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THE DIVERSITY OF LAWS IN ORIGEN'S COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

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VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT TE AMSTERDAM

THE DIVERSITY OF LAWS IN ORIGEN'S COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan
de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam,
op gezag van de rector magnificus
dr. C. Datema,
hoogleraar aan de faculteit der letteren,
in het openbaar te verdedigen
ten overstaan van de promotiecommissie
van de faculteit der godgeleerdheid
op donderdag 2 juni 1988 te 13.30 uur
in het hoofdgebouw van de universiteit,
De Boelelaan 1105

door

Riemer Roukema

geboren te Amsterdam

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Referent:	prof.dr. J. Veenhof

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STELLINGEN

I

De reden waarom Origenes νόμος in Paulus' brief aan de Romeinen meermalen uitlegt, niet alleen als de wet van Mozes maar ook, en soms zelfs uitsluitend, als de natuurwet, is dat hij aldus wil aantonen dat de brief betrekking heeft op Joden en niet-Joden.

(vgl. hoofdstuk III, § 4)

II

Origenes legt de teksten in de brief aan de Romeinen, waarin Paulus zich kritisch uit over het effect van de wet van Mozes, bij voorkeur uit met betrekking tot "de wet der zonde, die in mijn leden is" (Rm 7,23), enerzijds om een alternatief te bieden voor de mogelijke gnostische of Marcionitische exegese van zulke teksten, namelijk als doelend op de wet van Mozes, anderzijds omdat "de wet der zonde" alle mensen aangaat, terwijl de wet van Mozes alleen op de Joden van toepassing zou zijn.

(vgl. hoofdstuk III, § 5)

III

Er bestaat een opmerkelijke overeenkomst tussen Origenes' begrip van de brief aan de Romeinen als een geschrift bestemd voor Joden en niet-Joden, en de hedendaagse visie dat Paulus' hoofdthema in deze brief is, dat Joden en heidenen zonder onderscheid op dezelfde wijze deel kunnen krijgen aan de verlossing in Christus.

(vgl. hoofdstuk I, § 3)

IV

De opvatting dat de rechtvaardigingsleer niet het belangrijkste onderwerp van Paulus' brief aan de Romeinen is, wordt door Origenes bevestigd.

(vgl. hoofdstuk I, § 3)

V

Het verband tussen het Griekse catenenfragment dat handelt over Origenes' uitleg van Rm 2,25a en de verkorte Latijnse vertaling die Rufinus van Origenes' uitleg van Rm 2,25-29 biedt kan op bevredigende wijze worden aangetoond.

(contra: M. Harl; vgl. hoofdstuk II, § 8, noot 46)

VI

Het is wenselijk dat theologen de geschiedenis van de bijbeluitleg bestuderen, om aldus een grotere gevoeligheid te ontwikkelen voor de mate waarin contemporaine exegese wordt bepaald door de vraagstellingen van de eigen tijd.

VII

Vooropgesteld dat het lang geen uitgemaakte zaak is of de apostel Paulus terecht van anti-judaïsme beticht kan worden, kan in ieder geval worden gesteld, dat Origenes niet meer anti-judaïstisch was dan de apostel, zij het dat door het verschil, dat Paulus sprak als Jood en Origenes niet, hun woorden over het Joodse volk een verschillende indruk wekken.

VIII

Uit Clemens van Alexandrië, *Stromata* iii,80,1, is niet op te maken dat volgens hem in Rm 7,1 ὁ νόμος het subject van ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῇ is.

(contra: C. Blanc, *Origène. Commentaire sur Saint Jean* III [Sources Chrétiennes 222], Parijs 1975, p. 56)

IX

Dat de vertaler die de uitdrukking "in diesem jammerthal" in de Heidelbergse Catechismus, Zondag 9, heeft weergegeven met "in hac aerumnosa vita", niet heeft teruggegrepen op de Latijnse versie van Psalm 83,7 [84,7], die volgens de Vulgata luidt: "in valle lacrymarum", en waarop in de Duitse tekst gezinspeeld wordt, kan tot reden hebben dat hij van mening was dat de Vulgata geen juiste weergave van het Hebreeuwse הַבָּכָא bood.

(vgl. J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *De Nederlandse Belijdenisgeschriften*, Amsterdam ²1976, p. 164)

X

Het is aannemelijk dat de herkomst van de uitdrukking "de tale Kanaäns" te vinden is in een allegorische duiding van Jesaja 19,18, volgens welke deze tale geacht werd gesproken te worden door hen die in geestelijke zin uit Egypte - dit is: uit de zonde - waren uitgeleid en op weg waren naar Kanaän of daar al waren binnengegaan - hetgeen staat voor de toeëigening van de verlossing in Christus.

(vgl. R. Roukema, "De tale Kanaäns", in: *Kerk en Theologie* 38 [1987], p. 265-269)

XI

De Friese vertaling van ἐδίστασαν in Mt 28,17, "hâlden har op in distânsje", is eerder ingegeven door de overeenkomst van klank dan door de zin van διστάζειν.

(vgl. *Bibel út de oarspronklike talen op 'e nij yn it Frysk oerset*, Amsterdam-Boxtel 1978)

XII

Het streven van de Friezen voor het behoud van eigen taal en cultuur zou van de middelplatoonse filosoof Celsus hartelijke instemming hebben verworven, terwijl het de kerkvader Origenes onverschillig zou hebben gelaten.

(vgl. Origenes, *Contra Celsum* boek V, 25, 34)

WOORD VOORAF

Tijdens de theologische studie aan de Vrije Universiteit raakte ik geboeid door de oudkerkelijke uitleg van de Schrift. Ook later, in de pastorie van Oppenhuizen, lieten de kerkvaders mij niet los. Nu deze belangstelling heeft geresulteerd in het schrijven van dit proefschrift over Origenes' Commentaar op de brief aan de Romeinen dank ik graag diegenen die mij hiertoe hebben gestimuleerd en hierbij behulpzaam zijn geweest.

Dat Professor dr. C. Datema, onder wiens begeleiding ik mij tijdens de doctoraalstudie in de patristiek heb verdiept, nu als promotor optreedt, doet mij veel genoegen. Zijn belangstelling voor de vordering van het onderzoek en zijn verhelderende adviezen heb ik zeer op prijs gesteld.

Professor dr. T. Baarda heeft mij, in de tijd dat ik student-assistent bij hem was, regelmatig ertoe opgewekt, zo snel mogelijk een beknopte dissertatie te schrijven. Voor het feit dat hij hierbij nu als copromotor betrokken is, voor de gesprekken in verband hiermee, en voor alles wat ik in die jaren aan de VU van hem heb geleerd, ben ik hem veel dank verschuldigd.

Dr. K.H. Uthemann, die eveneens als copromotor optreedt, heeft het manuscript grondig en met grote precisie met mij doorgenomen. Voor alle tijd die hij daaraan gegeven heeft en voor zijn suggesties tot een nauwkeuriger weergave van Origenes' uiteenzettingen ben ik hem zeer erkentelijk.

Dat Professor dr. J. Veenhof zich bereid verklaard heeft om namens de theologische faculteit van deze universiteit als referent op te treden, heb ik bijzonder gewaardeerd.

Veel dank geldt ook drs. Th. Korteweg, met wie ik in de loop der jaren menig boeiend gesprek over Paulus, Origenes en over vele andere zaken gevoerd heb. Zijn adviezen voor de studie zijn mij meermalen van grote waarde gebleken, en de sporen hiervan zijn dan ook op vele bladzijden van dit boek aan te wijzen.

Mrs. E. Koole Buxton, B.A. (Dunelm), M.Sc. (Oxon), heeft het manuscript doorgelezen op de nodige vergrijpen tegen het Engelse taaleigen. Ook haar wil ik hartelijk danken voor de betoonde bereidwilligheid.

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I. INTRODUCTION

§ 1. Origen's understanding of *nomos* in Paul's epistle to the Romans

When the apostle Paul employs the term *nomos* he generally has in view the Old Testament law[1]. In his epistle to the Romans, for example, Paul denotes by *nomos* either the commandments of the Decalogue (Rm 7,7; 13,8ff) or the law of Moses in general (Rm 2,12.13.18) or the Pentateuch or the Old Testament as a whole (Rm 3,19.21.31). This use of *nomos* had been prepared by the translators of the LXX and corresponds with Rabbinic usage of *torah*[2].

But since the Greek sense of *nomos* is fundamentally not so much "law" as "custom" or "an immanent principle of life and action"[3], Paul may also use the term in this sense. Yet, there is no unanimity among the exegetes when this is the case. The acknowledgement that Gentiles who do not have the law may do by nature the things which the law requires (Rm 2,14) can safely be interpreted as referring to the Mosaic law, although at the same time Paul alludes to the Stoic concept of the natural law. But as for the second half of Rm 2,14, where he writes that these Gentiles, who do not have the law, are *nomos* to themselves, it is a matter of dispute whether he makes use of the purely Greek sense of principle[4] or of the law of God in general[5], or whether he asserts that the Gentiles do indeed fulfil the Torah[6].

Next, the sense of "principle" seems to be intended in expressions like "the *nomos* of faith" (Rm 3,27), "the *nomos* that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand" (Rm 7,21), "the *nomos* of my mind" (Rm 7,23), "another *nomos*", i.e. "the *nomos* of sin which dwells in my members" (Rm 7,23.25; 8,2b), and "the *nomos* of the Spirit of life" (Rm 8,2a). But it has also been defended that in Rm 3,27 and 8,2a Paul would refer to the Old Testament law[7], and the same is true for Rm 7,21[8].

It is not my intention to give an account of contemporary studies on these texts, nor to defend my own preference[9]. Instead, I wish to investigate the way in which Origen (± 185-253) solved these problems in his *Commentary on the epistle to the Romans*. Origen was well aware of the variety of senses which Paul attached to *nomos*. In his *Commentary on Romans* he even made this homonymity the key of his interpretation of this epistle[10]. For example, in his exposition of Rm 2,25 ("Circumcision is indeed of value if you obey the law") he enumerates six senses of *nomos*:

> the law of Moses according to the letter (Gal 5,4; 3,24);
> the law of Moses according to the spirit (Rm 7,12);
> the natural law (Rm 2,14);
> the history written by Moses (Gal 4,21);
> the prophets (I Cor 14,21);
> the teaching of Christ (I Cor 9,21)[11].

Another list occurs in a survey of the *nomoi* in Rm 7,21-8,2 (and for convenience' sake *nomos* will in each case be translated by "law"):

the law of God;
the law of the mind;
the law of the Spirit of life;
the law of the members;
the law of death;
the law of sin'[12].

Moreover, he also discerns the law of faith in Rm 3,27'[13].

To some extent these distinctions may appear to be correct, but whereas modern exegetes agree that Paul generally had in view the Old Testament law when he employed the term *nomos*, Origen is of a different opinion. Once he observes that the law of nature is referred to more frequently than the other laws'[14]. He puts this law on a par with the law of the mind'[15], and he identifies its opponent, the law of the members, in much more texts than just Rm 7,23. In his view the apostle tacitly moves from one sense of *nomos* to another, so that the reader must be very careful in discerning which law is intended. For example, Rm 3,21 should be interpreted in this way: Now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the natural law, being witnessed by the law of Moses and the prophets in their spiritual sense'[16]. Another example is, that Origen interprets Rm 5,20 in the sense, that the law in the members came in under the pretext of the natural law, in order that the trespass might increase'[17].

More than ten times Origen explicitly makes mention of the diversity of laws in this epistle'[18], and in many other texts this typical feature recurs. In this study I will give a survey and a discussion of Origen's comments on the texts where *nomos* in its different senses plays a role, and I intend to demonstrate which motives have led him to his peculiar interpretations.

As a continuation of this Introduction I will first give an account of the condition in which the *Commentary* has been transmitted. Next, I will pay attention to some modern views on Romans, to Origen as an exegete of Paul's epistles in general and to his own introductory remarks to the epistle to the Romans in the preface to the *Commentary* and elsewhere. Then an exposition of the relevant texts will follow.

§ 2. The transmission of Origen's *Commentary on Romans*

Originally the *Commentary* consisted of fifteen tomes. These have not been preserved fully in Greek, and the witnesses of the Greek original are relatively scarce and fragmentary. The following texts come into consideration'[19].

1. The Philocalia, which has been ascribed to Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus[20], contains at least two passages from the *Commentary on Romans*; one in chapter ix about Rm 7,7 ("What then? Is the law sin?"); this attribution to the comment on Rm 7,7 is correct for the first part of the chapter at least[21]. Another passage occurs in chapter xxv about Rm 1,1 ("Separated unto the gospel of God"), which probably consists of an uninterrupted text[22].

2. A papyrus from the seventh century which was found in Tura, Egypt, in 1941, contains extracts from tome v and vi of the *Commentary* (on Rm 3,5-5,7). It has been edited by J. Scherer in 1957[23]. The papyrus also contains extracts from *Contra Celsum* i and ii and from Origen's sermon on I Samuel 28. Since the latter texts have been preserved completely in other manuscripts, and apparently they have been excerpted in the same manner as the *Commentary on Romans*, it is possible to evaluate the way in which the selection of material has been made. Scherer concludes: The excerptor "ne se souci nullement de donner dans son ouvrage, en raccourci, une image fidèle de cette partie du *Commentaire*. Il copie ce qui lui plaît. ...l'excerpteur reproduit d'ordinaire son texte littéralement. Il l'abrège, mais il ne le résume pas en formules de son propre cru"[24]. Scherer calculates that about one fifth of tome v and about one fourth of tome vi have been reproduced[25].

3. About 70 fragments of the *Commentary* are known from the catenae. They have been edited by A. Ramsbotham in 1912-13 and by K. Staab in 1929[26]. The catenae have been compiled between 600 and 800[27]. Generally they represent an abridgement of the original text.

4. A valuable tenth century codex from Mount Athos (Gregory N° 1739) contains a text of Acts and the Catholic and Pauline epistles, that was transcribed from a manuscript, which was probably written in Caesarea around 400. It has been edited by E. von der Goltz in 1899 and collated anew by K. Lake, J. de Zwaan and M.S. Enslin, who published the result in 1932[28]. The importance of this codex is, that it provides a text of the epistle to the Romans which the compiler had reconstituted from the lemmata in his copy of Origen's *Commentary* on this epistle, as far as it was available to him. Moreover, in the margin he provides some scholia from the *Commentary*, and he indicates where its fifteen tomes started, except for tome xii; actually, both tome xi (on Rm 9,1-19)[29] and tome xiv (on Rm 12,16-14,10a) were missing from his copy of the *Commentary*.

Since these Greek texts represent just a rather small part of the *Commentary*, we depend mostly on the abridged Latin version made by Rufinus around 405[30]. He intended to reduce its size to the half of the original, which resulted in ten books. However, he complains about the Greek volumes: "*Super omnes autem difficultates est, quod interpolati sunt libri. Desunt enim fere apud omnium bibliothecas (incertum sane quo casu) aliquanta ex ipso corpore volumina; et haec adimplere atque in Latino opere integram consequentiam dare, non est mei ingenii, sed ... muneris fortasse divini*"[31].

There has been some dissension about these introductory remarks. Does Rufinus make one point or two? Does he write about interpolations *and* about the scarcity of the codices, as Scherer understands the passage[32], or is "*interpolare*" to be understood as "to alter", "to corrupt", "to interrupt", so that in this case the interpolation consists simply in the imperfection of the booksellers' copies? This is the view of C.H. Turner[33], H. Chadwick[34] and Mrs. C.P. Hammond[35], which indeed merits approval.

Rufinus does not specify which were the volumes he could not find. Chadwick argues that, like the author of the Athos codex, he missed tome xi, since his version of the *Commentary* on Rm 9,1ff (*ComRm* vii,13ff) seems "to contain not a trace of Origen's vitality and exegetical subtlety until we reach the exposition of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart at vii,16, where for a fuller treatment we are referred to the discussion of the same subject in a treatise of Origen concerning free will"[36]. For this treatise Chadwick refers to *De Principiis* iii,1[37]. As to the contents of tome xiv, which was also inaccessible to the author of the Athos codex, Chadwick holds that Rufinus had before him that tome, since the exegesis of Rm 12,16ff in his version (*ComRm* ix,16ff) "abounds in characteristic Origenisms"[38]. In her most valuable study *Der Römerbrieftext des Rufin und seine Origenes-Uebersetzung* (1985) Mrs. Hammond agrees with Chadwick that Rufinus did not have before him tome xi; she argues that for this volume Rufinus made use both of *De Principiis* iii,1 and of Origen's *Stromateis*, which contained exegetical notes on the Old and the New Testament. Moreover she makes plausible the possibility that Rufinus did not have tome xiv either, and that, in order to fill up the gap between Rm 12,16 and 14,10a, he also made use of Origen's *Stromateis*[39].

Once we have presumed how far the Greek volumes were available to Rufinus, the question remains, to what extent we can rely upon his abridged version. There has been some disagreement about this matter as well[40]. Scherer is rather critical in his evaluation of the reliability of the version. He acknowledges that it is often exact and in large measure faithful, but he also points to many instances where Rufinus seems to amplify or to neglect or even to misunderstand Origen's train of thought[41]. Moreover, he supposes that Rufinus had an incomplete and abridged Greek copy, which, on the other hand, had been interpolated. His conclusion is that, although the version is a valuable source, it undoubtedly contains apocryphal sections; in his words, it is "un amalgame si confus que souvent il défie l'analyse"[42].

Chadwick has reacted to this position. He is more cautious than Scherer in ascribing to Rufinus those passages which are unsupported by the Greek[43]. He does not neglect that Rufinus intended to abbreviate the work, "so we have no right to be surprised when we discover he has"[44]. But in general, Chadwick is more positive about the version.

Mrs. Hammond points out that Rufinus' purpose was to edify his readers, not to display his own learning. For that reason he often simplified the problems as they were exposed in the original texts. He chose to translate those works, who were of interest for the discussions in his own time. In the first decade of the fifth century the Pelagian controversy had not yet broken out, but the topics of original sin, the free will of man and predestination were animatedly discussed already. Mrs. Hammond observes that, as Rufinus tended to what would be called Pelagianism or semi-Pelagianism, one should be very careful to investigate Origen's doctrine of grace on the basis of this version of his *Commentary on Romans*. Sometimes Rufinus leaves out an alternative view of

Origen, or he ascribes it to an opponent. In short, however, Mrs. Hammond refers, as it seems with approval, to Chadwick's relatively positive judgment on the value of Rufinus' version[45].

Another point concerns the text of the epistle to the Romans which occurs in the version. In the beginning of each section Rufinus does not translate the text of the Greek *Commentary* (in his copy this may even have been shortened[46]), but he uses an old Latin version. Mrs. Hammond has profoundly investigated the relation between Origen's and Rufinus' text of Romans. She concludes that the independence of the latter towards the text of the former is yet very limited. Rufinus does quote his own text, even if it does not agree with Origen's, but he has not systematically adapted Origen's expositions to this Latin text, so that in the course of the comments Origen's text of Romans often comes to light. Sometimes Rufinus discusses the differences, but usually he tries to conceal them[47].

To sum up about the reliability of Rufinus' version: It is necessary to reckon with omissions, flat translations and alterations. This implies that the version has to be used with a certain reserve and must sometimes be distrusted. Yet, this relative incertitude about the original purport of the expositions need not restrain us from studying the version with regard to Origen's view on the subject of the diversity of laws, since there is no evidence that this was a controversial theme in the beginning of the fifth century. Otherwise the translations might have been influenced for dogmatic reasons. Therefore, in spite of the abbreviations, omissions and inaccuracies which we will meet, we may conclude that Rufinus offers a valuable rendering of those passages which deal with the interpretation of *nomos*. Wherever the text seems to be suspicious, however, this will be indicated.

§ 3. Origen as an exegete of Paul

In order to enable an evaluation of Origen's interpretation of Romans it will be useful first to pay attention briefly to some modern views on the historical context and the purport of this epistle. Since the Reformation it plays an important role as a kind of dogmatic treatise on justification by faith (Rm 1-8), with an appendix on the relation between Israel and the church (Rm 9-11) and some paraenetic chapters (Rm 12-16). In modern exegesis, however, it has often been emphasized that for understanding the so-called doctrinal parts of Romans it is first necessary to see their relation with the apostle's intention to hand over the collection to the church in Jerusalem, his appeal to pray for his visit because of the tensions he feared, and, basically, his effort to establish one church of Jews and Gentiles (Rm 15)[48].

The historical approach of the epistle has been initiated by F.C. Baur in 1836. In his view Paul's main point was the universality of salvation, embracing both the Jews and the Gentiles, as distinct from Jewish particularism. This would mean that in the expositions in Rm 1-8 Paul had just prepared his

central argumentation, which occurred in Rm 9-11[49]. In 1904 W. Wrede argued that the doctrine of justification was not Paul's central point, but a *Kampfeslehre* which can be understood only from the perspective of his struggle with Judaism and Jewish Christianity[50]. In 1930 A. Schweitzer asserted in the same vein, that the doctrine of justification by faith was just a fragment of Paul's doctrine of salvation, a secondary crater, whereas his eschatological mysticism of being in Christ was his main theme[51]. In "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West" (1963) K. Stendahl referred to Schweitzer's view with approval. He demonstrated, that Paul's references to the impossibility of fulfilling the law in Rm 2,17-3,20 (which result in his solution of justification by faith) is part of a scriptural argument about the relation between Jews and Gentiles. So "Rm 9-11 is not an appendix to chapters 1-8, but the climax of the letter". "It was not until Augustine that the Pauline thought about the Law and Justification was applied ... to a more general and timeless human problem"[52].

In *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977) E.P. Sanders confirms the correctness of these views[53]. He concludes that "on the point at which many have found the decisive contrast between Paul and Judaism - grace and works - Paul is in agreement with Palestinian Judaism"[54]. The pattern of Paul's religious thought is, in Sanders' view, that God has sent Christ to be the saviour of all, both Jew and Gentile; everyone must transfer from the group of those who are perishing to the group of those who are being saved; one participates in salvation by becoming one person with Christ. He calls this "participationist eschatology"[55]. In the announcement of the theme of Romans in Rm 1,16-17 Sanders puts the emphasis more on the equality of Jews and Gentiles than on the revelation of the righteousness of God. The point is, that salvation must be based on the same ground for both Jews and Gentiles. That ground cannot be law and must therefore be faith. This theme appears throughout the first four chapters, e.g. in Rm 3,29: "Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of their faith and the uncircumcised because of their faith"[56].

Finally, J.C. Beker, in his *Paul the Apostle* (1980), intends to integrate the themes of the righteousness of God and the universality of the gospel in his view on Romans. To him, the epistle "is a Christian response to Jewish questions such as 'What is Israel's role in salvation-history?' and 'What is the function of the Torah and circumcision?'" At the same time he puts that "chapters 9-11 are not an appendix but a climactic point in the letter", and that "the overarching theme of Romans is the righteousness of God (Rm 1,17), a righteousness that has appeared in Christ as a prelude to God's apocalyptic triumph"[57].

Whereas it is mostly recognized nowadays that one should understand Paul's epistles from their historical context, this was not an accepted principle in the early church. On the contrary, when their particular historical situation had passed away, the question arose why these letters should be regarded as canonical and read in all churches. In "The Particularity of the Pauline

Epistles as a Problem in the Ancient Church" (1962) N.A. Dahl describes the process of canonization and catholicization which these epistles have undergone. A solution of the problem "was found in the observation, that Paul, like John in Revelation ii-iii, had written to seven Churches, and, thus, to the whole Church"[58]. As for the epistle to the Romans, moreover, in some manuscripts the words "in Rome" were omitted from Rm 1,7.15, which enhanced its "catholic" character[59]. Thus the Pauline epistles were incorporated into the New Testament canon[60]. The outcome of this development can be seen in the works of Origen, to whom the verbal inspiration of these epistles, forming part of the divine Scriptures, was an established fact[61]. We will see how this worked out for the epistle to the Romans.

Origen composed his *Commentary on Romans* in Caesarea around 243[62]. In its preface he observes that, when writing to the Romans, Paul seems to have been even more inspired than in his previous epistles to the Corinthians and to the Philippians, as in Romans he displays a higher level of perfection, witnessing that now he was a conqueror in all things and that nothing could separate him from the love of God (Rm 8,35-39)[63]. Origen shows some awareness of its historical context when observing, e.g., that Paul had written it in Corinth[64] to the church in Rome, which consisted of Jews and Gentiles[65], but we will see that he primarily looks upon it as a general treatise for all men.

Yet, in spite of the consequences of the process of canonization, the fact, that Origen still lived rather close to the time and the environment of the apostle, provided him in *some* respect with a greater sensibility to the themes of this epistle than later commentators would have. With respect to the line of Pauline exegesis which is represented by Baur, Wrede, Schweitzer, Stendahl and Sanders it is most interesting that Origen tries to explain the epistle time and again as a treatise for both Jewish and Gentile Christians[66]. For in spite of the changes, due to the lapse of time since Paul wrote to the Romans, the relation between these two groups within the church and, moreover, the relation between the Christians and the non-Christian Jews, was still delicate. Paul carefully balanced his attention to the Jews and to the Gentiles, and Origen is very sensitive to this aspect of the epistle, which appears from his image of Paul as an arbiter between the two[67]. A difference is, that as a Jew Paul wrote from a Jewish perspective, whereas Origen wrote his *Commentary* from the perspective of a church which mainly consisted of Gentile Christians who considered themselves as having taken the place of the Jewish people[68]. In a survey of Rm 1-11 he recapitulates that "the apostle has taught how the substance of religion (*summa religionis*) has been transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles, from circumcision to faith, from the letter to the spirit, from shadow to truth, from carnal to spiritual observance"[69]. On the other hand, the literal interpretation and observance of the law of Moses had not ceased to appeal to part of the Christians, either of Jewish or Gentile origin. Repeatedly Origen refutes the Judaizers, who hold that the sabbath and the Jewish fast should be kept, who are troubled about

material sacrifice, and who persuade Gentile Christians to be circumcised[70]. He was also engaged in discussions with the Jews about the interpretation of the Scripture. He reports that, when asked about the purpose of the letter of the law, they were used to answer that "the Lawgiver had decided it thus"[71]. He wonders at their views: "For we see many Jews who are always learning, from childhood to old age, and never they come to the knowledge of the truth"[72].

The continuous presence of the Jews and their influence upon Christians brought about Origen's interest in the way in which Paul dealt with the relation between Jews and Gentiles. We will see that this comes to light most clearly in his expositions on the different laws. Therefore in this investigation the relation between Jews and Gentiles will be dealt with as a secondary point of interest.

In the preface to the *Commentary* Origen also observes that this epistle is more difficult than the other Pauline letters. He admits that Paul's wording is often confused and not so explicit[73]. In his comment on Rm 4,23-25 he points out that Paul was *idiôtès tôi logôi* (II Cor 11,6); because of his *en tôi frazein idiôteia* his text gives rise to different interpretations[74].

In his comment on Rm 5,12-14 Origen clarifies his view on the difficulty of the epistle by means of a parable, which reminds of the parable of the faithful and wise servant (Mt 24,45) and of the saying that it is good to conceal the mystery of a king (Tob 12,7). It reads that a servant is allowed to see the royal treasures. He is led through several entrances and exits, but the doors towards all the riches are not opened completely to him, so that he could see the treasures, but not in detail. After these disclosures the servant, since he is faithful, has to recruit an army for the king. Because he is also wise, and knows that it is necessary to conceal the mystery of a king, he speaks about it in vague terms[75].

By the servant Origen means Paul, who moderates his words, not only because his own knowledge is partial, but also because of his readers who even cannot grasp what he himself knows partially[76]. Although the point is made in the comment on one particular passage, it certainly applies to the whole epistle, as Origen refers to this parable several times[77]. Elsewhere he identifies a shorter version of it as a Jewish tradition on the divine Scripture in general[78].

Another reason why, in Origen's view, Romans is thought to be more difficult than the other epistles is, that in this epistle Paul deals with many questions which the heretics interpret as a support of their view, that the acts of man should not be reduced to his free choice, but to his nature. Origen complains that, on account of a few texts of this epistle, the heretics try to distort the sense of the whole Scripture, which teaches that God has given a free will to man[79].

By the heretics Origen means Marcion, Valentinus, Basilides and their adherents[80]. Among the few texts which they explain in favour of their denial of man's free will is Rm 1,1: that the apostle was "separated unto the gospel" would mean that "his nature was

specially endowed and by its constitution surpassed the natures of men unlike him"[81]. Undoubtedly Rm 9, the chapter about the election of Israel and the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, belonged to these texts, as can be derived from *De Principiis* III,1,19-24[82]. Next, Paul's comparison of the branches of the wild and the cultivated olive in Rm 11,16-24 was seen as a proof of the existence of natures that are either saved or perished for ever[83]. On the occasion of these and many other texts, where Paul seemed to represent a view opposite to that of the heretics, Origen refutes the gnostic and Marcionite views. This implies that the anti-gnostic and anti-Marcionite polemics, which, indeed, are an important feature of all works of Origen, also mark this *Commentary*. However, since the present investigation concerns the diversity of laws which Origen discerns in Romans, not all the instances of anti-heretic polemics will be discussed, but mainly as far as they are related to this theme.

When Origen announces the main themes of the epistle in the preface to the *Commentary*, his enumeration appears to justify our choice to study the diversity of laws as a characteristic feature of Romans in his understanding. At the same time his attention to the relation between the Jews and the Gentiles appears in this summary of the contents. Referring once again to the difficulty of this epistle he suggests that this is due to the themes which Paul discusses: "The law of Moses, the vocation of the Gentiles, Israel according to the flesh and Israel which is not according to the flesh, the circumcision of the flesh and of the heart, the spiritual law and the law of the letter, the law of the mind and the law of sin, the inward and the outward man"[84].

It would be possible to offer at once, on the ground of this *Commentary* and other works of Origen, an orderly synthesis of his view on the laws which he discerns. Such a study would contribute to the knowledge of Origen's "system". Instead, it is preferable to give a rather detailed account of his expositions of the relevant texts in which the different laws occur, in order to give a fair impression of the way in which he arrives at his views on the laws in Romans, and to draw conclusions from it only afterwards. In a handy report of the studies on Origen in the nineteenth and twentieth century, *Origenes* (1981), U. Berner concludes by referring to H. de Lubac, who wrote in 1950: "... qu'il importe avant tout de voir Origène à l'oeuvre plutôt que de s'en tenir à quelque exposé méthodique abstrait ou à quelques textes exotériques, nécessairement tendancieux. Le voir à l'oeuvre: c'est ... ce qui a manqué le plus"[85]. As for the diversity of laws in this *Commentary* this is perfectly true. This theme has often been noticed[86], but it has not yet been investigated thoroughly within the context of Origen's general interpretation of Romans in this *Commentary*. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to describe and evaluate one aspect of the history of patristic exegesis of the New Testament.

II. COMMENTS CONCERNING THE DIVERSITY OF LAWS IN ORIGEN'S *COMMENTARY ON ROMANS*

§ 1. Rm 1,9

In the introduction of the epistle (Rm 1,1-17) Paul does not mention any law, but to Origen the phrase "For God is my witness, whom I serve *with my spirit* in the gospel of his Son" (Rm 1,9a) is the first occasion to deal with his favorite distinction between the literal and the spiritual sense of the Mosaic law[1]. Quoting the apostle he argues that "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (II Cor 3,6) and that "the law was weak through the flesh" (Rm 8,3). To Origen this means that the law was weak through its letter, because it was impossible to keep all its commandments literally. From impracticable laws, e.g. that one should not go out of his place on the sabbath (Ex 16,29), or about leprosy in the warp (Lev 13,48ff) or on a wall (Lev 14,37ff) or in anything made of skin (Lev 13,48), Origen concludes that "the law is spiritual" (Rm 7,14), which means that it has to be understood allegorically. He who understands this "serves God with the spirit". For "If you live according to the flesh - i.e. the letter of the law - you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live" (Rm 8,13)[2].

In this way Origen reacts to the Judaizing tendencies among the Christians. Next, he observes that the patriarchs and the prophets also "served God with the spirit", which means to him that the law and the prophets correspond with the gospels[3]. Thus Origen apparently refutes the Marcionites and those gnostics, who used to reject the Old Testament.

§ 2. Rm 1,16b-17

The theme of the epistle is that the gospel is "the power of God for salvation for everyone who has faith, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written: 'He who through faith is righteous shall live'" (Rm 1,16b-17). This text induces Origen to make a point on the Greek laws. He refers to Rm 1,14 where Paul writes that he is a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, whereas in Rm 1,16 he mentions the Jew first and then the Greek. To Origen this means that Paul ranges the peoples in this way: first the Jews, thereafter the Greeks, and lastly the Barbarians. He argues why Paul's order is to be preferred to the Greek distinction of Greeks and Barbarians. Since the Greeks made use of laws, they called Barbarians all the others who more or less lived without laws. But the Jews started to live according to laws even before the Greeks, and their laws have been promulgated by God and not by men[4].

By asserting the superior ancientness of the laws of the Jews in comparison with the Greek laws Origen represents a familiar

theme of Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian apologetic literature[5].

To Origen the revelation of the righteousness of God implies that nobody is excluded from salvation, whether one comes as a Jew or as a Greek or as a Barbarian[6]. From this interpretation of God's righteousness as a warrant of the equality of Jews, Greeks and Barbarians it appears that here Origen interprets it as *aequitas*[7].

The expression "from faith to faith" is explained against the heretics as evidence of the complementarity of the law and the prophets and the gospel: from faith in the Old Testament one comes to faith in the gospel, and vice versa[8].

§ 3. Rm 1,18-20

After his introduction of the theme of the epistle in Rm 1,16-17 Paul starts its explication by arguing that both Jews and Greeks who do not believe in Christ are in the same position before God (Rm 1,18-3,20). Referring primarily to the Gentiles he argues that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is manifest in their midst, for God has made it manifest to them. For since the creation of the world the invisible things of him, even his eternal power and deity, are clearly perceived in the things that have been made, so that they are without excuse" (Rm 1,18-20). In this passage Paul does not deal with the law, and in his exposition Origen does not mention any law either, but since the concept of the natural law is touched, a discussion will be useful.

Origen emphasizes that the wrath of God is not directed to all men, but especially to the wise of this world, the philosophers, who, although they could know the truth and the righteousness of God, did not acknowledge him as God but turned to the idols[9]. For thanks to the natural faculty of reason which God has given to all men they can know the invisible realities and God's eternal power and deity by investigating the creation (Origen understands *apo ktiseôs kosmou* [Rm 1,20] as "from the created universe", *ex conjecturis creaturae*). Yet, God's own nature (*ratio substantiae ejus vel naturae; proprietas*) cannot be known by man[10].

So, while employing Platonic and Stoic philosophy[11], Origen is rather positive about the natural capacity of man to know about the spiritual world and about God, but he is more negative about the way in which the philosophers made use of this capacity. This judgment announces his view on the impact of the natural law.

§ 4. Rm 2,7-11

Paul repeats the phrase "the Jew first and also the Greek" (Rm 1,16) when writing about "the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed": "For he will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for

glory and honour and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury, tribulation and distress, for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek; but glory and honour and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality" (Rm 2,5b-11)[12]. We notice again that Jews and Greeks are equal before God.

After having explained the present concepts of reward and punishment[13], Origen considers how they are related to the phrase of the Jew and the Greek. He asks: why there will be wrath and fury for the Jew first and also - to be understood as: in the second place - for the Greek? He answers: because also glory and honour are for the former first, which appears from the fact that "they were the first who were entrusted with the oracles of God" (Rm 3,2)[14]. It is true that the Gentiles could know God's eternal power and deity from the creation of the world in the things that have been made (Rm 1,20), but the Jews knew the will of God from the law and the prophets. The Jew is like the servant of the parable, who knew the will of his lord, but did not do it, and so he will receive a severe beating. But the Greek or Gentile, who did not know the will of the lord, will receive a light beating (Lk 12,47-48)[15].

Yet, Origen is not satisfied by his own interpretation. Since the apostle states that on the day of judgment the Jews will precede the Greeks not only in punishments, but also in recompense, he asks who these Greeks and Jews actually are. He excludes the possibility that Paul had in mind the Jews who are still under the law and do not come to Christ, and, as for the Greeks, the Christians from the Gentiles[16].

Then he suggests that by the Jews Paul means "the Christians who believed from all the Gentile nations", who Paul calls "inward Jews" in Rm 2,29. As a consequence the Greeks would be those Gentiles who have not yet believed. But Origen is aware that by this spiritual interpretation of "Jew" he shifts the problem of giving a coherent exegesis of the whole passage. For this interpretation implies that Paul had good hopes for the Gentiles who do not yet believe, which is contrary to the rule of the church that one can be saved only by the name of Christ and by being born anew of water and the holy Spirit. How could Paul make the Gentiles share in glory and honour and peace after the (inward) Jews[17]?

In order to solve this problem Origen divides the verdicts in Rm 2,7-10 into three parts. First Paul says, that to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, God will give eternal life (Rm 2,7). This applies to the Christians. "Patience in well-doing" refers to their struggle for piety, their tribulation in the world and even martyrdom. The promise of eternal life is meant only for them, for faith in Christ is an absolute condition for receiving it[18].

In the second place Origen distinguishes the counterpart of this promise: to those who are factious and do not obey the truth,

but obey wickedness, threaten wrath and fury, tribulation and distress. To Origen, this is meant for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek (Rm 2,8-9)[19]. Here Origen does not give a deeper sense of "Jew" and "Greek".

But in the third place there is also a promise of recompense for the same: glory and honour and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek (Rm 2,10). Origen supposes that this applies to the Jews and the Gentiles who do not yet believe. For someone who is under the Mosaic law and, because of the common opinion, does not believe in Christ, may still do good and lead a virtuous life. Although he does not have eternal life since he only believes in God and not in Jesus Christ, the glory of his works and his peace and honour cannot perish[20].

The same is true, in Origen's view, for the Gentile Greek who does not know the Mosaic law, but who is a law to himself and shows that what the law requires is in his heart, and who leads a virtuous life thanks to the natural reason (Rm 2,14-15). Although he is devoid of eternal life since he does not believe in Christ, he cannot loose the glory of his good works and his honour and peace[21]. For as Paul has condemned the Gentiles in the above for not honouring God, although they could know him by natural insight (Rm 1,19-21), he is also obliged to praise them if those who know God indeed honour him as God. For God shows no partiality (Rm 2,11)[22].

In this way Origen spreads his attention to the Jews and the Greeks. It is noteworthy how he tries to do justice to the precedence of the Jews. He acknowledges that they were the first who were entrusted with the oracles of God, i.e. the law and the prophets, and he emphasizes that their judgment will be heavier, but he does not see how the recompense of eternal life may also apply to them. Instead, he understands it as meant for the Christians only. And since the Greeks can know the law by nature, they are in fact on the same level as the Jews. Origen counts on a relatively positive verdict on the day of judgment for both Jews and Greeks who lead a virtuous life, although it will not be "eternal life"[23].

From this exposition it may be concluded that Origen was interested in emphasizing the equality of the Jews and the Gentiles before God. It appears, among other things, that the revelation of the law of Moses parallels, in Origen's view, the manifestation of the natural law among the Gentiles. In order to demonstrate this equality he starts and finishes his comments on Rm 2,7-11 with a reference to Rm 3,29: "Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also"[24].

§ 5. Rm 2,12

Paul's first explicit reference to the law in this epistle occurs in the present verse, where he states "that all who have sinned without the law (*anomôs*) will also perish without the law"

(Rm 2,12a). This means that the Gentiles who have sinned without knowing the law of Moses, will perish in spite of their ignorance. In fact, this sentence serves mainly as an introduction to the more important verdict that "all who have sinned under the law (*en nomôi*) will be judged by the law" (*dia nomou*; Rm 2,12b), which is meant for the Jews[25].

In a retrospective survey of the contents of Rm 2 Origen also briefly interprets v.12a with regard to the Gentiles and v.12b with regard to the Jews[26]. But his actual comment on Rm 2,12 is more comprehensive.

To Origen it is not fair that all who have sinned without any knowledge of the law of Moses will perish. Therefore he asks, if "law" is to be understood only of the law of Moses, or also of the law of Christ, or even of any human law. In favour of his suggestion of a broader interpretation Origen points out that Paul himself was also without the law of Moses, as he became as one without the law to those outside the law, although he was not without any law, but under the law of Christ (I Cor 9,21). Moreover, the natural law is normally found in all people, as appears from the following verses: "When Gentiles, who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law; they show that what the law requires is written on their hearts" (Rm 2,14-15a)[27].

But if "law" in Rm 2,12 also applies to the natural law, who then are those who sin without law? Origen suggests that they are those who obey neither the written laws nor their conscience (which, apparently, is instructed by the natural law; cf. Rm 2,15). The prodigal son is an example of someone who had withdrawn even from the natural law, since he squandered his share of his father's property in loose living (Lk 15,12-13). After having assured the Lord's special care for those who are lost, Origen maintains that if somebody has withdrawn from all the different laws which are mentioned in the Scripture, so that even the natural law seems to be wiped out by hardness of heart, it may be said about him that he perishes without law[28].

About Rm 2,12b Origen states that, whether one is under the law of Christ or under the law of Moses, one will be judged by this respective law. In view of the Judaizers he specifies that one who is under the law of Christ will not be judged according to the law of Moses in its literal sense, e.g. in point of circumcision and the sabbath, but in its spiritual sense[29]. In this context Origen does not say that on the day of judgment also the Gentiles will be judged according to their laws. However, this application occurs in the exposition of Rm 13,3, even with reference to Rm 2,12b[30]. As this comment occurs in the part of the *Commentary* which corresponds with the Greek tome xiv, which most probably was not available to Rufinus, it may have been borrowed from another work of Origen[31]. Therefore, it is possible that in this *Commentary* Origen's interpretation of Rm 2,12b also contained a reference to the Gentiles who will be judged according to their laws, which has been omitted by Rufinus.

However that may be, also in the exposition of Rm 2,12 as far as it has been rendered it appears to be Origen's intention to apply this text impartially to all people, Jews and Christians and Gentiles alike.

§ 6. Rm 2,14-15a

By his consideration that Gentiles may do by nature what the law requires even though they do not have the law (Rm 2,14-15a), which was quoted already in the foregoing section, Paul stresses again that the Gentiles are in the same position towards God as the Jews. Here he treats the Gentiles so mildly in order to put to shame the Jews who do have the law but do not keep it, as he will say in the following passage[32].

Origen interprets the text as a testimony to the universal revelation of the law of God. First, he clarifies that not the ceremonial laws of the Jews have been written on the hearts of the Gentiles, but the natural law, which corresponds more or less with the Decalogue, as it teaches, e.g., not to kill, not to commit adultery, not to bear false witness, to honour father and mother, etc., and perhaps that there is one God, the Creator of all things. Then, Origen observes that the natural law seems to fit in even more with the laws of the gospel, where the universal standard is natural justice (*aequitas*). "For what is more consonant with our natural feeling than that men should not do to others what they would not have done to themselves?" In the third place Origen points out that the natural law can agree with the law of Moses according to the spirit, not according to the letter. For when the Gentiles do what the law requires, the law has been written on their hearts, "not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God" (II Cor 3,3)[33].

As to the identification of the essence of the Mosaic law with the natural law, Philo and Clement of Alexandria have preceded Origen[34]. Their concept of natural law as the law of God derives from the syncretism of Stoic and Platonic philosophy which was prevalent since the first century B.C.[35]. Origen employs the concept of the natural law almost exclusively in its moral, and not in its physical sense[36].

§ 7. Rm 2,17-24

In Rm 2,17-24 Paul contends again the superiority of the Jews by accusing them of complacency. He reprimands them that they pretend to rely upon the law, whereas in reality they do not obey it, so that the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles.

Origen observes that in this passage Paul does not direct his words to the whole church. To him the question is, who is meant by the one who is addressed as: "if you *call yourself* a Jew" (Rm 2,17), for this is not the same as "if you *are* a Jew". He points to the next passage where Paul teaches that the real Jew is he who

is circumcised inwardly, in heart, who keeps the law according to the spirit, and not to the letter, and whose praise is not from men but from God (Rm 2,29). This means that he who is circumcised outwardly in the flesh (Rm 2,28), who obeys the law in order to be seen by men, *is called* a Jew, but is one in name only[37].

Having made this distinction, Origen applies the passage in the first place to the Jews who understand the law literally and who do not believe in Christ. He emphasizes their hypocrisy and maintains that their observance of the law is ridiculous to the Gentiles[38].

In the second place Origen applies the reproaches to everybody who manifests religion and piety in name only, whereas works and knowledge and faith are absent. He observes that this may also be true for the Christians, even for the teachers of the church, who by faith in Christ and by circumcision in baptism have become real Jews. In spite of their reliance upon the law of Christ and their self-confidence, their greediness and lust may still cause that the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles[39].

In the third place Origen explains the passage in relation to the heretics. They call themselves Christians, some of them even keep the law, but in reality they defile the church and its doctrine, so that again the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles[40].

So to Origen the purport of Rm 2,17-24 is not restrained to a criticism of the Jews, as to them the apostle speaks just ironically[41]. It also strikes the Gentiles (everybody who manifests religion and piety in name only) and not less the Christians and the heretics. Again we notice the tendency to a broad application of the text.

§ 8. Rm 2,25-29

Paul continues his address to the Jew: "Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. So, if someone who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who, having the letter and circumcision, break the law. For the (real) Jew is not he, who is one outwardly, nor is (real) circumcision something outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and (real) circumcision is that of the heart, spiritual and not literal. His praise is not from men but from God" (Rm 2,25-29). Thus Paul intends again to undermine the privileged position of the Jews[42]. It is possible that the reference to the uncircumcised who obey the law concerns the Gentile Christians[43].

In his preface to the *Commentary* Origen had ranged the distinctions in these verses with the central themes of the epistle ("Israel according to the flesh and Israel which is not according to the flesh, the circumcision of the flesh and of the

heart"[44]). His exposition of this passage is very thorough and has grown famous in antiquity[45].

As to Rm 2,25a, "Circumcision is indeed of value if you obey the law", we are informed about Origen's explanation both by the Latin version and by a Greek catena extract[46]. In the Greek fragment Origen first gives a list of six possible senses of *nomos*, which were rendered in chapter I,1: the law of Moses according to the letter, the law of Moses according to the spirit, the natural law, the history written by Moses, the prophets, and the teaching of Christ[47]. The first three senses and the last one will be of importance to his interpretation of Rm 2,25.

This list has been omitted by Rufinus, for according to his version Origen immediately begins with a spiritual interpretation of Rm 2,25a. Origen thinks that by *peritomè* not the Jewish *katatomè* is meant, which stands for carnal circumcision (Phil 3,2-3), but the circumcision of the heart, which is of value if one obeys the law spiritually. Origen argues, that "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (II Cor 3,6) and that the law of God is written "not with ink" but with the finger of God, which is his Spirit, and "not on tablets of stone but on tablets of the heart" (II Cor 3,3)[48].

Next, Origen interprets the text with regard to the natural law. This is not explicated in the Latin version, but it is in the Greek extract, which reads: "But *law* can also be understood here as the law according to the natural notions" (*dunatai de nun nomos noeisthai kai ho kata tas fusikas ennoias*)[49]. This spiritual circumcision according to the law of nature is of value (*ho pneumatikôs peritemnomenos ôfeleitai*) since it implies the improvement of the soul and the removal of evil by doing the law[50]. This application to the natural law could also appear from Rufinus' quotation of II Cor 3,3, which in the *Commentary* is normally interpreted with regard to the revelation of the natural law to the Gentiles[51].

As to Rm 2,25b, "But if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision", Origen deems it impossible that circumcision can be changed into uncircumcision literally[52], so he concludes that it can only be interpreted allegorically. In this sense it would mean that if refraining from evil, i.e. spiritual circumcision, does not imply that the works of faith and justice are done, it will still be reckoned as unbelief and impurity. This is also true for the church. If someone breaks the law of Christ after the circumcision, administered in baptism, this circumcision will be reckoned as the uncircumcision of unbelief[53].

After his comments on Rm 2,26-27 Origen, according to the version, returns to Rm 2,25. He considers the possibility that after the coming of Christ carnal circumcision may still be of some value for those who keep the law. In the Greek extract this is called the literal interpretation, without an anagogical sense[54]. Origen argues that in the initial period of the church the law was kept by Peter, who distinguished between clean and unclean food (Acts 10,14), and by Paul, who circumcised Timothy and cut his own hair and was involved in some sacrifices of purification (Acts

16,3; 18,18; 21,26). Thus Paul professed that he became a Jew to the Jews, and to those outside the law as one outside the law, and that he became all things to all men that he might win all of them (I Cor 9,20-22)[55]. But the practices Paul seems to allow to the believers from the Jews, he does not allow to the believers from the Gentiles, for to the latter he writes: "If you receive circumcision Christ will be of no advantage (*ouden ôfelèsei*) to you" (Gal 5,2). Origen concludes that circumcision was of no value at all for those who thought to obtain a certain part of justification (*aliquid justificationis*) from it. Yet, it was of value for those who thought that they could not come to Christ if they were prohibited to circumcise their sons. He explains that in the beginning there were some who practised circumcision with exceeding devotion as an indigenous sign of their nation. So to these people the apostle seems to say, in order to prevent that he might close the door of faith to them: "Circumcision is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision". But if, on the contrary, believers from the Gentiles are forced to receive circumcision, faith in Christ and the proclamation of the Word are harmed[56].

Origen demonstrates extensively that not all the precepts of the Bible apply to all people. He gives many examples of commandments from the Mosaic law, which were valid for the Israelites only, or even for the priests and the Levites only, or for both the Israelites and the strangers who sojourned among them (*prosèlutoi* in the LXX)[57]. The purport of this exposition is evident: Christians from the Gentiles should not be forced to receive circumcision. Origen does not say explicitly, according to the version, that it was a common temptation for Gentile Christians of his time to receive circumcision; he only observes that "even after the coming of Christ some have been persuaded to be circumcised, although they were from the Gentiles"[58]. But it goes too far to say that the argument is merely induced by the text of Romans and not at all by the situation of Origen's time. In other works he makes clear that sometimes Gentile Christians did indeed receive circumcision[59]. For this reason Origen was worried about the influence of Judaism and Jewish Christianity, and therefore he dealt with circumcision so extensively.

On the other hand, Origen refutes all those who ridiculize circumcision as it is prescribed in the Old Testament. He reproaches Marcion, who does not accept any allegorization at all, that he was not able to provide an exposition on the apostle's statement that "circumcision is of value if you obey the law". Origen defends that circumcision, which is prescribed literally by God in the Old Testament, is allegorically in line with the redemption by Christ in the New Testament. He explicates that this is said against the Marcionites and the other heretics who reject the Old Testament[60]. Towards the Gentiles Origen argues that circumcision is practised as something honourable among the Egyptians, the Arabs, the Ethiopians and the Phoenicians, whose priests used to be circumcised[61].

Two more sections of the exposition ask for our attention. First, Origen's interpretation of Rm 2,26-27.

In fact he comments only on Rm 2,26a.27. It seems that his text of Romans did not contain Rm 2,26b, and read: "But if (*ean de*) the uncircumcision keeps the precepts of the law, will not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfils the law, condemn you who, having the letter and circumcision, break the law?"[62]. The uncircumcision is interpreted as the Gentiles who believed in Christ and keep the law spiritually. They are compared with the Jews, who have the letter of the law and receive circumcision of the flesh, but yet break the law, and will be judged by the former[63]. Origen also explains these verses as an appeal to the church. The catechumens or even the Gentiles could be called the uncircumcised, whereas the believers have been circumcised by the grace of baptism. If a catechumen keeps the law of Christ, he judges him who is called a believer but yet is contemptuous of the law of Christ[64].

Secondly, it is noteworthy how he concludes his exposition of Rm 2,25-29 with a mystical interpretation of the two kinds of Jews. They occur in everyone personally as the inward and the outward man (II Cor 4,16). Thus circumcision of the inward and the outward man means that the inward man does not covet in his heart and that the outward man does not give way to the desire of his body. In this sense one who is circumcised in the flesh does not live in the flesh anymore, but in the Spirit, as he mortifies the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit (Rm 8,9.13)[65].

Surveying the respective interpretations of Rm 2,25-29, one may conclude that as for Rm 2,25 Origen tries to demonstrate in how far this sentence is relevant to all different groups within or out of the church. It is applied literally to the Jews and to the Christians from the Jews. According to the allegorical interpretation of circumcision as refraining from doing evil, the text is true for the Christians who are supposed to keep the law of Christ and for the Gentiles who observe the natural law. Paul's distinction between those who are Jews outwardly and those who are so inwardly and between the outward circumcision and the spiritual circumcision of the heart (Rm 2,28-29) serves as a justification of both his literal and his spiritual interpretation. As for Rm 2,26a.27 we recognize Origen's effort to show that the text is relevant not only to the Jews, but also to the Christians, and may even apply to the Gentiles. Finally, the mystical interpretation of the two kinds of Jews naturally is relevant to each man personally.

The conclusion that Origen's object is to interpret the text with respect to all different groups and to each man personally is confirmed by his own retrospective survey of Rm 2, where he explicates the reason for Paul's spiritualization. He makes clear that, since the law and the prophets apparently contain many promises to the Jews, the Gentiles could be in despair as if they had no share in these promises. Therefore Paul taught the latter that mystically they are Jews too and do have circumcision[66].

§ 9. Rm 3,1-2

After his relativization of the privileged position of the Jews, Paul continues his letter by asking: "Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?" According to Origen's text the answer is: "Much in every way. For they were the first who were entrusted with the oracles of God" (Rm 3,1-2)[67].

This shift in Paul's approach induces Origen to characterize the apostle's position when writing the epistle to the Romans. He observes: "In this epistle Paul, standing as an arbiter between the Jews and the Greeks, i.e. the believers from the Gentiles, invites both peoples to faith in Christ. He is careful neither to offend the Jews by totally disparaging the Jewish rites, nor to bring about despair to the Gentiles by confirming that the law should be observed literally. Also when making mention of either promises or punishments he divides his attention to both peoples"[68]. Origen illustrates this observation by briefly taking Rm 2,8-29 through again, pointing out how Paul addressed himself alternately to both peoples[69]. As Paul, in Origen's view, had favoured the Gentiles above the Jews, he now meets the complaints of the latter by recognizing that, although now the oracles of God are also entrusted to the Gentiles, they have been first entrusted to the Jews[70].

But in spite of this recognition Origen cannot believe that this advantage is also true for the Jews of his own time. "For we see many Jews who are always learning, from childhood to old age, and never they come to the knowledge of the truth"[71]. He explains that the oracles of God are not so much the letters and the books, but their sense and the mysteries that are within them, and that the Jews who had the advantage of being entrusted with these oracles were men like Moses and the prophets and the apostles. But the Jews who read the oracles of God without believing in Christ are only entrusted with the letter that kills (II Cor 3,6)[72].

The question which Origen asks next typifies his *Commentary on Romans*. Do those who come to Christ from the Gentiles also have an advantage? His answer is positive. If the Gentiles have faith they are much more at an advantage than the Jews. Origen quotes Jesus' saying about the Gentile centurion that not even in Israel he had found such faith, and that many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness (Mt 8,10-12). For if the Jews were the first who were entrusted with the oracles of God, this implies that there are others who are entrusted with them in the second place[73].

Origen denies that the Samaritans also belong to the first who were entrusted with the oracles of God. He would say that they even had not been entrusted with the letter that kills, since they reject the prophets. He adds that the heretics who split up the unity within God and who separate the law from the gospels have not been entrusted with the oracles of God either, even if they read the divine Scriptures; since they do not understand them spiritually, they only have the letter that kills (II Cor 3,6)[74].

We notice that in his comment on Rm 3,1-2 Origen emphasizes that the revelation of the oracles of God is given to the Jews only temporarily, and more really, albeit in the second place, to the Gentiles.

This is confirmed by a characterization of the whole epistle in the beginning of the comment on Rm 3,5-8, which is also attested by the papyrus, in the beginning of the Greek tome v. Neither the interpretation of Rm 3,3-4[75] nor the comment on Rm 3,5-8[76] need to be discussed within the scope of this study, but this general observation is worth rendering. Origen repeats that Paul speaks alternately to the Gentiles and to the Jews, both against and in favour of them[77]. Then he remarks: "We say that it is his (i.e. Paul's) intention throughout the whole epistle to establish that the salvation of the Jews before the coming of Christ was according to the law, and on the subject of what followed our Saviour's arrival, to show that salvation became possible for the Gentiles because of Israel's transgression"[78]. In Rufinus' version Origen specifies: Yet, Paul does not teach that the Gentiles will reach salvation all together, but only those who will have believed; nor that Israel will be rejected as a whole, but that a remnant of believers will be saved (Rm 9,27)[79].

From this section it appears that, in Origen's view, the Gentiles have received the advantage which was first entrusted to the Jews, namely the true understanding of the Scriptures, and the salvation.

§ 10. Rm 3,9ff

In Rm 3,9 Paul confirms that Jews and Greeks are all in the same situation: "What then? Are we (Jews) better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all men, Jews and Greeks, are under sin"[80]. To Paul, this conclusion is necessary if Christ is to be the universal Saviour[81].

Origen's exposition of Rm 3,9a would have been interesting for our investigation, but if he offered an interpretation at all, it is not extant[82].

His comments on the charge that all men, Jews and Greeks, are under sin (v.9b), start with a discussion of its context within the epistle. Origen refers to his image of Paul as an arbiter between Jews and Greeks. As Paul accuses all men of being under sin, this implies that no one has reason to extol himself above the other, because both Jews and Greeks are saved not in virtue of their own righteousness but on the ground of God's mercy. Origen shows that Paul had explicated his charge in the preceding chapters[83]. Next, he points out that the following string of texts from the psalms and the prophets (Rm 3,10-18) serves as a biblical justification of this charge of sin[84].

In his actual interpretation of v.9b Origen compares Paul's charge, that all Jews and Greeks are under sin, with Rm 4,15b: "But where there is no law, there is no transgression". The Jews, however, have the law of Moses, and the Gentiles know the law of nature. So where do we find somebody without law and therefore

without the transgression of sin? Origen points out that even Paul said about himself: "I was once alive without law" (Rm 7,9a). Having been circumcised on the eighth day, Paul could not mean that he once lived without the Mosaic law. Origen is sure that Paul had in mind the natural law here, without which he lived in childhood, before he could discern between good and evil. As long as one lives without the natural law, "sin is not imputed" (Rm 5,13b), even if one sins. The next phrase in Rm 7,9 logically fits in with this interpretation: "But when the commandment (of the natural law) came, sin revived"[85].

Having thus excepted the children from Paul's all-embracing charge, Origen pursues the question, in which sense "Jews and Greeks" is meant. For in his view these are not strictly ethnical designations, since proselytism is possible in both directions. "Jew" stands for a deliberate way of life, which can be adopted by a non-Jew, whereas a Jew can renounce Judaism and embrace the Gentile laws and doctrine. One who decides to live according to the letter of the law is an "outward Jew", but one who decides to live according to the spiritual law, is called an "inward Jew" (Rm 2,28-29)[86].

Origen admits that one could wonder how the Gentiles have got under sin, as "sin is not imputed, where there is no law" (Rm 5,13b). But he repeats that they know the law by nature (Rm 2,14), and puts forward the traditional distinction between the natural law as the law of God and the written law of the cities which does not exist by nature (*fusei*) but by decree (*thesei*), and which may be opposite to the law of nature[87]. If Paul said that "sin is not imputed where there is no law" with regard to the written law, i.e. the law of Moses, it would appear that sin was not imputed to those who lived prior to Moses, like Cain, those who perished in the flood and the Sodomites. But as we see, not only that their sin has been imputed, but also that they have been punished, it is inevitable - to Origen - that Paul speaks about the natural law, which, except for the first age of childhood, is known to everybody[88]. In support of his interpretation regarding the unaccountability of the children he appeals to those Greek philosophers who hold that, along with the perfection of reason (*sumplèrôsis tou logou*) in man, evil first comes into existence. Next, thanks to instruction and diligence, evil is invalidated and virtue originates[89].

In general Origen's view that children are not responsible for their sins as they still live without the directives of reason and natural law, corresponds with Stoic philosophy, although it is not exclusively Stoic. It belonged to common opinion that reason had developed when the second hebdomad of years was completed[90]. The idea about the order in which evil and virtue originate is familiar to Origen[91]. It seems to be difficult to trace it back to the witnesses of Greek philosophy[92]. M. Harl suggests that these Greeks were Stoics of Origen's time[93].

Next, Origen demonstrates that his view on human responsibility corresponds with the Scripture. Besides Rm 7,9b ("but when the commandment - of the natural law - came, sin revived") he now

quotes Christ himself: "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin" (Jn 15,22). To Origen this means that Christ, in his capacity of Logos (reason), speaks to everyone's heart and teaches the discernment of good and evil[94].

Origen does not explicitly deal with the meaning of "sin" here, although in this verse *hamartia* occurs for the first time in this epistle. Instead, he first refers to the charges in the preceding chapters, and secondly he interprets the following passages from the Old Testament as an explication of the concept of sin[95]. His interpretation of Rm 3,10, "No one is righteous, no, not one", which is quoted from Ps 13,3 (LXX), may serve as an illustration of his view on sin. Origen refers to Ps 142,2 (LXX), "For in thy sight shall no living man be justified". He also observes that in the Scripture some people are called righteous. He quotes an apocryphal prophecy to Jerusalem: "Sodom has been justified more than you" (*edikaiôthè Sodoma ek sou*)[96], which he interprets in the sense that Sodom has been justified only in comparison with Jerusalem, which was even more sinful. Origen concludes that one can be righteous in comparison with others, but nobody is righteous (or: justified) in comparison with God, except for Jesus Christ[97].

Origen also applies the idea of relative righteousness to the relation between the Christians and the Gentiles. The Gentiles who do not believe in Christ and who do not know the law of God (i.e., in this case, the spiritual law), but who do lead a virtuous life, will be justified in comparison with those Christians who seem to apply themselves to the law of God and to the commandments of the gospel and who yet are involved in immorality and other vices[98].

We notice that Origen tends to relativize the wholesale accusation of iniquity, without denying that it is true before God. He is even most embarrassed by the verse: "No one does good, except one" (Rm 3,12b = Ps 13,3 LXX)[99], and wonders how it is possible that no one can be found among the Jews or the Greeks who does good. In his view it means, that no one is perfectly good, except for God[100] or the Good Shepherd[101]. But in spite of Origen's tendency to tone down the charge of sin, he maintains that essentially Paul is right. Conceiving the singular *hamartia* in a plural sense he concludes that, although not everybody is guilty of all sins, but one of this and another of that sin, it can be said that all men together are under sin and are guilty of all sins[102].

In the sections which preceded this comment on Rm 3,9ff we noted that Origen demonstrated as much as possible that the epistle to the Romans is relevant to both Jews and Gentiles. As for its universal relevance Paul's charge that all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, is clear in itself. But because of its offensive character Origen takes pains to show from the Bible and from Greek philosophy that Paul is right, although the children are exempted. His appeal to the natural law is decisive for his argumentation.

§ 11. Rm 3,19-20

In Rm 3,19-20 Paul continues: "Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held guilty before God. For no flesh will be justified in his sight by the works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin". It is rather curious that from the quotations from the Scripture (*ho nomos* in v.19), which speaks to the Jews, Paul concludes that the whole world is guilty before God. In fact, his aim is to show that the Jews also are under sin[103]. He states that the law of Moses (meant in v.20) does not lead to salvation, but just gives rise to knowledge of sin.

Reminding that in his preface to the *Commentary* he wrote that the apostle would deal with many laws, Origen warns again that Paul's use of *nomos* is confusing. He knows the explanation that in Rm 3,19 the apostle means the law of Moses, but he rejects this possibility, because this law speaks to only one people, viz. the circumcised. How could the law of Moses stop every mouth and hold the whole world guilty before God?, Origen asks. What does this law have in common with all the Gentile peoples and with the whole world? Moreover, also before Moses people like Cain and the patriarchs and Job have acknowledged their sin[104].

Origen concludes that in Rm 3,19 the law of nature is meant, of which nobody of the Jews or the Gentiles is devoid. Yet, the children are excepted, as they cannot yet discern between good and evil (according to Rm 7,9), and those who are not mentally fit are supposed to be excepted as well. Even the angels are under the natural law, but Christ himself is not, for he is the fulfilment of the law (Rm 10,4), and the law himself, *autonomos*[105]. Next, Origen specifies that Paul's charge of sin applies to those who live in the flesh and in whom reason has developed. These are under the law, whereas "the saints who God has foreknown and predestined and called and justified and glorified" (Rm 8,29-30) are a law themselves and are not under the law. Therefore their mouth will not be stopped and they will not be guilty before God, since they are not "flesh"[106].

Paul writes that "through the law comes knowledge of sin". Origen employs the Stoic definition of (natural) law: The law commands what is to be done and prohibits what one should not do[107]. So for him the phrase, that through the law comes knowledge of sin, is just a sober observation. If one comes to know the law, sin originates if one neglects what is commanded and does not avoid what is prohibited. Origen emphasizes that knowledge of sin comes through (*dia*) and not from (*ek*) the law[108]. He takes the law, and implicitly also the law of Moses, under his protection against the Marcionite and gnostic contention that the law is a bad tree that bears bad fruit[109]. He argues that the law through which comes knowledge of sin is good, just like medicine, by means of which an unobserved illness is discovered, is not bad but good[110]. By interpreting "law" as the natural law Origen avoids even more the interpretation that the law of Moses is bad. For who, apart from some gnostics, would assert that the natural law is bad[111]?

We see that Origen is concerned to explain the text in its most general sense, so that it is true for the Jews and for the Gentiles. This is warranted by his interpretation with regard to the natural law. At the same time, this interest goes hand in hand with his concern to fight the heretic exegesis.

§ 12. Rm 3,21-22

Then Paul reveals the divine solution of the problem of sin: "Now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all[112] who believe; for there is no distinction" (Rm 3,21-22). In a subtle way Paul plays with the sense of *nomos*. Salvation is offered apart from the law of Moses, although it is announced by the same law. His point is, that the condition for salvation, i.e. faith in Jesus Christ, is the same for both Jews and Gentiles, without distinction[113].

Before exposing his interpretation, Origen defends it against the reproach that he violates the sense of the text. He acknowledges that in these verses Paul seems to speak about the law of Moses, whereas Origen had interpreted *nomos* in the foregoing verses as "natural law". But referring to the heretic interpretation of v. 20, he accuses the sects of disrupting the one doctrine of faith[114].

In Origen's view these verses contain a contradiction unless one distinguishes between two different laws. To him the sequence of Paul's thought is: Through the natural law comes knowledge of sin (v.20), but at once the apostle wanted to exclude the conclusion that through this law also comes knowledge of the righteousness of God. No, the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the natural law, but it is witnessed by the law of Moses and the prophets according to the spirit[115]. Origen argues that this sort of homonymity is usual in the Scripture, as it also applies to, e.g., "harvest", "drinking", "water", and "blind" in Jn 4 and 9[116]. The distinction between the two senses of *nomos* also appears, to Origen, from Paul's use of the article. When the law of Moses is meant, the article precedes the noun: *hupo tou nomou*. When the article is left out, the natural law is meant, as in *chôris nomou*[117].

As for "the righteousness of God", Origen first interprets it in a moral sense, with reference to the teaching of Christ. To Origen, the rule that you should not do to your neighbour what you yourself dislike is an example of human righteousness. Of divine righteousness Jesus taught that one should not do it before men, and that one's left hand should not know what the right hand is doing (Mt 6,1.3). This surpasses the human righteousness, and cannot be conceived naturally; Jesus taught it without any appeal to the natural law[118]. But later on Origen identifies "the righteousness of God" with Christ, "who of God is made unto us wisdom and right-

eousness and sanctification and redemption" (I Cor 1,30). He admits that we have natural inclinations to chastity and to community and justice among men and to wisdom and courage; but we are not naturally inclined to believe that Jesus is the Christ of God. This is witnessed by the law of Moses and the prophets'[119]. In the third place Origen interprets the righteousness of God in the sense that it is given equally to all who believe, either from the Jews or from the Gentiles, without any distinction'[120]. Against the heretic separation of the Old Testament from faith in Christ he adds, that the righteousness of God is manifested neither by faith only, without the law and the prophets, nor by the law and the prophets without faith'[121]. Finally, he concludes that "the righteousness of God" implies the justification of all who believe, both Jews and Greeks, as they are cleansed from their former transgressions and made susceptible to the glory of God. This is done neither on the ground of their merits, nor because of their works; this glory is given freely'[122].

It appears that in this exposition Origen aptly underlines the equality of Jews and Gentiles'[123]. His distinction between the law of nature and the spiritual law of Moses in Rm 3,21 can be explained by his interest to uphold his interpretation of Rm 3,19-20, where he also identified the natural law. In fact, he misunderstood Paul's paradox. Yet, he sticks to the confession that the righteousness of God is given through faith in Jesus Christ, being witnessed by the Mosaic law and the prophets, and not by the natural law.

§ 13. Rm 3,27-28

After his exposition on the redemption in Jesus Christ and on God's justification of those who have faith in Jesus (Rm 3,24-26), Paul concludes: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law" (Rm 3,27-28). He means that boasting of works of the Mosaic law is meaningless, because it is not the works of this law which count for justification, but faith only. In the expressions "*nomos* of works" and "*nomos* of faith" Paul plays with the other sense of *nomos*, "principle"'[124].

Origen reminds of Paul's attention to both the Jews and the Gentiles and observes that now the apostle concludes his refutation of Jewish boasting towards the Gentiles, as justification only by faith is sufficient. To Origen this means that *sometimes* someone who only believes without having done anything already obtains justification. E.g., the penitent robber who had been crucified with Jesus (Lk 23,40-43) and the woman who, being a sinner, anointed Jesus' feet (Lk 7,36-50) have been justified only by faith (*ek monès pisteôs, sola fide*)'[125]. Origen is of the opinion that if one neglects to behave according to God's will, as if faith were sufficient for justification, the unrighteousness committed after justification abolishes the grace of God who justifies. So the justification by faith anticipates the works which will follow it,

which implies that one cannot boast of works of the law. Origen supposes that the works which are committed prior to faith, even if they seem to be good, do not justify the doer, since they are not built on the good foundation of faith. In this way all boasting of works of the law is excluded. The only thing man can boast of, Origen adds, is faith in the cross of Christ, and not even of Christian virtues like chastity or justice or piety, since these cannot be practiced perfectly anyway. Thus Jewish boasting of works of the law is excluded by the law of faith'[126].

In a final passage Origen deals with the identification of the law of faith more definitely. Surmising that Rufinus has heavily abbreviated this passage, and that a fragment of the papyrus originally belongs to the argumentation, I would suggest the following reconstruction.

Origen proposes two interpretations, of which he rejects the first one. He first considers the possibility that the law of works and the law of faith are to be interpreted as, respectively, the law of Moses and the natural law'[127], but he does not accept it'[128]. In the papyrus we read a part of the reason for this rejection. It reads: "Therefore, perhaps, it is added: 'Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also?' (Rm 3,29). For the law of God, which is more influential than the law of the letter, has been written on the hearts of men by God who is not only God of Jews but also of Gentiles. But he who does not know that boasting is excluded by the law of faith, will boast because of his ignorance, as he did not even know the word of Solomon: 'Who will boast that he has a pure heart? Or who will boldly say that he is pure from sins?'" (Prov 20,9)'[129]. By "the law of God" Origen means the natural law, which is known to the Gentiles, but which does not teach that boasting of works is meaningless. Thus Origen maintains that the Gentiles do not know the law of faith by nature. They do not by nature have an advantage above the Jews who have only the law of Moses.

In the second interpretation, of which Origen approves, he identifies the law of works as the law of the letter and the law of faith as the law of the spirit. "For the law of the letter kills and works death; but the law of the spirit of life sets free from the law of sin and death"'[130]. In this Pauline language (cf. II Cor 3,6; Rm 7,13; 8,2) Origen maintains that justifying faith is taught by the law of Moses, not in its literal, but in its spiritual interpretation.

§ 14. Rm 3,29-30

Next, Paul reiterates the point of the equality of Jews and Greeks, although the latter are called Gentiles here: "Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one; and he will justify the circumcision (circumcised) on the ground of faith and the uncircumcision (uncircumcised) through faith" (Rm 3,29-30)'[131].

In his interpretation of the preceding chapters Origen had

sufficiently demonstrated the equality of Jews and Gentiles, sometimes by referring precisely to Rm 3,29[132], so that it was not necessary anymore to deal with his understanding of this verse extensively. But the testimony to the oneness of God and the equality of Jews and Gentiles induced him to attack a gnostic view upon God and mankind. We learn that the allegorical interpretation of "Jew" and "circumcision" as "the inward Jew" and "spiritual circumcision" (Rm 2,29), which was favorite to Origen himself, was also in use with the gnostics (probably the Valentinians are meant[133]).

As to Rm 3,29-30, Origen sticks to the literal meaning of "Jew" and "circumcision", and he demonstrates that if one interprets it allegorically, the text is senseless to the heretic system. He argues: If by "Jews" and "circumcision" the inward Jews, i.e. the pneumatics, and spiritual circumcision are meant, then the uncircumcised Gentiles are the psychics. But if here God is the one whom they (the gnostics) call the Ungenerated[134], how could he be also the God of the psychics who do not know him? And if the demiurge is meant, how could he be also the God of the pneumatics[135]? How could the good God justify equally the pneumatics and the psychics? Origen concludes that to these gnostics this text contains an inextricable knot. To him, his own interpretation is evident and easy: The circumcision is for those who believed from the Jews, and the uncircumcision is for those who have been called to faith from the Gentiles. For one and the same God justifies the believers from both peoples, not because of the privilege of circumcision or uncircumcision, but only because of their faith (*solius fidei contemplatione*)[136].

Origen seems to give an affirmative answer to the question whether Jewish Christians who continue to live according to the law of Moses are also justified by faith. The only sentence of the discussion of this question which has been preserved reads: "In this way he (Paul) seems to demonstrate that, provided they believe in Jesus, both circumcised and uncircumcised are saved, the former when they still observe the commandments of the law of Moses as far as possible, the latter when they live according to the liberty of Christ"[137].

Next, Origen distinguishes between justification of the circumcised, which is from (*ek*, translated as: on the ground of) faith and justification of the uncircumcised, which is through (*dia*) faith[138]. Origen observes that something which comes *from* something else is more closely related to it than something being *through* something else. Therefore, he values justification *from* faith higher than justification *through* faith. And since circumcision is superior to uncircumcision, the circumcised are justified *from* faith[139] and the uncircumcised *through* faith[140].

Yet, having made this distinction, Origen immediately relativizes it. As for those who are justified *from* faith, he asks through which (*per quem, di' hou*) they are justified. As for those who are justified *through* faith, he asks from which (*ex quo, ex hou*) they are justified. He answers that those who are justified *from* faith start with faith and are perfected by performing good works. Those

who are justified *through* faith start with good works and receive ultimate perfection through faith. Thus both ways of justification belong together and are perfected by each other[141]. It is clear that Origen felt obliged to explain the difference between *ek pisteôs* and *dia tès pisteôs*. But his interest in the equality of circumcised and uncircumcised believers brought about this ingenious conclusion, in which he tends to harmonize the difference between Jews and Gentiles.

§ 15. Rm 3,31

As a conclusion of Rm 3,21-31 Paul opposes an erroneous deduction from his view on the importance of faith: "Do we then overthrow the law through faith? By no means! Rather we uphold the law" (Rm 3,31). It is disputed whether the assertion that "we uphold the law" is elaborated in the midrash on Abraham in Rm 4, as a proof that justification by faith also occurs in the Pentateuch[142], or whether Paul announces his view that Christians indeed keep the law, as they live in the Spirit (Rm 8,4)[143]. Sanders may be right that "the rhetorical question and answer do not permit 'the law' in v.31 itself to be defined and nuanced"[144].

Origen observes that, as for receiving justification Paul seems to reduce everything to faith, he replied to the possible objection that he overthrew the law of Moses. Origen concludes from Jesus' saying that Moses wrote about him (Jn 5,46) that one who does not believe in Christ overthrows the law, whereas one who does believe in him upholds the law. Origen reproaches Marcion and the Ebionites[145] for overthrowing the law. He adds that, moreover, everyone who believes in Christ and does well upholds the law of God, whereas one who seems to believe in Christ and leads a sinful life overthrows the law[146]. So to Origen "upholding the law" applies to everyone who leads a holy life and soundly believes the Mosaic law, especially in its spiritual sense[147].

§ 16. Rm 4,9-12

By considering Abraham's state of circumcision or uncircumcision, Paul returns to his theme of the equality of the Jews and the Gentiles; referring to the blessing of forgiveness (Rm 4,6-8), he continues: "Does this blessing then apply to the circumcision, or also to the uncircumcision? For we say: Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it reckoned (to him)? When he was circumcised or when he was uncircumcised? It was not when he was circumcised, but when he was uncircumcised. And he received as a sign circumcision[148], as a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who, in a state of uncircumcision, believe, so that righteousness is reckoned to them[149], and the father of the circumcision, for those who not only belong to the circumcision but also walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while he

was uncircumcised" (Rm 4,9-12)[150].

Origen comments that if Abraham received justification on the ground of his faith when he was still uncircumcised, this implies that everyone who believes in God can be justified by faith, even if he is uncircumcised. So Abraham is called the father both of all uncircumcised believers and of those who are circumcised according to the flesh[151].

Next, he exposes the meaning of sign (*sèmeion*) and seal (*sfragis*). Because of some divergence between the Greek and Latin sources it is preferable to deal with them separately.

In the Greek text we read that the sign of circumcision stands for a seal, which keeps secret the mystery of those who are justified by faith. According to this mystery Israel, which by circumcision belongs to Abraham after his act of faith, is a people different from his children who will be justified by faith in a state of uncircumcision. Origen refers to Rm 11,25-26: "When the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, then all Israel will be saved"[152]. His comment reads, that the seal has been kept intact as long as the uncircumcised believers had not yet come. But since the people of the uncircumcised, who have been justified on the ground of faith, have come (*èlthen*), the seal and sign will be broken (*luthèsetai*), as the fulfilment of the time until which the seal had to be kept intact is at hand (*enstantos tou plèrômatos tou chronou* ...). This implies that to someone who wants to receive this seal now it is said: "If you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you" (Gal 5,2)[153]. It may be concluded that according to the Greek text Origen holds that the seal of the mystery of the Gentiles who are justified by faith is being broken since the Gentiles are coming in[154].

In Rufinus' version we read that the sign of circumcision points to the spiritual circumcision of the heart, whereas the seal points to the righteousness of faith which Abraham deserved when he was still uncircumcised, and to the fact, apparently as a consequence of his faith, that he would be the father of a multitude of nations. This seal is to be broken when the fullness of the Gentiles will have come in and all Israel shall be saved. For then through faith Abraham will be the father, not only of the Gentiles, but also of the circumcised. It is specified that the mysteries which were hidden in the law even to the patriarchs had to be revealed to the believers from the Gentiles by means of signs, whereas they had to be covered and sealed to the circumcised who would not believe. This seal will be broken when, in the last days, after the fullness of Gentiles will have come in, all Israel will be saved. Therefore Abraham is first justified by faith when he was still uncircumcised, and afterwards he has been circumcised[155].

So Rufinus seems to situate the coming of the fullness of the Gentiles and the breaking of the seal in the future, whereas in the Greek texts Origen seems to put the emphasis more on the proximity of this process. Consequently Rufinus renders in the future tense (but Origen may have aimed at the present situation of the church) that Abraham will first be the father of the multitude of Gentile nations and after that of those who will believe from the circumcised. Rufinus adds that those who are born of Abraham according to the flesh cannot be called children of Abraham, if they do not have the faith and the works of Abraham (Cf. Jn 8,39)[156].

Although it appears that to Origen the Gentile believers precede the Jews in being children of Abraham, his interest is really to demonstrate the equality of Jews and Gentiles: he concludes that the apostle "declares clearly that the requirement to both peoples does not consist of a carnal origin, but of the distinguishing mark of faith"[157].

§ 17. Rm 4,13

Paul continues: "For it was not through the law that the promise was made to Abraham or to his descendants, that he should be the heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith" (Rm 4,13). The sense of *dia* in *dia nomou* could be chronological, denoting attendant circumstances (the Mosaic law had not yet been given when Abraham was justified by faith), or instrumental (the righteousness of faith can not be appropriated by means of the law)[158].

Origen gives both senses of *dia nomou*. First he observes that the apostle seems to speak about the law of Moses, as the promise that the Lord would show a land to Abraham and that all the families of the earth would be blessed in him (Gen 12,1-3) was given prior to the legislation of Moses. Next, Origen also states that through the observance of the law one only escapes from punishment, whereas faith brings about the hope of the promise[159].

In the context of his second interpretation of *dia* Origen also offers an alternative interpretation of *nomou*. He refers to his expositions on the natural law, and observes that if Paul is understood to speak about the natural law, this would not be contrary to the above-mentioned reasoning. For although the law of nature gives testimony to good and evil, it can not be equated with the law of faith, through which Abraham believed God and was worthy to receive justification[160].

Thus Origen repeats that the natural law does not teach the righteousness of faith[161]. It is interesting that Philo paid attention to Abraham as a man who lived according to nature and so was a law himself[162]. In general Origen undoubtedly agrees with this[163]. But Philo could say that Abraham's faith, which was reckoned to him as righteousness, was also according to nature[164], and on this point Origen disagrees. He clearly distinguishes the *nomos* of faith, through which one is justified, from the law of nature.

§ 18. Rm 4,14-15

In support of the foregoing verse, and in reaction to the Jewish claim to the inheritance on the ground of their fulfilment of the law, Paul continues: "For if it is the adherents of the law who are heirs, then faith has been rendered vain and the promise annulled.

For the law works wrath, but where there is no law, there is no transgression" (Rm 4,14-15). In v.15 he means that the Mosaic law works divine wrath because it provokes transgression; so that, inversely, where there is no law, there is no transgression. The missing link of the provocation of transgression appears from Rm 3,20b, "Through the law comes knowledge of sin", from Rm 5,20a, "Law came in, to increase the trespass", and from the more comprehensive discussion of the effect of the Mosaic law in Rm 7[165].

A comparison of Rufinus' version of the comment on Rm 4,14-15 with the Greek texts demonstrates that Rufinus has drastically rearranged and abridged the original exposition. Yet, Chadwick, who has examined the comment on these verses in Greek and in Latin, concluded that "so far as general fidelity is concerned, Rufinus emerges well from the scrutiny. (...) The voice is the voice of Origen, even though the hands are the hands of Rufinus"[166].

As in his interpretation of Rm 4,13, Origen declares that "law" in Rm 4,14 can refer both to the Mosaic and to the natural law[167]. He observes that if the inheritance is given on the ground of the law of Moses, the sentence that Abraham acquired it on the ground of faith would be devoid of sense; and if the natural law could be sufficient for faith, it would have been superfluous that it is said to Abraham: "Go from your country and your kindred..." etc. (Gen 12,1), since he could have kept the natural law at home. But as the natural law is not sufficient, he is commanded to follow the law of faith[168]. It is interesting that to Philo Abraham's departure meant allegorically that he was ready to follow the natural law[169].

Next, Origen argues that being under the law of Moses is not the same as being under the law of faith[170]. Also prior to Moses men like Enoch, Noah and the patriarchs were justified. The law of Moses was given in order to stop the sins of those who were not strong enough to be justified without the written legislation, and in order to save many weak people from idolatry by means of the sacrifices and all the ceremonies of the law[171].

For the interpretation of Rm 4,15 Origen considers the question, which law works wrath, so that without this law there is no transgression. He refutes the interpretation of the heretics, who say that it is the law of Moses which works wrath so that where this law is absent there is no transgression. Against these gnostics[172] he reasons: If where there is a law there is also transgression of the law, then where there is faith there is also transgression of faith. But it is absurd to say that faith is the cause of its transgression, and that without faith one would not be a transgressor of faith. Likewise, it is absurd to suppose that there is transgression of the law because one has taken the observance of the law upon one. Moreover, Origen continues, if there is no transgression where the law of Moses does not exist, this would imply that all who have sinned before Moses (e.g. Cain, those who drowned in the flood, the Sodomites, Adam and Eve) have, in fact, not committed any transgression and were neither culpable nor punished[173].

Yet, Origen does not completely rule out the interpretation with regard to the law of Moses. He observes that as far as the law of

Moses works wrath, it is not the wrath of the day of judgment which is meant, but the wrath which belongs to the punishments which are described in it, like lapidation or burning to death[174].

Next, Origen quotes Rm 3,19a, "Whatever the law speaks it speaks to those who are under the law"[175]. One may infer that he wants to say that one is bound to the law under which one lives; which law then provokes wrath and transgression?

Origen considers the possibility whether the law of faith, which Paul also calls the law of God, can be meant. According to a catena extract the answer seems to be affirmative, but I suppose that this impression is due to the incompleteness of the text. The reference to this law probably serves merely as an introduction of the other law according to Rm 7,22-23: Paul delights in the law of God after the inward man, but there is another law in his members which fights against the law of his mind (the law of God). To Origen, this "law in the members" could be the law which works wrath and without which there is no transgression. He adds that it also applies to Rm 4,14: For those who adhere to this law are definitely no heirs[176].

As to Rm 4,15b Origen observes that the apostle did not say: Where there is a law, there is also transgression, but: "Where there is no law, there is no transgression". He clarifies that transgression cannot exist if there is no law; but that a law can exist without transgression. To Origen this implies that even if one interprets v.15b with regard to the law of Moses, one must admit that not all who lived under it continually transgressed it. He refers to the prophets and all the righteous, but he also admits that it may be right that these did not live under the law, but under faith, since "the law is not laid down for the righteous but for the lawless and disobedient", etc. (I Tim 1,9-10)[177].

Origen also asks, according to the Latin version, whether the Gentiles are not better off than those who have the law of Moses, as about the former it is written that, although they have not the law, they do the law by nature and are a law to themselves (Rm 2,14-15). For if they fulfil the law without fear, they should be preferred to the Jews[178]. But according to a fragment of the papyrus Origen also considers the possibility that it is the law of nature which has worked wrath at people like Cain, those who were drowned in the flood, and the Sodomites. He reasons that they were transgressors, so they had a law, which must have been the natural law, not written on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts (II Cor 3,3)[179]. This interpretation seems to be a parallel to Origen's concession that even the law of Moses works wrath, yet not the wrath on the day of judgment, but the punishments in lifetime.

Fortunately Rufinus has preserved a conclusion from the overwhelming amount of considerations which he renders. It reads that whether the law of Moses or the law in our members is understood to work wrath, those who adhere to them cannot be heirs, but only those who adhere to the law of faith, i.e. of that faith by which Abraham has been justified[180]. From the papyrus[181] we may infer that also the law of nature could work wrath, and we know that to

Origen this law is not sufficient for justification either.

From these expositions one may conclude: (a) Origen refutes the gnostic disparagement of the law of Moses. (b) He interprets the text as broadly as possible: with regard to the Jews who know the law of Moses and to those who only know the law by nature, whereas his trump card, the law in the members, is common to all people. (c) He maintains that one can receive justification only by the *nomos* of faith.

§ 19. Rm 4,16-17

In view of the equality of Jews and Gentiles Paul continues: "That is why it depends on faith, in order that it may be according to grace, so that the promise may be sure for all the descendants - not only for the adherents of the law, but also for the adherents of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written: 'I have made you father of many nations' - before God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not into being" (Rm 4,16-17)[182]. It is disputed whether "the adherents of the law" are the Jews as such, like in v.14[183], or the Jewish Christians[184], or both[185]. We will see that Origen's interpretation is still different from these.

Origen makes mention of a tradition which he identifies as coming from the apocrypha, that Abraham believed in God on account of natural notions (*apo fusikôn ennoiôn*), but he says that it is disputed (*antilegetai*)[186]. Origen refutes this view by observing that faith is not something which man has to offer to God, by which he can deserve the grace of God; on the contrary, faith itself is a divine grace[187]. - As for the reference to the natural interpretation of Abraham's faith, Origen probably has in mind the book of Jubilees[188]. Moreover, we noted that Philo wrote explicitly that Abraham's faith was according to nature[189].

Next, Origen makes clear that "faith" and "grace" through which the promise is sure, are meant in opposition to "law", as the written law is something external, whereas the things which depend on faith and grace are written in one's heart by the Spirit of God[190].

As for "all the descendants, not only the adherents of the law, but also the adherents of faith", Origen observes that those who descend from Abraham through faith are superior to those who descend from him carnally, since Abraham is not justified on the ground of the flesh, but by faith. Otherwise, even the posterity of Ishmael and of Keturah would receive the promises. This would be unsatisfactory, and therefore only the posterity by the law and by faith (*sola legis ac fidei posteritas*) is mentioned[191].

Yet, in Paul's statement that the promise is sure, "not only for the adherents of the law, but also for the adherents of faith", Origen perceives a difficulty. To him, it is impossible to understand these as two different groups, for this would contradict the foregoing texts about justification by faith apart from the works of the law (Rm 3,28), and about faith being vain if the adherents

of the law are heirs (Rm 4,14). His solution is, that Paul has in mind the natural law, and that not two groups are meant, but one. Thus, the promise is sure, not for those who adhere only to the natural law, but even for those who add the faith of Abraham to the natural law. This implies that the observance of the natural law is not sufficient for justification, for this is reckoned by faith[192]. To Origen, this condition of faith brings about that Abraham is not called "the father of all" but "the father of *us* all", which excludes the adherents of the law and points to the Christians from the Gentiles and the Jews. He wonders how the circumcised can defend that Abraham is the father of them only[193].

Origen's interest in the relation between the Jews and the Gentiles appears again in his interpretation of the phrase "who calls the things that are not into being". Those who are far from God and have no share in him "are not", Origen explains, "like we, Gentiles, were before we came to the knowledge of the divine truth". With reference to the vocation of the Corinthians, as described in I Cor 1,26-29, he maintains that God chose what is foolish in the world, i.e. the Gentiles, to shame the wise, i.e. "undoubtedly" the Jews. Thus God chose the things that are not, i.e. the Gentiles, to bring to nothing the things that are, i.e. the Jews who were under the law but did not fulfil it[194].

§ 20. Conclusion of Rm 1-4 and the function of Rm 5-6

In his comment on the last verses of Rm 4 Origen does not, at least according to the extant sources, deal explicitly with the theme of the diversity of laws, nor with the relation between the Gentiles and the Jews. Only in a retrospect on the foregoing chapters these themes recur, as Rufinus renders: "Up to here the discourse was about the sort of faith of Abraham, which is reckoned as righteousness, about the observance of the different laws and about the difference between uncircumcision (the uncircumcised) and circumcision (the circumcised). Let us see now in which way those who have been justified on the ground of faith and not on the ground of works are instructed by the apostle"[195]. From this recapitulation we could infer that to Origen an important divisional break within this epistle falls between chapters 4 and 5[196]. His view on the next chapters within the structure of the epistle appears from a similar retrospect prior to the exposition of Rm 7, the chapter on the effect of the Mosaic law. There Origen surveys the previous chapters in this way: "In the above Paul extensively treated of faith and law, and he showed that faith has always to be preferred, namely faith of those who believe 'in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the death' (Rm 4,25). After that he added how their conversion had to take shape, and he treated of the sin of Adam and of the righteousness of Christ; but he also dealt with slavery and liberty through which one either serves righteousness and is free from sin, or one serves sin and is devoid of righteousness. Now then, after a fairly extensive excursus, he returns to the discussion of the law and Christ"[197]. So it is clear that to Origen

the contents of Rm 5-6 is a digression from the main theme of the epistle, which is the relation between law and faith in Christ.

§ 21. Rm 5,1-11

Origen's exposition of Rm 5,1-11 hardly sheds any new light on the theme of this investigation[198]. Only in his interpretation of Christ's death for the ungodly and of the phrase, that one will hardly die for a righteous man (Rm 5,6f), a remarkable observation occurs. Exceptionally Origen employs the expression "law of nature" not in its moral sense, as he does usually, but in its physical sense[199]; in the latter sense he also uses the plural. Origen observes that, on the ground of their love for Christ, Christians often offer themselves for martyrdom. He continues that normally, out of love for life, one hardly accepts one's death patiently, even if the cause of death is just. "And indeed the cause of death seems to be just, when it is impelled by the law of nature; but even though it is just because of one's mortal state, yet the mind hardly accepts to yield to the laws of nature"[200]. It appears that Origen has not explicitly distinguished between the different senses of "law of nature".

Again Origen offers a survey of the contents in order to connect the preceding with the following chapters[201]: "After Paul has explained thoroughly the difference between faith and law and between those who are justified by faith and those who cannot by the law hope for the promises that were made to the fathers, and after having manifested the secrets of the mystery that 'while we were enemies to God, we are reconciled by the death of his Son' (Rm 5,10)[202], he now continues to expose also the reasons why we were enemies or why the death of the Son of God was necessary for this reconciliation; so that, by considering how much Jesus is superior to us, yes, how much he suffered for us, we might have a deeper faith in him and unseparable love"[203]. Seeing that in this survey, in which the contents of Rm 5,1-11 is included, Origen briefly repeats his retrospect on the foregoing chapters, we might conclude that he is aware that Rm 5,1-11 is not only the first section of the excursus, as he looks upon Rm 5-6[204], but also represents a transition between Rm 1-4 and the next chapters.

§ 22. Rm 5,12-14.18

According to Origen's text the apostle continues: "Therefore, as through one man sin came into the world and death through sin, and so death came to all men because all have sinned - for sin was in the world before there was law, but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses over those who have sinned in the same way as by the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come / of what is to come. (...) Then as through one man's trespass there was condemnation for all, so also through one man's righteousness there is justification of

life for all men" (Rm 5,12-14.18)[205]. In these verses, as in the whole section of Rm 5,12-21, the subject is no longer Jew or Gentile, but the one figure of Adam, who represents all men[206]. Although not all of Origen's considerations on these verses are directly connected with our theme of the diversity of laws, it is, because of the coherence of his exposition, inevitable to discuss most of it.

Modern exegetes observe that the protasis in Rm 5,12 does not have an apodosis, as Paul breaks off his construction in order to give an explanation of what he has said in the second part of the protasis. In v.18 the protasis is repeated, and there the apodosis follows immediately[207]. This is recognized by Origen too. He observes that Paul did not openly add an apodosis like: "so also life came to all men through Christ", since this could cause laxity to the hearers. Yet, Origen knows that the idea of v.12 is completed in v.15 and vv.18-19[208]. It is remarkable that, because of the intricacy of this passage, Origen tells his parable of the faithful and wise servant, who has been initiated into the mysteries of the king, right here[209].

Concerning Rm 5,12a, how "through one man sin came into the world and death through sin", Origen observes that Eve had sinned prior to Adam. He asks, why it is not said that through one *woman* sin came into the world, whereas in fact sin had started with the devil. His answer is, that the apostle holds to the order of nature; the lineage of mankind is derived from man, not from woman, as the apostle writes: "For man is not from woman, but woman from man", and: "As woman is from man, so man is - not *from* but - *through* woman" (I Cor 11,8.12)[210].

Origen derives another reason, why death through sin is due to Adam, from the text that Levi was still in the loins of his father Abraham when the latter paid tithes to Melchizedek (Hebr 7,10-11). He reasons that if Levi, who was born in the fourth generation after Abraham, is said to be in the loins of Abraham, the more all men who are and have been born in this world were in the loins of Adam when he was still in paradise; and that all men have been expelled from paradise with him or in him when he himself was driven away from it. As a consequence death which came from sin came also to those who were in his loins[211].

A similar section occurs in Origen's comment on Rm 5,18a, "As through one man's trespass there was condemnation for all...". Because of its affinity with the foregoing passage, it is discussed in this context. It reads: "The Lord God expelled Adam from paradise and planted him in this earth, in contradistinction to the paradise with its delicacies. This was the condemnation of his sin, which without doubt has extended to all men. For all have been set in this place of humiliation, this valley of tears, whether because all who are born from Adam were in his loins and were banished with him, or because each one has been thrust out of paradise in some other way, ineffable and known to God alone, and has undergone condemnation"[212]. It appears that the second way of being thrust out of paradise points to a personal fall of each man. In the conclusions to be drawn from this section it will be demon-

strated that here Origen alludes to the fall of the preexistent soul.

Origen also applies "through one man" in Rm 5,12a to man in general. He maintains that about one who is still "in the world" and "earthly" and who bears the image of the earthly Adam instead of being transformed to the image of God, it is said that through him sin came into the world and death through sin. But those who through or with Christ have died to the world, Origen continues, are free from death and sin, because they have risen with Christ and are citizens of heaven. Thus the story of the earthly Adam is true for each man who lives according to the flesh, whereas one who turns to the Lord is a last Adam who becomes a life-giving spirit (I Cor 15,45-49)[213].

To Origen, the "world" into which sin has come, may be interpreted in different ways. It is the earth on which men live; yet, he considers whether sin also came into other places, e.g. the heavenly places where are the hosts of wickedness (Eph 6,12)[214]. Allegorically "world" means earthly life which is subject to death, and to which the saints have been crucified. Origen explains "death" as the death of the soul that sins, of which the death of the body is the shadow that follows it[215].

As to Rm 5,12b, "and so death came to all men because (*ef' hôi, in quo*) all have sinned, Origen takes pains to argue that it is true indeed that all men have sinned. He refers to Rm 3,23, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God", and asserts that sin was also found with Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah and Abraham, even with all the saints; only when death came to Jesus, it was repelled and destroyed, as he was life[216].

Whereas Origen interpreted "world" in v.12a allegorically as earthly life, he explains "men" in v.12b as those who start to realize that they have been made to the image of God. He observes that sin is said to have *come into* (*eisèlthen*) the world, which implies that it has not left it; but sin is said to have *come through* (*dièlthen*) men, which means to him that it has been driven away by penance and conversion[217]. Thus Origen considerably modifies Paul's *absoluta sententia*, as it is called in Rufinus' version[218].

If we may trust Rufinus' version Origen does not pay attention to the sense of *ef' hôi*, which in the Latin translation *in quo* has been related to the "one man", Adam, and so to the doctrine of original sin[219]. It is not my intention to deal with Origen's view on the origin of sin extensively, but a few remarks about the interpretation of Rm 5,12 in this respect are not out of place.

Rufinus renders *ef' hôi* normally as *in quo*, once as *in eo in quo*[220]. Since in the comment on Rm 5,12b there is no reference to Adam at all, it is clear that Origen understood it as a causal conjunction[221]. However, it is striking that in his comment on Rm 5,12a Origen seems to represent the doctrine of original sin, as he writes that all men were in the loins of Adam when he was in paradise, so that all men have been driven away from it with him or in him, and death came to them too[222]. But in fact, Origen only wanted to solve the problem why Paul wrote "through one man" and not

"through one woman". He does not say expressly that all men have *sinned in Adam*, but only that they are liable to death because of Adam's sin. Instead of introducing a doctrine of original sin he argues that all men, even the saints, have sinned *personally*[223].

We turn to Rm 5,13, a statement about the relation between sin and law, by which Paul interrupts the sentence he started in Rm 5,12: "For sin was in the world before there was law (*achri ... nomou*), but sin is not imputed where there is no law". Nowadays, exegetes tend to relativize the sense of *ouk ellogeitai*, and interpret it as if, before the law of Moses was given, sin was not imputed in the same way as after this legislation[224]. Sanders calls this attempt to connect universal sin with the law awkward and inconsistent[225].

Origen seems to be most embarrassed by the first part of the verse. In his introductory and literal interpretation he explains *achri* in the inclusive sense of "as long as". Thus Paul would mean: As long as the law was in force, i.e. until Christ came to take away the sin of the world, sin was in the world. It appears that here Origen understands "law" as the law of Moses[226]. As to Rm 5,13b, Rufinus first renders only one sentence: "It is obvious that sin cannot be imputed where there is no law which accuses the sinner"[227].

When exposing the deeper sense[228], Origen first rejects the interpretation that *achri ... nomou* means "until the law of Moses was given", as if sin is not imputed where this law is absent. He argues that sin has been imputed to Cain, Lamech, those who were drowned in the flood and the Sodomites. For his interpretation Origen needs a supplement from Rm 7,8-9: "for without law sin is dead; I was once alive without law"[229]. From Rm 7,8 he adds the adjective "dead" to Rm 5,13a, which results in this text: "For before the law sin was dead in the world[230], but sin is not imputed where there is no law". To Origen, this law is the natural law. Right here, where his interpretation may seem to be unsatisfactory, he asserts that the natural law is the most frequent of all the different laws dealt with in this epistle[231]. It is remarkable that, as distinct from the previous and literal interpretation, *achri* now retains its normal sense of "before", "until"[232].

The text as reconstructed by Origen means that when someone starts to be susceptible to reason and learns the discernment between righteous and unrighteous, as taught by the natural law, then sin which was first regarded as dead in him, is said to revive (cf. Rm 7,9b). He argues that, for example, a child of four or five, who strikes or curses his father or his mother, should be put to death according to the Scripture (cf. Ex 21,15.17). But since the natural law, which teaches that one should not injure one's father or mother, is not yet in him, and he is not aware of his transgression, sin is dead in him, which means that it is not imputed to him[233]. Origen repeats his interpretation of Rm 7,9a, which reads that Paul lived without the natural law when he was not yet susceptible to reason. To Origen, this is confirmed by Rm 7,9b: "for when the commandment - of the natural law - came, sin revived and I died"; which means that he died because sin was

imputed to him[234].

Origen also asks why Paul wrote that "sin was *in the world*" and not *in men*. The problem is, that e.g. animals and trees also belong to the world, whereas one cannot believe that there is sin in them. For the answer he distinguishes between "world" and "men" in a similar way as in his comment on Rm 5,12[235]. He supposes that to the apostle "men" are those who are susceptible to reason and obey the natural laws, whereas those who have not yet attained the age of reason are called "world"; they are part of the world, and have not yet developed the image of God in them[236].

As a conclusion of his explanation of Rm 5,13 Origen returns to the rejected interpretation with regard to the Mosaic law. He reasons that if sin was not imputed where this law is absent, this would imply that the devil and his angels are acquited from their disobedience. As they have been condemned, this judgment must have taken place on account of the natural law. To Origen, this consideration is once again an argument in favour of his own interpretation[237].

Next, he offers an extensive comment on Rm 5,14: "Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses (*mechri Môuseôs*) over those who have sinned in the same way as by the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come / of what is to come (*tou mellontos*)". In his introductory and literal interpretation he explains *mechri Môuseôs* in the same way as *achri ... nomou* in v.13; it would mean "as long as the law remained in force"[238].

When Origen reaches Rm 5,14 in his deeper and more comprehensive comment, he gives a narration about the reign of death[239]. He represents death as a tyrant who wanted to invade the reign of a legitimate king. The tyrant occupied the entrances since the watchman let him pass[240], and he tried to win the minds of all men, in which he succeeded for the most part. Therefore a commander was sent, Moses, who had to teach the laws of the true king. He managed to convert one nation, which one could join if one wanted to. Thanks to the sacrifices sin was forgiven and thus mankind started to be liberated from sin and death to a certain extent. The tyrant reigned from Adam to Moses, yet not over all, but over those who sinned in the same way as by the transgression of Adam. For sin *came through* (*dièlthen*) the righteous, who were just slightly contaminated by it[241], but it *reigned* over those who submitted themselves totally to it. Death reigned "to Moses", which means: until the law, for through the law purification of sins started to come to light, and the tyrant was resisted to a certain extent. But since the strength of the law gave way, the prophets were sent, and seeing that the tyrant was too strong to them too, they called to God. Therefore Jesus Christ the Son of God came, and because the law was weak through the flesh, God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin he condemned sin in the flesh (Rm 8,3). Christ reconciled the world with God (II Cor 5,19) and triumphed over the tyrant (Col 2,15)[242].

In correspondence with the most positive valuation of the law of Moses in this narration, Origen seems to understand the expression "from Adam to Moses" as "until the law of Moses", as if death reigned until the law of Moses was given. But in fact, he says that the reign of death was resisted by the law of Moses only to a certain extent, and for that reason he subjoins his initial explanation[243]. He puts "from Adam to Moses" on a par with "until the coming of Christ", and reminds that the law of Moses was in force until John the Baptist; since then Jesus had started to preach the kingdom of God (Lk 16,16)[244].

As for the explanation of "those who have sinned in the same way as by the transgression of Adam" Origen offers two possibilities. First, he suggests that there might have been some people who, before the time when men were kept under the law as under a tutor (Gal 3,23-24), have experienced something like Adam had in paradise, so that they have touched the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, were ashamed about their nakedness, and have fallen from paradise[245]. Origen calls this interpretation the mysterious one (*occultatum ... sacramentum*)[246]. The reasons why it must refer to the fall of a certain category of the preexistent souls, who had sinned in the same way as Adam, are given in the conclusions from this section. This passage can be related to the above-mentioned observation about the mysterious way in which each man may have fallen away from paradise personally[247].

In the second place Origen gives a more simple explanation. It reads that "those who have sinned in the same way as by the transgression of Adam" may be those who are born of Adam, and have the same way of transgressing within them, not only by descent but also by instruction. For children learn to sin from their parents. Having grown adult, one can continue in the way of his fathers or proceed in the way of the Lord God. For example, Abel is said to have brought an offering only "after some time" (Gen 4,3-4), which means that in the first time of his life he clung to the sinful instruction of his father. But when he grew amenable to reason and turned to God thanks to the instigation of the natural law, then he brought his offering[248]. We note that according to this interpretation sin is not so much inherited, as it is learned by imitation; therefore one can also unlearn it.

Origen expands on this interpretation in his comment on Rm 5,15-16; it is suitable to insert here an outline and a discussion of the relevant passage. Origen repeats that parents teach their children to sin, so that children are urged to sin not so much by nature as because of instruction. If someone turns away from God and starts to worship idols, it is evident that he will teach his sons to do the same. He does so in conformity with Adam; in him "death reigns from Adam", which means: from birth, until the time of the law, when he learns to discern between good and evil, and can become susceptible to the grace of Christ. Then he leaves behind Adam who either generated or instructed him to death, and he follows Christ, who both instructs and generates him unto life. For Christ gives a different instruction and regeneration[249]. It is clear that Origen alludes to Rm 5,14a, "death reigned from Adam to Moses". Allegorically, he applies this period to man, who is born

and brought up as a sinner, until he comes to know the law, which appears to be the natural law. This aspect of the allegory corresponds with the example of Abel and reminds of the interpretation of Rm 5,13 in view of the natural law[250].

We return to the exposition of Rm 5,14, where Origen also comments on the longer text: "Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses *even* over those who have *not* sinned in the same way as by the transgression of Adam"[251]. He explains the reign of death as Hades in which even the souls of the Old Testament saints were kept, even though they had not died because of the law of sin but because of the law of death (*moriendi lege*)[252]. Therefore Christ has descended to Hades in order to set them free. Then Origen continues his narration of the tyrant. The enemy, whose reign has been put to an end by Christ, has to be destroyed himself as yet: "the last enemy to be destroyed is death" (I Cor 15,26). His reign has been destroyed, but he still goes round as a brigand. Hence, Origen concludes, the apostle called: "Let not sin therefore *reign* in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions" (Rm 6,12)[253]. I observe that the saints of the Old Testament are supposed to be those, who have not sinned in the same way as Adam, and that "from Adam to Moses" means from Adam until Christ.

To Origen, the purport of the last part of Rm 5,14, *hos estin tupos tou mellontos*, seems to be ambiguous. In the beginning of his exposition of Rm 5,12-14 he sketches Adam as the opposite type of Christ, who is the new Adam, through whom life came to the world and justification to all men[254]. But in the end of his exposition Origen asks whether *tou mellontos* is seen from the time of the apostle - in that case Adam would be a type of the age to come -, or from the time of Adam himself - so that he could also be the type of Christ, which corresponds with the initial interpretation. Origen prefers the eschatological interpretation. Now he describes the purport of the phrase as follows: "As in this age death reigned through one Adam, and all mankind grew mortal, thus in the age to come life will reign through Christ, and all mankind will be endowed with immortality"[255]. However, in his comment on Rm 5,15-16 immediately after that, Origen plainly refers to Adam as a type of Christ again[256].

From the foregoing expositions conclusions are drawn only with respect to the theme of this investigation, the diversity of laws. Therefore we will mainly pay attention to Rm 5,13: "For sin was in the world before there was *law*, but sin is not imputed where there is no *law*", and to the expression "from Adam to *Moses*" in v.14.

Origen first explains *achri nomou* in v.13 as: "as long as the law of Moses was in force"[257]. Here he understands *achri* in its inclusive sense. Later on, when he deals with the deeper sense of the passage, he rejects the explanation of v.13 in relation to the law of Moses, because in that case sin would not have been imputed to those who lived prior to Moses[258]. This implies that, in the sense which Origen refutes, *achri nomou* would mean "before the law of Moses", so that *achri* would be exclusive. Instead, Origen prefers his interpretation with regard to the natural law. Thus *achri nomou* means "before the natural law", and refers to

each man's childhood, which is the period before one has learned to discern between good and evil and in which sin is dead, because one did not yet know the natural law[259]. It may be inferred that Origen prefers this interpretation because it has reference to all men personally.

As to the historical sense of the expression *apo Adam mechri Môuseôs*, Origen seems to suggest once that it means "until the law of Moses was given"[260], as if *mechri* was used in its exclusive sense; but in reality he explains it as "until the coming of Christ", so that *mechri* is understood in its inclusive sense[261]. Allegorically, however, he understands the expression as "from Adam until Moses" (thus *mechri* is exclusive), which he explains as the period of one's life in which one does not yet accept the natural law or the doctrine of Christ[262].

There is still one allusion to the expression "until Moses" which does not fit in with these interpretations. It occurs in the mysterious interpretation of "those who have sinned in the same way as by the transgression of Adam", where Origen suggests that some people have experienced something like a mysterious fall from paradise "before the time when men were kept under the law as under a tutor" (Gal 3,23-24)[263].

It is unthinkable that Origen supposes that in the time after the historical fall of Adam and before the law of Moses was given as a tutor, some people were in paradise, sinned in the same way as Adam, and were thrust out of paradise like he was. - Origen might seem to refer to the historical fall of Adam, since then all men were in his loins, as he writes twice[264]. But according to these passages all men *fell* with or in Adam, whereas Origen does not write that all men *sinned* in him. From the passage which is under discussion here we learn that there may have been *some* people who have sinned like Adam. In this case Origen must have in view another event. - The only interpretation which is plausible, is related to Origen's theory of the fall of the preexistent souls[265]. Thus Origen compares the fall of a certain category of souls with Adam's fall. He is careful not to identify the two events: "They have experienced something like Adam had in paradise"[266]. Yet, it is difficult to establish what Origen means by his allusion to Gal 3,23-24: "before the time when men were kept under the law as under a tutor". Normally he interprets this text with regard to the law of Moses[267], but it is hard to understand why in his exposition he shifts from the precosmic fall of the souls to the legislation of Moses. Probably the obscurity is due to Rufinus' translation. As in his translation of *De Principiis*, Rufinus has left out or blurred the references to the precosmic fall of the souls, because this theory was regarded as unorthodox[268]. However, Rufinus stressed the esoteric character of this "delicate interpretation", which is "a mystery, hidden in an almost undescribable way"[269].

Another allusion to this theory occurs in a short and cryptic observation after a reference to the incorporation of all men in Adam. Origen writes that all have been set in this place of humiliation, this valley of tears, either because all who are born

of Adam were in his loins and were banished with him, or because each one has been thrust out of paradise in some other way ineffable and known to God alone, and has undergone condemnation[270]. This distinction of two possiblities confirms my distinction within the earlier passage, that the fall of Adam and the other mysterious fall are two different events. By the latter interpretation Origen refers to the preexistent souls who chose to fall away from God. The point of the former interpretation is, that Adam's sin could not determine that all men would be sinners, because in that case their free will would have been neglected. Origen emphasizes that each man has sinned personally, which has been preceded by the disobedience of one's preexistent soul.

However, does Origen really hold to the fall of Adam as a historical event[271]? - According to the version of this *Commentary* Origen seems to maintain the historicity of Adam and Eve. In his comment on the contradistinction of Adam and Christ or the age to come, he does not, if we may trust Rufinus' version, call in question the existence of Adam, although the term *tupos* could have given rise to a figurative interpretation. Yet, the allegorical interpretation, which we find in other works of Origen[272], is not absent from this *Commentary*. He applies the clause in Rm 5,12a, "through one man sin came into the world", not only to Adam but also to each man who is still "in the world" and "earthly" and bears the image of the earthly Adam instead of being transformed to the image of God[273]. Another allegorisation occurs in the application of the expression "from Adam to Moses", to man who lives as a sinner until he comes to know the natural law or the doctrine of Christ[274].

Origen gives an extensive exposition of the history of salvation from Adam to Moses and to Christ, but he is not really interested in the historicity of Adam. What really counts to him is the personal development of each man. Therefore he distinguishes between men *into* whom came sin, so that it has not left them, and men *through* whom came sin, so that they repelled it and were just slightly contaminated by it[275]. For the same reason Origen distinguishes between those who do and those who do not obey the natural law[276]. Each man is brought up as a sinner, but he can learn to discern between good and evil and become susceptible to the grace of Christ[277]. In such a history of salvation Origen is most interested[278].

§ 23. Rm 5,20-21

In the end of the section in Rm 5,12-21 Paul returns to the theme of the function of the law: "The law came in (*pareisèlthen*) in order that the trespass might increase; but where sin increased, grace superabounded, in order that, as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rm 5,20-21). To modern expositors it is evident that the law of Moses is meant in v.20. As in Rm 3,20b and 4,15 Paul briefly relates this law with

sin, but he delays an explanation of the interaction between the two until chapter 7[279].

Origen first identifies the interpretation with regard to the law of Moses as being heretic. He observes that Marcion and the other heretics took this text as an opportunity to disparage the law of Moses, as if sin did not exist before the law and started to abound since this law was given. Origen repeats his stock argument that sin also existed before Moses; he reminds his readers of Cain, Lamech, Noah's contemporaries, the Sodomites and Pharaoh. Yet, before giving his own interpretation, he recognizes that the interpretation with regard to the law of Moses might also be in use with others than the heretics[280].

Origen recalls that the natural law, which has been written on one's heart, starts to penetrate one's conscience and the senses along with the development of the mind, at the age when reason comes to light. But the will of the flesh arises against the natural precepts of this law, and suggests other desires. This is, to Origen, what the apostle called "the law in the members" which is at war with "the law of the mind" (Rm 7,23). He supposes that according to the apostle the law of the members came in (*pareisèlthen*), which means that it entered under the pretext of the natural law, which is the law of the mind, which in its turn agrees with the law of God[281]. This law of the members makes man captive to lust and inclined to pleasures, so that sin increases[282]. Origen continues that the grace of Christ, however, superabounded, not only in order to absolve man from sins of the past, but also to protect him against sins in the future. Grace drove away sin from its reign, i.e. from our members, and with sin also death was driven away, so that eternal life came about. It seems that Origen is not contented with the objective statements about the abundance of grace, and that for this reason he adds the exhortations from the next chapter: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies", and: "For just as you once yielded your members as instruments of iniquity to sin, so now yield your members as instruments of righteousness to God" (Rm 6,12.14. 19)[283].

In the interpretation of Rm 5,20-21 we note the same tendency to a personal application as in the foregoing exposition of Rm 5,12-14.18. Whereas Paul made an observation about the effects of the legislation to Israel, Origen offers an interpretation with regard to the manifestation of the natural law and the rise of the law of sin in each man personally.

§ 24. Rm 6,1-2

Responding to a false inference from the foregoing statement about the abundance of grace, Paul continues: "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin, in order that grace may increase? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" (Rm 6,1-2). Origen's comment on these verses merits discussion as far as it considers the theme of the natural law.

In his explanation of the expression "to die to sin" Origen observes that, in a way, sin resides in the body. Starting from the natural incentives of the body, the order of nature is distorted so that it leads to death. For example, the flesh has a natural appetite for food and drink, but by the persuasion of sin one can exceed the natural wants, so that the flesh strives for luxury and drunkenness. Likewise, in the flesh there is a natural incentive for intercourse with a woman, in order to procreate offspring. But if, by the persuasion of sin, one turns away from the law, and the emotions of natural lust are excited illicitly, then one lives for sin and does not obey the law of God[284]. It is to be noted that up to here Origen seems to give an illustration of the way in which the law of the members, which is the law of sin, comes in under the pretext of the natural law, as he wrote in his comment on Rm 5,20. Here he calls the natural law "the law of God".

Origen continues that if one is reminded of Christ, who died for the ungodly, and one repents and drives out the bad king who reigned in one's flesh, and one keeps away from his desires and precepts, then one is said "to die to sin"[285].

§ 25. Rm 6,14-15

In the comment on Rm 6 it is apparent that to Origen the process of dying with Christ and rising to the newness of life with him is a favorite theme[286]. Moreover, he interprets Paul's imperatives as an argument that man has a free will to serve righteousness[287]. Yet, because of my concentration on texts concerning "the law", I will not dwell on these expositions, but only discuss Rm 6,14: "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under the law, but under grace". Thus Paul connects once more the law of Moses with sin.

Clement of Alexandria informs us that the heretics appealed to this text as a permit to libertinism[288]. From the gnostic exegesis of other texts about the law (as we have seen in our discussion of Rm 3,20b; 4,15a; 5,20a) we may infer that they interpreted "law" in Rm 6,14 as the Mosaic law, just as modern exegetes do.

As in Rm 4,15 and 5,20 Origen prefers to interpret "law" in this verse as "the law of the members", which resists "the law of the mind" (cf. Rm 7,22-23). He argues that someone who "mortifies his members" (cf. Col 3,5) is certainly not under the law of the members, but under the grace of God. He identifies the same law in I Cor 15,56b: "The power of sin is the law"[289]. In a corresponding catena extract it is not explicated which law is meant, but the reference to I Cor 15,56b occurs there too. It is followed by a quotation of Rm 5,20: "The law came in, in order that the trespass might increase; but where sin increased, grace superabounded"[290]. It may be repeated that Origen interpreted Rm 5,20 with regard to this "law of the members". Although neither in the catena extract nor in the Latin version he refers to the gnostics or to the Marcionites, it is most probable that his preference for the

interpretation of Rm 6,14 in view of "the law of the members" is brought about by his reaction to the heretic interpretation.

According to Rufinus' version Origen admits that "law" in this verse could also be explained in view of the law of Moses. In that case the purport is, that "we are not under the law of the letter that kills, but under the law of the spirit that gives life, which Paul called 'grace' here"[291]. According to the catena extract Origen continues that "the law is not laid down for the righteous" (I Tim 1,9), and explains that if one has been taught by God he does not need the law of the letter in order to keep God's commandments. For if the law of God has grown together (*sumpefuken*) with someone, so that his will does not deviate from the law, then he is not under the law but under grace; "his pleasure is in the law of the Lord" (Ps 1,1)[292]. Thus Origen points out that the grace of spiritual observance of the Mosaic law is superior to the literal observance, which is something outward[293].

It is likely that a similar explanation of "law" was true for Rm 6,15: "What then? Are we to sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!" For its interpretation Origen, according to Rufinus, only refers to the comment on Rm 6,14[294].

§ 26. Rm 7,1-6

In Rm 7 Paul finally takes pains to explain how he looks upon the relation between the Mosaic law and sin. He describes the life of the Roman Christians as being released from the law: "Do you not know, brethren - for I am speaking to those who know the law - that the law has authority over a man so long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband (*tou andros*). So then, while her husband is alive, she will be called an adulteress if she becomes another man's; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress if she becomes another man's. Therefore, my brethren, you too were made dead to the law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For, when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death; but now we have been released from the law, having died to that by which we were held, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit, not in oldness of the letter" (Rm 7,1-6). It is important to understand that Paul's illustration of the woman who is bound to her husband as long as he lives, is not meant as an allegory in view of those who used to be bound to the Mosaic law before they believed in Christ. In that case the law had to die and not those who believed. The conclusion in v.4 is drawn from the principle in v.1, not from the example in v.2-3[295].

As to the structure of the epistle, Origen observes that after a fairly extensive excursus (Rm 5-6) Paul returns to the discussion of the law and Christ[296]. His comment on Rm 7,1-6 consists

of an introductory survey in which he briefly takes the passage through[297], and a more detailed exposition.

Origen interprets "those who know the law" (v.1) as a reference to the difference between the oldness of the letter and the newness of the Spirit within it. In his view the addressees are supposed to know that "the law is spiritual" (Rm 7,14)[298]. Thus he paves the way for his allegorical interpretation of the whole passage. He maintains that in the phrase "the law has authority over a man so long as he lives" (v.1) not "man" but "the law" is the subject of "lives"[299]. This implies that the law can die. Origen understands the woman who is bound by the law to her husband as the soul, whose husband is the law of Moses according to the letter. When the law of the letter dies, the soul accepts another husband, i.e. the spirit of the law. Origen argues that the first "husband", who is the law according to the letter, is dead, because the earthly Jerusalem with its temple and altar has been destroyed by the presence of Christ. No sacrifices are offered anymore, the tasks of the priests and the Levites are not fulfilled, and because of the Roman domination they do not have the right to perform executions[300]; many commandments cannot be fulfilled. He concludes that, since the first husband has died, the soul of man is not an adulteress if she comes to Christ and is united with him as with a second husband, but that she is an adulteress if the first husband, the law according to the letter, is still alive to her[301]. By the last remark he refers to the attraction of Judaism to the church.

Origen is aware that Paul did not write that the law has died, but: "Therefore, my brethren, *you too were made dead to the law* through the body of Christ" (v.4). He points out that this corresponds with the idea of Rm 6,3-4, that one has to die and to be buried with Christ. Admitting that Paul makes use of different images, Origen holds that the sense of his interpretation that the law is called dead to us is identical with the saying, that we too were made dead to the law through the body of Christ. He urges the readers to hurry to the second wedding, which he calls far more blissful than the first one[302].

Origen's interest in the relation between the Jews and the Gentiles appears from his observation, that those who believed from the circumcised were indeed under the law, whereas the Gentile believers were not. He quotes Isaiah 54,1 in order to specify the different position of the Jews and the Gentiles: "For more are the children of the desolate one than of her that has a husband" (cf. Gal 4,27). He explains that the one who has a husband is the synagogue which has the law, whereas the desolate one, who lived without the (Mosaic) law, represents the multitude of the Gentile nations. To Origen, this prophecy is confirmed by the fact that the Gentile believers outnumber those who have believed from the circumcised[303]. In a subsequent passage, however, Origen observes that Paul's text need not to be understood only with regard to the law of Moses according to the letter, but can be applied to each man. This means that the customs (*instituta, mores*) which are in use are to be considered as a law under which

one lives. One has to die to this law, or this law has to die to man, for otherwise the soul that comes to Christ is still married to another husband. If the soul still lives according to the laws of the first husband, she does not wed Christ, but she is an adulteress[304]. In this comment we recognize Origen's intention to apply the epistle both to the Jews and to the Gentiles. It is remarkable that, whereas Origen often parallels the natural law to the Mosaic law, here he does not write that a non-Jew has to die to the natural law, but to the customs under which he lives. The reason for this is, that the natural law remains true and given by God, whereas the human laws may be opposite to the law of nature[305].

In Rm 7,5 Paul writes that when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. In the introductory survey of the passage Origen interprets "law" in v.5 in the same way as in the foregoing verses; this implies that it would be the law of Moses according to the letter which brings about, that in our members the passions bear fruit for death[306]. But in his more comprehensive comment Origen offers another interpretation[307]. He reminds his readers that, like the servant of the parable, Paul secretly goes from one room to another with unsure steps[308]. This means that, to Origen, Paul switches from the law of Moses according to the letter, which pertained only to those who believed from the circumcised, to the law of the flesh and the passions. The reason for this change is, "undoubtedly, that this epistle (*tractatus iste*) would appear to apply also to the other people, and not only to those who are from the circumcised". Here Origen refutes the view that the law of Moses, even if it is kept according to the letter, originates the sinful passions, and he asserts that in v.5, like in Rm 5,20, the law in the members is meant, which resists the law in the mind[309].

It may be concluded that two reasons have induced Origen to interpret Rm 7,5 as dealing with this law in the members. First, he wants to meet the criticism that the gospel is just a Jewish affair. He demonstrates that Paul wrote his epistle not only for the Christians from the Jews, but also for those from the Gentiles. In the second place, by this interpretation he implicitly refutes the heretic appeal to Rm 7,5 which, although it is not attested[310], is evident; the Marcionites and the gnostics would have appealed to v.5 in order to criticize the function of the law of Moses.

In Rm 7,6 Paul continues that "now we have been released from the law, having died to that by which we were held, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit, not in oldness of the letter". In the initial survey Origen seems to suppose that it is the law of Moses according to the letter to which the Christians have died and from which they have been released. It goes without saying that he identifies the same law in the expression "the oldness of the letter"[311]. But later on Origen continues his interpretation with regard to the law of the members. Thus the Christians have been released from this law when they died with Christ in baptism[312], so that they can serve the law of God in newness of

the Spirit, not in oldness of the letter. Origen interprets the last phrase in the sense, that Christ has not set free from the law of sin in order that one might fulfil the law of Moses according to the letter, and receive circumcision and keep the sabbath, but that one serves the law of God in its spiritual sense[313]. By this interpretation Origen refutes at the same time the Marcionite and gnostic views and the judaizing tendencies in the church.

Origen's polemics against the Marcionites and the gnostics appears again from his final observations on this passage. He maintains that "newness of the Spirit" does not imply that there is a new Spirit which did not exist before. The same Spirit is present in the law and in the gospel; he is not new, but renews the inner man[314]. Correspondingly, Origen comments, the expression "oldness of the letter" does not mean that it used to be new, but that its ideas and works brought about the "old man" (Rm 6,6)[315].

§ 27. Rm 7,7-13

Next, Paul corrects a possible misunderstanding about the law of Moses: "What then shall we say? Is the law sin? By no means! But I had not known sin except through the law. For indeed I had not known coveting if the law had not said: 'you shall not covet'. But sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, worked in me all kinds of covetousness; for without the law sin is dead. I was once alive without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died, and the commandment which was unto life proved to be unto death to me. For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. Did then that which is good become death to me? By no means! But sin, in order that it might be manifest as sin, was working death for me through that which is good, in order that sin might through the commandment become sinful beyond measure" (Rm 7,7-13). It would be wrong to understand this as a part of Paul's autobiography. It is probable that he refers to the story of man in paradise, and that his use of the first person singular is due to his deep sense of personal involvement[316].

Various sources of Origen's comment on Rm 7,7-13 are extant. Besides Rufinus' translation, the ninth chapter of the *Philocalia* is available to us, which, at least according to its heading, comes from the exposition of Rm 7,7 in the ninth volume of the *Commentary on Romans*. The catenae contain several extracts on Rm 7, and moreover, Jerome made use of Origen's exposition of Rm 7 in his *Epistle* 121. For the reliability of these sources and their mutual relation I refer to Mrs. Hammond's article of 1981. She confirms that, for the first part at least, the ninth chapter of the *Philocalia* does indeed come from Origen's exposition of Rm 7,7, and she demonstrates that Rufinus has drastically abbreviated the original exposition[317].

According to Rufinus' version Origen first reminds his readers

of the diversity of laws in this epistle. With reference to the parable of the mystery of the king he observes that Paul makes tacit transitions from one kind of law to another while still using the same term, in order to conceal the divinely inspired truths from the unworthy[318].

Origen paraphrases Rm 7,7a in this way: "Do you think that I say about the law of Moses that it is sin? By no means!" Next, Rufinus renders just briefly that the answer: "By no means" indicates both that Paul does not speak about the law of Moses and that he does not say about this law that it is sin, but: "I had not known sin except *through* the law"[319]. Actually, the answer to the question "Is the law sin?" could have been positive in the context of Origen's interpretation, as in Rm 7,5-6 he had interpreted "law" as "the law of the members", which brings about sin. But since Paul's answer is negative, Origen, according to Rufinus' abridgement, first denies that the law of Moses is meant, which refers to the interpretation of v.5-6; and secondly he seems to maintain that even if the law of Moses was meant, it would not be sin, since Paul wrote: "I had not known sin except *through* the law" (Rm 7,7b), which implies that the law does not originate sin (cf. the interpretation of Rm 3,20b)[320]. By the second statement Origen refutes the Marcionites and the gnostics[321].

He continues that in Rm 7,7b the law of Moses cannot be meant because sin was known and admitted also before Moses, e.g. by Adam, Cain and Pharaoh. So to Origen in Rm 7,7b the natural law is meant, which is unknown until one attains the age of reason. He quotes Rm 7,9a, which by now has become well known to the readers: "I was once alive without law". This means that in one's youth one does not know what covetousness is, until he is taught about good and evil by the natural law[322]. Since this switch in the sense of *nomos* might seem to be unlikely, Origen inserts an exposition on the homonymity of *nomos*, which has been preserved in the *Philocalia*, chapter ix, whereas Rufinus has left it out[323].

Initially, Origen seems to interpret Paul's point in Rm 7,7c ("For indeed I had not known coveting, if the law had not said: 'you shall not covet'") only with regard to the natural law and not in relation to the Mosaic law, but this impression is due to Rufinus' abridgement[324]. Later on it appears that Origen has in mind both the Mosaic and the natural law[325]. According to a catena extract he seems first to have discussed the phrase as understood of the Mosaic law, and to add in the second place that also the natural law prohibits coveting[326].

The same is true for Rm 7,8a, where Origen equates "commandment" with "law" in the previous verse: "But sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, worked in me all kinds of covetousness". He explains that a struggle between the flesh and the spirit arises (cf. Gal 5,17). Admitting that the commandment is holy and just and good, because it prohibits something evil, namely covetousness, Origen confirms that it yet provokes and inflames covetousness, so that it works death through what is good. He applies this text both to the Mosaic and to the natural law[327]. It may be inferred that, although the Marcionites and the gnostics could

have referred to Rm 7,7b-8a in order to criticize the law of Moses[328], Origen acknowledged that it was impossible to interpret this text with regard to "the law of sin which dwells in my members", like he preferred to interpret other texts about the law provoking wrath and sin (Rm 4,15; 5,20; 6,14; 7,5). Thus Origen cannot but explain correctly that in Rm 7,7b-8a Paul deals with the law of Moses[329]. As he intends to interpret the epistle as generally as possible[330], which means, also with regard to the Gentiles, he adds that also the natural law prohibits and provokes covetousness.

Origen rightly observes that in the foregoing he has dealt extensively with most of the aspects of Rm 7,8b-10[331]. We came to know his view that sin is dead during childhood, when one does not yet know the natural law. When, at the age of reason, the commandment of the natural law comes, sin revives and man dies. Origen repeats this interpretation and emphasizes that the subject *ego* of these verses applies to all men, since each soul that transgresses the law sins and dies[332]. Because of the interpretation with regard to the natural law, which is manifested to everybody personally, these verses appear to be a key text of Origen's *Commentary on Romans*[333]. By this interpretation he implicitly refutes the heretic appeal to Rm 7,8b, which read that sin is dead without the law of Moses[334]. Explicitly he refutes the appeal to Rm 7,9a as a proof text for the doctrine of reincarnation. In the comment on Rm 5,13 he ascribes this interpretation to Basilides[335]; now he repeats it without (at least in Rufinus' version) identifying its author. It reads that Paul meant that he was alive without law in a previous life, when his soul had lived in an animal. Origen does not understand *anezèsen* in its inchoative sense, like modern expositors do[336], but he points out that, when the commandment came, sin *revived*, which means to him that sin, which had been alive, had died and came to life again. To him, this death of sin is given by the favour of God during childhood[337].

In Rm 7,11 Paul repeats that sin finds opportunity in the commandment, and he adds that it deceived him by means of the commandment and killed him. Origen comments that this does not imply that the commandment is accused. He reminds of the Stoic definition of law, namely that it teaches what one should do and what one has to refrain from[338]; so if somebody, who is taught by the law does something he has to refrain from, he knew about it through the opportunity of the law. But, Origen continues, the purpose of the law is not that one would transgress it and die, but that one would keep it and live[339]. In Rufinus' version Origen does not specify which law he has in mind, but according to a catena extract he observes that someone has explained the text also with relation to the natural law[340]. This implies that the foregoing interpretation was most probably applied to the law of Moses[341], and that both applications are possible.

To Origen, Paul's positive statement about the law in Rm 7,12, that it is holy and just and good, refutes the objection that the death of the soul, through sin finding opportunity in the law, has

to be attributed to the law. He emphasizes that not the law but sin has worked death, in order that it might be clear how unrighteous it is, as it worked death through what is good. Thus, through the opportunity in the commandment, it becomes sinful beyond measure (Rm 7,13)[342]. Neither in the Greek nor in the Latin text is it specified which law or laws Origen has in view. From the comment on Rm 7,11 it can be concluded that he thinks both of the Mosaic and of the natural law. This implies that by his comment on Rm 7,12-13 Origen combats the Marcionite and gnostic view on the Mosaic law[343].

Two general remarks will precede my conclusions from this section. First, in the extant sources of this comment on Rm 7,7-13 Origen does not make the distinction between the Mosaic law according to the letter and according to the spirit, except for the list of the six senses of *nomos* in the *Philocalia* ix,2. It is remarkable that this distinction was not of importance here.

Secondly, it is striking that, when *nomos* is preceded by the article, Origen interprets it either as the law of Moses (Rm 7,7a: the law of Moses is *not* sin), or as both the Mosaic and the natural law (Rm 7,7c.12). When *nomos* occurs without article, he explains it as the natural law (Rm 7,7b.8b.9a). So in this section Origen seems to apply, more or less, the distinction which he made in his comment on Rm 3,21; there he explained *ho nomos* as the law of Moses, and *nomos* as the natural law[344].

It may be concluded that by his interpretation with regard to the natural law Origen intends to demonstrate that Paul does not write for the Jews only, but also for the Gentiles; more specifically, for each man personally. When Origen deals with the Mosaic law, he intends to defend it against the attacks of the Marcionite and gnostic heretics. For both laws it is true that sin does not originate from either of them. Yet, Origen admits that the law, which teaches what one should do and do not, provokes transgression of its good commandments, and so works death. As to Rm 7,7-13 he saw no way to ascribe this negative effect of the law to "the law of the members".

§ 28. Rm 7,14-25

Changing from the past to the present tense, Paul continues: "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I work I do not acknowledge; for I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate. But if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law that it is good. Now then it is no longer I that work it, but sin which dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. For the will to do good lies close at hand, but to work what is good is beyond my reach. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. So I find it to be a law (*ton nomon*) that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, so far as the inner man is concerned, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my

mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God[345] through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then I myself serve with my mind the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin." (Rm 7,14-25). Even if one leaves on one side the question, whether or in how far this passage contains an autobiographical element, it remains unclear whether Paul describes the experience of a Jew who is under the law, as seen from a Christian perspective[346], or whether the experience of a Christian is intended[347]. As to Paul's use of *nomos*, it appears that he plays with its sense of "principle"[348].

Origen supposes that in this section Paul introduces different characters. To him, the occurrence of this *personarum diversitas* confirms the plausibility of his view on the diversity of laws in this epistle. The reason for his distinction of different characters is, that it would not correspond with Paul's apostolic dignity if he wrote about himself that he was carnal, whereas he had attested many times that Christ and the Spirit lived in him[349]. Thus, with apostolic authority Paul wrote about the law of Moses: "We know that the law is spiritual" (Rm 7,14a). To Origen this verse is very favorite as a proof text that the Mosaic law had to be interpreted spiritually, i.e. allegorically, and that in this sense the law contains the same truth as the gospel[350]. In the present comment on Rm 7,14a he maintains, according to Rufinus' version, that this is said by those who have the Spirit of God within them, as distinct from those who are carnal[351]. Yet, according to a catena extract Origen writes that Rm 7,14a is said by those who have learned concerning the law that it is divine and that its commandments are good, but nonetheless, as being sold under sin and carnal, they fall under sin[352]. This sentence may have been selected from another part of Origen's discussion than from that paraphrased by Rufinus[353].

According to Rufinus' version Origen interprets Rm 7,14b, "But I am carnal, sold under sin", as said by Paul in the name of the weak; for he became "weak to the weak, that he might win the weak" (I Cor 9,22)[354]. In the same vein Rm 7,15a, "For that which I work I do not acknowledge", means that he does not know the reason why he acts like he does. Origen interprets Rm 7,15b, "For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate", in the sense that by the instigation of the natural law carnal man tries to resist the vices to a certain degree. As far as man does not want to do evil he agrees that the law, which prohibits evil, is good; thus the natural law corresponds with the law of God[355].

Although the person which Paul presents here acknowledges that sin works within him and that nothing good dwells in his flesh (Rm 7,17-18a), Origen comments that this does not mean that this person is completely devoid of good things, but that he is not able to do the good things which he starts to strive after with his will[356]. In Origen's view this weakness occurs in those who have recently been converted. To them he also applies Rm 7,21-22, which, in order to clarify the train of thought, he rearranges in this way: "So, as evil lies close at hand, when I want to do good,

I find the law of God, and I delight in it so far as the inner man is concerned". This means that one delights in the virtues which are taught by the law of God, like wisdom, chastity, mildness and patience. One would like to practise them immediately after conversion, but the habituation to carnal vices, which is called "the law of the flesh" or "the law of the members", resists the will to do good. These virtues are acquired only thanks to assiduous devotion and instruction. Origen notes that the will to do good is called "the law of the mind" here, which agrees with the law of God[357]. From other texts in this *Commentary* it appears that by the law of God Origen means both the spiritual law of Moses and the natural law, as far as it agrees with the spiritual law. This is confirmed by Jerome's *Epistle* 121[358].

Origen explains that because of this struggle between so many laws within man, Paul exclaims in the name of a new convert: "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rm 7,24). With apostolic authority, as Origen understands it, Paul answers: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rm 7,25a)[359]. The reason why the apostle describes this struggle as taking place within himself, Origen observes, is that nobody of the Christians should be ashamed of the things he feels going on within him, even though one has been converted to the Lord, and that one should never despair of improvement. For by the grace of Christ one is delivered from the many evils within one[360]. Origen is aware that the conclusive sentence of this chapter, "So then I myself serve with my mind the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin" (Rm 7,25b), seems to apply to the apostle himself, but he comments that this cannot be right, because in that case everybody would be struck with despair. Again he applies it to the convert whose flesh does not yet obey the mind, which agrees with the law of God[361].

From Rufinus' version of the comment on Rm 7,14-25 it appears that Origen situates the struggle between the law of the members and the law of God in the new convert, who is still a carnal Christian as long as he has not yet mastered the vices to which he was habituated. But since Jerome, in *Epistle* 121, states not only that Paul speaks of the repentant sinner but also that he describes the frailty of the human condition because of the struggle of the inner and the outer man, it may be that in reality Origen applied this section of Rm 7 to all men[362].

In order to evaluate Origen's interpretation of the different laws in this passage, we should look not only to his comment on this passage as such. In the first place, to Origen Paul's statement "that the law is spiritual" is most important as a testimony to the allegorical sense of the Old Testament. In the second place, we note about "the law of the members" that, whereas Paul used the expression "the law of sin which dwells in my members" only in Rm 7,23, Origen interprets it as a sort of law by itself, which he identifies in those texts in which Paul seems to criticize the law of Moses (Rm 4,15; 5,20; 6,14; 7,5-6)[363]. Because these texts, if explained with regard to the law of Moses, fitted in very well with the Marcionite and gnostic systems,

Origen was much interested in an interpretation which differed from the heretics'. Paul's expression "the law of sin which dwells in my members" furnished him with the alternative he needed. Moreover, the advantage of Origen's particular interpretations was, that "the law of the members", being the inclination to sin, occurs in all people, whereas the law of Moses applies only to the Jews. In the third place, Origen discerns "the law of the mind", which he identifies with the natural law or the law of God. It may be remembered that to Origen the natural law is the most frequent of all the different laws which occur in this epistle[364]. Like "the law of the members" it is manifested to all men.

§ 29. Rm 8,1-2

In Rm 8 Paul explicates that deliverance from sin and death is possible through life in the Spirit of Christ. Origen first deals with Rm 8,1-2: "So then there is no condemnation for those who are[365] in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has in Christ Jesus set you[366] free from the law of sin and death". Twice Paul employs *nomos* in the sense of "principle"[367].

Origen explains that there will be no comdemnation for those who are thoroughly set free from the law of sin, which is the law of death, and who serve the law of God, which is the law of the Spirit. To serve this law means to serve Christ, which he interprets as devoting oneself to virtues like wisdom, righteousness, truth, chastity and piety. Origen emphasizes that one is not transferred immediately from the bondage of sin to being in Christ. It takes a long time before one has acquired the virtues completely, and this will surely not happen to those who are inactive and lazy[368]. So far Origen deals with the two opposite "laws" in a general sense. It is remarkable that, whereas Paul describes the liberation as an event in the past[369], Origen interprets it as an aim for devoted Christians.

Next, Origen relates the two "laws" to the Mosaic law. Thus, the law of the Spirit of life, which he called the law of God, is the law of Moses in its spiritual sense. He observes that the Mosaic law also contains the letter, that kills. Although it is not rendered by Rufinus, Origen's intention seems to be, that the law of Moses in its literal sense can be understood as the law of sin and death[370].

§ 30. Rm 8,3-9a

Paul continues: "For what was impossible for the law (*to gar adunaton tou nomou*) because it was weak through the flesh - God, having sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the

flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is enmity toward God; for it is not subject to the law of God, indeed, it cannot be; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Rm 8,3-9a). The expression *to adunaton tou nomou* could be translated not only in its passive sense, i.e. "what was impossible for the law", as it is generally understood nowadays, but also in its active sense, i.e. "the impotence of the law". In case of an active understanding of *adunaton* Cranfield suggests the following translations: Either "as a sort of nominative absolute ('the impotence of the law being this that it was weak through the flesh') or perhaps as an accusative of respect ('as to the impotence of the law...')"[371]. Origen makes use of both senses alternately.

Yet, as for *to adunaton tou nomou* Origen's problem is not which is the precise sense of *adunaton*, but which law is meant. He enumerates the "laws" which were mentioned in the above; namely, on the one hand, the law of God, the law of the mind, and the law of the Spirit of life, and on the other hand, the law in the members, the law of death, and the law of sin. Origen avows that it is not easy to make a choice for Rm 8,3; he prefers to interpret it with regard to the law of Moses according to the letter[372]. Since this law does not occur in the enumeration, Rufinus may have left out a link of Origen's exegesis. Probably Origen has related the literal law of Moses to the law of death and the law of sin.

Origen comments that the law is *adunatos* (*impossibilis*: impossible, or: impotent) and weak if it is understood according to the flesh, i.e. literally. He repeats his argument that it is impossible to keep the commandments with relation to the sabbath literally, and that there is even no temple or altar or any place of sacrifice anymore, so that the law is completely dead[373]. He maintains that even before its death it was weak, because it could not take away the sins, and because, e.g., no one could either explain or practise the commandments concerning leprosy in their carnal or literal sense. Therefore God, having sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, comdemned sin in the flesh[374]. Origen interprets "and for sin" (*kai peri hamartias*) in view of the following clause; it means that through the sacrifice of his flesh which Christ brought for sin, he condemned sin in his flesh[375]. The purpose of this sacrifice is, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in "us", which means to Origen that one should keep the law according to the spirit and not according to the flesh[376]. Also in his comment on the following verses Origen applies Paul's distinction between life according to the flesh and life according to the Spirit to the literal and the spiritual interpretation of the law of Moses. He puts it that the Jews, i.e. Israel according to the flesh, set their mind on the letter, that kills the soul (cf. II Cor 3,6), and that the literal interpretation is hostile to God. Only if one under-

stands the law spiritually, has one life and peace, which is Christ[377].

As a matter of fact the reason for this exposition is, that the influence of Judaism or Jewish Christianity upon the church was still considerable. On account of Gal 4,29 ("But as at that time he who was born according the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the spirit, so it is now") Origen even maintains that the carnal Jews persecuted the inward Jews, i.e. the Christians[378]. Yet, it is unlikely that the Jews of Origen's time really persecuted the Christians. The wording of the observation has been inspired by Gal 4,29, whereas in reality the Jewish hostility towards the Christians, being a traditional Christian topic, was expressed just verbally[379].

Rufinus renders also a second interpretation of the passage. However, from a catena extract which obviously belongs to the same context and which varies from Rufinus' version, it appears that the version is not complete. According to Rufinus the expression *to adunaton tou nomou* is applied to "the law of the mind". The comment reads that this law, which is called the will to do good (Rm 7,18), could impossibly be fulfilled because of the weakness of the flesh, i.e. of carnal man. Because of the forgiveness of sin through the sacrifice of Christ, sin has been dismissed from our flesh, and the righteous requirement of the law started to be fulfilled in us. It is fulfilled easily (*cito*) since, if one lives according to the Spirit, the law of sin in the members does not resist it anymore. Thus the flesh, which resists the spirit, is applied to the way of life which displays enmity towards the law of the mind. Origen specifies that this law of the mind is the law of God[380]. The Greek extract starts with *mallon*, which indicates that an alternative interpretation is presented, which is preferred. Here Paul is said to speak rather of the impotence of the law of sin and death. Origen argues that, whereas virtue is strong by its own nature, evil is weak and impotent, because it does not have influence over the strong but over the weak, not because of its own strength but because of the weakness of the latter[381]. Since this fragment starts with *mallon*, one might infer that Origen prefers this interpretation with regard to the law of sin and death, i.e. the inclination to evil, to the first interpretation which is rendered by Rufinus, concerning the literal sense of the Mosaic law[382]. But since the first possibility represents Origen's standard interpretation of Rm 8,3, namely that the law of Moses is weak in its literal sense[383], it is unlikely that he really prefers another interpretation. Therefore it is more likely, that the catena extract represents a modification of Rufinus' second interpretation. Apparently Rufinus has omitted this modification. This implies that in case of Origen's alternative interpretation it is not so much the law of the mind which is weak through the flesh, but rather (*mallon*) the law of sin and death, i.e. the law of the members which inclines carnal man to evil.

In a catena extract on Rm 8,7 the two interpretations recur, but in a different order. First life according to the flesh or

according to the Spirit is related to one's way of life in a general sense. In the second place the text is applied to the Jewish observance of the Mosaic law according to the letter and to the spiritual observance of the same law as it is understood by the "inward Jews", i.e. the Christians[384].

In the comment on Rm 8,9b-11 Rufinus renders the twofold interpretation with reference to Rm 8,9a: Being "in the Spirit" means either to understand the law not in its literal but in its spiritual sense; or to live, the body being mortified, according to the laws of the Spirit and not of the flesh[385].

The purport of the interpretation concerning the sense of the law of Moses is, both to refute its literal observance and to prove that it should be observed spiritually. This interpretation applies to the Christians from the Jews and to all who are influenced by Judaism. The other interpretation is true for the Gentiles who are not tempted by the Judaizing tendencies in the church. Thus Origen demonstrates that the text applies to all men. It is remarkable that he does not speak of the law of nature anymore - which was inspired by Rm 2,14 - but, under the influence of Rm 7,23, of "the law of the mind". To Origen, both expressions are synonymous.

§ 31. Relevance of the comments on Rm 9-16

In the introductory chapter I, § 3, *Origen as an exegete of Paul*, I noted the correspondence between Origen's emphasis on the equality of Jews and Gentiles according to Paul's epistle to the Romans and the present-day recognition of the importance of the same theme. In the foregoing discussion of Origen's comments on Rm 1-8 it appeared, that he often connected this insight with his discernment of the different laws in this epistle. As it is evident that also in the next chapters, especially in Rm 9-11 and 14-15, the relation between the Jews and the Gentiles is the leading theme, Origen's exposition of these chapters contains many instances of his discussion of this relation; therefore, it would be interesting to outline and to evaluate these comments. The main theme of my investigation, however, remains the diversity of laws which Origen discerns in this epistle, whereas the relation between Jews and Gentiles is only a secondary point of interest. Therefore only the comments which pertain to the theme of the law will be discussed.

Concerning the relation between Jews and Gentiles it can be said briefly that essentially Origen has already displayed his views in his exposition of the preceding chapters. In consequence, in the following comments we read many references to the foregoing expositions concerning this theme[386]. Besides, some texts from Rm 9-11 occurred in his comments on the previous chapters, like Rm 11,26, "When the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, then all Israel will be saved", which is quoted in the interpretation of Rm 4,11[387]. It appears that Origen looks upon Rm 1-11 as a unity, so that to him Rm 9-11 is not an appendix to Rm 1-8[388].

The Latin exposition of Rm 9,1-19, of which the Greek text, i.e. tome xi, was not available to Rufinus, contains no comments which are relevant to the theme of the diversity of laws. The expression "the legislation" in Rm 9,4 is commented most briefly. On the one hand this must be due to the loss of the volume, but on the other hand it is possible that Paul's text, except for Rm 9,4-5, did not induce Origen to deal with the theme of the law. In the exposition of Rm 12,16-14,10a, which Rufinus may have supplied from Origen's *Stromateis* since most probably he did not have the Greek tome xiv of the *Commentary*[389], some interesting comments occur. In the discussion of these texts it will appear to be perceptible that Rufinus drew on another source.

In Origen's exposition of Rm 15-16 there are no texts that need to be discussed in the present study.

§ 32. Rm 9,24-26

After an exposition on the sovereignty of God in relation to his creatures Paul explicitly returns to his theme that salvation is both for Jews and for Gentiles. Referring to the chosen who God "prepared beforehand for glory" (Rm 9,23), he specifies: "whom he - God - also called, even us, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles. As indeed he says in Hosea, 'I will call Not-my-people My people, and Unloved Beloved; and instead of being said to them, You are not my people, they will be called sons of the living God'" (Rm 9,24-26). By the verses which he quotes from Hos 2,25 and 2,1 (RSV: 2,23; 1,10) Paul demonstrates that salvation is also for the Gentiles. In the following quotations from Isaiah, which will not be discussed here (Rm 9,27-29), he pursues the position of the Jews.

As can be expected, Origen brings into relief this distinction between Jews and Gentiles. He observes that, like the Hebrews, who were given up as hopeless and repudiated among mankind, used to obtain mercy from God, thus now also the Gentiles, who were spurned and given up as hopeless by those who boast of circumcision, have obtained mercy[390]. Origen also anticipates the Jewish criticism that God has spoken this prophecy of Hosea in Judah, as God is only there (Ps 75,1 LXX), and that it has nothing to do with the Gentiles, since "the law speaks to those who are under the law" (Rm 3,19). He answers that there is a much worthier place for God to speak, i.e. not on the mountains or any other place on earth, but in the mind of man, in his reason. Origen continues that to those who by their conscience are convicted of ungodly actions, it is said: "You are not my people"; but if one purifies himself, and "the peace of God, which transcends every mind" (Phil 4,7) starts to protect his heart, one will be called, with support of one's conscience, a son of God[391]. In this controversy with the Jewish particularistic view on election Origen's interpretation of Rm 3,19 basically corresponds with his exposition of the verse in its own context. There Origen refuted the explanation of *nomos* as the Mosaic law, as in that case Paul's argument would only pertain to the Jews. Instead, he interpreted it with regard to the natural law, which is known to all people[392]. In his comment on Rm 9,25-26 Origen does not mention the natural law as such, but in terms of conscience, mind and reason he represents the same idea, that God makes known his will not only to the Jews, but to all men.

§ 33. Rm 9,30-32

Taking up his distinction of righteousness through faith and righteousness on the ground of works of the law (cf. Rm 3,21ff), Paul continues: "What then shall we say? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have obtained righteousness, but the righteousness of faith; but that Israel, which pursued the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law. Why? Because they did not pursue it on the ground of faith but as on the ground of works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone..." (Rm 9,30-32).

To Origen the phrase, that Gentiles did not pursue righteousness, seems to contradict his former expositions that the natural law, which undoubtedly also contains righteousness, is in use even among the Gentiles. His solution is, to distinguish between "to pursue" (*sectari; diôkein*) and "to have inborn" (*insitum habere*; Origen may have used: *emfuton echein*, which is reminiscent of *nomos tès fuseôs*)[393]. He comments that the Gentiles who did not have the law that was written on tablets or in books are not said to have *pursued* righteousness; yet, they had an inborn righteousness, which the natural law taught them. Therefore, Origen maintains, they were close to the righteousness through faith, which is Christ[394]. It appears that in this phrase Origen understands righteousness first in its moral sense, and that to him natural morality is a preparation to the righteousness which is obtained by faith in Christ; secondly he may have in view the sense of righteousness as a divine gift. In this way he intends to do justice to the position of the Gentiles.

Concerning Israel Origen observes that it pursued the law of righteousness according to the letter, and has not attained to the law of the spirit. He denies that Israel has not attained to the law which it pursued and possessed. As for the distinction between faith in Christ and works of the law Origen refers to the beginning of his *Commentary*. He confines his explanation, according to Rufinus at least, to a quotation of Rm 10,3-4: "For being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the fulfilment of the law, for righteousness to every one who believes". Origen continues that, because they have not pursued the law according to the works of the righteousness of God but according to their own righteousness, they have stumbled over the stumbling stone, which is the Lord Jesus[395]. This is Origen's view on the position of the Jews. By referring to Paul's own conversion[396] he makes clear that for a Jew it is necessary to believe in Christ if he does not want to stumble and to be put to shame (cf. Rm 9,33).

§ 34. Rm 10,4-11

Paul expands on the two kinds of righteousness: "For Christ is the fulfilment (*telos*) of the law, for righteousness to every one who believes. For Moses writes that 'the man who does' the righteousness which is of the law 'shall live in it'[397]. But the righteousness which is of faith speaks thus: 'Do not say in your heart: Who shall ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) or 'Who shall descend into the abyss' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? 'The word is very[398] near you, in your mouth and in your heart'; that is, the word of faith which we preach. Because, if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture says: 'Every one who believes in him shall not be put to shame'" (Rm 10,4-11). Although *telos* could also be rendered as "goal" or "end" the translation "fulfilment" seems to fit in more with Origen's interpretation[399].

In Rufinus' version *telos* (*finis*) is explained as *perfectio*; in Greek this may have been *teleiotès*, i.e. perfection, completion. According to the version, Origen comments that Christ is the fulfilment of the law and that he is righteousness only for the believers, whereas those who do not believe in him do not have the fulfilment of the law and cannot attain to righteousness. Through the righteousness of faith one obtains eternal life, whereas the righteousness of the law affords only life as such[400]. In these terms Origen maintains that only through faith in Christ one can understand and observe the law of Moses in its ultimate sense and be saved.

The exposition of Paul's christological paraphrase of Dt 30,12-14 (Rm 10,6-8) does not contain a reference to Origen's concept of the law, but it is of importance because it makes clear the difference between the presence of Christ and the function of the natural law; moreover, Origen's intention to apply the text to all men comes to light. He observes that one has to look upon Christ as the Logos, the truth, the wisdom and the righteousness of God. These attributes are present everywhere, and they are perceived only with one's mind and intellect. Origen makes use of the well-known distinction between potentiality (*dunamis*) and actuality (*energeia*)[401]. Potentially Christ, the Logos of God, is near every one, like reason (*logos*) is destined for children. But actually, Origen argues, he is in me only if I confess with my mouth Jesus as Lord, and if I believe in my heart that God raised him from the dead. Potentially Christ is among those who do not know him (Jn 1,26), but actually he is not, as long as they do not receive him[402]. Thus Origen maintains that Christ, being the Logos, is present with everybody and can be perceived with one's mind; yet, he has to be accepted in faith. This is different from the presence of the natural law, which Origen identifies with "the law of the mind" (Rm 7,23); to everyone who has reached the age of

reason (*logos*) this law is known automatically, unless one withdraws from it deliberately[403].

§ 35. Rm 10,14-15

In a chain of four questions Paul asks: "How then shall they invoke him in whom they have not believed? And how could they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how could they preach unless they had been sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!'" (Rm 10,14-15)[404]. It is disputed whether these questions concern the Jews[405] or men in general[406].

Part of Origen's comment on the first three questions is worth rendering. To him, the Jews are the subject of the first question[407]. His comment on the second question, "How could they believe in him whom they have not heard?", reads that either they did not want to hear Christ when he was in the flesh, or they did not want to hear his apostles who preached about him. Here Origen does not specify the subject, but from the context it appears that he has in mind the Jews. With regard to all men he considers the possibility, that also now and always Christ, being the Logos (*tanquam verbum et ratio*), speaks to everyone in his heart, and teaches piety, justice, chastity, and all other virtues. But in his interpretation of the third question, "How shall they hear without a preacher?", Origen observes that Christ is heard rather (*magis*) through the preachers, as it is Christ who speaks in them[408]. It may be noted that Origen distinguishes between the instruction of the Logos to each man personally, which obviously corresponds with the manifestation of the natural law, and the proclamation of Christ through those who preach about him. The reason for his distinction is, that the instruction of the Logos does not lead to faith and to salvation (cf. Rm 10,9-13), whereas the proclamation of Christ also includes the call to believe in him[409].

§ 36. Rm 11,9

With reference to the Jews who do not have faith in Christ Paul quotes Ps 68,23 (LXX): "And David says: 'Let their table become a snare and a trap and a stumbling-block and a retribution to them'" (Rm 11,9). This text induces Origen to say something to those who deny the existence of allegories in the divine Scriptures and are wont to laugh at those who do not in all points follow the historical sense[410]. He challenges them to give a literal interpretation of "table" in this verse, being sure that their laughter will turn to confusion. Then, he invites them to consider his explanation of "table" as all the Scriptures which Israel had prior to the coming of the Lord; "for they (the Jews) were the first who were entrusted with the oracles of God" (Rm 3,2). At this table one could take the Word of God, i.e. the law and the

prophets. But since Israel does not understand that spiritually the Scriptures refer to Christ, this table has become a snare, etc. For it is Moses who accuses them (Jn 5,45); and "all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law" (Rm 2,12b). Origen also warns the Christians, however, that the same may happen to them if they take the pure and spiritual food without (spiritual) understanding, and if they sit at the table of wisdom (cf. Prov 9,2), their body and heart being defiled[411].

From these comments it appears that Origen felt obliged to defend his allegorical interpretation of the law and the prophets against the Jews and against part of the Christians. The latter may have been influenced by Judaism or Jewish Christianity. In this context R.P.C. Hanson speaks of "unintellectual literalists"[412].

§ 37. Rm 11,11-12

In his wrestling with the question, whether God has rejected Israel, Paul asks: "Have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, in order to make them jealous. But if their trespass means riches for the world and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more shall their fullness mean!" (Rm 11,11-12).

A discussion of a part of Origen's comment on these verses will be useful because he makes a point on Israel's observance of the law. At the same time, this comment may serve as an example of the way in which Origen deals with the relation between the Jews and the Gentiles according to this chapter.

Origen comments that the Gentiles should not be elated towards Israel, as the purpose of its trespass was not that it should fall, but that it would bring about salvation to the Gentiles. By seeing the conversion of the Gentiles, and that the covenant of God, which Israel had received first, is given to them, and that the law and the prophets are observed more worthily by them, Israel should be made jealous and become zealous too, in the last days at least. Origen emphasizes that Paul does not say that Israel has fallen, which he interprets as: fallen irrevocably; for at the end of the times their conversion will take place, "when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, and all Israel will be saved" (Rm 11,25-26)[413]. He explains that if a righteous man, who has been overcome by, e.g., the weakness of the flesh, or by any other trespass, and who yet has not given up the observance of the whole law, but practises righteousness, mercy, faith, piety and mildness, and who does not neglect the meditation of the law of God, it can be said about him: "Has he stumbled so as to fall? By no means". To Origen, this is true for the Israelites. Notwithstanding their rejection of their Saviour, they still have something like a remainder, i.e. the meditation of the law, although they neither believe nor understand it, and they have zeal for God, yet not according to knowledge (Rm 10,2)[414].

It is notable that Origen not merely rejects the Jewish

observance of the Mosaic law, but also values it, as far as it contributes to morality.

§ 38. Conclusion of Rm 1-11 and the function of Rm 12ff

Prior to his exposition of Rm 12ff Origen recapitulates the whole epistle up to here: "The apostle has taught how the substance of religion (*religionis summa*) has been transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles, from circumcision to faith, from the letter to the spirit, from shadow to truth, from carnal to spiritual observance"[415]. This means that, if Rufinus has faithfully rendered this recapitulation, Origen's understanding of Rm 1-11 amounts to the view, that Christianity, being the spiritual fulfilment of the Old Testament, is a religion for Gentiles. Yet, it is clear that for Origen Christianity is not meant exclusively for Gentiles, since the Jews may also keep the law spiritually.

As an introduction to his expostion of Rm 12ff Origen observes that now Paul continues by establishing the customs and the precepts of this spiritual observance[416].

§ 39. Rm 13,1-4

Concerning the Christians' attitude towards the civil authorities Paul declares: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. So he who rebels against the authority opposes God's ordering; and those who oppose that shall bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a cause for fear to the good work, but to the evil. Do you wish not to fear the authority? Do what is good, and you shall receive praise from it. For it is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, fear; for it does not bear the sword in vain; for it is God's minister, to execute his wrath on him who does evil" (Rm 13,1-4).

In Rufinus' version the interpretation of these verses is somewhat confused. Most probably the reason of this lack of order is, that Rufinus did not have the Greek tome xiv, and collected the comments from other works of Origen, probably his *Stromateis*[417]. Yet, because of the observations about different laws, it will be worth discussing the exposition with regard to this theme. Its importance for this study will be evaluated in the conclusions from this section.

Origen can imagine that the phrase, "For there is no authority except from God" (v.1), evokes astonishment, as if the authority which persecutes God's servants and attacks faith and destroys religion were from God. He answers that there will be a righteous judgment of God for those who exercise their authority impertinently and not according to the divine laws (*divinas leges*)[418]. Concerning v.3-4 he asks, in which way an earthly judge is a minister of God. He refers to the apostolic decree that no greater

burden should be laid upon the Christians from the Gentiles than to abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from fornication (Acts 15,28-29). Origen remarks that this does not imply that Christians are free to practise other crimes like murder, adultery, theft, and homosexual intercourse, which are punished by the divine and the human laws (*divinis et humanis legibus*). To him, it is a dispensation of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 15,28) that, since the other crimes are avenged by the secular laws (*saeculi legibus*), and it is superfluous to forbid by divine law (*divina lege*) the things which are punished sufficiently by human law (*humana lege*), only those things were decreed which were not mentioned by human law and which seemed to fit in with religion. Origen concludes that thus it appears that an earthly judge carries out the most part of the law of God (*Dei legis*), as it is the will of God that all crimes which he wants to be avenged, are avenged by an earthly judge, and not by the bishops of the churches[419].

Origen observes that the secular authorities are not used to praise those who have not done evil, as is suggested in v.3, and because of this incongruity he interprets this phrase with regard to the mysteries of faith. He quotes Rm 2,12b, "all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law", and comments that the law which will accuse everyone in judgment is undoubtedly the law according to which one has lived; Origen recalls that in many people the Holy Spirit has given place to human law. Therefore, he argues, it is sure that on the day of judgment one who has committed nothing against the established laws (*statutas leges*) will also have praise from God on account of these laws. For sinners fear the law, whereas one who does good, not out of fear for the law, but out of love for what is good, is not under the law of the letter anymore, as he lives under the law of the spirit[420].

It is striking that in this comment Origen speaks about law in terms which are rather different from the distinctions which he usually makes in this *Commentary*. It is true that this reference to human laws corresponds with his comment on Rm 1,16, where he writes about the Greek laws and about the more ancient Jewish laws, which had been promulgated by God, and not by man[421]. In his comment on Rm 2,12 he also makes mention of "human laws", beside the law of Moses, the law of Christ, and the natural law[422]. But in his comment on Rm 3,9 Origen distinguishes between the natural law, which is the law of God, and the written law of the cities, which does not exist by nature (*fusei*) but by decree (*thesei*), and which may be opposite to the law of nature[423]. It is remarkable that in his exposition of Rm 13,1-4 Origen writes about the function of the Holy Spirit in secular legislation without reference to this distinction between law which is by nature and that which exists by decree. The fact that in this comment Origen does not refer to the natural law, which, in his view, is the most frequent of all the laws dealt with in this epistle[424], confirms Mrs. Hammond's hypothesis, that Rufinus did not have before him the Greek tome xiv and made use of other sources in order to supply

an interpretation in Origen's vein. For this reason I will not refer to this comment in my final conclusions.

§ 40. Rm 13,8-10

In Rm 12-16 Paul makes mention of "the law" only in Rm 13,8-10: "Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves the other has fulfilled the law. For 'You shall not commit adultery', 'You shall not kill', 'You shall not steal', 'You shall not covet', and whatever other commandment there is, it is summed up in this sentence, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. Love does not do the neighbour wrong: therefore love is the fulfilling (*plèrôma*) of the law". It is unlikely that *ton heteron nomon* in v.8 would mean "the other law", being the law of commandment of love to the neighbour or the Mosaic law[425]. As in v.10, Paul refers to the essence of the Mosaic law[426].

In the exposition it is briefly discussed how through love to the neighbour one fulfils the whole law. Rm 10,4 is quoted, "For Christ is the fulfilment (*telos*) of the law, for righteousness to every one who believes", which would imply that it is impossible that one who loves Christ does something which does not please him[427]. - Just as in the foregoing section, it appears that this comment is not really in line with the *Commentary* as a whole. Since the four commandments from the Decalogue which Paul enumerates in Rm 13,9 are also taught, in Origen's view, by the natural law[428], it would have been inevitable to deal with the question, in how far the Gentiles can fulfil the law by nature. So, whether Rufinus composed this comment himself, or whether he translated it from Origen's *Stromateis*, as Mrs. Hammond supposes[429], it does not represent Origen's discernment of the multiple sense of *nomos* which he displays in his *Commentary on Romans*.

§ 41. Rm 14,1-4

With reference to dissension within the church concerning abstention from meat and wine and the observance of special days Paul admonishes[430]: "Him who is weak in faith receive, (but) not for disputes over opinions. One man has the faith to eat anything, but he who is weak eats vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat pass judgment on him who eats, for God has received him. Who are you to pass judgment on another's house-slave? It is before his own lord that he stands or falls. And he will stand, for God[431] is able to make him stand" (Rm 14,1-4).

As for weakness in faith, Origen - or, perhaps, Rufinus - refers to the comment on Abraham who did not weaken in faith, according to Rm 4,19[432]. With regard to the present passage Origen observes that this seems to be said to the believers from the Gentiles, who pride themselves on the freedom of faith, because they believe that nothing is common or unclean, in opposition to

the believers from the Jews, who still distinguish between the different kinds of food according to the tradition of the law. Origen affirms this admonition by pointing out that one who is weak in faith is not an unbeliever[433]. This acceptance of the Jewish observance of the Mosaic law corresponds with some other observations in the *Commentary*[434].

In his comment on vv.3-4 Origen argues that Paul seems rather to speak with a deeper sense, as in fact the law did not command anything concerning the eating of vegetables to those who come from the circumcision. Therefore he concludes that "food" is to be understood as the word of God. Thus, weak in faith is he who has not yet perfected his sense perception to the extent that he can consume all the word of God[435]. In other parts of the *Commentary* Origen has interpreted Rm 14,1-4 in a similar way[436] If Rufinus did not make use of the Greek tome xiv, he could have supplied a comment on these verses on the ground of the other passages. Because of the reference to this comment in the exposition of Rm 14,5-6, however[437], it is also possible that Rufinus drew on a continuing exposition of Rm 14, which may have been Origen's *Stromateis*. In any case, the present passage does not add anything new to our knowledge of Origen's view on the function of the Mosaic law according to this *Commentary*.

§ 42. Rm 14,16-18

The following part of Paul's admonition is probably directed to the "strong" Christians[438]: "So let not your[439] good thing be reviled. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who therein serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men" (Rm 14,16-18).

We may assume that for this text the Greek tome xv was available to Rufinus. Origen comments that it is a "good thing" to understand the law spiritually, and to avoid the doctrines of the heretics and of false philosophy like unclean and polluted food, as is taught by the spiritual law. But if, e.g., a Jew or an Encratite wants to believe in Christ, and yet he attaches great importance to the observance of continence, or to abstinence from food which is forbidden by the law, and it is said to him that he cannot be saved unless he eats the food he shuns, then the "good thing" of the spiritual sense is reviled. For thus, Origen argues, he gets the impression that Christians believe that one can be saved only if one eats pork or other common food, which is indifferent[440]. Origen reminds his readers of Paul, who was a Jew to the Jews in order to please the Jews and to save them, and as one outside the law to those who are outside the law, in order to please and to save these (I Cor 9,20-21)[441].

It appears that Origen allows the literal observance of the Mosaic law to those who cannot get away from it and yet pursue salvation by Christ. The freedom of spiritual observance should not be enforced on them.

§ 43. Rm 14,20b-21

To the strong Christians Paul writes[442]: "All things are indeed clean, but it is evil for that man who eats with offence. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble" (Rm 14,20b-21).

Origen comments that, although all things created by God are clean (cf. I Tim 4,4), there are two reasons for which something clean can become unclean, or something good, evil: Either a brother stumbles because he is offended by the food another Christian takes, or the clean food becomes unclean because it is unclean to him who takes it. Origen concludes that the uncleanness is not material, but consists in wrong actions and thoughts. He admits that the law of Moses designates some things as either clean or unclean; but the reason for this was, that through such observance the people that were intended to live under the law should be distinguished from the Gentiles. Since the door of faith is opened to the Gentiles, and these are cleansed from their defilement through the knowledge of faith, all food is hallowed by the word of God and by prayer (I Tim 4,5)[443]. Thus Origen argues that since salvation through Christ is offered to the Gentiles the Mosaic law should not be observed literally anymore.

With regard to his own time he specifies that to eat meat and to drink wine or to abstain from them is neither good nor evil in itself, but indifferent; for on behalf of the idols abstinence is practised even by wicked men and unbelievers. Also with the heretics this observance can be found, Origen remarks, and yet this is not a reason to praise them. The only reason why abstinence is good, is not to put a stumbling block to one's brother. Therefore Origen quotes: "Give no offence to Jews or Greeks or to the Church of God" (I Cor 10,32). Next, he critizes the practice to force those, who for any reason abstain from meat and wine, to take a taste of it, in order to take away the suspicion that they still superstitiously hold to the distinction between different kinds of food. Origen warns that thus one may fall to gluttony and luxury, and that one forfeits chastity[444].

Once again, just as in the two foregoing sections, we see that Origen's attachment to the spiritual interpretation of the law of Moses is not merely an exegetical matter, but affects the attitude of the church towards the catechumens, the new converts, and those who are fascinated by the Jewish observance. Yet, the spiritual observance should not be carried through at all costs, as it is incompatible with pressure.

III. CONCLUSIONS

§ 1. Origen's conception of *nomos* in the epistle to the Romans

In Origen's exposition of the epistle to the Romans the alleged homonymity of *nomos* appears to play an important role. Therefore I have discussed the relevant texts in his *Commentary* on this epistle in which his understanding of the various senses of *nomos* comes to light. In a concluding survey of the different "laws" I will summarize the function of each "law" and show the reasons of Origen's interpretations. - Unless indicated otherwise, the section marks in this chapter refer to the discussions of Origen's expositions in chapter II.

As a preliminary remark it may be noted, that throughout his *Commentary* Origen anticipates the sequence of the epistle by quoting texts concerning *nomos* from the next chapters (e.g. §§ 4, 10, 22, 23, 25; cf. also § 31). This indicates that Origen, being aware of the structure of the epistle (§§ 9, 20, 38), mainly considered it as a whole from which he could borrow texts irrespective of their actual context. It is clear that from the beginning, i.e. from his preface (I,3), Origen had a preconceived idea of the relation between the different "laws".

§ 2. The Mosaic law as such or in its literal sense

Origen values the "Jewish laws" as given by God, as distinct from the less ancient Greek laws which have been promulgated by men (§ 2). As a positive effect of the Mosaic legislation he mentions, that it saved many weak people from idolatry and that thanks to the sacrifices which are prescribed by it sin was forgiven and mankind started to be liberated from sin and death to a certain extent (§§ 18, 22). Thus, through the observance of the law Israel could distinguish itself from the Gentiles (§ 44). On the other hand, towards the Gentiles Origen observes concerning circumcision that among other peoples, whose priests used to be circumcised, it is even practised as something honourable (§ 8). He confirms that the law is holy and just and good (Rm 7,12), because it teaches what one should do and prohibits evil (§ 27). Also for his own time Origen maintains that the law can induce the Jews to lead a virtuous life, for which they will be recompensed (§ 4; cf. § 37). Thus Origen upholds the value of the Mosaic law towards the Gentiles for apologetic reasons, and in order to do justice to morality which is practised by Jews.

Against the Marcionite and gnostic interpretation of Rm 5,20 Origen maintains that the purpose of the Mosaic law was not that the trespass might increase, so that sin did not come into the world only since this law was given (§ 23). Similarly, he observes that as far as Rm 4,15a could be interpreted in view of the Mosaic law, it can only be said that this law works the wrath which is related to the punishments which it prescribes (§ 19). Yet, in his interpretation of Rm 7,7-13 Origen admits that, good

though its moral commandments may be, the Mosaic law does provoke sin and cause death (§ 27). It is impossible to keep the ceremonial commandments of the law literally, and since the coming of Christ it is not only weak (Rm 8,3), but in fact dead. This means that one has to do away with the literal observance, which he calls hostile to God (Rm 8,7; §§ 1, 26, 30). In his interpretation of Rm 3,27 Origen confirms that Jewish boasting of the law towards the Gentiles is excluded (§ 13). The Jewish observance is hypocritical and ridiculous so that the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles (Rm 2,17-24; § 7). Origen himself also utters his amazement at the Jewish devotion, and he concludes, that the Jews are only entrusted with the letter of the law, that kills (§ 9). By his negative valuation of the literal observance he intends to criticize not only the Jews, but also the Christians from the Gentiles who are tempted by Judaism or Jewish Christianity.

Notwithstanding his refutation of the literal observance of the law, Origen is rather mild towards believers from the Jews who still cling to it. He observes that if they believe in Jesus they are saved too (§ 14). In his exposition of Rm 2,25a he admits that in the apostle's time circumcision was of value for those who thought that they could not come to Christ if they were prohibited to circumcise their sons, and this admission could imply that Origen would allow contemporary Christians from the Jews to do the same (§ 8); in any case he allows them, in agreement with Rm 14,16-18, to abstain from food and wine which they consider as unclean (§ 42). Thus, for pastoral reasons, Origen leaves open the possibility of literal observance of the law, lest the church put a stumbling block to believers from the Jews.

§ 3. The Mosaic law in its spiritual sense

Origen basically disapproves of the literal observance of the Mosaic law because in its true sense it is spiritual (Rm 7,14; § 28). This means that allegorically it speaks about Christ and about the righteousness of God which has been revealed by Christ (Rm 3,21-22; §§ 12, 13, 15, 34). The spiritual sense of the law was known to the patriarchs and the prophets, and it corresponds with the gospels (§§ 1, 9, 12, 27). Only thanks to allegory can difficult texts in the Scriptures be explained satisfactorily (§ 36). Consequently, the commandments of the law, which seem to be "impossible" (Rm 8,3), or which repel the Gentiles, are in reality intended to be observed spiritually. For example, true circumcision is circumcision of the heart (Rm 2,29), which stands for baptism and refrainment from evil (§§ 7, 8). The true sense of the law has come to light especially since salvation is offered to the Gentiles. Spiritually the observance of the law is possible also for them, so that they need not despair (§§ 8, 9, 43). Origen considers spiritual observance as life according to the liberty of Christ (§ 14) and according to the Spirit of God (§ 30). Because essentially it is a question of spiritual freedom it is incompat-

ible with efforts to impose it upon anyone who still anxiously prefers to keep the commandments of the law literally (§§ 42, 43). The spiritual law is also called the "law of God" (§§ 26, 29).

Thus, for two reasons at least Origen maintains that the true sense of the law is spiritual. Against the Marcionites and the gnostics he defends that allegorically the law corresponds with the gospel. Towards the Gentiles he makes clear that spiritually the law can be observed by them too. Moreover, he maintains towards the Jews and the Christians who do not accept his allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures that only in this manner can difficult texts be explained satisfactorily.

§ 4. The natural law

Although Origen's observation that the natural law is the most frequent of all the different laws dealt with in this epistle (§ 22) seems to be exaggerated, it is still most remarkable that so often he identifies this law in the epistle to the Romans, whereas modern expositors recognize it at best in Rm 2,14-15.

Occasionally Origen refers to the physical law or laws of nature, according to which, for example, man is bound to die (§ 21). But usually Origen employs the expression in its moral sense, according to the definition that the law commands what is to be done and prohibits what one should not do (§§ 11, 27). He also speaks of natural laws, in the plural (§ 22). In his comment on Rm 2,14-15 he explains that the natural law corresponds more or less with the Decalogue, and that it might even teach that there is one God, the Creator of all things. Next, he notes that it fits in even more with the laws of the gospel and with the Mosaic law in its spiritual sense (§ 6). Thanks to the natural law the Gentiles have an inborn righteousness (§ 33), and they may receive spiritual circumcision (Rm 2,29), which means refrainment from evil (§ 8). Origen often deals with the natural law as a parallel to the Mosaic law. For example, in his interpretation of "the Jew first and also the Greek" in Rm 2,10 he observes that a Jew who is under the Mosaic law and does not believe in Christ but yet leads a virtuous life will receive a recompense, and that the same is true for a Gentile who lives according to the natural law (§ 4, cf. § 5). Except for the children, the natural law is known to everybody in whom reason has developed; it applies also to those who lived prior to Moses (§§ 10, 18, 23, 27) and even to the angels and the devils (§ 22). It is taught by Christ who, in his capacity of Logos, speaks to everyone's heart and teaches the discernment of good and evil (§§ 10, 34, 35). Origen identifies it with the "law of the mind" (Rm 7,23; § 23), and he also calls it "the law of God" (§§ 10, 13, 23, 24, 28).

However, the effect of the natural law is not only positive. The fact that it is known to the Gentiles, as the Mosaic law has been revealed to the Jews, implies that Paul is right in his charge that all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin (Rm 3,9; § 10). Origen explains Rm 3,20 in the sense that the natural law,

good though it may be, brings to light sin (§ 11); in his interpretation of Rm 7,7-13 he admits that it even provokes sin and causes death as the Mosaic law does (§ 27), and on the ground of Rm 4,15a he notes that it works wrath (§ 18). Origen is most interested to demonstrate that this is true for everyone personally, and therefore he often quotes Rm 7,9 as a key text of his view on the law: in childhood sins are not imputed, but when one comes to know the natural law, sins are imputed so that spiritually one dies (§§ 10, 11, 22, 27). Although Origen observes that Abel turned to God thanks to the instigation of the natural law (§ 22, cf. § 3), he maintains definitely that the natural law does not incline man to believe that Jesus is the Christ of God. It does not reveal the righteousness of God which is in Christ Jesus, for this is witnessed by the law and the prophets in their spiritual sense. Also Jesus' moral teaching of divine righteousness surpasses the human righteousness of the natural law (Rm 3,21-22; § 12). Christ, being the Logos and the righteousness of God, is present with everybody, but he has to be accepted in faith (§§ 34, 35). In other terms, Origen denies that the natural law can be equated with the "law of faith" (Rm 3,27; §§ 17, 18).

One of the most important conclusions from the present investigation is, that in this *Commentary* Origen often interprets *nomos* in the epistle to the Romans with regard to the natural law in order to demonstrate that God is not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also (Rm 3,29). For it is evident that all texts which deal with the natural law pertain also to the Gentiles. His interpretations, which have been criticized since his own time (§ 12), can be understood as an effort to actualize the Pauline principle "for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Rm 1,16; 2,9-10; cf. I,3). However, Origen was not aware of the fact that thus he actualized the epistle. He was plainly convinced that his interpretation represented the sense which was intended by Paul himself.

§ 5. The law of the members

Although in the expression "the *nomos* of sin, which dwells in my members" (Rm 7,23) Paul did not have in view a real law but rather a principle, i.e. the inclination to sin, Origen treats it as a law by itself, which would be intended in those texts in which *nomos* is used in a negative sense. It is the opponent of the "law of the mind" (Rm 7,23), which is the natural law (§§ 23, 28). It is also called "the law of the flesh and the passions" (cf. Rm 7,5; § 26) or "the law of sin and death" (Rm 8,2; § 30). It is remarkable, however, that repeatedly Origen also offers an alternative to his interpretations with regard to the law of the members. This indicates that he was aware that his interpretations were contestable.

Thus, Rm 4,15a means that the law of the members works divine wrath on the day of judgment, whereas the law of Moses (and, probably, the natural law) works wrath of punishments in lifetime

(§ 18). Rm 5,20 means that the law of the members came in under the pretext of the law of the mind, in order that the trespass might increase (§ 23). For Rm 6,14 Origen offers two alternatives: sin will have no dominion over Christians, since they are not under the law of the members, or since they are not under the Mosaic law according to the letter (§ 25). Likewise, the law which, according to Rm 7,5, aroused sinful passions in the members, may be the literal law of Moses, but Origen prefers the interpretation with relation to the law of the members. The same alternatives are offered for Rm 7,6, which reads that Christians have been released from the law (§ 26). As an alternative to the interpretation of Rm 8,3 that it is the law of Moses according to the letter which is weak through the flesh, Origen considers that also the law of the members (the law of sin and death) could be intended (§ 30).

In general the texts in which Paul criticizes the function of the Mosaic law could be used by the Marcionites and the gnostics as proof texts for their negative view on the Old Testament. The reason why Origen appealed to the so-called "law of the members" is, that by these comments he offered an alternative to the heretic interpretations. An other advantage of his own interpretations was, that, since the inclination to sin is common to all men, he made clear that thus the texts were relevant also to the Gentiles, whereas the law of Moses applied only to the Jews.

§ 6. The law of Christ

Paul employs the expression *ho nomos tou Christou* in Gal 6,2 and *ennomos Christou* in I Cor 9,21. To Origen "the law of Christ" is one of the senses of *nomos* in the epistle to the Romans (§ 8), but it does not play an important role in this *Commentary*.

In his comment on Rm 2,12 the law of Christ occurs as the law for Christians, according to which they will be judged (§ 4). In his application of Rm 2,17-24 to the Christians he criticizes those who rely on the law of Christ without practising it (§ 7). It is also possible that a catechumen keeps the law of Christ, whereas a baptized believer breaks it (cf. Rm 2,26-27; § 8). Origen had in view the same law in his exposition of Rm 2,14-15, where he observes that the natural law seems to fit in with the laws of the gospel, where the universal standard is natural justice (§ 6).

It appears that three times Origen refers to the law of Christ in order to apply a text concerning the Mosaic law to the Christians. The law of Christ is intrinsically related to the natural law, as to Origen it is Christ, as the Logos, who teaches the natural law to all men (§ 10). Thus Christ may be called *autonomos* (§ 11). Yet, Origen is careful not to identify the law of Christ with the law of nature, because the former is more exacting than the latter (§§ 12, 34). So, in Origen's view the law of Christ is the moral teaching of Christ which occurs in the gospels.

§ 7. The law of faith

In Rm 3,27 Paul opposes the "*nomos* of faith" to the "*nomos* of works" in order to assert that not the works of the Mosaic law but only the principle of faith counts for justification. To Origen the "law of faith" corresponds with the Mosaic law in its spiritual sense (§ 13); he also calls it the "law of God" (§ 18). In his interpretation of Rm 4,13-15 he refers to this "law of faith" with regard to Abraham's faith. He maintains that it cannot be equated to the natural law, since the observance of the latter is not sufficient for receiving justification, which is given only on the ground of faith (§§ 17, 18).

Seeing that, apart from Rm 3,27, Origen does not interpret any instance of *nomos* in this epistle with relation to the "law of faith", it appears that this "law" plays only a minor role in this *Commentary*. Yet, it is remarkable that Origen does not make mention of the "law of faith" when he lists the different senses of *nomos* in his discussions of its homonymity, whereas he does mention some other senses which do not play a role in this *Commentary*, namely "the history written by Moses", "the prophets", and "the psalms" (I,1).

§ 8. The Greek laws or the human laws

Sometimes Origen refers to the Greek or human laws, in order to make clear how they relate to the Mosaic law or to the natural law. For apologetical reasons he observes that although the Greeks made use of laws, the Jews started to live according to laws even before the Greeks, and that the Jewish laws have been promulgated by God and not by men (§ 2). In his interpretation of the designations "Jew" and "Greek" in Rm 3,9 he makes mention of the possibility that a Jew renounces Judaism and embraces the Gentile laws and doctrine. Next, he distinguishes between the written law of the cities and the natural law, which is the law of God (§ 10). In his comment on Rm 2,12a Origen considers the possibility that "law" might also apply to the human laws, so that if one has sinned without a human law, one will perish without law. Maybe Origen applied Rm 2,12b in the same way, which would imply that the Gentiles will be judged according to their laws (§ 5). Likewise, he interprets "law" in Rm 7,4 not only as the Mosaic law according to the letter, but also with regard to all the customs which are in use among the non-Jews; these customs are to be considered as a law to which one has to die (§ 26). Thus Origen shows that these texts also pertain to the Gentiles.

Interesting though these data may be, the impression they give of Origen's view on the Greek laws is too fragmentary to offer a synthesis of it on the ground of this *Commentary*. The only conclusion regarding his interpretation of *nomos* in the epistle to the Romans is, that twice (in Rm 2,12; 7,4) he also applies it to human laws. For an investigation of Origen's view on the Greek laws in relation to the natural law, the Mosaic law and Christian

morality one should consult his apology *Contra Celsum*, in which he responds to Celsus' charge that "the Christians secretly make associations with each other contrary to the laws", and that they "have forsaken their traditional laws"[1]. In this apology Origen asserts that the new laws which the Christians received fit in with the established order[2]. Appealing once again to the natural law as the law of God, he maintains that Christians do live according to the natural law, whereas they do not obey those human laws which contradict the law of God[3].

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. Cf. Gutbrod, 1061-1063.
2. Cf. Dodd, 25-36.
3. Dodd, 25; Räisänen 1983, 131-146.
4. Dodd, 36-37.
5. Bornkamm, 101.
6. Gutbrod, 1062.
7. It is discussed and rejected by Räisänen 1979, 101-117.
8. References in Cranfield, 361-362.
9. For a competent discussion of the arguments one may consult Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, ²1987.
10. Correctly observed by Harl 1972b, 164. For Origen's appeal to homonymity Mrs. Harl refers to his *HomJer* xx,1, where he quotes Aristotle's definition: "Things are called homonyms when they have the name only in common, the essence corresponding with the name being different" (*Categoriae* i,1a). Harl points to the "typological homonymity" of *nomos* which is descerned by Justin, *Dial* 34,1: The Jews understand "The law of the Lord is faultless" (Ps 18,8 LXX) of the law of Moses, whereas it really refers to the new law and the new covenant; Harl 1972b, 165-166.
11. *CatRm* x,3-13. In Origen's exposition of Rm 7,7 (*Philoc* ix,1-2) he gives a list which is slightly different: the law of Moses according to the letter (Gal 3,19; 3,14); the history written by Moses (Gal 4,21); the psalms (Jn 15,25); the prophet Isaiah (I Cor 14,21); the spiritual law (Rm 7,14); the natural law (Rm 2,14).
12. *ComRm* vi,12 (1093C).
13. Scherer, 164.
14. *ComRm* v,1 (1014A).
15. *ComRm* v,6 (1033C).
16. Scherer, 150.
17. *ComRm* v,6 (1033BC).
18. *CatRm* x, *Philoc* ix, *ComRm* ii,8 (891C), iii,6 (937C), iii,7 (942B), iv,4 (972B), iv,5 (977A), v,1 (1014A), v,10 (1050C), vi,8 (1076C), vi,9 (1085A), vi,12 (1093C), vii,1 (1103A). Origen perceives a similar homonymity of the concept of "death" in Rm 6 (*CatRm* xxx, *ComRm* v,10 [1048C-1052B], vi,6 [1068A-1069A]), and of the concept of "spirit" in Rm 8 (*ComRm* vii,1 [1103A-1106B]).
19. For a more exhaustive treatment of the Greek sources see Scherer, 51-84; Hammond 1985, 18-41.
20. It has been edited by Robinson in 1893. Cf. Harl 1983 (chapters i-xx), Junod (chapters xxi-xxvii), and the discussions by Scherer, 51-58, and Hammond 1985, 19-22.
21. Hammond 1981, 50-57; cf. Harl 1972a, 305-316.
22. Perhaps a third passage has survived in chapter xxvii on the hardening of Pharaoh's heart (Rm 9,17-18); see Hammond 1981, 79-81; Hammond 1985, 91-92.
23. This edition has been discussed by Chadwick 1959, 10-42, and by Hammond 1985, 28-34.

24. Scherer, 16-17.
25. Scherer, 18.
26. It has been observed that Ramsbotham did not always respect the divisions of the extracts as they occur in the manuscripts; see Scherer, 67-83; Chadwick 1959, 12-13; Hammond 1985, 22-27.
27. Staab, 35.
28. For more publications see Hammond 1985, 35-39.
29. Mrs. Hammond (1985, 87-97) has proved that tome xi contained the exposition of Rm 9,1-19 and did not run as far as Rm 9,22 or 9,33. Cf. von der Goltz, 93; Chadwick 1959, 40; Birdsall, 219-220.
30. Edited by C.H.E. Lommatzsch in 1836-1837 and by J.-P. Migne in his *Patrologia Graeca* 14, 831-1294. Mrs. Hammond prepares a new critical edition. Rufinus' *Praefatio* and *Epilogus* have been edited anew by M. Simonetti (CCSL 20), 275-277.
31. *ComRm Praefatio* (831-832).
32. Scherer, 86; also E. Preuschen in Harnack 1893, 373.
33. Turner, 490-491.
34. Chadwick 1959, 38-40.
35. Hammond 1985, 53.
36. *ComRm* vii,16 (1145A).
37. Chadwick 1959, 40-41.
38. Chadwick 1959, 40.
39. Hammond 1985, 58-104.
40. The opinions which were held before the publication of the Tura papyrus will be left out of consideration, since this text has thrown a new light on Rufinus' version. Cf. de la Rue in PG 14, 10-11: "Hinc enim fit ut vix Origenem in Origene reperias", and 841AB, 1076D: "Quam infida sit Rufini interpretatio..."; and Schelkle 1956, 443-448, who considers the version as fairly reliable.
41. Scherer, 88-113.
42. Scherer, 117-121.
43. Chadwick 1959, 18-37.
44. Chadwick 1959, 17.
45. Hammond 1985, 43-56.
46. Scherer, 60; Hammond 1985, 176-177.
47. Hammond 1985, 57-58, 204-230; cf. also Bardy, 229-241. In chapter II of the present study Origen's text of the epistle to the Romans will be the starting point for the translations which are offered in the beginning of each section. The differences from the 26th edition of Nestle-Aland's *Novum Testamentum Graece* will be discussed in the notes.
48. See, e.g., Wilckens, 110-170; Sanders 1977, 488-492; Beker, 59-93.
49. Baur, 165-175.
50. Wrede, 72-79 (ed. Rengstorf, 67-74).
51. Schweitzer, 214-221.
52. Stendahl, 201-205.
53. Sanders 1977, 434-442, 474-497.
54. Sanders 1977, 543.

55. Sanders 1977, 547-549.
56. Sanders 1977, 488-489; Sanders 1983, 30.
57. Beker, 77, 92.
58. Dahl, 261.
59. Dahl, 267-269. He observes on the ground of the Codex von der Goltz that the words "in Rome" were also absent from Origen's *Commentary on Romans*, and have been inserted by Rufinus. But Hammond (1985, 193-197) argues that although the whole line *klètoi Ièsou Christou pasin tois ousin en Rômèi agapètois theou* (Rm 1,6b-7a) accidentally missed from Origen's copy of Romans, he undoubtedly knew that the epistle was addressed to the Romans, and commented the passage in this sense. This implies that Rufinus has rather faithfully translated the exposition with regard to the Christians "in Rome"; see *ComRm* i,7 (853A), i,9 (855AB), i,11 (857A), i,13 (858B).
60. Dahl, 271; Campenhausen, 207-244.
61. Campenhausen, 354-376.
62. Nautin, 407-408.
63. *ComRm Praefatio* (833A-835B), x,14 (1273A).
64. *ComRm Praefatio* (835BC), x,13 (1271A).
65. *ComRm* i,8-13 (853B-860B), viii,10 [9 Lommatzsch] (1187C-1188A).
66. Cf. *ComRm* vi,7 (1075A); Gorday, 1-10.
67. Scherer, 124, *ComRm* ii,14 (914A), iii,1 (921C-922C), iii,2 (928BC), viii,1 (1157B), viii,10 [9 Lommatzsch] (1187C-1188A), x,8 (1263C-1264A), x,11 (1267B).
68. *ComRm* iv,5 (978C), vi,7 (1072B), viii,6 [5 Lommatzsch] (1170B), viii,9 [8 Lommatzsch] (1186BC); Sgherri, 277-317.
69. *ComRm* ix,1 (1201C-1203A).
70. For the references see Hanson, 152; de Lange, 86-87; Sgherri, 285-289.
71. *ComRm* ii,9 (892C). Cf. *HomLev* iv,7. For Origen's debates with learned Jews, see de Lange, 89-102.
72. *ComRm* ii,14 (915C). Cf. II Tim 3,7; *HomEx* vii,7.
73. *ComRm Praefatio* (833A).
74. Scherer, 218.
75. *ComRm* v,1 (1008AB).
76. *ComRm* v,i (1008C).
77. *ComRm* vi,7 (1074C), vi,8 (1079A), viii, 12 [11 Lommatzsch] (1198BC). *ComRm* vii,16 (1143C), which corresponds with the Greek tome xi, which was lost, might have been written by Rufinus; cf. also ii,4 (878A) and Cocchini 1984, 119-121.
78. *Philoc* ii, 3, in his Commentary on Ps 1. Cf. Harl 1972b, 180-181; de Lange, 111.
79. *ComRm Praefatio* (833A); cf. Scherer, 218.
80. *ComRm* iv,12 (1002A), viii,8 [7 Lommatzsch] (1181B), viii,11 [10 Lommatzsch] (1191B).
81. *Philoc* xxv,4. Translation by Lewis, 213.
82. As the Greek text of the *Commentary* on this chapter was not available to Rufinus, he must have used *De Principiis* as a subtitute. Cf. *ComRm* vii,16 (1145A); Chadwick 1959, 40-41; Hammond 1985, 60-61; for the theme of Pharaoh's hardened

heart, Boyd, 434-442.

83. *ComRm* viii,11 [10 Lommatzsch] (1191A-1195A).
84. *ComRm Praefatio* (835C-836A).
85. De Lubac, 34; Berner, 99.
86. See, e.g., Verfaillie, 41-50; Völker, 272; Aleith, 104-105; Hasler, 81-82; Schelkle 1956, *passim*; Kyriazi, 218-224; Hanson, 298-300; Vergara, 73-219; Wiles, 50-54; Emond, 46-148; Harl 1972a, 305-316; Harl 1972b, 162-172.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. For Origen's view on the literal and the spiritual sense of the Scripture see de Lubac, *Histoire et Esprit* (1950), Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (1957), and Hanson, *Allegory and Event* (1959), which has been written in reaction to de Lubac. Cf. Torjesen, 3-12. A concise survey of Origen's view on the interpretation of the Scripture is given by Trigg, 120-129.
2. *ComRm* i,10 (855C-856C).
3. *ComRm* i,10 (856C).
4. *ComRm* i,14 (861AB).
5. Cf. Krüger, 20-21, Chadwick 1966, 13-15, de Lange, 64-67, who refer to Aristobulus, Artapanus, Philo, Josephus, Justin, Tatian, Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria and Origen's *Contra Celsum*. E.g., Josephus' *Contra Apionem* is written to prove the antiquity of the Jews and the dependence of Greek civilisation upon them. For Barbarian laws see *DePrinc* ii,9,3.
6. *ComRm* i,15 (861B); cf. i,13 (858B).
7. Cf. Stuhlmacher, 13; Schrenk, 195-196.
8. *ComRm* i,15 (861BC), i,13 (858C); *CatRm* [Staab] xii.
9. *ComRm* i,16 (861C-862B).
10. *ComRm* i,16-17 (863B-864C).
11. Crouzel 1961, 104-106; Crouzel 1962, 93-94; Lackmann, 286-287.
12. Quoted from the *Revised Standard Version*, except for the beginning of v. 9 (*RSV*: *There will be* tribulation and distress...), because Origen reads *orgè kai thumos, thlipsis kai stenogôria* as a whole (*ComRm* iii,6 [883A, 885B], *CatRm* [Staab] xv); cf. Hammond 1985, 295.
13. *ComRm* ii,5-6 (880B-886A), *CatRm* vi, vii, [Staab] xv.
14. Origen reads Rm 3,2b as: *prôtoi gar episteusan ta logia tou theou* (e.g.: Codex von der Goltz, *CatRm* xi,11.18, Scherer, 162,21-22). Rufinus quotes the text according to the translation he was familiar with: *primum quidem quia credita sunt illis eloquia Dei* (*ComRm* ii,14 [913D]), which corresponds with the majority text; but he also translates Origen's reading (*ComRm* ii,14 [915B,13-14, 915C,5-6, 916A,2-3, 916C,12-13, 917D,1]; viii,8 [7 Lommatzsch] [1182B,2-3; cf. § 37]). See Hammond 1985, 302-303.
15. *ComRm* ii,7 (886AB).
16. *ComRm* ii,7 (886BC).
17. *ComRm* ii,7 (886C-887A).
18. *ComRm* ii,7 (887BC); cf. ii,5 (880B).

19. *ComRm* ii,7 (887C-888A).
20. *ComRm* ii,7 (888AB).
21. In *CatRm* vii Rm 2,10 seems to be interpreted in view of the Christians. But in fact it belongs to the context of *ComRm* ii,5-6 (880A-886A), as appears from the reference to Ps 48,13 (LXX), which corresponds with *ComRm* ii,5 (882A), and from the reference to I Cor 15,43, which probably corresponds with *ComRm* ii,5 (881C). Moreover, since the fragment has been heavily abbreviated, its contents are unreliable and cannot be taken into consideration.
22. *ComRm* ii,7 (888B-889A).
23. Schelkle (1954, 300-301; 1956, 77) interprets Origen in the sense that the promise in Rm 2,10 consists not of heavenly and eternal but only of earthly and temporal blessings. But this does not appear from the text of the *Commentary*. On the ground of the texts gathered by Bigg (207-208, 234) and Crouzel (1962, 98-100) it is more probable that Origen had in mind a lower gradation in afterlife. Cf. also *DePrinc* iv,3,10.
24. *ComRm* ii,5.7 (880A, 889D).
25. Cranfield, 153-154; Beker, 80.
26. *ComRm* ii,14 (914B); cf. also viii,8 [7 Lommatzsch] (1183B) (§ 36).
27. *ComRm* ii,8 (890A-C).
28. *ComRm* ii,8 (890C-892A), *CatRm* viii. Cf. the example of Cain in *HomLev* xiv,3.
29. *ComRm* ii,8 (890C).
30. *ComRm* ix,28 (1228C); cf. § 39.
31. If Mrs. Hammond's argumentation is right (see chapter II,2), Rufinus took this comment from Origen's *Stromateis* (Hammond 1985, 101-102).
32. Cf. Beker, 80; Räisänen 1987, 101-106.
33. *ComRm* ii,9 (892A-893A). Cf. Hanson, 299, for the rendering.
34. Koester, 530-541; Myre, 163-181; Banner, 63-68; Spanneut, 253-257.
35. Banner, 56-63, 68-77; Horsley, 35-59.
36. For this distinction see Grant 1952, 19-26. In its physical sense the term occurs in *ComRm* iv,10 (998C); see § 21.
37. *ComRm* ii,11 (895B-896A).
38. *ComRm* ii,11 (896A-897A).
39. *ComRm* ii,11 (897A-C).
40. *ComRm* ii,11 (897C-898B).
41. *ComRm* ii,11 (898B).
42. Beker, 79.
43. Cranfield 173; Schlier 88; this is contended by Sanders 1983, 126-132.
44. *ComRm Praefatio* (835C).
45. Cf. *CCels* v,47; Jerome, *Epistula* 36,1; Ambrosius, *Epistula* 72.
46. *CatRm* x. As it appears to be possible to integrate the two texts, M. Harl's doubts about the mutual relation of the two sources (Harl 1972a, 311-312) are refuted; cf. also Cocchini 1985, 87.
47. *CatRm* x,3-13. One should not attach too great importance to

the way in which Origen introduces the teaching of Christ as one of the senses of *nomos*: *mèpote...* (*CatRm* x,12). It only gives evidence of Origen's cautiousness, not of his uncertainty.

48. *ComRm* ii,12 (898C-899A), *CatRm* x,15-16.
49. *CatRm* x,16-17. From *Philoc* ix,2 it appears that the Stoic concept of the *fusikai* or *koinai ennoiai* corresponds with the natural law; cf. *CCels* i,4 and *SVF* ii,28,19ff; 154,28f.
50. *CatRm* x,17-19; cf. *ComRm* ii,12 (899AB). Cf. also Philo, *DeSpecLeg* i,9-11. The allegorical interpretation of circumcision receives more attention in the digressions in *ComRm* ii,13 (907B-910A).
51. *ComRm* ii,9 (892D-893A), v,6 (1033B), vi,8 (1080A), Scherer, 204.
52. Yet, cf. the texts gathered by Lietzmann, 32, in his comment on I Cor 7,18.
53. *ComRm* ii,13 (899D-900A).
54. *CatRm* x,19-20.
55. The same idea in Clement, *Strom* vii,53,3.
56. *ComRm* ii,13 (900C-901B), *CatRm* x,20-24.2-3. Cf. Justin, *Dial* xlvii,1-4.
57. *ComRm* ii,13 (902B-907B), *CatRm* x,25-40.
58. *ComRm* ii,13 (903A)
59. *CatCor* xxxvii,15-18; *HomGen* iii,5.
60. *ComRm* ii,13 (910A-C, 911C-912C). The so-called "Stoic" fragment in *ComRm* ii,13 (910BC) really is Marcionite; cf. Harnack 1919, 68.
61. *ComRm* ii,13 (910C-911B). Cf. Philo, *DeSpecLeg* i,2; Barnabas 9,6 and the texts given by Windisch *ad locum*.
62. *ComRm* ii,13 (900A, 901C); see Hammond 1985, 300-301.
63. *ComRm* ii,13 (900B); cf. ii,14 (914CD).
64. *ComRm* ii,13 (900BC). Cf. Clement, *Strom* i,95,3.
65. *ComRm* ii,13 (912D-913B). Cf. Ambrosius, *Epistula* 72,19-21.
66. *ComRm* ii,14 (914D-915A).
67. For Origen's reading of Rm 3,2 see note 14. Rufinus translated *to perissòn*, the advantage (Rm 3,1), by the comparative *amplius* (*perissón*; cf. Blass-Debrunner § 60,3). Therefore I translate *amplius* by "the advantage". Cf. Hammond 1985, 302.
68. *ComRm* ii,14 (914A). Similar observations in *ComRm* iii,1 (921C-922C), iii,2 (928BC), viii,1 (1157BC), viii,10 [9 Lommatzsch] (1187C-1188A), x,8 (1263C-1264A), x,9 (1267B).
69. *ComRm* ii,14 (914A-915A).
70. *ComRm* ii,14 (915AB).
71. *ComRm* ii,14 (915BC); cf. I Tim 3,7; *HomEx* vii,7.
72. *ComRm* ii,14 (916AB), *CatRm* xi,1-8; cf. *ComRm* viii,8 [7 Lommatzsch] (1182B) (§ 36).
73. *ComRm* ii,14 (916BC), *CatRm* xi,8-14. Mrs. Hammond (1985, 306) states that it is Rufinus who adds that the advantage consists in the Gentiles' faith. The fact that this part of the comment does not occur in the catena extract (xi) has probably induced her to this statement, but it is not convincing, since the catenist may also have left out some sentences.

74. *ComRm* ii,14 (916C-917A).
75. *ComRm* ii,14 (918A-922B).
76. *ComRm* ii,14 (923B-928A).
77. Cf. *ComRm* ii,14 (914A-915B).
78. Scherer, 124 (translation by Gorday, 49-50); cf. *ComRm* iii,1 (922C-923A).
79. *ComRm* iii,1 (923A). Gorday, 285, suggests that this is Rufinus' attempt to ward off any universalistic tone in Origen's statement, but he admits that such a division of humankind into the "saved" and the "not saved" recurs periodically in Origen-Rufinus on Romans.
80. For a survey of the difficulties in this verse one may consult Cranfield, 187-191.
81. Cf. Sanders 1983, 82, 125.
82. Mrs. Hammond argues that probably Origen's reading was: *ti oun; proechometha; ou pantôs* (or perhaps the subjunctive *proechômetha*). In any case, there is no evidence that he read *ti oun prokatechomen perisson*, which is represented in the Latin version: *quid ergo tenemus amplius* (so what advantage do we have? - *ComRm* iii,2 [928A,C]). Rufinus may have left out Origen's comment because it was not relevant to this text. See Hammond 1985, 306-307.
83. *ComRm* iii,2 (928B-929A).
84. Scherer, 130-134; *ComRm* iii,2 (929A-930B).
85. *ComRm* iii,2 (930B-D).
86. Scherer, 134, *ComRm* iii,2 (930D-931A).
87. Cf. *SVF* iii, 77-80; *CCels* v,37. The right text in *ComRm* iii,2 (931A) occurs in the footnote (18): *legem autem scriptam positione legem appellant*; see Hammond 1985, 56.
88. Scherer, 134-136, *ComRm* iii,2 (931AB).
89. Scherer, 136-138, *ComRm* iii,2 (931BC).
90. Cf. Pohlenz I,56; II,33; Festugière, 13-14, 100, 198; *SVF* i,40,32ff; ii,28,11ff; 215,6ff. In *SVF* ii,28,23 *prôtèn* is to be corrected into *deuteran*; cf. Festugière, 198.
91. Cf. *HomEx* iv,8; *CatPs118*, 128; *ComMt* xiii,23 (p.242); xvii,33 (p.689); *HomLc* xix (p.114); *CatRm* xxxviii; *CCels* iii,62.
92. Cf. Harnack 1919, 97; Scherer, 137.
93. In the commentary to her edition of *CatPs118*, 714.
94. *ComRm* iii,2 (931C). The same interpretation occurs in *ComJoh* i,270-275; ii,105-107; *DePrinc* i,3,6. Cf. Gögler, 252-259.
95. Scherer, 130-134, 138-142, *ComRm* iii,2-5 (929A-930B, 931C-937C). Cf. Teichtweier, 217-218.
96. Cf. Ez 16,51-52 and the references to Origen's works in Scherer, 138, and in Ropes, 42-43.
97. *ComRm* iii,2 (931C-932B), Scherer, 138.
98. *ComRm* iii,2 (932C).
99. For the translation of *heôs henos* see Schelkle 1956, 102-103.
100. Scherer, 140.
101. *ComRm* iii,3 (934AC). For the relation between the Greek text and the Latin version see Chadwick 1959, 33-34; Cocchini 1985, 136-137.
102. Scherer, 142, *ComRm* iii,5 (937BC)

103. Cf. Beker, 80; Sanders 1983, 82.
104. Scherer, 142-144; *ComRm* iii,6 (937C-938B). Cf. *ComRm* ii,2 (873C) (in his comment on Rm 2,1 Origen quotes Rm 3,19a as a general maxim, in order to introduce his statement that similarly the gospel speaks to the bishops of the churches and not to the secular authorities); *ComRm* vii,18 (1152BC) (§ 32); Scherer, 202 (§ 18).
105. Scherer, 144-146, *ComRm* iii,6 (938B-939C). For the allusion to Rm 10,4, cf. § 34.
106. Scherer, 146-148; cf. *ComRm* iii,6 (939CD).
107. Scherer, 148, *ComRm* iii,6 (941A, 939A). Cf. vi,8 (1080A, 1083B); *SVF* iii, 77-80.
108. Cf. the Aristotelian distinction of the efficient and the material cause in note 138.
109. From Clement, *Strom* ii,34,4 we learn that, in order to prove that the law was not good, "some sects" appealed to Rm 3,20b (cf. *Strom* iv,9,6). From *DePrinc* ii,5,4 we know that the appeal to Lk 6,43-44 (about the tree and its fruit) was in use with the Marcionites. According to the Valentinian *Evangelium Philippi* 122,5-12 the law was the tree of knowledge of good and evil which created death for those who ate of it.
110. Scherer, 148, *ComRm* iii,6 (941AB). Cf. Clement, *Strom* 1,171.
111. Jonas, 266-277, points to Plotinus, *Enneads* ii,9,15, who raised against the gnostics that because of their anti-cosmic attitude they lacked a theory of virtue. Jonas demonstrates that in the gnostic view the moral law makes the souls subservient to the demiurge. For that reason the gnostics repudiated allegiance to nature either through a libertinistic or an ascetic morality. Cf. also Koschorke, 109-117. - *De Resurrectione (Epistula ad Rheginum)* 44,17-21 has been translated in the sense that the law of nature is called death: "He [the Son of God] walked in this place where thou dost dwell, speaking about the law of nature. But I call it 'death'"; thus Malinine e.a., 61; similarly Layton, 13; M.L.Peel in Attridge, 149-150. It seems, however, that a more convincing translation of the passage is offered by van den Broek, 155, who renders that the Son of God contradicted ("weersprak") the law of nature, i.e. death. Cf. note 200.
112. Contrary to the text in Migne's edition, *in omnes et super omnes*, (*ComRm* iii,7 [941B]), Rufinus really read *in omnes*, as Mrs. Hammond (1985, 310) observes. She supposes that Origen read *eis pantas*.
113. Sanders 1977, 489.
114. *ComRm* iii,7 (941C-942A).
115. *ComRm* iii,7 (942BC), Scherer, 148-150.
116. *ComRm* iii,7 (943BC), Scherer, 150.
117. *ComRm* iii,7 (944AB). Wiles, 51, correctly observes that Origen never claims that this distinction is an invariable rule.
118. *ComRm* iii,7 (942D-943A), Scherer, 150.
119. Scherer, 150, *ComRm* iii,7 (944BC).

120. Here appears the sense of *aequitas* which also occurs in the comment on Rm 1,17 (§ 2).
121. *ComRm* iii,7 (944D-945A). Cf. Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* iv,34,2 and Clement, *Paed* 1,73,2 for a similar appeal to Rm 3,21ff. Of course, Marcion had cut out everything that testified to this harmony; see Harnack 1924, 104*.
122. *ComRm* iii,7 (945B). Cf. Stuhlmacher, 13.
123. *ComRm* iii,7 (941C, 944D, 945A, 945B), Scherer, 154.
124. See chapter I,1.
125. Scherer, 162-164, *ComRm* iii,9 (952B-953B).
126. Scherer, 164-168, *ComRm* iii,9 (953C-954C).
127. *ComRm* iii,9 (955A).
128. This is misunderstood by Melanchthon, 118-119, who supposes that this interpretation was meant seriously. Therefore he writes: "Illud est ridiculum".
129. Scherer, 168.
130. *ComRm* iii,9 (955A).
131. Cf. Sanders 1977, 489; Beker, 82.
132. *ComRm* ii,5 (880A), ii,7 (889D), Scherer, 168. Cf. Clement, *Strom* v,18,8. 134,2; vi,47,2 for the quotation of Rm 3,29, and Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* iii,10,2; iv,22,2; v,22,1 for the quotation of Rm 3,30.
133. Scherer, 169.
134. The papyrus reads *agenètos* (unoriginated), but Scherer, 171, translates it as *agennètos* (ungenerated). Both terms are often confused in the manuscripts; see Lampe s.v.
135. Scherer, 168-170, *ComRm* iii,10 (955AB).
136. *ComRm* iii,10 (955BC).
137. Scherer, 170. Chadwick (1959, 16) suggested that the sentence is a point made in the course of a discussion and not Origen's final conclusion. But this recognition of Jewish Christianity also occurs in Origen's interpretation of Rm 2,25a; 14,16-18; 14,20b-21 (§§ 8, 42, 43). This proves that the sentence really could be Origen's own conclusion.
138. Perhaps Origen has in mind the Aristotelian doctrine of the four causes, of which Philo, *De Cher* 125-126, renders the material cause as *to ex hou* (e.g. the material from which a house is built) and the efficient cause as *to di' hou* (e.g. instruments for building a house). See the note in Colson's edition, volume ii, 486; Aristotle, *Physica* ii,3,194b-195a. Cf. *CatEph* i; Cadiou, 279-280; Blanc, 118-119.
139. C.H. Turner proposed to insert *ek pisteôs* (see Ramsbotham's edition of *CatRm*, 223,12 note); this is adopted by Scherer, 172,12.
140. Scherer, 170-172; cf. *ComRm* iii,10 (955C-956C).
141. *ComRm* iii,10 (957AB).
142. See, e.g., Beker, 81; Käsemann, 98-99.
143. Cranfield, 223-224; Schlier, 118-119.
144. Sanders 1983, 98.
145. Rufinus (*ComRm* iii,11 [957C]) translates *Ebion*, but this unhistorical designation does not occur in Origen's works; cf. Harnack 1919, 77-78; Sgherri, 288. Also Rufinus' observa-

tion on the Trinity must be inauthentic; cf. Sgherri, 288.

146. *ComRm* iii,11 (957B-958A).
147. Scherer, 174.
148. In v.11 Origen probably read *peritomèn* instead of *peritomès*; cf. Hammond 1985, 317.
149. In v.11 Origen read *eis to logisthènai autois dikaiosunèn*; cf. Hammond 1985, 317-318.
150. Sanders 1977, 489; Sanders 1983, 30ff.
151. *ComRm* iv,2 (966B-967C), Scherer, 188-190.
152. For the text of Rm 11,25b-26a see Hammond 1985, 415.
153. Scherer, 190. Cf. Origen's comment on Rm 2,25a (§ 8).
154. Cf. Scherer, 191, note 12.
155. *ComRm* iv,2 (968C-969A).
156. *ComRm* iv,2 (969A).
157. *ComRm* iv,2 (969C).
158. Cranfield, 238-239. Cf. Sanders 1977, 489.
159. *ComRm* iv,3 (970BC). From the papyrus (Scherer, 194-196) it appears that Origen's interpretation of the relation between the promise to Abraham and his righteousness by faith was more complicated than is visible in Rufinus' rendering. But because this question does not regard the theme of this investigation, I confine the discussion to Rufinus' abridgement.
160. *ComRm* iv,3 (970CD).
161. Cf. his comment on Rm 3,21.27 (§§ 12, 13).
162. Philo, *DeAbr* 5-6, 275-276.
163. See, e.g., his observation on Gen 26,5 in his *SelGen* (121B).
164. Philo, *QuisRerDivHer* 94-95; *DeAbr* 275-276 follows on a discussion of Abraham's faith, 262-274. Clement of Alexandria echoes this interpretation in *Strom* v,i,4,1.
165. Cf. Cranfield, 240-241.
166. Chadwick 1959, 25.
167. Chadwick (1959, 21-22) is mistaken in supposing that the question is, whether the Mosaic or the natural law is meant in Rm 4,15b. Origen means that Rm 4,14 can be explained with regard to both laws.
168. *ComRm* iv,4 (971BC); Scherer, 196.
169. Philo's comment on Gen 12,4, "Abraham went as the Lord spoke to him", in *DeMigrAbr* 127-128: "This is the aim extolled by the best philosophers, to live agreeably to nature (*to akolouthôs tèi fusei zèn*); and it is attained whenever the mind, having entered on virtue's path, walks in the track of right reason and follows God..." (Colson's translation, volume iv, 205).
170. *ComRm* iv,4 (973D-974B), Scherer, 196-198. From the forward place of the fragment in Scherer, 196,23-198,3 we can infer that the corresponding (and longer) text in the version, viz. *ComRm* iv,4 (973D,4-974B,6), originally followed on the section rendered in *ComRm* iv,4 (971B,5-C,12). The sequence is logical, since the theme of the distinction of the law of Moses and the law of faith is continued. Cf. Scherer, 109; Chadwick 1959, 22-23.

171. Scherer, 198-200.
172. Since Marcion had left out Rm 4 from his *Apostolicum*, it is improbable that, for the interpretation of this verse, Origen had in mind the Marcionite heretics. Cf. Harnack 1924, 104*.
173. *ComRm* iv,4 (971C-972B), Scherer, 200-202.
174. Scherer, 202, *ComRm* iv,4 (972D-973A). For the idea Chadwick (1959, 24) refers to *HomLev* xi,2 and to *SelPs* ii,5 (1106C-1108A), xxxvii,1,1 (1369B-1372D).
175. Scherer, 202.
176. Scherer, 202 (cf. *CatRm* xxv,10-12), *ComRm* iv,4 (972C).
177. *ComRm* iv,4 (973AB), Scherer, 198.
178. *ComRm* iv,4 (973BC).
179. Scherer, 204. Cf. the interpretation of Rm 3,9 (*ComRm* iii,2 [930B]; § 10), where Rm 4,15b is also interpreted with regard to the natural law.
180. *ComRm* iv,4 (973BC).
181. Scherer, 204.
182. Cf. Sanders 1977, 489-491; Beker, 87. 99.
183. Lietzmann, 55; Michel, 170.
184. Cranfield, 242-243; Käsemann, 115.
185. Schlier, 131.
186. For Origen's view on the apocrypha which are related to the Old Testament see Ruwet 1943, 42-58; 1944, 143-159, 311-321; Harnack 1919, 34-50.
187. Scherer, 204-206, *ComRm* iv,5 (974B-975A).
188. In *Jubilees* 11,16-17 we read that Abraham began to pray to the Creator when he was 14 years old. This is the time at which, according to Stoic philosophy, one has attained the age of reason (*SVF* ii,215). According to *Jubilees* 12,16-24 the Lord's call of Abraham (Gen 12,1-3) is an answer to a prayer for salvation and guidance of his. Thus Abraham is supposed to have believed in God naturally before he had been called. Cf. note 49 and Josephus, *Ant* i,154-157.
189. Cf. the discussion of Rm 4,13 (§ 17) and note 164.
190. Scherer, 206-208, *ComRm* iv,5 (975C-976A).
191. *ComRm* iv,5 (976B), Scherer, 208.
192. *ComRm* iv,5 (976B-977A), Scherer, 208.
193. *ComRm* iv,5 (977BC), Scherer, 208.
194. *ComRm* iv,5 (978C-979B), Scherer, 210; cf. *HomSam* i,17. In *CatCor* vii Origen does not relate this text to the Gentiles and the Jews, but to the Christians and the unbelievers.
195. *ComRm* iv,7 (988AB).
196. Cf. the views on the structure of Rm 1-8 as exposed by Beker, 64-69, 78-86.
197. *ComRm* vi,7 (1069BC).
198. See *ComRm* iv,8 (988D), where Rm 8,7 is quoted; *ibidem* (989C), about Rm 7,22-23; *ComRm* iv,19 (998D-999A), against the Marcionite disparagement of the law; *CatRm* xxviii and *ComRm* iv,11 (999CD), about being a sinner under the law.
199. For this distinction, see Grant 1952, 19-26; Emond, 86.
200. *ComRm* iv,10 (998BC). Cf. *ComRm* v,1 (1019A); *HomNum* vii,3 (p.43); Seneca, *Quaestiones Naturales* vi,12: *mors naturae lex*

est; cf. also note 111.

201. Cf. the foregoing section (§ 20).
202. Mrs. Hammond (1985, 331) suggests that Origen may have read *haimatos* instead of *thanatou* in Rm 5,10; cf. *ComRm* iv,12 (1002C,2.9.11.15, 1003C,6-1004A,1).
203. *ComRm* v,1 (1003D-1005A).
204. *ComRm* vi,7 (1069C) and § 20.
205. As for Origen's text, Mrs. Hammond (1985, 332-334) suggests that in his manuscript *ho thanatos* may have missed before *diélthen* in v.12; cf. *ComRm* v,i (1013A,1-6, 1005b,3 [where *mors* must be omitted], 1005B,15), v,7 (1036B,14); and the other texts given by Hammond, 333. The reading without *ho thanatos* corresponds with the western text. - In v.14 Origen omitted *kai* and *mè* and read: *epi tous hamartèsantas* (Codex von der Goltz, *ComRm* v,1 [1003D, 1007C, etc.]; *ComJoh* xx,388); but he also knew the longer text (*ComRm* v,1 [1019A]). See Hammond 1985, 219-220.
206. Beker, 85.
207. Cf. Cranfield, 272-273.
208. *ComRm* v,1 (1005A-1007A).
209. *ComRm* v,1 (1008). This parable is discussed in chapter I,3.
210. *ComRm* v,1 (1009A-C). Cf. Clement, *Strom* iii,65,1.
211. *ComRm* v,1 (1009C-1010A).
212. *ComRm* v,4 (1029CD). For the translation see Bigg, 204-205.
213. *ComRm* v,1 (1010A-C).
214. Cf. *DePrinc* i,5,2.
215. *ComRm* v,1 (1011AB).
216. *ComRm* v,1 (1011C-1012C).
217. *ComRm* v,1 (1012C-1013A). Also on the ground of this passage Mrs. Hammond (1985, 332-333) infers that in Origen's text *ho thanatos* may have missed before *diélthen*; cf. note 205.
218. *ComRm* v,1 (1011C).
219. "Ambrosiaster" and Augustine were the first who related this doctrine to Rm 5,12; see Freundorfer, 132-146. Irenaeus was the first who taught this doctrine as such, but he did not found it on Rm 5,12 but on Rm 5,19; see Freundorfer, 107-110.
220. See Hammond 1985, 335.
221. See Freundorfer, 110-114; Gaudel, 333-335.
222. *ComRm* v,1 (1009C-1010A).
223. *ComRm* v,1 (1011C-1012C).
224. E.g. Cranfield, 282; Michel, 187; Schlier, 164-165.
225. Sanders 1983, 24, 35-36; cf. Räisänen 1987, 145-147.
226. According to Clement, *Strom* iv,9,6, the heretics "who disparage the law" appealed to Rm 3,20b ("through the law comes knowledge of sin") and to Rm 5,13a. This implies that also by these gnostics *achri ... nomou* was understood as: as long as the law of Moses was in force (sin was in the world); otherwise they could not have appealed to it in order to criticize the law of Moses.
227. *ComRm* v,1 (1007B).
228. Cf. *ComRm* v,1 (1007C).
229. In order to demonstrate that the law is the source of sin, the gnostics, according to Clement, *Strom* iv,9,6, appealed not only to Rm 3,20b and Rm 5,13a (see note 226), but also to Rm 7,8b: "without law sin is dead". Cf. Origen's *ComJoh* ii,106, where Rm 5,13b and Rm 7,8b-9a are connected.
230. Rufinus' reading *in hoc mundo* (*ComRm* v,1 [1003D]) indicates that the Greek text was: *en tôi kosmôi*; see Hammond 1985, 336.
231. *ComRm* v,1 (1013A-1014A).
232. Cf. Liddell-Scott and Bauer, s.v.
233. *ComRm* v,1 (1014AB).
234. *ComRm* v,1 (1014C-1015A). Origen had offered more or less the same reasoning, with references to Rm 5,13b and Rm 7,9, in his comment on Rm 3,9 (§ 10).
235. Cf. *ComRm* v,1 (1011AB, 1012C-1013A).
236. *ComRm* v,1 (1015C).
237. *ComRm* v,1 (1015D-1016B); cf. iii,6 (939B).
238. *ComRm* v,1 (1007C). The inclusive interpretation of *mechri Môuseôs* is presupposed also in Origen's *ComJoh* xx,364-366; in Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* iii,18,7; and in Clement, *Strom* iii,64,2.
239. Cf. Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* iii, 18,7.
240. In Rufinus' version: *praevaricatione custodis* (*ComRm* v,1 [1016D]). By *praevaricatio* he translates *parabasis* from Rm 5,14, which originally means: going aside. See Liddell-Scott s.v.
241. Cf. the interpretation of Rm 5,12 (*ComRm* v,1 [1012C-1013A]).
242. *ComRm* v,1 (1016D-1018A).
243. The Greek text of *usque ad legem* (*ComRm* v,1 [1017C]) was probably *achri nomou*; in the discussion of Origen's comment on Rm 5,13 we saw that to him the sense of this expression is ambiguous (before the law, or: as long as the law was in force).
244. *ComRm* v,1 (1018A).
245. *ComRm* v,1 (1018B).
246. *ComRm* v,1 (1018D).
247. *ComRm* v,4 (1029CD).
248. *ComRm* v,1 (1018BC; cf. 1011CD).
249. *ComRm* v,2 (1024A-C).
250. *ComRm* v,1 (1018C; 1014A).
251. See note 205.
252. By *moriendi lege* Origen does not refer to the Pauline expression in Rm 8,2, but to the physical sense of the law of nature, according to which one is bound to die; cf. § 21.
253. *ComRm* v,1 (1019A-C).
254. *ComRm* v,1 (1007C).
255. *ComRm* v,1 (1019C-1020B).
256. *ComRm* v,2 (1021B-1022A).
257. *ComRm* v,1 (1007C).
258. *ComRm* v,1 (1013AB).
259. *ComRm* v,1 (1013C-1015A).
260. *ComRm* v,1 (1017C).
261. *ComRm* v,1 (1007C, 1018A, 1019A-C).
262. *ComRm* v,1 (1018C); v,2 (1024B).

263. *ComRm* v,1 (1018B).
264. *ComRm* v,1 (1009C-1010A, 1018B).
265. See *DePrinc* i,8,1 (in the edition of Görgemanns-Knapp: 252-255, 272-279), ii,8,3, ii,9,2.6. Cf. Teichtweier 97-101; Harl 1987, 238-258. Bigg, 205, also detects a reference to "the character of antenatal sin" in *ComRm* v,1 (1018B). Likewise, Verfaillie, 26. Cf. the references given by Hammond 1985, 52 (*ComRm* i,18 [867C], v,2 [1026C-1027A], v,4 [1029CD], v,9 [1046D-1047C]).
266. *ComRm* v,1 (1018B).
267. E.g. *Philoc* ix,1, *CatRm* x.
268. Cf. *DePrinc* i,5,3 in the edition of Görgemanns-Knapp, 203-205.
269. *ComRm* v,1 (1018D).
270. *ComRm* v,4 (1029D).
271. For a discussion of Origen's view on the historical authenticity of Gen 2-3, see Hanson, 269-272.
272. *DePrinc* iv,3,1; *CCels* iv,40.
273. *ComRm* v,1 (1010A-C).
274. *ComRm* v,1 (1018C), v,2 (1024B).
275. *ComRm* v,1 (1012C-1013A, 1017BC).
276. *ComRm* v,1 (1015C).
277. *ComRm* v,2 (1024B).
278. Cf. Torjesen, 70-107, who concludes from other works of Origen that the organizing principle of his exegesis is his concept of the journey of the soul as the means of redemption. In other terms one might say that Origen was most interested in the personal development of man.
279. Cf. e.g. Cranfield, 292; Michel, 192.
280. *ComRm* v,6 (1032B-1033A).
281. For the identification of the natural law and the law of the mind, cf. Horsley, 41.
282. *ComRm* v,6 (1033BC).
283. *ComRm* v,6 (1034AB).
284. *ComRm* v,7 (1035B-D). Similar texts about natural morality occur in *ComRm* i,19 (870C), ii,13 (909C); cf. Vergara, 115-117.
285. *ComRm* v,7 (1035D-1036A).
286. Cf. Wiles, 115-117.
287. *ComRm* vi,3 (1059C-1060A), vi,4 (1063D).
288. Clement, *Strom* iii,61.
289. *ComRm* vi,1 (1059A; cf. 1055D).
290. *CatRm* xxxi,50-53.
291. *ComRm* vi,1 (1059A).
292. *CatRm* xxxi,55-61.
293. Cf. Molland, 121.
294. *ComRm* vi,2 (1059AB).
295. Cf. Cranfield, 331-335.
296. *ComRm* vi,7 (1069C); cf. § 21.
297. *ComRm* vi,7 (1069C-1070C).
298. *CatRm* xxxv, *ComRm* vi,7 (1069C, 1070D-1071B).
299. The same interpretation occurs in *ComJoh* xiii,43; *ComMt* xii,4 (p.74).
300. For the contradiction with *EpAfr* 14 (20) see Sgherri, 11, and de Lange, 33-34, 161. Cf. *HomGen* vi,3; *HomJos* i,3; Sgherri, 104-107.
301. *ComRm* vi,7 (1069D-1070C, 1070B-1073B), *CatRm* xxxv.
302. *ComRm* vi,7 (1073C-1074A).
303. *ComRm* vi,7 (1072AB). Cf. *ComJoh* i,7; Simon, 91.
304. *ComRm* vi,7 (1074B).
305. Cf. Scherer, 136 (§ 10).
306. *ComRm* vi,7 (1070BC).
307. Mrs. Hammond (1985, 221-222) supposes, that the impression of a contradiction with the first interpretation is due to Rufinus, and that Origen really offered two alternative interpretations.
308. Cf. *ComRm* v,1 (1008).
309. *ComRm* vi,7 (1074C-1075B). It is remarkable that in *ComMt* xii,4 (written in 249, i.e. after the *ComRm* has been written; see Nautin, 376, 381) Origen identifies the law of the mind and the law of the members also in Rm 7,2-3. The law of the mind, which he equates with the spiritual law, is the husband to whom the soul was given by God as wife; thus Origen interprets Rm 7,2a. He does not specify which is the law that dies, according to his understanding of Rm 7,2b. The adulterous relationship, described in Rm 7,3, arises when the soul has been joined to another husband, namely the law of the flesh, which is identical with the law of the members. Thus the law of the members is an adulterer of the soul. Cf. *CatMt* 274.
310. Except for the reference in Clement, *ExcTheod* 67,1, which does not relate to the law.
311. *ComRm* vi,7 (1070C).
312. Rufinus observes that for Rm 7,6 he also knew the reading *a lege mortis* instead of *a lege mortui*; he prefers the latter reading (*ComRm* vi,7 [1075B]), which indeed corresponds with Origen's text: *apo tou nomou apothanontes*. See Hammond 1985, 220-222.
313. *ComRm* vi,7 (1075B-1076A).
314. *ComRm* vi,7 (1076AB), *CatRm* xxxvi. The trinitarian wording in *ComRm* vi,7 (1076B) might stem from Rufinus. Cf. *DePrinc* i,3,4 (p. 168-169).
315. *CatRm* xxxvi.
316. Cranfield, 341-344, 350-353; Schlier, 221-226; Beker, 239; cf. Kümmel, 74-89.
317. Hammond 1981, 50-67. The ninth chapter of the *Philocalia* has also been studied by Scherer, 51-58; Harl, 1972a. Cf. chapter I,2.
318. *ComRm* vi,8 (1076C-1079A); cf. *Philoc* ix,3; Hammond 1981, 57.
319. *ComRm* vi,8 (1079A).
320. Cf. Hammond 1981, 58. She observes that it is very unlikely that Origen presented this interpretation as baldly as Rufinus does. - It is important that her interpunction is different from Migne's; she reads a point after the first

absit in *ComRm* vi,8 (1079A,7), so that the second *absit* is the subject of *sufficiat*.

321. Yet, Marcion has not left out Rm 7,7a from his *Apostolicum* (however, instead of *ho nomos hamartia;* he read *hoti nomos hamartia;*). He must have understood *nomos* as the moral commandments of the law. See Harnack 1924, 106-109, 106*; Orbe, 111-113.
322. *ComRm* vi,8 (1097A-1081A), *Philoc* ix,2.
323. See chapter I,1, note 11; Hammond 1981, 56-57; cf. Harl 1972a, 306-308.
324. *ComRm* vi,8 (1079A-1081A).
325. *ComRm* vi,8 (1081C).
326. *CatRm* xxxvii. Cf. Hammond 1981, 58-59, 64.
327. *ComRm* vi,8 (1081BC), *CatRm* xxxviii. Cf. Hammond 1981, 60-61.
328. Thus the gnostic Epiphanes in Clement, *Strom* iii,7-9, which is discussed by Orbe, 102-104. Marcion retained the negation that the law is sin (Rm 7,7a) in his text of Romans and read: "But I had not known sin except through the law. Sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me" (Rm 7,7b.8a/11a); see Harnack 1924, 106*.
329. Cf. Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* iii,18,7; Clement, *Strom* iii,76,1-2; 84,1.
330. Cf. *CatRm* xxxviii,1-2.
331. It is quoted in the comments on Rm 3,9 (*ComRm* iii,2 [930BC]; § 10); Rm 3,19-20 (Scherer, 144, *ComRm* iii,6 [938C]; § 11); Rm 5,13 (*ComRm* v,1 [1013C]; § 22); Rm 6,17 (not discussed in this study; *ComRm* vi,3 [1061A]); lastly on Rm 7,7 (*ComRm* vi,8 [1081A]).
332. *ComRm* vi,8 (1081C-1082C), *CatRm* xxxix,1-18. On the ground of the other references to Rm 7,9a in this *Commentary* (see the previous note) I do not agree with Mrs. Hammond's suggestion (1981, 62), that it is Rufinus who ties down the interpretation to the natural law, as distinct from the catena extract, in which the question which law is referred to is left open.
333. Basically the same interpretation, albeit without an explicit reference to the natural law, occurs in *CatPs118*,9; *HomIs* v,3 (p.267); *ComJoh* ii,106; *CCels* iii,62. Except for *CatPs118*,9, these texts are discussed by Orbe, 95-98.
334. Clement, *Strom* iv,9,6.
335. *ComRm* v,1 (1015AB).
336. Cf. Cranfield, 352; Schlier, 224.
337. *ComRm* v,1 (1015AB), vi,8 (1082C-1083B); cf. *CatRm* xxxix,19-25. See Orbe, 104-107; Hammond 1981, 62-63. Mrs. Hammond observes rightly: "Origen may have thought that sin lived in the soul before the soul entered the body, but this is stated neither by Rufinus nor in the catena extract".
338. Cf. the exposition of Rm 3,19-20 (§ 11).
339. *ComRm* vi,8 (1083BC).
340. *CatRm* xxxix,26-30. Ramsbotham observes that Origen refers to an earlier expositor. It is remarkable that Harnack (1924, 106-109) infers that Marcion must have understood "law" in Rm 7,7-13 as "the moral commandments of the law", which draws near to the natural law (cf. Orbe, 112-113). Yet, it is unlikely that Origen refers to Marcion in a positive sense. So far it is not possible to identify the earlier expositor.
341. Mrs. Hammond (1981, 63) supposes that the previous interpretation applied either to law in general or to the Mosaic law.
342. *ComRm* vi,8 (1084AB), *CatRm* xl.
343. Cf. Heracleon in *ComJoh* xiii,420. In *DePrinc* ii,5,4 Origen quotes Rm 7,12-13 against the Marcionites. Yet, Rm 7,12.13b also occurred in Marcion's *Apostolicum* (Harnack 1924, 106-109, 106*), and Rm 7,12 is quoted in a positive sense in Ptolemaeus, *Epistula ad Floram* 6,6.
344. *ComRm* iii,7 (944AB) (§ 12).
345. In Rm 7,25 Origen reads *eucharistô tôi theôi* (Codex von der Goltz; *CatRm* xliv,4), whereas Rufinus keeps to the Latin text *gratia dei* (= *hè charis tou theou*). See Hammond 1985, 359-360.
346. Cf. Kümmel, 89-134; Schlier, 229; Käsemann, 191-192; Beker, 215-218, 238-243; Räisänen 1987, 109-113.
347. Cf. Cranfield, 342-347; Michel, 238-246.
348. See chapter I,1.
349. *ComRm* vi,9 (1085AB), *CatRm* xli. Mrs. Hammond (1981, 68) stresses that Origen introduces the suggestion of *prosôpopoiia* tentatively (*ei mè pou eipômen...*; *CatRm* xli).
350. In the *ComRm* Rm 7,14a is quoted in i,10 (856C), ii, (890C), ii,13 (907B), iii,7 (944A), vi,7 (1071AB), vi,9 (1085C), vi,11 (1092C), *Philoc* ix,2. Quotations of Rm 7,14a prior to Origen: Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* iii,18,7; Clement, *Strom* i,169,2, iii,83,4, iv,11,1.
351. *ComRm* vi,9 (1085C).
352. *CatRm* xli.
353. Hammond 1981, 68.
354. *ComRm* vi,9 (1086A); cf. ii,11 (895A); *ComJoh* x,28-29.
355. *ComRm* vi,9 (1086A-C); cf. *CatRm* xlii.
356. The Marcionites explained Rm 7,18a in the sense that Paul was speaking against the Creator; see Clement, *Strom* iii,76,3; cf. Harnack 1924, 310*, 323*. It is also quoted by Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* iii,20,3.
357. *ComRm* vi,9 (1087A-1089A).
358. See Scherer, 136, *ComRm* v,6 (1033A-C), vi,9 (1086C); Jerome, *Epistula* 121, p. 34. To the gnostics the two laws in Rm 7,22-23 correspond with the two souls in man, divine and material; see Clement, *ExcTheod* 52,1; *DePrinc* iii,4,2. Cf. also Clement, *Strom* iii,77,1, iv,40,2; *DePrinc* iii,4,4; *HomGen* vii,2; *HomJos* xxii,3.6.
359. *ComRm* vi,9 (1089A-C), *CatRm* xliv. Cf. Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* iii,20,3; Clement, *Strom* iii,77,1.
360. *ComRm* vi,9 (1090C).
361. *ComRm* vi,10 (1090C-1091B).
362. Jerome, *Epistula* 121, p.34; see Hammond 1981, 70-76; Schelkle 1956, 242-243.
363. See Scherer, 202, *ComRm* iv,4 (972C) (§ 18), v,6 (1033BC) (§ 23), vi,1 (1055D, 1059A) (§ 25), vi,7 (1075A-C) (§ 26), vi,9 (1087C-1089A).

364. *ComRm* v,1 (1014A).
365. In the Codex von der Goltz *tois* is missing, but the exposition in Rufinus' version does not confirm this variant; see Hammond 1985, 360.
366. The reading *me* in Migne's edition (*ComRm* vi,11 [1091B,14]) is not correct; it should be *te*, according to Hammond 1985, 361.
367. Cf. chapter I,1; Räisänen 1979, 101-105, 113-117; Räisänen 1987, 50-52; Schlier, 238; Michel, 249.
368. *ComRm* vi,11 (1091C-1092C).
369. Cranfield, 376.
370. *ComRm* vi,11 (1092C-1093A).
371. Cranfield, 378-379; cf. Hammond 1985, 362.
372. *ComRm* vi,12 (1093B-1094A).
373. Cf. *ComRm* i,10 (856B), vi,7 (1073AB); *DePrinc* iv,2,9; *HomEx* xi,6 (p.260). For "impossible texts" (*adunata*) see Harl 1983, 90-100.
374. *ComRm* vi,12 (1094A-C).
375. In this interpretation *kai* has become superfluous (Hammond 1985, 361), and Christ is the subject of *katekrinen*.
376. *ComRm* vi,12 (1095A-C).
377. *ComRm* vi,12 (1095C-1096C), *CatRm* xlvi,11-21. Rm 8,2-4 and Rm 8,7-8 are quoted in, respectively, Clement, *Strom* iii,77,2 and iv,45,4.
378. *ComRm* vi,12 (1096C-1097A).
379. De Lange, 84-86; Sgherri, 28-41; Simon, 144-154; cf. Bietenhard, 42-52.
380. *ComRm* vi,12 (1097A-C); cf. *CatRm* xlv,9-14.
381. *CatRm* xlv,1-5.
382. Cf. Schelkle 1956, 266; Hammond 1985, 361-362.
383. Cf. *ComRm* i,10 (856B), ii,13 (902A), v,1 (1017D-1018A), vi,7 (1072A); *HomEx* xi,6.
384. *CatRm* xlvi.
385. *ComRm* vi,12 (1098AB). Cf. Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* v,8,1-2; 10,2.
386. *ComRm* vii,19 (1155B), viii,1 (1157B), viii,3 (1164B), viii,6 [5 Lommatzsch] (1173D), viii,8 [7 Lommatzsch] (1179C), viii,10 [9 Lommatzsch] (1187C). Even if these references are due to Rufinus' abridgement, it is still true that Origen had often dealt with this theme.
387. See § 16. Other examples are Origen's allusions to Rm 9,27 and 11,11 in his comment on Rm 3,5-8 (*ComRm* iii,1 [923A], Scherer, 124); cf. § 9.
388. For Origen's view on the relation between Rm 1-8 and chapters 9-11 one could consult Gorday, 43-102, who concludes that to Origen Rm 1-11 is a unity. My objection to Gorday's book is, that his discussion of Origen's expositions is most superficial; but I agree with his conclusion.
389. For tomes xi and xiv, see chapter I,2.
390. *ComRm* vii,18 (1151B).
391. *ComRm* vii,18 (1152BC).
392. Scherer, 144-146, *ComRm* iii,6 (937C-939C).
393. The observation in *ComRm* vii,19 (1155A), *unde et a sectando sectae appellatae sunt hujusmodi doctrinae quae hominum traditione discuntur*, surely comes from Rufinus, as it is true only in Latin and not in Greek. See also Hammond 1985, 396.
394. *ComRm* vii,19 (1155A).
395. *ComRm* vii,19 (1155B-1156A).
396. *ComRm* vii,19 (1156C-1158A).
397. Origen reads: *grafei hoti tèn dikaiosunèn tèn ek tou nomou ho poièsas anthrôpos zèsetai en autèi*. See Hammond 1985, 398.
398. Origen inserts *sfodra* from Dt 30,14; see Hammond 1985, 399.
399. Cf. Cranfield, 516-519; Räisänen 1987, 53-56.
400. *ComRm* viii,1 (1160B-1161A). Cf. *ComRm* iii,6 (939C) (*Christum plenitudinem esse legis commemorat*; cf. § 11), ix,31 (1232A); *HomNum* xxii,4 (p.209); *CatLam* cxvi (p.277); *CatJoh* lvii (p.530). Cf. also Irenaeus, *AdvHaer* iv,12,4. Apart from *Strom* ii,42,5, Clement replaces *telos* in Rm 10,4 by *plêrôma*: *Strom* iv,130,3; *QuisDiv* 9,2.
401. Originally it is Aristotelian; see Aristotle, *Metaphysica* θ 1047a-1048b; cf. *ComJoh* ii,157.
402. *ComRm* viii,2 (1162C-1163A); cf. *DePrinc* i,3,6; *HomJer* xviii,2 (p.153); *ComJoh* i,269, ii,111, vi,188-190, xix,76-78.
403. Cf. Scherer, 144-148, *ComRm* v,6 (1033BC), ii,8 (890C-892A).
404. Translated according to the Codex von der Goltz, which reads the future tenses *epikalesontai* and *akousontai*, and the subjunctives *pisteusôsin* and *kèruxôsin*. See Hammond 1985, 400.
405. Michel, 333; Schlier, 316; Cranfield, 533; yet, Cranfield, 504, translates "people" as the subject of "preach".
406. Lietzmann, 101; Käsemann, 284.
407. *ComRm* viii,5 [4 Lommatzsch] (1165C-1167A).
408. *ComRm* viii,5 [4 Lommatzsch] (1167B).
409. Cf. the foregoing section, § 34.
410. Cf. Hanson, 153.
411. *ComRm* viii,8 [7 Lommatzsch] (1182A-1184A).
412. Hanson, 154. For Origen's view on the spiritual sense of the Old Testament, see the literature referred to in note 1.
413. For the text of Rm 11,25-26, see Hammond 1985, 415. Origen quotes and discusses Rm 11,25-26 several times in the course of this *Commentary* (Scherer, 190, *ComRm* iv,2 [968C-969A], viii,1 [1160A], viii,9 [8 Lommatzsch] [1185B, 1187B]), apart from the interpretation in its own context (*ComRm* viii,12 [11 Lommatzsch] [1195A-1198C]). The reference in *ComRm* vii,13 (1139A) - corresponding with the Greek tome xi, which was lost - may be Rufinus' doing, but it is in line with Origen's view; cf. *ComRm* viii,12 [11 Lommatzsch] (1195C). Emphasizing the mysterious character of the text, Origen maintains that as Israel, as long as it lives according to the flesh, cannot attain to salvation, thus neither all the Gentiles can be saved, if they are not found within the fullness. Thus he suggests that part of Israel, i.e. the remnant, and equally part of the Gentiles, will be saved. But Origen also stresses that for those who rejected the purification of the Word of God, there will be purifications in afterlife (*ComRm* viii,12 [11 Lommatzsch] [1197B-1198B]).

414. *ComRm* viii,9 [8 Lommatzsch] (1184B-1186A).
415. *ComRm* ix,1 (1201C-1203A); cf. chapter I,3 and *HomJos* xxv1,3 (p.463).
416. *ComRm* ix,1 (1203A).
417. See Hammond 1985, 94-96, 98; she refers to *CCels* viii,65. Cf. also Schelkle 1952, 223-225.
418. *ComRm* ix,26 (1226C-1227A).
419. *ComRm* ix,28 (1227B-1228B).
420. *ComRm* ix,28 (1228B-1229A). Cf. § 5.
421. *ComRm* i,14 (861AB); cf. Scherer, 134 and § 1.
422. *ComRm* ii,8 (890B); cf. vi,7 (1074B) and § 5.
423. Scherer, 136, *ComRm* iii,2 (931A.D); cf. § 10.
424. *ComRm* v,1 (1014A).
425. This has been argued, respectively, by Gutbrod, 1063, 1069 (as distinct from the first commandment of love for God, Mt 22,36ff), and Marxsen, 234-236 (as distinct from the civil Roman law); cf. Michel, 409; Cranfield, 675.
426. Cf. Michel, 409-410.
427. *ComRm* ix,31 (1231B-1232B).
428. See *ComRm* ii,9 (892B), vi,8 (1080A), *CatRm* xxxvii.
429. See Hammond 1985, 97-98.
430. For the problem of identifying the group of the "weak", see Cranfield, 690-698.
431. *Theos* and not *kurios* is Origen's reading according to the Codex von der Goltz; see Hammond 1985, 429.
432. Cf. *ComRm* iv,6 (981BC).
433. *ComRm* ix,35 (1234C-1235A).
434. See Scherer, 170, *ComRm* ii,13 (900C-901A), x,1 (1249C), x,5 (1255B); cf. §§ 8, 14, 42, 43.
435. *ComRm* ix,36 (1235B).
436. See ii,14 (917C), iv,6 (981BC), viii,10 [9 Lommatzsch] (1190A), x,4 (1254C, 1255B).
437. *ComRm* ix,37-38 (1237A-C).
438. Cf. Cranfield, 715-716; Michel 433.
439. According to Hammond 1985, 432, Rufinus read *uestrum*, which corresponds with the Greek reading *humôn*.
440. *ComRm* x,1 (1249C-1250B).
441. *ComRm* x,1 (1251AB).
442. Cf. Cranfield, 723-726; Michel, 437-438.
443. *ComRm* x,3 (1252C-1253C).
444. *ComRm* x,3 (1253C-1254C).

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. *CCels* 1,1, v,35, quoted in Chadwick's translation (1979, 7, 291).
2. *CCels* iv,22.
3. *CCels* v,37; cf. § 10.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For the abbreviations which are not explained see S. Schwertner, *Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete*, Berlin/New York 1974.

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SAMENVATTING

DE VERSCHILLENDE BETEKENISSEN VAN "WET" IN ORIGENES' *COMMENTAAR OP ROMEINEN*

In zijn brief aan de Romeinen bedoelt Paulus met *nomos* meestal de wet van Mozes, soms het Oude Testament in zijn geheel. Toch is de oorspronkelijke zin van het begrip *nomos* niet zozeer "wet" als wel "gewoonte" of "principe". Ook in deze betekenis komt *nomos* in Romeinen voor, zoals in Rm 3,27, "de *nomos* van het geloof"; in Rm 7,21, "de *nomos* dat als ik het goede wil doen, het kwade bij mij is"; in Rm 7,23, "de *nomos* van de zonde, die in mijn leden is" en "de *nomos* van mijn verstand"; en in Rm 8,2, "de *nomos* van de Geest van het leven". Overigens dient vermeld te worden dat er exegeten zijn die *nomos* ook in deze teksten verbinden met de wet van Mozes. Datzelfde geldt ook voor Rm 2,14, "want wanneer heidenen, die de wet niet hebben, van nature doen wat de wet gebiedt, dan zijn zij, hoewel zonder wet, zichzelf tot wet". De eerste drie keer dat Paulus hier het woord "wet" bezigt, bedoelt hij kennelijk de wet van Mozes, al maakt hij tegelijk een toespeling op het stoïsche begrip van de natuurwet; het is echter een punt van discussie of Paulus de vierde keer dat hij in deze tekst "wet" gebruikt hiermee "principe" bedoelt, of "de wet van God" in het algemeen, of zelfs de tora.

Ook Origenes (± 185-253) heeft deze moeilijkheden van Paulus' gebruik van *nomos* onderkend toen hij rond 243 zijn *Commentaar op de brief aan de Romeinen* schreef. In deze studie komt aan de orde, welke oplossingen hij hiervoor bood in deze *Commentaar*, en welke beweegredenen hij voor zijn interpretaties heeft gehad. In de oriëntatie op het thema in hoofdstuk I, § 1 wordt met instemming verwezen naar M. Harl, die heeft opgemerkt, dat voor Origenes de meervoudige zin van *nomos* de sleutel tot het verstaan van deze brief is. Origenes onderscheidt namelijk in Paulus' brieven vele betekenissen van *nomos*, zoals bij voorbeeld blijkt uit deze opsomming: de wet van Mozes naar de letterlijke zin; de wet van Mozes naar de geestelijke zin; de natuurwet; de geschiedenis die Mozes geschreven heeft; de profeten; het onderricht van Christus. Afgezien van deze opsomming onderscheidt hij ook de bovengenoemde "wetten" in Rm 3,27 en Rm 7,21-8,2. Het merkwaardige van Origenes' *Commentaar op Romeinen* is, dat hij *nomos* regelmatig uitlegt met betrekking tot de natuurwet en soms ook tot "de wet van de zonde die in mijn leden is". Volgens Origenes moet de lezer erop bedacht zijn, dat Paulus de betekenis van *nomos* vaak stilzwijgend varieert.

In hoofdstuk I, § 2 wordt besproken in welke staat de *Commentaar* is overgeleverd. Er is een aanmerkelijk aantal Griekse fragmenten van verschillende kwaliteit bewaard gebleven. Voor het grootste deel zijn we echter afhankelijk van de verkorte vertaling, die Rufinus van de *Commentaar* heeft gemaakt. Deze Latijnse vertaling is niet overal even betrouwbaar, en moet derhalve met de nodige voorzichtigheid worden gebruikt. Toch beschikken we hiermee over een waardevolle bron voor onze kennis van deze *Commentaar*.

Om Origenes' visie op Romeinen enigszins te kunnen evalueren

wordt in hoofdstuk I, § 3 eerst aandacht geschonken aan de wijze waarop deze brief in latere tijd is uitgelegd. Het blijkt dan dat sinds de Reformatie de brief aan de Romeinen een belangrijke rol speelt als een geschrift over de rechtvaardiging door het geloof, waarin de hoofdstukken 9-11 over de verhouding tussen Israël en de kerk als een aanhangsel fungeren, met enkele vermanende hoofdstukken als afsluiting. In de vorige, maar vooral in deze eeuw is deze visie echter ook bestreden. Volgens exegeten als F.C. Baur, W. Wrede, A. Schweitzer, K. Stendahl en E.P. Sanders is het thema van de rechtvaardiging door het geloof een onderdeel van Paulus' eigenlijke argumentatie dat het heil in Christus voor zowel Joden als heidenen bestemd is. Opmerkelijk is nu, dat ook Origenes herhaaldelijk benadrukt, dat Paulus schrijft voor Joden en heidenen. In Origenes' tijd was de verhouding tussen de Christenen van Joodse en niet-Joodse herkomst, en bovendien tussen kerk en Jodendom, een aangelegen punt. Er waren Christenen die zich ertoe lieten overhalen, de sabbat, de Joodse vasten en de besnijdenis te onderhouden en offers te brengen. Regelmatig was Origenes met Joden in gesprek over de uitleg van de Schrift. In zijn *Commentaar op Romeinen* blijkt Origenes' aandacht voor de verhouding tussen Joden en heidenen vaak in verband te staan met het onderscheid dat hij maakt tussen de verschillende betekenissen van *nomos*.

Overigens verzet Origenes zich in deze *Commentaar*, behalve tegen Judaïserende Christenen, vaak ook, zoals in al zijn werken, tegen de gnostici en de Marcionieten. In deze studie wordt echter van deze polemieken slechts melding gemaakt voor zover deze in verband staan met het thema van de verschillende wetten.

In hoofdstuk II volgt een bespreking van al die gedeelten van deze *Commentaar* die van wezenlijk belang zijn voor dit onderzoek. Het zou ook mogelijk geweest zijn, direct een systematisch overzicht van Origenes' exegeses te bieden. In aansluiting bij H. de Lubac en U. Berner is er echter de voorkeur aan gegeven, de lezer eerst de gelegenheid te geven Origenes "aan het werk te zien", om pas daarna, op grond van de besprekingen van zijn uiteenzettingen, meer systematische conclusies te trekken betreffende zijn verschillende interpretaties van *nomos*. Deze conclusies staan in hoofdstuk III. In deze samenvatting zal worden volstaan met een weergave van dit laatste hoofdstuk, aangezien dit tegelijk een overzicht van de diverse exegeses bevat. Het blijkt dan dat de volgende betekenissen van *nomos* in Origenes' *Commentaar op Romeinen* een rol spelen.

Zoals in al zijn werken onderscheidt Origenes **de wet van Mozes naar de letterlijke en naar de geestelijke zin**. Uit apologetisch oogpunt neemt Origenes het op voor de wet van Mozes als zodanig. Hij merkt op, dat deze door God is gegeven en ouder is dan de Griekse wetten, die door mensen zijn uitgevaardigd; voorts dat dank zij deze wet zwakke mensen werden afgehouden van de afgoderij en dat hierdoor de mensheid tot op zekere hoogte van zonde en dood bevrijd werd. Origenes bevestigt dat de wet heilig en rechtvaardig en goed is (Rm 7,12), omdat zij, volgens de stoïsche definitie, gebiedt wat je moet doen en het kwade verbiedt.

In zijn commentaar op Rm 5,20, waar staat dat de wet erbij is gekomen opdat de overtreding zou toenemen, ontkent Origenes, in

reactie op de gnostische en Marcionitische uitleg van dit vers, dat het doel van de wet van Mozes was dat de zonde zou toenemen, en dat de zonde pas in de wereld kwam sinds deze wet werd gegeven. Eveneens ter weerlegging van gnostici past Origenes de uitspraak, dat de wet toorn bewerkt (Rm 4,15a), alleen in zoverre op de wet van Mozes toe, dat in deze wet straffen voorgeschreven worden, die met toorn gepaard gaan.

Toch erkent Origenes in zijn uitleg van Rm 7,7-13 wel dat de wet van Mozes zonde opwekt en zo tot de dood leidt. Ten aanzien van de letterlijke zin van de wet zegt hij dat deze onmogelijk gehouden kan worden en zwak, ja zelfs dood is en vijandig tegenover God (vgl. Rm 8,3.7; II Cor 3,6). In zijn uitleg van Rm 2,17-24 noemt Origenes de letterlijke inachtneming van de wet van Mozes schijnheilig en belachelijk voor de heidenen, en in aansluiting op Rm 3,27 noemt hij het Joodse roemen op de wet van Mozes uitgesloten.

Met deze negatieve waardering van de letterlijke zin van de wet van Mozes bekritiseert Origenes niet alleen de Joden, maar ook de Christenen uit de heidenen die zich tot het Jodendom aangetrokken voelen. Desondanks staat Origenes mild tegenover Christenen van Joodse herkomst die de wet nog letterlijk willen onderhouden. Hij stelt dat zij behouden zijn door te geloven in Jezus.

De reden waarom Origenes de letterlijke onderhouding van de wet van Mozes afkeurt is, dat zij geestelijk is bedoeld (Rm 7,14); dit betekent dat zij in geestelijke zin spreekt over Christus en over de gerechtigheid van God die door Christus is geopenbaard (Rm 3,21), en dat zij aldus overeenstemt met het evangelie. Hiermee richt Origenes zich ook tegen de Marcionieten en die gnostici, die de wet van Mozes verwerpen.

Tegenover de Joden en die Christenen, die zijn allegorische uitleg van de Schrift niet aanvaarden, houdt Origenes staande dat moeilijke teksten alleen langs deze weg verklaard kunnen worden. Bijgevolg kunnen geboden die "onmogelijk" te vervullen zijn (vgl. Rm 8,3), of die de heidenen afstoten, in geestelijke zin wel worden gehouden. Zo is bij voorbeeld de ware besnijdenis die van het hart (Rm 2,29), welke staat voor de doop en het mijden van het kwaad. Deze werkelijke betekenis van de wet, die de aartsvaders en de profeten al kenden, is vooral aan het licht gekomen sinds het heil ook voor de heidenen bestemd is. Aangezien het mogelijk is de wet geestelijk te onderhouden, hoeven zij niet te wanhopen. Origenes beschouwt de geestelijke onderhouding van de wet als leven volgens de vrijheid van Christus en volgens de Geest. Vandaar dat het volgens hem geen pas geeft, haar dwingend op te leggen aan hen die nog aan de letterlijke onderhouding van de wet willen vasthouden.

Een heel merkwaardige trek van Origenes' *Commentaar op Romeinen* is, zoals gezegd, dat hij *nomos* in deze brief vaak als de **natuurwet** uitlegt. Als definitie hiervan houdt hij de stoïsche formulering aan, dat de wet gebiedt wat je moet doen en het kwade verbiedt. In zijn uitleg van Rm 2,14-15 stelt hij de natuurwet min of meer gelijk aan de Tien Geboden, en nog meer aan de wetten van het evangelie en de wet van Mozes in de geestelijke zin. Dank zij de natuurwet zijn de heidenen volgens Origenes ertoe in staat het kwade te mijden en het goede te doen, en wellicht brengt deze wet

hen ertoe, zo veronderstelt hij, te geloven in één God, de Schepper van alle dingen. Deze wet was er eerder dan de wet van Mozes, en is bekend aan alle mensen, behalve de kinderen en de zwakzinnigen, en ook aan de engelen en duivelen. Christus, als de Logos, is het die deze wet aan ieder mens leert. Origenes identificeert de natuurwet met "de wet van het verstand" die Paulus noemt in Rm 7,23.

Regelmatig noemt Origenes de natuurwet parallel met de wet van Mozes. Bij voorbeeld in zijn uitleg van Rm 2,10 zegt hij dat een Jood die zich aan de wet van Mozes houdt en de deugden in acht neemt, beloond zal worden, en dat hetzelfde geldt voor een Griek die leeft volgens de natuurwet.

Het effect van de natuurwet is echter niet alleen postief. Omdat de natuurwet aan de heidenen bekend is zoals de wet van Mozes aan de Joden, heeft Paulus gelijk met zijn oordeel dat allen, Joden en Grieken, onder de zonde zijn (Rm 3,9). Origenes legt de uitspraak "door de wet is er kennis van zonde" in Rm 3,20 uit, niet met betrekking tot de wet van Mozes - dat zou de gnostici en Marcionieten in de kaart spelen -, maar in de zin dat er door de natuurwet kennis van zonde is. Naar aanleiding van Rm 4,15a zegt hij dat ook de natuurwet toorn bewerkt; en in zijn verklaring van Rm 7,7-13 stelt hij dat, behalve de wet van Mozes, ook de natuurwet zonde opwekt en tot de dood leidt. Origenes verwijst vaak naar Rm 7,9, "ik heb vroeger geleefd zonder wet; toen echter het gebod kwam, begon de zonde opnieuw te leven, maar ik begon te sterven"; deze ervaring betreft volgens hem het moment waarop een kind volwassen wordt en dank zij de natuurwet leert goed en kwaad te onderscheiden. In de kinderjaren worden de zonden voor dood gehouden aangezien ze niet toegerekend worden (vgl. Rm 5,13), maar bereikt iemand de jaren des onderscheids, dan worden ze wel toegerekend en treedt de geestelijke dood in. Dit geldt voor ieder mens persoonlijk.

Origenes legt Rm 3,21-22 zo uit dat de gerechtigheid van God, die in Christus is, niet door de natuurwet wordt geopenbaard, aangezien deze gerechtigheid wordt betuigd door de wet van Mozes en de profeten in hun geestelijke zin. De natuurwet leidt dus niet tot het geloof in Christus, en ook Christus' onderricht van de goddelijke gerechtigheid gaat de menselijke gerechtigheid van de natuurwet te boven.

Een van de belangrijkste conclusies van deze studie is, dat Origenes *nomos* in Romeinen vaak uitlegt met betrekking tot de natuurwet om zo duidelijk te maken, dat God niet alleen de God van Joden, maar ook van heidenen is (Rm 3,29). Het is immers duidelijk dat de natuurwet betrekking heeft op de heidenen. In de overtuiging dat hij zo Paulus' bedoeling met deze brief juist weergeeft, actualiseert Origenes in feite het principe "eerst voor de Jood en ook voor de Griek" (Rm 1,16; 2,9-10).

Ook **"de wet van de zonde, die in mijn leden is"** speelt een opmerkelijke rol in deze *Commentaar*. De uitleg van Rm 4,15a waaraan Origenes de voorkeur geeft, is dat "de wet van de leden" Gods toorn bewerkt op de dag van het oordeel. Rm 5,20 zou betekenen dat "de wet van de leden" erbij gekomen is onder de dekmantel van de wet van het verstand, dat is de natuurwet, opdat de zonde zou toenemen.

Voor Rm 6,14 biedt Origenes twee alternatieven: de zonde zal geen heerschappij over Christenen voeren, omdat zij niet onder "de wet van de leden" zijn, òf omdat zij niet onder de wet van Mozes naar de letterlijke zin zijn. In de uitdrukking "de zondige hartstochten, die door de wet geprikkeld worden" in Rm 7,5 legt Origenes *nomos* uit met betrekking tot de wet van Mozes naar de letter, maar liever nog met betrekking tot "de wet van de leden". Dezelfde alternatieven biedt hij voor Rm 7,6, waar staat dat "wij van de wet ontslagen zijn". Van Rm 8,3 zegt Origenes dat met de wet die zwak is door het vlees behalve de wet van Mozes naar de letter eventueel ook "de wet van de zonde en van de dood" (Rm 8,2) bedoeld kan zijn.

In het algemeen konden deze teksten, waarin Paulus de functie van de wet van Mozes bekritiseert, door gnostici en Marcionieten worden aangehaald om aan te tonen dat hun negatieve visie op het Oude Testament terecht was. Al sloot Origenes de interpretatie met betrekking tot de wet van Mozes naar de letter niet uit, toch wilde hij op deze manier ook een alternatief bieden voor een ketterse uitleg van deze teksten. Bovendien was het voordeel van zijn exegeses dat "de wet van de zonde, die in de leden is", op alle mensen betrekking had, terwijl de wet van Mozes alleen op de Joden van toepassing was.

Enkele malen in deze *Commentaar* legt Origenes *nomos* ook uit als **"de wet van Christus"**, om de desbetreffende teksten toe te passen op de Christenen. In zijn uitleg van Rm 2,12 zegt hij dat Christenen volgens de wet van Christus geoordeeld zullen worden. De passage in Rm 2,17-24 past hij ook toe op Christenen die zeggen te steunen op de wet van Christus maar deze niet houden. Ook kan een catechumeen leven volgens de wet van Christus, terwijl een gedoopte haar overtreedt (vgl. Rm 2,26-27). Dezelfde wet had Origenes op het oog in zijn uitleg van Rm 2,14-15, waar hij de natuurwet vergelijkt met de wetten van het evangelie.

Aangezien volgens Origenes Christus, als de Logos, de natuurwet aan alle mensen onderwijst, zijn deze beide wetten nauw met elkaar verbonden. Christus noemt hij zelfs *autonomos*, de wet zelf. Toch identificeert Origenes de beide wetten niet, omdat de wet van Christus meer eist dan de natuurwet.

In zijn uitleg van Rm 3,27 stelt Origenes **"de wet van het geloof"** gelijk aan de geestelijke zin van de wet van Mozes. Hij stelt dat Abraham dank zij deze wet God geloofde en gerechtvaardigd werd. Hieruit blijkt volgens Origenes het verschil met de natuurwet, welke Abraham al kende, maar die niet tot rechtvaardiging kon leiden.

Soms maakt Origenes ook melding van de **Griekse** of **menselijke wetten**, om duidelijk te maken hoe deze zich verhouden tot de wet van Mozes of tot de natuurwet. Zoals vermeld, stelt hij dat de Griekse wetten door mensen zijn uitgevaardigd en minder oud zijn dan de Joodse wetten. Hij maakt onderscheid tussen de geschreven wet van de steden en de natuurwet, die wet van God is. In zijn uitleg van Rm 2,12 overweegt Origenes, of *nomos* ook van toepassing is op de menselijke wetten, zodat wie zonder zulke wetten gezondigd hebben, "zonder wet verloren zullen gaan". In Rm 7,4 betrekt hij *nomos* ook op de menselijke gewoonten, waaraan men moet sterven.

Hieruit blijkt opnieuw hetgeen we al tegenkwamen bij de behandeling van de natuurwet en "de wet van de zonde, die in de leden is", namelijk dat het Origenes erom te doen was aan te tonen, dat Paulus zijn brief niet alleen voor Joden, maar ook voor Grieken geschreven had.