe* of all bodies and all souls.<sup>302</sup> This descent is *somehow* the source of our participation in Adam, in his transgression and punishment for it, which Tertullian declares very explicitly:

<sup>297</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 175.

<sup>298</sup> Tertullian, *De testimonio animae* 3; PL 1, 613, CSEL 20, 138; transl. ANF 3, 177.

<sup>299</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 176.

<sup>300</sup> N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 236-237.

<sup>301</sup> J.E. Ménard, *Le péché originel*, 70.

<sup>302</sup> A. d’Alès, *La théologie de Tertullien*, Paris 1905, 136.

*Sicut portavimus imaginem choici, portemus etiam imaginem supercoelestis. Portavimus enim imaginem choici per collegium transgressionis, per consortium mortis, per exilium paradisi.*

*As we have borne the image of the earthy, let us also bear the image of the heavenly (1Cor 15:49). We have indeed borne the image of the earthy, by our sharing in his transgression, by our participation in his death, by our banishment from Paradise.<sup>303</sup>*

However, we shall not find in Tertullian any attempt to provide a detailed explanation of the basis upon which we were included in that community of transgression, death and banishment from paradise.

## 5.2 Ambrose of Milan

### 5.2.1 The Unity of All Creation

For Ambrose of Milan the idea of the unity of mankind with Adam arises from his conviction of the unity of all creation. As François Szabó explains Ambrose took over Stoic ideas from Philo, which the latter had already dematerialized (spiritualized): God as the soul of the world and Logos as Pneuma which interconnects everything. The Word unites the cosmos just as the soul unites all parts of the body.<sup>304</sup> It will suffice to quote an excerpt from *Hexaemeron* to see how Ambrose combined the Stoic conviction of the unity of the entire universe with the biblical teaching on creation:

Diem primum, vel potius unum, maneat enim ei prophetici praerogativa sermonis, ut potuimus, absolvimus; in quo conditum coelum, terram creatam, aquarum exundantiam, circumfusum aerem, discretionem factam lucis atque tenebrarum Dei omnipotentis, et Domini Jesu Christi, Spiritus quoque sancti operatione cognovimus. Quis ergo non miretur dissimilibus membris disparem mundum in corpus unum assurgere, et insolubili concordiae charitatisque lege in societatem et connexionem sui tam distantia convenire, ut quae discreta natura sunt, in unitatis et pacis vinculum velut individua compactione nectantur? Aut quis haec videns, possibilitatem rationis infirmo ingenio rimetur? Quae omnia vis divina,

We have finished as best we could our discussion of the first day—or, rather, of one day, in order to keep to the phrase preferred by the inspired book. On this day, by the work of the omnipotent God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit, we know that the heavens were founded, the earth was created, the waters and the air were sent forth around us, and a separation was made between light and darkness. Who, therefore, does not marvel at the fact that a world formed of dissimilar elements should rise to the level of unity in one body, that this body should combine by indissoluble laws of concord and love to link together and form a union of such discordant elements? Furthermore, who does not marvel that these elements so naturally separate

<sup>303</sup> Tertullian, *De resurrectione carnis* 49; PL 2, 866, CSEL 47, 102; transl. ANF 3, 582.

<sup>304</sup> F. Szabó, *Le Christ et Monde selon S. Ambroise*, Roma 1968, 350.

incomprehensibilis humanis mentibus, et ineffabilis sermonibus nostris, voluntatis suae auctoritate connexuit.

should be tied together in the bonds of unity and peace as if by an indivisible compact? Or who in a moment of weakness would, on beholding this, question the possibilities of order or plans? All these elements a divine power incomprehensible to human minds and incapable of being expressed in our language has by the might of His will woven closely together.<sup>305</sup>

The unity of creation has its source in the unity of God. The closer a creature is to God, the more perfect and better is this unity. This indicates a prior special position of man, who thanks to his moral choices may decide to be closer to God or not:

Et praecepit Dominus Deus Adae dicens: *Ex omni ligno quod est in paradiso ad escam, edes: de ligno autem quod est scientiae boni et mali non editis. Qua die autem manducaveritis ex eo morte moriemini.* Qua ratione, ubi praecepit ex omni ligno edendum, singulariter dixerit, Edes: ubi autem de ligno scientiae boni et mali pluraliter, *Non edetis*, dixerit, non otiosa quaestio. Verum si diligenter intendas, Scripturarum auctoritate absolvi potest. Quod enim bonum, hoc est faciendum: quod autem bonum et faciendum, consonans et adhaerens: quod vero turpe, hoc dissonans, incompositum, atque discretum est. Et ideo Dominus unitatem semper intendens, secundum unitatem praecepit. [...] Ergo ubi bonum praecipit, tamquam ad unum praecipit dicens, *Edes*. Unitas enim praevaricari non potest. Ubi vero de ligno scientiae boni et mali, dicit non esse gustandum, quasi ad plures dicit, *Non edetis*. Quod enim prohibitorium est, tamquam pluribus imperatur.

And the Lord God commanded the man thus: *from every tree of the garden thou shalt eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for the day you eat of it you shall die* (Gen 2:16-17). Why did He use the singular *thou shalt eat* when He bade them eat of every tree, and, again, when He bade them eat of the tree of good and evil, why did He use the plural *You shall not eat*? This is no trifling question. This problem can, in fact, be solved by the authority of the Scriptures if you study them carefully. Scripture refers to something good and something that should be done. What is good is naturally associated with what should be done. On the other hand, what is base is separate and unrelated to what should be done. And so the Lord, aiming always at oneness, gave orders in accordance with this principle. [...] When He prescribes a good, therefore, He does it to one person, saying, *Thou shalt eat*, for the oneness cannot be gainsaid. Where, however, He says that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil should not be tasted, He speaks as if to several people: *You shall not eat*. What has been prohibited as if applies to several people.<sup>306</sup>

Human nature not only constitutes oneness in itself if it is close to God but somehow unites itself with the entire universe, with all creatures. Ambrose claims that the consequences of Adam's sin affected the entire material world – including all creatures:

<sup>305</sup> Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* II 1, 1; PL 14, 145, CSEL 32/1, 41; transl. J.J. Savage, 45-46.

<sup>306</sup> Ambrose, *De paradiso* V 26; PL 14, 285, CSEL 32/1, 282-283; transl. J.J. Savage, 304-305 with alterations.

Non enim ita circa illum sicut circa te soluta est sententia. Nam Christi gratia quae te resolvit, illum astrinxit. Manet enim maledictio directa in serpentem propter tuam deceptionem. Sic enim dictum est ad eum: *Maledictus tu ab omnibus pecoribus terrae.* Omnium enim communis inimicus est, qui fuit hostis bonorum, et pro iis damnatur quos adhuc non laeserat; quoniam qui hominem laesit, cui illa omnia subjecta sunt, laesit omnia.

The sentence was not relaxed in his regard as it was in yours. The grace of Christ, which has freed you, has bound him, and the curse directed against the serpent by reason of his deception of you endures. For thus it was said to him, *Cursed are you from all the beasts of the earth* (Gen 3:14). For he who was the enemy of the good is the common foe of all, and he is condemned on behalf of those that he still has not harmed, since he who has harmed man has harmed all things, for they are all subject to man.<sup>307</sup>

Scheffczyk sees here the influence of the Stoic teaching on the unity of nature and the central role of man.<sup>308</sup> This conviction of Ambrose is also confirmed by the following text in which he suggests that thanks to the birth of saints the entire earth is transformed:

Solemnis autem laetitia est in ortu et generatione sanctorum; sanctus enim non solum parentum gratia, sed etiam salus est plurimorum. Unde admonemur hoc loco sanctorum generatione laetari. [...] Vernet in Dei laudem terra, quia colitur: mundus, quia cognoscitur.

There is something quite special about the joy experienced at the conception and birth of a saint. This is because a saint not only brings joy to his parents, but also he brings salvation to a great many people. This passage teaches us how we should rejoice at the birth of saints. [...] Let earth be radiant in praise of God and be thankful that it is cultivated; let the world rejoice because God is known.<sup>309</sup>

Man is a part of the universe, in a special manner belongs to the community of rational beings that rejoice when human nature, represented by one sheep, returns to the higher world.

Dives igitur pastor cujus omnes nos centesima portio sumus. Habet Angelorum, habet Archangelorum, Dominationum, Potestatum, Thronorum, aliorumque innumerabiles greges, quos in montibus dereliquit. Qui quoniam sunt rationabiles, non immerito hominum redemptione laetantur.

He must be a very rich shepherd, if we form only one percentage of His inheritance. He possesses innumerable flocks of angels, archangels, dominations, powers, thrones, and many others. All these He leaves on the heights. Since these are rational beings they think it right to rejoice over the redemption of the man.<sup>310</sup>

**307** Ambrose, *De fuga saeculi* 7, 41; PL 14, 588, CSEL 32/2, 195; transl. M.P. McHugh, in: *Seven exegetical works*, 312.

**308** L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 185.

**309** Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* I 29-30; PL 15, 1545-1546, CCL 14, 21; transl. Í.M. Ní Riain, 18-19.

**310** Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* VII 210; PL 15, 1756, CCL 14, 287; transl. Í.M. Ní

The unity underlays the beginning of creation and is the destination we aim for:

Itaque si in hac vita tres mensurae in eodem fermento manserint, donec fermententur, et fiant unum; ut aequalitatum nulla distantia sit, nec compositi ex trium diversitate videamur, erit in futurum diligentibus Christum incorrupta communio: nec compositi manebimus; nam et qui compositi nunc sumus, unum erimus, et in unam substantiam transformabimur.

So long as the three measures can remain, in this life, leavened by the one yeast; so long as they all rise together so as to form one loaf, there will be - in the life to come, incorruptible union for those who love Christ. The three measures must become so perfectly one that there will be perfect equality. And when incorruptible union is attained, we shall no longer be three elements that are put together - as we now are - but we shall be one, we shall be transformed into one unique substance.<sup>311</sup>

Ambrose wrote the above text in the context of the ultimate unification of Israel and pagans and the consequent levelling of all differences among people.

### 5.2.2 The Participation of Mankind in Adam's Sin

Turmel is of the opinion that Ambrose's teaching follows a dual track: on the one hand he believes in the pre-existence of souls and Adam would be there merely a symbol of the fall in pre-existence,<sup>312</sup> and on the other hand he speaks about Adam's heritage that consists of passions.<sup>313</sup> Therefore, Ambrose – in Turmel's opinion – believes after Origen that upon birth we carry along the guilt from the earlier life. Following the tradition, he also believes that we inherit passion as Adam's sin, but he does not perceive the need for unifying those two contradictory views.<sup>314</sup> However, it is impossible to find any statement of Ambrose which would confirm such interpretation; first of all, he says nothing about the pre-existence of souls.

Thanks to his practical and pastoral approach Ambrose focused his attention not on ontology but on anthropological issues; among other things he posed himself a question about original sin.<sup>315</sup> All of his teaching on this subject is based not on philosophical or theological concepts which he knew of course, but on the teaching of St. Paul.<sup>316</sup> Adam was mysteriously the human race, but Ambrose does not use the

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Riain, 258 with alteration.

**311** Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* VII 194; PL 15, 1751-52, CCL 14, 282; transl. Í.M. Ní Riain, 253-254.

**312** J. Turmel, *Histoire des dogmes*, vol.1: *Le péché originel. La rédemption*, 64.

**313** *Ibid.*, 66-67

**314** *Ibid.*, 69.

**315** L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 177.

**316** J. Huhn, *Ursprung und Wesen des Bösen und der Sünde: nach der Lehre des Kirchenvaters*

categories of Platonic realism but teaches in the spirit of Paul: Adam was the head of the race in a manner similar to Christ.<sup>317</sup>

Nempe omnes in primo homine peccavimus, et per naturae successionem, culpae quoque ab uno in omnes transfusa successio est. In quem ergo peccavi, in Patrem, an in Filium? Utique in eum qui mihi credidit, quod non servando peccavi. Mandatum est homini, ut ab omnibus gustaret quae erant in paradiso, sed lignum scientiae boni et mali non tangeret. Adam ergo in singulis nobis est. In illo enim conditio humana deliquit, quia per unum in omnes pertransivit peccatum.

Without doubt we all sinned in the first man and the inheritance of guilt was transferred from one onto all through the heritage of nature. Against who did I sin: against the Father or the Son? Of course, I sinned against Him who trusted in me, by betrayal. Man was commanded to eat everything that was in paradise except from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Therefore, Adam is in each of us. It was in him that the entire human nature transgressed because through one sin passed onto all.<sup>318</sup>

Williams claims that in the above text we for the first time see the well elaborated form of the seminal identity theory which sublimes the concrete individual Adam into the abstract universal humanity and acknowledges that the latter somehow sinned.<sup>319</sup> Williams further suggests that identification of mankind with Adam ceased to be merely material or seminal but becomes logical or metaphysical. Ambrose seems to think about Adam as the Platonic idea of man, as the hypostasis of human nature, *contitio humana*.<sup>320</sup>

Without doubt Ambrose, like Irenaeus, recognized the solidarity of the entire human race in Adam.<sup>321</sup> However, James Mara correctly notes that everything that Ambrose says about the unity of human nature was more or less a paraphrase of Paul. Therefore, he did not try to explain his idea of the solidarity with Adam either in the categories of seminal identity or in the categories of universal ideas.<sup>322</sup> However, he is very clear as regards our share in Adam's fall:

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Ambrosius, Padeborn 1933, 101.

**317** J. Mara, *The Notion of Solidarity in Saint Ambrose's Teaching on Creation, Sin and Redemption*, Roma 1970, 39.

**318** Ambrose, *Apologia altera prophetae David* 12, 71; PL 14, 915, CSEL 32/2, 406-407; transl. MP.

**319** N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 305.

**320** *Ibid.*, 306.

**321** A. Gaudel, *Péché originel*, 366.

**322** J. Mara, *The Notion of Solidarity in Saint Ambrose's Teaching on Creation, Sin and Redemption*, 21 and 23.

Laetatur autem pater, quia filius perierat, et inventus est: mortuus fuerat, et revixit. Ille perit qui fuit; non enim potest perire qui non fuit. Itaque gentes non sunt, Christianus est, juxta quod supra dictum est: *Quia elegit Deus quae non sunt; ut quae sunt, destrueret.* Potest tamen et hic in uno accipi species generis humani. Fuit Adam, et in illo fuimus omnes. Periiit Adam, et in illo omnes perierunt. Homo igitur et in illo homine qui perierat, reformatur: et ille ad similitudinem Dei factus et imaginem divina patientia et magnanimitate reparatur.

The father rejoices that the son who was lost is found, and that the son who was dead is restored to life. Had he not existed, he could not have died. For no one can die unless they first exist. Therefore the Gentiles do not exist, but the Christian does. As was said further back: *God has chosen that which is not to destroy that which is* (1Cor 1:28). But you can see in that one the image of the entire human race. Adam was, and in him we all were; Adam died and in him all died. The man is, therefore, restored and renewed in the very man who had perished. He who was made in the image and likeness of God is patiently mended by the excessive kindness of God.<sup>323</sup>

This solidarity is expressed even more explicitly by the following text in which – as Gaudel suggests – Ambrose speaks about the solidarity not only in punishment but also in guilt.<sup>324</sup>

Non est ergo gravis subeundus moeror secundum naturam; ne aut excellentiorem aliquam naturae exceptionem nobis arrogare videamur, aut communem recusare. Etenim mors aequalis est omnibus, indiscreta pauperibus, inexcepta divitibus. Et ideo licet per unius peccatum, in omnes tamen pertransivit; ut quem generis non refugimus auctorem, non refugiamus et mortis: et sit nobis sicut per unum mors, ita per unum etiam resurrectio; nec recusemus aerumnam, ut perveniamus ad gratiam: *Venit enim, ut legimus, Christus salvum facere, quod perierat et ut non solum vivorum, sed etiam mortuorum dominetur.* Lapsus sum in Adam, de paradiso ejectus in Adam, mortuus in Adam; quomodo revocet, nisi me in Adam invenerit, ut in illo culpae obnoxium, morti debitum, ita in Christo justificatum?

Therefore, in accordance with nature, excessive grief must not be yielded to, lest we should seem either to claim for ourselves either an exceptional superiority of nature, or to reject the common lot. For death is alike to all, without difference for the poor, without exception for the rich. And so although through the sin of one alone, yet it passed upon all; that we may not refuse to acknowledge Him to be also the Author of death, Whom we do not refuse to acknowledge as the Author of our race; and that, as through one death is ours, so is also the resurrection; and that we should not refuse the misery, that we may attain to the gift. *For, as we read, Christ is come to save that which was lost* (Lk 19:10), and to be Lord both *of the dead and living* (Rom 14:9). In Adam I fell, in Adam I was cast out of Paradise, in Adam I died; how shall the Lord call me back, except He find me in Adam; guilty as I was in him, so now justified in Christ.<sup>325</sup>

<sup>323</sup> Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* VII 234; PL 15, 1762, CCL 14, 295; transl. Í.M. Ní Riain, 265-266 with alterations.

<sup>324</sup> A. Gaudel, *Péché originel*, 366.

<sup>325</sup> Ambrose, *De excessu fratris sui Satyri* II 6; PL 16, 1316-17, CSEL 73, 254; transl. NPNF II 10, 174-175.

In still another place, Ambrose speaks about Adam's sin in order to identify it immediately with *our* fall:

Hiericho enim figura istius mundi est, in quam de paradiso, hoc est, de Hierusalem illa coelesti eiectus Adam praevaricationis prolapsione descendit, hoc est, de vitalibus ad infirma demigrans: cui non loci, sed morum mutatio naturae suae fecit exsilium. Longe enim mutatus ab illo Adam, qui inoffensa beatitudine fruebatur, ubi in saecularia peccata defluxit, incidit in latrones: in quos non incidisset, nisi his mandati coelestis devius se fecisset obnoxium. Qui sunt isti latrones, nisi angeli noctis atque tenebrarum, qui se nonnumquam transfigurant in angelos lucis, sed perseverare non possunt? Hi ante dispoliant quae accepimus indumenta gratiae spiritualis, et sic vulnera inferre consuerunt; nam si intemerata quae sumpsimus indumenta servemus, plagas latronum sentire non possumus. Cave ergo ne ante nuderis, sicut Adam ante nudatus est, mandati coelestis custodia destitutus, et exutus fidei vestimento, et sic lethale vulnus accepit: in quo omne genus occidisset humanum, nisi Samaritanus ille descendens, vulnera ejus acerba curasset.

Jericho, you see, stands for the world. Adam, when, because of his sin, he was chased out of paradise - the heavenly Jerusalem - descended to Jericho. That is to say, he left what is strong and went down to what is weak. But his exile caused of his nature was not so much a matter of moving from place to place; rather it was a change of habits. Ah, how changed he was from the Adam who enjoyed undisturbed happiness. But once man plunged into the sins of this world he met up with the thieves. He would not have met them if he had not put himself in their way by straying from the heavenly commandments. And who are these thieves? They are the dark spirits of the night and of the shadows, demons who sometimes transform themselves into angels of light, but cannot play the part for long. First they tear off from us the clothing we were given of spiritual grace, and that is how they are able to inflict such blows upon us. If we could keep intact the clothing that is ours, we would not feel the buffeting of the thieves. Take care not to be stripped, as Adam was; for after abandoning the heavenly precepts, stripped of the garment of faith, he received a deadly wound. In him the whole human race would have been killed only that the Samaritan came down to heal him of the cruel injuries inflicted on him.<sup>326</sup>

The expression *human nature* itself comprise the idea of the mysterious unity between Adam and all people.<sup>327</sup> Adam's sin was the sin of all of his progeny; in some way it was the sin of nature. As explained by Josef Huhn, for Ambrose the universality of original sin arises from real embracement (*Eingeschlossenheit*) of all people in Adam. Therefore, all people shared Adam's sin because they were all contained in him. Ambrose did not wonder how was it possible if human souls did not exist yet – such a problem was raised only in the course of the Pelagian controversy.<sup>328</sup> Indeed, when Ambrose ponders over the origin of sin in us he actually leaves the problem open.

<sup>326</sup> Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* VII 73; PL 15, 1718, CCL 14, 238-239; transl. Í.M. Ní Riain, 213 with alterations.

<sup>327</sup> J. Mara, *The Notion of Solidarity in Saint Ambrose's Teaching on Creation, Sin and Redemption*, 20.

<sup>328</sup> J. Huhn, *Ursprung und Wesen des Bösen und der Sünde*, 133-134.



*Ecce, inquit, in iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in delictis peperit me mater mea. Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis: et omnes iniquitates meas dele. Ne projicias me a facie tua, et Spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me. Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus, Deus salutis meae. Antequam nascamur, maculamur contagio; et ante usuram lucis, originis ipsius excipimus injuriam, in iniquitate concipimur: non expressit utrum parentum, an nostra. Et in delictis generat unumquemque mater sua: nec hic declaravit utrum in delictis suis mater pariat; an jam sint et aliqua delicta nascentis. Sed vide ne utrumque intelligendum sit. Nec conceptus iniquitatis exsors est, quoniam et parentes non carent lapsu. Et si nec unius diei infans sine peccato est, multo magis nec illi materni conceptus dies sine peccato sunt. Concipimur ergo in peccato parentum, et in delictis eorum nascimur. Sed et ipse partus habet contagia sua, nec unum tantummodo habet ipsa natura contagium.*

*Behold, – he says – I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me (Ps 50:5). Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities (Ps 50:9). Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me (Ps 50:11). Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation (Ps 50:14). Even before birth we are stained with contagion; before coming out to the light we accept the contagion of the very origin, we are conceived in iniquity, although he did not explain whether it was our parents' or our iniquity. Everyone is born by one's mother in sin: and here it is not clear whether the mother gives birth in her sins or there already exist some sins of the newborn. But consider whether both eventualities should not be accepted. Also the conception is not free from iniquity because the parents are not sinless. And even if a one-day-old infant is not without sin, how much more without sin are not the days of this motherly conception. We are conceived in the sin of our parents and are born in their transgressions. But also the birth has its flaws and nature itself has more than one contagion.<sup>329</sup>*

Scheffczyk draws the conclusion that for Ambrose there is no conception without sin and Adam's sin is passed on through propagation. He admits, however, that in Ambrose the idea of the unity of human nature in Adam is more explicit than the idea of propagation. The formal basis for the participation of everyone in Adam's sin is that the entire human nature is contained (*Enthaltensein*) in Adam. Therefore, one may speak about the sin of nature, although not in the Manichean sense.<sup>330</sup> Ambrose himself treats the problem curtly and does not go into details:

Denique peccatum ab Adam: ex illo culpa, ex quo et Eva: ex illo praevaricatio, ex quo et humana conditio.

Sin comes from Adam; guilt comes from the same one as Eve; transgression from the same one as human nature.<sup>331</sup>

Apart from that, in confrontation with Manicheism Ambrose emphasized voluntariness of sin and hence he distinguished our passions from the wound inflicted on Adam by the serpent.

<sup>329</sup> Ambrose, *Apologia prophetae David* 11, 56; PL 14, 873-874, CSEL 32/2, 337, transl. MP.

<sup>330</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 191.

<sup>331</sup> Ambrose, *De Tobia* 23, 88; PL 14, 792, CSEL 32/2, 570, transl. MP.

In die iudicii timere quid possum, nisi forte calcanei mei iniquitas mihi sit abluenda? Alia est iniquitas nostra, alia calcanei nostri, in quo Adam dente serpentis est vulneratus, et obnoxiam haereditatem successionis humanae suo vulnere dereliquit, ut omnes illo vulnere claudicemus. Unde Dominus discipulis pedes lavit, ut lavaret venena serpentis.

What can I fear on Judgement Day? Only this, that the iniquity of my heel will have to be washed off. Our own iniquity is one matter, that of our heel is another matter. Adam was wounded by the tooth of the Serpent and left the whole human race affected by this wound. We have all been lamed by that wound. That is why the Lord washed his disciples' feet. He wanted to wash off the Serpent's venom.<sup>332</sup>

Scheffczyk underlines that Ambrose speaks here about the participation of mankind not in Adam's guilt but in his punishment.<sup>333</sup> Nevertheless, the entirety of his teaching on original sin shows that he acknowledged the participation of mankind in Adam's sin. After all, that same Scheffczyk writes that certain expressions of Ambrose may be understood as the confirmation of the participation of mankind in Adam's sin.<sup>334</sup> Mara concentrates on the idea of *human nature* and points out that when Ambrose says that Adam is in each of us he means that human nature is in each of us. Human nature was so real in Adam that the entire human race is subject to death.<sup>335</sup> In turn, André Loiseau claims that the first man is for Ambrose the *type* of humanity which constitutes a model indicating how everyone should look like and what everyone should strive at.<sup>336</sup> Tennant maintains that Ambrose is as explicit as Augustine in his teaching that we were all in Adam. Adam's sin is our sin because it was not strictly a personal sin but Adam was human nature so his transgression was the first transgression of human nature.<sup>337</sup>

The above interpretations are actually unverifiable because Ambrose nowhere provides any ontological explanation of his – otherwise very significant – statements. The only thing that is unquestionable is his adherence to the belief in humanity's solidarity with Adam. The effect of this solidarity is – as Gross underlines – the evil of passion as a wound or poisoning of human nature, which does weaken its moral force but absolutely does not paralyse or destroy it. The natural ability to follow the path of virtue remains in the progeny of Adam, although it is difficult after the serpent's bite in paradise.<sup>338</sup>

<sup>332</sup> Ambrose, *Explanatio psalmsorum* XII 48, 8; PL 14, 1158, CSEL 64, 365; transl. Í.M. Ní Riain, 289.

<sup>333</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 177-178.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>335</sup> J. Mara, *The Notion of Solidarity in Saint Ambrose's Teaching on Creation, Sin and Redemption*, 31.

<sup>336</sup> A. Loiseau, *Nature de l'homme et histoire du Salut. Étude sur l'anthropologie d'Ambroise de Milan*, Lyon 1970, 74.

<sup>337</sup> F.R. Tennant, *The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin*, 342.

<sup>338</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 243.

## 6 Adam as a Representative of Mankind

The fourth group of interpretations concerning the unity of mankind in Adam includes three very different Fathers, who lived and wrote in different environments, though at a similar time. For all three the concept of people's solidarity with Adam is neither of primary significance nor constitutes an important point of their teaching. They talk about it by the way when discussing other issues and make no attempts to explain it in greater detail. Nevertheless, from their texts it may be concluded that they considered Adam to be a representative of the entire humankind.

### 6.1 Didymus the Blind

Several remarks which may be interpreted as an evidence of the conviction of the unity of mankind in Adam are found in Didymus the Blind. Nowhere does he speak straightforwardly about solidarity with Adam, but several times calls Adam's transgression *our disobedience*. The most frequently quoted fragment comes from *De Trinitate*, traditionally attributed to Didymus of Alexandria, although the authorship of this work is not settled:

„καὶ ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν, καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος”, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὴν τῆς ἀναγεννήσεως ἀντὶ ἧς ἀπεβάλομεν χάριτος παρακρουσάμενοι τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ ἐνὶ φυτῷ πρώτην θεσμοδοσίαν.

*Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given (Jn 1:16). Which means rebirth for grace which we rejected when we disobeyed the first commandment of God concerning a single tree.<sup>339</sup>*

Further in the same treatise he speaks in a similar tenor:

“Ὅσοι γὰρ, φησὶν, εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδώσασθε· καὶ τὴν γεγραμμένην εἰκόνα καὶ ὁμοίωσιν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀπολαμβάνομεν, ἦν ἐδεξάμεθα διὰ τοῦ θεϊκοῦ ἐμφυσημάτων, καὶ ἀπώλεσαμεν διὰ τοῦ ἁμαρτήματος καὶ αὐθις εὗρισκόμεθα, οἷοί περ ἐπὶ τοῦ πρωτοπλάστου ἐγενήθημεν, ναμάρτητοι καὶ αὐτεξούσιοι· ταῦτα γὰρ σημαίνει ἡ εἰκὼν καὶ ὁμοίωσις.

*You who have been included in Christ through baptism – says the Scripture – you have clothed yourselves in Jesus Christ (Ga 3:27), we also accept the image and likeness to God that was described [in the Scripture], which we received through God's breath and lost through sin and we again turn out as we were when we arose in our progenitor – this is exactly what image and likeness stand for.<sup>340</sup>*

<sup>339</sup> Didymus, *De Trinitate* I 27; PG 39, 401; transl. MP.

<sup>340</sup> Didymus, *De Trinitate* II 12; PG 39, 680; transl. MP.

Further on, Didymus combines the expressions *our filth* and *past sin* as descriptions of the same reality:

Καὶ τοῦ Δεσπότητος δὲ βαπτιζομένου ἐν τῇ  
οἰκονομίᾳ ἐπὶ τῷ τόν τε δράκοντα, τὸν ἐπὶ τοῖς  
ὔδασι δεξάμενον τὸν Ἰορδάνην, ἐν τῷ στόματι,  
ὡς ἱστορεῖ αἰνιγματωδῶς ὁ Ἰώβ, θανατῶσαι,  
τόν τε ἡμέτερον ἀποσμῆξαι ῥύπον, καὶ τὴν  
παλαιὰν συγχωρῆσαι ἁμαρτίαν.

The Lord was baptised due to the plan for  
the serpent, which was contained in the  
waters of the Jordan, in the jaws, as Job says  
enigmatically, to kill [him] in order to erase our  
filth and forgive the past sin.<sup>341</sup>

And again, in *De Trinitate* he says that Christ came to destroy *our old disobedience*, and thanks to the preceding fragments we may conclude that *past disobedience* means Adam's sin:

Ταύτη γοῦν τῇ παραδόξῳ αὐτοῦ ὑπακοῇ τῇ  
ἀνθ' ἡμῶν, ἔλυσε τὴν ἡμῶν ἀρχαίαν παρακοήν.

With this extraordinary obedience [assumed]  
on our behalf He destroyed our old  
disobedience.<sup>342</sup>

Somehow Didymus links Adam's sin with the present sinful condition of the entire humanity, although he confines himself to the acknowledgement of that relation without giving any explanation thereof. Namely, he says:

πάντες γὰρ ἄνθρωποι παρακούσαντος τοῦ  
Ἰδὰμ ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν εἰσίν.

All people are under sin because Adam  
showed disobedience.<sup>343</sup>

Scheffczyk believes that Didymus attributes historical reality to sin in paradise and combines it with the Irenaean tradition pronouncing that *we sinned in Adam*.<sup>344</sup> Also Gross underlines that like many of his predecessors Didymus identifies all people with the first parent who transgressed God's commandment. He adds that those texts give an impression that Didymus accepted Irenaeus' realism according to which the souls of all Adam's descendants were somehow contained in the first parent and in this way took part in his fall. With his extremely realistic language he emphasizes solidarity which bonded Adam with his progeny. A question remains as to whether or not he extends this solidarity to sin. Indubitably Didymus teaches that for all of Adam's children his sin caused the loss of original grace which consisted in the likeness to God.<sup>345</sup>

<sup>341</sup> Didymus, *De Trinitate* II 12; PG 39, 684; transl. MP.

<sup>342</sup> Didymus, *De Trinitate* III 12; PG 39, 860; transl. MP.

<sup>343</sup> Didymus, *Fragmenta in Epistulam II ad Corinthios*, PG 39, 1692; transl. MP.

<sup>344</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 130.

<sup>345</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 135-136.

## 6.2 Ambrosiaster

As regards the teaching on original sin Ambrosiaster is known primarily for having coined the statement that people have sinned in Adam as though in a lump. Let us have a look at the text itself:

*In quo, id est, in Adam, omnes peccaverunt. Ideo dixit, in quo, cum de muliere loquatur, quia non ad speciem retulit, sed ad genus. Manifestum itaque est in Adam omnes peccasse quasi in massa; ipse enim per peccatum corruptus, quos genuit, omnes nati sunt sub peccato. Ex eo igitur cuncti peccatores, quia ex eo ipso sumus omnes; hic enim beneficium Dei perdidit, dum praevaricavit, indignus factus edere de arbore vitae, ut moreretur. Mors autem dissolutio corporis est, cum anima a corpore separatur. Est et alia mors, quae secunda dicitur in gehenna, quam non peccato Adae patimur, sed ejus occasione propriis peccatis acquiritur: a qua boni immunes sunt, tantum quod in inferno erant, sed superiori, quasi in libera, qui ad coelos ascendere non poterant; sententia enim tenebantur data in Adam, quod chirographum in decretis morte Christi deletum est.*

Paul says that all have sinned in Adam (Rom 5:12), even though he really meant the woman, because he was not referring to the particular person but to the universal human race. For it is clear that all have sinned in Adam as though in a lump. For being corrupted by sin himself, all those whom he fathered were born under sin. For that reason we are all sinners, because we all descend from him. He lost God's blessing because he transgressed, and was made unworthy to eat of the tree of life. For that reason he had to die. Death is the separation of body and soul. There is another death as well, called the second death, which takes place in hell. We do not suffer this death as a result of Adam's sin, but his fall makes it possible for us to get it by our own sins. Good men were protected from this, as they were only in hell but they were still not free, because they could not ascend to heaven. They were still bound by the sentence meted out in Adam, the seal of which was broken by the death of Christ.<sup>346</sup>

Scholars interpret this text of Ambrosiaster as revealing his conviction of the solidarity or virtually unity of the entire humanity with Adam. Gross believes that the statement *we have sinned in Adam as though in a lump* sounds as an echo of generic realism (*generisch Realismus*) of Irenaeus or Gregory of Nyssa.<sup>347</sup> Likewise, Gaudel claims that Ambrosiaster explains Paul's words as Origen would with the idea of the physical unity (*l'unité physique*) of the entire human race in the substance of the first father. Where Origen said: *In Adam's loins*, Ambrosiaster says: *In Adam as though in a lump (in Adam quasi in massa)*.<sup>348</sup> Juan B. Valero notes the fact that Ambrosiaster underlines the real and universal relation between Adam and the sinful human

<sup>346</sup> Ambrosiaster, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Romanos* 5, 12; PL 17, 92, CSEL 81/1, 165; transl. G.L. Bray, 40.

<sup>347</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 233.

<sup>348</sup> A. Gaudel, *Péché originel*, 369.

race.<sup>349</sup> It is certain that Ambrosiaster combines the conviction about the unity of all with Adam with the statement that one's own transgressions are a true source of sin:

Hoc est venditum esse sub peccato ex Adam qui prior peccavit, originem trahere, et proprio delicto subjectum fieri peccato, sicut dicit Esaias propheta: *Venditi estis*, inquit, *peccatis vestris*: Adam enim vendidit se prior, ac per hoc omne semen ejus subjectum est peccato.

To be sold under sin means to trace one's origin to Adam, who was the first to sin, and to subject oneself to sin by one's own transgression, as Isaiah the prophet says: *You are sold to your sins* (Is 50:1). For Adam sold himself first, and because of this all his descendants are subjected to sin.<sup>350</sup>

This real participation in Adam's sin has its source in the fact that we are Adam's descendants. It is the heredity of sin that is meant here. We all sinned in Adam by way of our participation in the human *kind*. We are all Adam because Adam is the *kind* (*genus*) in which all people partake. Therefore, it would be fitting to say that Adam's sin is the sin of the humankind.<sup>351</sup> Ambrosiaster considers the entire humanity to be one substance:

*Quod si delibatio sancta est, et massa.*  
Manifestum est, quia quod unius substantiae est, unum est: ac per hoc non potest delibatio sancta esse, et massa immunda; delibatio enim de massa est. Ideoque ostendit non posse indignos dici ad fidem hos, quorum jam patres adepti sunt fidem; quia si pars Judaeorum creditur, cur non et alia pars posse credere dicatur?

*If the dough offered as first fruit is holy, so is the whole lump* (Rom 11:16). It is clear that they are one and the same substance, so it is impossible for the offering to be holy and the lump unclean, given that the offering comes from the lump. Thus Paul shows that those whose ancestors believed cannot be regarded as unworthy to receive the faith, for if some of the Jews have believed, why can it not be said that the others may also believe?<sup>352</sup>

He also notes that God specially initially created only one man from whom all people originate because He wanted to show that the Creator is only one.

Ut hic homo positus, creatus ex supernis et infernis, id est, ex coelestibus et terrenis, unius Dei dominium, non tantum voce, sed et imagine, qua unus ab uno Deo factus est, ex quo caeteri orientur, ostenderet. Ideo enim unus unum fecit, ut doceret ab uno omnia esse.

Man, created from higher and lower, that is heavenly and earthly elements, has become the possession of one God not only under an order but thanks to the image in which God created one man from him others originate. Therefore, the one created one to show that all is from one.<sup>353</sup>

**349** J.B. Valero, *Pecar en Adán según Ambrosiaster*, "Estudios Eclesiásticos" 65 (1990), 153.

**350** Ambrosiaster, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Romanos* 7, 14; PL 17, 111-112, CSEL 81/1, 233-235; transl. G.L. Bray, 57

**351** J.B. Valero, *Pecar en Adán según Ambrosiaster*, 152.

**352** Ambrosiaster, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Romanos* 11, 16; PL 17, 151, CSEL 81/1, 375; transl. G.L. Bray, 90.

**353** Ambrosiaster, *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* 2; PL 35, 2217; transl. MP.

Ambrosiaster even ventures a statement that one man is the image of the one God. To acknowledge that only the first man was in the image of God and his descendants were not would be absurd. Therefore, it should be accepted that Ambrosiaster sees the first man as the whole humankind created as a certain entity.

Multum distat inter gloriam Dei et gloriam viri; vir enim ad imaginem Dei factus est, non mulier. Haec autem imago Dei in viro, quia unus Deus unum fecit hominem; ut sicut ab uno Deo sunt omnia, ita essent et ab uno homine omnes homines; ut unius Dei invisibilis, unus homo visibilis imaginem haberet in terris, ut unus Deus in uno homine videretur auctoritatem unius principii conservare, ad confusionem diaboli, qui sibi, neglecto uno Deo, dominium et divinitatem voluit usurpare.

There is an enormous distance between the glory of God and the glory of a man, for a man is formed in the likeness of God and a woman is not. She is the likeness of God because of the man. God created only one human being, so that just as all things come from the one God, all human beings come from the one man. The result is that one man bears on earth the likeness of the one invisible God, to that the one God would see the authority of the single originating principle being maintained. This would be to the consternation of the devil, who wanted to claim lordship and divinity for himself, to the detriment of the one God.<sup>354</sup>

He does not even hesitate to say that Eve is also Adam – exactly in the sense that Adam means the entire humankind.

*Propterea sicut per unum hominem peccatum in hunc mundum intravit, et per peccatum mors; sic in omnes homines mors pertransiit, in quo omnes peccaverunt.* Quoniam superius Dei gratiam per Christum datam ostendit secundum ordinem veritatis; nunc ipsum ordinem unius Dei Patris, per unum Christum Filium ejus declarat; ut quia Adam, unus, id est, Eva, et ipsa enim Adam est, peccavit in omnibus; ita unus Christus Filius Dei peccatum vicit in omnibus.

*Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because in him all men sinned* (Rom 5:12). Having already shown how the grace of God has been given to us through Christ according to the pattern of truth, Paul now expounds what that pattern of the one God and Father [working] through his one Son Christ actually is. Because the one Adam (that is Eve, for she too is Adam) sinned and affected everyone, so the one Christ, the Son of God, has conquered sin in everyone.<sup>355</sup>

Valero draws attention to the fact that for Ambrosiaster Adam constitutes a counterpoint to Christ and His grace. Real salvation performed by Christ logically requires a similarly real participation of the humankind in Adam's sin.<sup>356</sup>

<sup>354</sup> Ambrosiaster, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Corinthios Primam* 11, 7; PL 17, 240, CSEL 81/2, 121-122; transl. G.L. Bray, 172.

<sup>355</sup> Ambrosiaster, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Romanos* 5, 12; PL 17, 92, CSEL 81/1, 163; transl. G.L. Bray, 40 with alteration.

<sup>356</sup> J.B. Valero, *Pecar en Adán según Ambrosiaster*, 153.

Cum enim unus homo carne constet et anima, ex illa parte qua sapit, Deo servit; ex altera autem qua stolidus est, legi peccati. Si autem homo in eo quod factus est, perdurasset, non esset potestas inimico ad carnem ejus accedere, et animae contraria susurrare. Ut autem totus homo minime reparatus fuisset Christi gratia ad statum pristinum, sententia obstitit data in Adam; iniquum enim erat solvere sententiam jure depromptam. Idcirco manente sententia, providentia Dei remedium inventum est, ut redhiberetur homini salus, quam proprio vitio amiserat; ut hic sanatus crederet quia adversarius ejus devictus potentia Christi, non auderet, transpuncta sententia primae mortis, hominem sibi defendere, adunato genere Aadae, ne ad primae originis redderetur facturam jam totus permanens immortalis.

Because man consists of both soul and flesh, with the thinking part he serves God and with the irrational part he serves the law of sin. But if man had persevered in the form in which he was created, the enemy would have no power to reach the flesh and persuade it to act against the will of the soul. But because the whole man was not restored to his pristine state by the grace of Christ, the sentence pronounced on Adam remains in force, for it would be unjust to abolish a sentence which was rightly pronounced. So although the sentence remains in force, a cure has been found by the providence of God, so that the salvation which man had lost by his own fault might be given back to him in order that since he was healed he can believe, because after the sentence of the first death had been revoked, his adversary, defeated by the power of Christ, would not dare to prevent the man, united with Adam through the race, to be restored to his first original state and to remain permanently immortal.<sup>357</sup>

Summing up Ambrosiaster's role in the development of the teaching on original sin Gross underlies that he was first to mine out the theological formula *We all sinned in Adam* from the Epistle to the Romans; he was also the originator of Augustine's idea of sinful lump. However, the similarity of language is in contradiction to the difference of views. Although both consider death and passion to be the consequences of original sin, contrary to Augustine Ambrosiaster does not see inherited passion as sin poisoning entire human nature in the proper sense of the word. His view of human nature is optimistic, reminding that of the Antiochians.<sup>358</sup> Scheffczyk adds that Ambrosiaster's expressions are close to Augustine's but his thoughts remain under the influence of Greek ideas. He restricts death originating from Adam to a physical one, whereas spiritual death is caused by personal sins. For this reason he could be recognized as a Pelagian.<sup>359</sup> Emil Stanula perceives Ambrosiaster's views rather as a kind of a bridge between Augustinianism and Pelagianism.<sup>360</sup> Without doubt – as Josef Jäntschi claimed – Ambrosiaster recognizes that people are sinful by the very fact

<sup>357</sup> Ambrosiaster, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Romanos* 7, 25; PL 17, 116, CSEL 81/1, 249; transl. G.L. Bray, 60-61 with alterations.

<sup>358</sup> J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 235.

<sup>359</sup> L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 120.

<sup>360</sup> E. Stanula, *Nauka Ambrojastra o stanie pierwotnym człowieka. Studium z zakresu antropologii teologicznej*, "Studia Antiquitatis Christianae" 1 (1977), 7.



of originating from Adam.<sup>361</sup> Valero also correctly adds that when saying all having sinned in Adam Ambrosiaster has in mind generic sin (*un pecado genérico*), which is the germ or root of personal sins.<sup>362</sup>

### 6.3 Gregory of Nazianzus

Gregory of Nazianzus only once explicitly mentions our share or participation in Adam and that in the context of salvation in Christ. It is a fragment of *Oration 33*:

μίαν δὲ καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι γῆν; μητέρα  
καὶ τάφον, ἐξ ἧς ἐλήφθημεν, καὶ εἰς ἣν  
ἀποστραφησόμεθα, μηδὲν πλέον ἀλλήλων  
ἔχοντες· καὶ ἔτι πρὸ τούτων, κοινὸν λόγον,  
νόμον προφήτας, αὐτὰ τὰ Χριστοῦ πάθη, δι'  
ἧν ἀνεπλάσθημεν, οὐχ ὁ μὲν, ὁ δ' οὐ, πάντες  
δὲ οἱ τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἀδάμ μετασχόντες, καὶ ὑπὸ  
τοῦ ὄφεως παραλογισθέντες, καὶ τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ  
θανατωθέντες, καὶ διὰ τοῦ ἐπουρανίου Ἀδάμ  
ἀνασωθέντες, καὶ πρὸς τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς  
ἐπαναχθέντες, διὰ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ἀτιμίας, ὅθεν  
ἀποπεπτώκαμεν.

And that one and the same is the Earth, the mother and the tomb, from which we were taken, and to which we shall return, none having a greater share than another. And further, above this, we have in common reason, the Law, the Prophets, the very sufferings of Christ, by which we were all without exception created anew, who partake of the same Adam, and were led astray by the serpent and slain by sin, and are saved by the heavenly Adam and brought back by the tree of shame to the tree of life from whence we had fallen.<sup>363</sup>

This is, however, not all what Gregory taught on mankind's solidarity with Adam. He somehow identifies all people with Adam as on occasions he speaks about the events in paradise as concerning all of us, just like salvation concerns all of us. Sometimes these are but enigmatic phrases, and on other occasions Gregory speaks more extensively. In *Oration 38* he uses only a brief formula:

εἰ ἡ γεῦσις κατέκρινε, πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ Χριστὸν  
παθεῖν ἐδικαίωσεν;

If the taste of forbidden fruit condemned [us], how much more does the Passion of Christ justified?<sup>364</sup>

Similarly in *Oration 45*:

φεῦ τῆς ἐμῆς ἀσθενείας! ἐμὴ γὰρ ἡ τοῦ  
προπάτορος.

Alas for my weakness, for that of the first father is mine!<sup>365</sup>

<sup>361</sup> J. Jäntschi, *Führt der Ambrosiaster zu Augustin oder Pelagius*, "Scholastik" 9 (1934), 97.

<sup>362</sup> J.B. Valero, *Pecar en Adán según Ambrosiaster*, 153.

<sup>363</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio 33*, 9; PG 36, 225; transl. C.G. Brawne, J.E. Swallow.

<sup>364</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio 38*, 4; PG 36, 316; transl. N. Verna Harrison, 63 with alterations.

<sup>365</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio 45*, 8; PG 36, 633; transl. N. Verna Harrison, 167.

However, in the same *Oration* 45 he expounds on the subject more broadly:

Ἠγούμεθα γὰρ, ἐπειδὴ πεσόντας ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἀμαρτίας τὸ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, καὶ διὰ τῆς ἡδονῆς κλαπέντας μέχρις εἰδωλολατρίας, καὶ τῶν ἀθέσμων αἱμάτων, ἔδει πάλιν ἀνακληθῆναι, καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἐπαναχθῆναι, διὰ σπλάγχνα ἐλέους Θεοῦ Πατρὸς ἡμῶν, οὐκ ἀνασχομένου ζημιωθῆναι τοσοῦτον ἔργον τῆς οἰκείας χειρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

For we believe that since we had fallen due to sin from the beginning and been led away by pleasure as far as idolatry and lawless bloodshed, we needed to be called back again and restored to our original state, through the heartfelt compassion of God our Father, who could not bear that such a work of his own hands as the human being should be lost.<sup>366</sup>

In all of the fragments quoted above Gregory refers not only the consequences of Adam's sin but also the events in paradise as if we really participated in them. He is even more explicit as regards our share in the fall and exile from paradise in *Oration* 19:

Ὡς ἀπόλοιτο ἡ κακία, καὶ ἡ πρώτη ταύτης καταβολή, καὶ ὁ καθεύδουσιν ἡμῖν ἐπιστεῖρας τὰ ζιζάνια Πονηρὸς, ἴν' ἀρχῆ τοῦ κακοῦ γένηται τὸ ἀμελήσαι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὡσπερ καὶ σκότους ἡ τοῦ φωτὸς ὑποχώρησις. Ταῦτα τὸ ξύλον, καὶ ἡ πικρὰ γεῦσις, καὶ ὁ βάσκανος ὄφις, καὶ ἡ παρακοὴ ἐν ἰδρωτί τοῦ προσώπου ζῆν κατακρίνασα. Ἐντεῦθεν γυμνὸς ἐγὼ καὶ ἀσχίμων, καὶ τὴν γύμνωσιν ἔγνω, καὶ τὸν δερμάτινον χιτῶνα ἡμφιασάμην, καὶ τοῦ παραδείσου διέπεσον, καὶ εἰς τὴν γῆν ἀπεστράφη, ὅθεν ἐλήφθη, ἐν τοῦτο ἀντὶ τρυφῆς ἔχων, τὰ ἔμαυτοῦ γινώσκων κακὰ· καὶ λύπην κατεκρίθη ἀπαυστον ἀντὶ τῆς μικρᾶς ἡδονῆς, καὶ πόλεμον πρὸς τὸν φιλωθέντα κακῶς, καὶ διὰ τῆς γεύσεως ὑποσπάσαντα. Ταῦτα τῆς κακίας ἐμοὶ τὰ ἐπίχειρα· ἐντεῦθεν τὸ γεννᾶσθαι μόχθῳ, καὶ ζῆν, καὶ λύεσθαι.

How I wish that evil might be destroyed and its first seed along with the devil who sowed weeds among us while we were sleeping so that evil might arise from our failure to do good just as the failing sun marks the onset of darkness! This is the harvest of the tree and its bitter fruit and the treacherous serpent and the disobedience that condemned us to live in the sweat of our face. As a direct result, I, naked and ugly, came to know my nakedness and clothed myself in a garment of skin and fell from the garden and returned to the ground from which I was taken with nothing to show from that perfect existence except an awareness of my own misery; and for my brief moment of pleasure I was condemned to sorrow without end and to war against the false friend who through the lasting of the fruit deceived and swayed me to his side. Such are for me the wages of evil; this is why I am born and live and die in travail.<sup>367</sup>

Jan Maria Szymusiak writes that Gregory assumes some joint responsibility, which is mystical though nevertheless real. Our share in Adam's sin is similar to our share in the work of Christ, that is very real, and Christ comprises the entire saved humanity just as Adam comprises all generations of sinners.<sup>368</sup> If one takes the weight of this

<sup>366</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 45, 12; PG 36, 637-640; transl. N. Verna Harrison, 171.

<sup>367</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 19, 14; PG 35, 1060; transl. M. Vinson, 104-105.

<sup>368</sup> J.M. Szymusiak, *Grzegorz Teolog*, Poznań 1965, 192.

analogy into account, one cannot consider the above statements made by Gregory as purely rhetorical, as Williams did.<sup>369</sup>

Scheffczyk even claims that the above quoted statements denote certain reality and frequently give an impression that Gregory speaks about the formal participation of mankind in Adam's sin.<sup>370</sup> Indeed, Gregory exceptionally strongly stresses the unity and solidarity of mankind with Adam. However, he does not explain how this unity has been built or where its foundation is. Where Origen or Gregory of Nyssa aspire to provide explanations, Gregory limits himself only to the statement of the weight of the original fall.<sup>371</sup>

Sometimes Gregory seems to speak about Adam as a representative of the entire humanity, e.g. in *Oration 38*, 10-12, where he does not use the name of Adam at all but speaks about man in the general sense so as in the next point of that oration pass to subsequent history all the time referring it to *man*. From this it follows that depending on the need Gregory interprets the story of the paradise either historically or allegorically, and considers Adam to be either a concrete individual or a representative of the entire humanity.<sup>372</sup> Scheffczyk believes that the strong accent put on the representative character of Adam and his deed is based on ontological assumptions. Gregory perceives Adam's sin as a prototype of other sins. Such perception is based on the Platonic concept of participation – it is the relation of the model to the image (reflection).<sup>373</sup> However, this is a very far reaching interpretation which is based on the conviction that it is possible to determine the philosophical sources of Gregory of Nazianzus. However, I think that Gregory, as did other Fathers, also most probably drew from many philosophical systems adapting philosophical concepts to his own convictions based on the biblical message and the teaching of the faith.

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**369** N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 291.

**370** L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 139.

**371** J.M. Szymusiak, *Grégoire de Nazianze et la péché*, "Studia Patristica" 9 (1966), 299.

**372** J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 143.

**373** L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 141.

## 7 Conclusion

In the end, it is worth re-emphasizing that the concept of the unity of mankind in Adam that I have presented is not an alternative to the traditional Catholic teaching on original sin. I would rather say that it may be its complement or explanation from a different perspective. It is true that the term *original sin* was not used by the Fathers before Augustine, but their writings contain a teaching which in its basic assumptions corresponds with the dogma. This basic assumption is the fact that Adam lost sanctity and justice not only for himself, but also for us; that he passed onto the entire human race not only mortality and suffering of the body, but also sin that is death of the soul.<sup>374</sup>

The first group of the Fathers: Irenaeus, Methodius of Olympus and Gregory of Nyssa sees the sin of nature in Adam's transgression because human nature constitutes a real entity for them. The statement: *We are all in the first man, Adam*<sup>375</sup> is used for the first time by Irenaeus not as a rhetorical figure but confirmation of ontic solidarity of all people with the first parent. Irenaeus' teaching was developed and broadened by Methodius of Olympus. Basing on the conviction about the unity of all people he declared: *In Adam we transgressed Your commandment*.<sup>376</sup> The deliberations of Gregory of Nyssa crown the development of the idea of the unity of human nature. Not only statements similar to his predecessors, but also theoretical reflections on human nature are found in his teaching.

The second group of the Fathers acknowledges that all people share Adam's sins because they were mysteriously contained in his loins when he was transgressing. For Origen the image of all people concealed in the loins of the first parent is one of the hypotheses explaining the universality of sin. Alongside this intuition we also saw a totally different concept in his writings – the fall of minds in pre-existence, which in no way may be linked with Adam's story. However, both those contradictory theories are connected to the profound and fundamental belief of Origen in the free will of rational beings on one hand and the universality of sin on the other. In Augustine one also sees several various ways of understanding Adam's fall and its linkages with the present condition of the humanity. His theories are more homogenous than those of Origen, however. Augustine sees Adam's transgression as the sin of the entire nature which caused that all of its participants are born sinners. However, he does not limit himself to this explanation but also speaks about the physical unity of all as a result of which all people form one lump or mass (*massa*). He also invokes the image of the presence of all in Adam's loins, though does not stop, as Origen, at referring to

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<sup>374</sup> E. McClear, *The Fall of Man and Original Sin in the Theology of Gregory of Nyssa*, 191; J. Vives, *El pecado original en San Gregorio di Nisa*, 190. Although both wrote about Gregory of Nyssa, their statements ideally fit also other Fathers.

<sup>375</sup> Irenaeus of Lyon, *Demonstratio apostolicae praedicationis* 31; Sch 406, 126.

<sup>376</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *De resurrectione* III, 23, 3; manuscript Petersburg Q.I.265, folio 166.

this association but tries to explain this presence. Namely, he acknowledges that all were present in Adam thanks to the law of procreation / propagation, that is the mysterious force which caused that at the time of committing the first sin Adam was already capable of procreating all of his descendants; what is more, all descendants were somehow present in him. Thanks to such assumptions Augustine could say that in fact we all *were in Adam*.<sup>377</sup>

The third group is made up of two Fathers whose teaching is deeply rooted in the Stoic conviction about the physical, actually material unity of the entire world: Tertullian and Ambrose. They both deeply believe in that unity, though make no attempts to explain it. Nevertheless, Ambrose does not hesitate to declare: *In Adam I fell*.<sup>378</sup>

The fourth group perceives Adam as a representative of the entire humanity. Most symptomatic is the following declaration by Ambrosiaster: *All people sinned in Adam as if in a lump*.<sup>379</sup> Alas, neither he nor two other Fathers from this group: Didymus the Blind and Gregory of Nazianzus look for an explanation of the unity or solidarity of all people with Adam, though they are deeply convinced of it.

As we have seen, although the fundamental positions of the Fathers analysed in this present work are different from the way of thinking of later dogmatic formulas – first of all the Council of Carthage and the Council of Trent – they do not contradict the dogma. There is a widespread view that the Eastern Fathers do not mention *peccatum originale originatum* (original sin in us), nevertheless, in their teaching we found a conviction that the fall of the first man separated him from the unity with God and somehow all people participated in that fall.<sup>380</sup> And this is exactly what makes the essence and sense of original sin.

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**377** Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 84, 7; PL 37, 1072; CCL 39, 1165.

**378** Ambrose of Milan, *De excessu fratris sui Satyri* 2, 6; PL 16, 1316; CSEL 73, 254.

**379** Ambrosiaster, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Romanos* 5, 12; PL 17, 92; CSEL 81/1, 163.

**380** D.L. Balás, *Plenitudo Humanitatis*, 124.

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