4 Mankind in Adam’s Loins

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

4.1 Origen

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

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

4.1.1 The Fall of Minds in Pre-existence

The concept of the fall of minds in pre-existence, which is most recognizable and associated with Origen, was to explain inequalities between people with a view to
Gnostics’ claiming that the inequality had been given by God. As Origen explains in *The Principles*, in the beginning all intellectual natures were created equal and occupied themselves with contemplating God. That some of them became angels, others became demons, and still others – human beings is a consequence of their free choice.

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

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

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

182 Origen, *De principiis* I 5, 3; SCh 252, 182; transl. G.W. Butterworth, 47; cf. *De principiis* I 8, 4; SCh 252, 232; II 8, 3-4; SCh 252, 342-348.
183 *De principiis* III 5, 4; SCh 268, 224-226.
184 Origen, *De principiis* I, preface, 5; SCh 252, 82-84; transl. G.W. Butterworth, 4.
A question obviously arises: What role in the so conceived fall was played by the first man and whether at all his guilt was more important that the individual sin of each mind? An interesting interpretation of the unity of mankind in the idea of the fall in pre-existence was given by N.P. Williams. However, it is not the unity in Adam which is the primary object of my research, but as Williams correctly notes also the hypothesis of the fall of minds assumes a unity of the human race. In this concept the unity is not the cause of the participation of all in the fall but its effect: the unity is formed by those who share the same sinful fate.\textsuperscript{185}

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

4.1.2 Humanity as the Lost Sheep

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{185} N.P. Williams, Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin, 216.
\textsuperscript{186} Origen, Homiliae in Genesim II 5; Sch 7 bis, 100; transl. R.E. Heine, 82-83.
As noted by A. Orbe, through this parable Origen presents his favourite idea: the primeval equality of rational beings before they were hierarchized as a result of the sin. In the beginning, perfect equality prevailed symbolized by the number 100. While angels remained in the heights (mountains), man fell into matter.\textsuperscript{187} The unity of mankind that Origen speaks about on this occasion has, however, a totally different dimension than the unity from the teachings of Irenaeus, Methodius and Gregory of Nyssa. This is a mystical unity

\begin{quote}
οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἓν σῶμα ἐσμεν καὶ ἓν πρόβατον· ὁ μὲν τίς ἐστι πούς, ὁ δὲ κεφαλή, ὁ δὲ ἄλλο τι, ὁ δὲ ποιμὴν ἐλθὼν συνήγαγεν ὀστέον πρὸς ὀστέον καὶ ἄρμονίαν πρὸς ἄρμονίαν καὶ ἐνώσας ἀνέλαβε ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν αὐτοῦ. ἡ δὲ ἑνότης γίνεται δι’ ἀγάπης καὶ ἀληθείας καὶ προαιρέσεως ἀγαθῆς. τῷ ἰδίῳ μὲν οὖν λόγῳ ἡνώσεν.
\end{quote}

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

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

### 4.1.3 Adam as a Symbol of Mankind

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

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{187} A. Orbe, \textit{Parabolas Evangelicas in San Ireneo}, vol. 2, 160.\textsuperscript{188} Origen, \textit{Fragmenta in Jeremiam} 28; GCS 6, 212-213; transl. MP.
\end{flushright}
I think indeed some deeper mystery is stored up in these passages. For perhaps the rational creature was not altogether imperfect at the time he was placed in paradise. For how would God have placed what was altogether imperfect in paradise to work and guard it? For he who is capable of tending the tree of life and everything that God planted and caused to spring up afterwards, would not reasonably be called imperfect. Perhaps, then, although he was perfect, he became imperfect in some way because of his transgression, and was in need of one to perfect him from his imperfection. And perhaps the Savior was sent for the following reasons.189

189 Origen, Commentarius in Iohannem XIII 37, 239-241; SCh 222, 158-160; transl. R.E. Heine, 117-118.

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

Sed priusquam de specie ipsa indumentorum dicere incipiamus, velim conferre illa infelicia indumenta, quibus primus homo, cum peccasset, indutus est, cum his sanctis et fidelibus indumentis. Et quidem illa dicitur Deus fecisse: Fecit enim - inquit - Deus tunicas pellicias, et induit Adam et mulierem eius. Illae ergo tunicae de pellibus erant ex animalibus sumptae. Talibus enim oportebat indui peccatorem, pellicis, inquit, tunicis, quae essent mortalitatis, quam pro peccato acceperat, et fragilitatis eius, quae ex carnis corruptione veniebat, indicium. Si vero iam lotus ab his fueris et purificatus per legem Dei, induet te Moyses indumento incorruptionis, ita ut nusquam appareat turpitudo tua et ut absorbeatur mortale hoc a vita.190

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

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

189 Origen, Commentarius in Iohannem XIII 37, 239-241; SCh 222, 158-160; transl. R.E. Heine, 117-118.
190 Origen, Homiliae in Leviticum VI 2; SCh 286, 276-278; transl. G.W. Barkley, 120 with alteration.
When he asserts that the narrative of Moses represents God most impiously, making Him into a weakling right from the beginnings and incapable of persuading even one man whom He had formed to this also we will reply that his remark is much the same as if one were to object to the existence of evil because God has been unable to prevent even one man from committing sin in order that just one individual might be found who has had no experience of evil from the beginning. Just as in this matter those who are concerned to defend the doctrine of providence state their case at great length and with arguments of considerable cogency, so also the story of Adam and his sin will be interpreted philosophically by those who know that Adam means anthropos (man) in the Greek language, and that in what appears to be concerned with Adam Moses is speaking of the nature of man. For, as the Bible says, in Adam all die (1Cor 15:22), and they were condemned in the likeness of Adam’s transgression (Rom 5:14). Here the divine Word says this not so much about an individual as of the whole race. Moreover, in the sequence of sayings which seem to refer to one individual, the curse of Adam is shared by all men. There is also no woman to whom the curses pronounced against Eve do not apply. And the statement that the man who was cast out of the garden with the woman was clothed with coats of skins, which God made for those who had sinned on account of the transgression of mankind, has a certain secret and mysterious meaning superior to the Platonic doctrine of the descent of the soul which loses its wings and is carried hither until it finds some firm resting-place (Plato, Phaedrus 25, 246 BC).

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

191 Origen, Contra Celsum IV 40; SCh 136, 288-290; transl. H. Chadwick, 216-217.
other reason.\textsuperscript{192} This concept does not tie in with the idea of the fall in pre-existence; however, I think, it may be accepted that in the above statements Origen recognizes Adam as a prototype\textsuperscript{193} or symbol of the humanity, although Simonetti believes that seeing Adam as a symbol of all fallen souls goes too far.\textsuperscript{194}

\subsection*{4.1.4 We Were in Adam’s Loins}

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

\begin{quote}
Si ergo Leui qui generatione quarta post Abraham nascitur in lumbis Abrahae fuisse perhibetur, multo magis omnes homines qui in hoc mundo nascuntur et nati sunt in lumbis erant Adae cum adhuc esset in paradiso et omnes homines cum ipso uel in ipso expulsi sunt de paradiso cum ipse inde depulsus est; et per ipsum mors qua e\textsuperscript{1} ex praeuaricat\textsuperscript{1} eun\textsuperscript{1} nerat consequenter et in eos pertransit qui in lumbis eius habebantur.
\end{quote}

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

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

\textsuperscript{192} M. Simonetti, \textit{Alcune osservazioni sull'interpretazione origeniana di Genesi 2, 7 e 3, 21}, “Aevum” 36 (1962), 374.
\textsuperscript{193} H. Lassiat, \textit{Pour une théologie de l’homme}, vol. 1, 183.
\textsuperscript{194} M. Simonetti, \textit{Alcune osservazioni sull'interpretazione origeniana di Genesi 2, 7 e 3, 21}, 374.
\textsuperscript{195} Origen, \textit{Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos} V 1, 12; Sch 539, 364-366; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 311
οὐχ ὁρῶν ὅτι Μωϋσῆς, ὁ πολλῷ καὶ τῶν ἑλληνικῶν γραμμάτων ἀρχαιότερος, εἰσῆγαγε τὸν θεὸν ἐπαγγελλόμενον τὴν ἁγίαν γῆν καὶ ἀγαθὴν καὶ πολλήν, ῥέουσαν γάλα καὶ μέλι τοῖς κατὰ τὸν νόμον ἑαυτοῦ βιώσασιν, οὐδ᾽ ὡς οἴονται τινες τὴν ἁγάθην, τὴν κάτω νομίζομεν Ἰουδαίαν, κειμένην καὶ αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ ἀρχήν κατηραμένην ἐν τοῖς ἔργοι τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ ᾿Αδὰμ γῇ. Τὸ γὰρ “ἐπικατάρατος ἡ γῆ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοι σου· ἐν λύπαις φαγῇ αὐτὴν πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς σου” περὶ ὅλης εἴρηται τῆς γῆς, ἣν ἐν λύπαις, τουτέστι πόνοις, ἐσθίει πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῷ ᾿Αδὰμ ἀποθανών, καὶ ἐσθίει πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ζωῆς. Καὶ ὡς ἐπικατάρατος πᾶσα ἡ γῆ ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους ἀνατελεῖ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἐν τῷ ᾿Αδὰμ ἐκβληθέντος ἀπὸ τοῦ παραδείσου, καὶ ἐν ἱδρῶτι τοῦ προσώπου ἑαυτοῦ ἐσθίει πᾶς ἄνθρωπος τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἄρτον, ἕως ἐπιστρέψει εἰς τὴν γῆν, ἐξ ἧς ἐλήφθη.

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

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

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

196 Origen, Contra Celsum VII 28; SCh 150, 78; transl. H. Chadwick, 417.  
197 Origen, Homiliae in Ezechielem 19; SCh 352, 74-76; transl. M. Hooker, 45.
Origen

67

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

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

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

4.1.5 Stain of Birth

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

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

198 Origen, Commentarius in Iohannem I 31, 225; Sch 120, 170; transl. R.E. Heine, 78.
199 F.R. Tennant, The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin, 299.
Quod si placet audire, quid etiam alii sancti de ista nativitate senserint, audi David dicentem: *In iniquitatibus – inquit – conceptus sum, et in peccatis peperit me mater mea*, ostendens quod quaecumque anima in carne nascitur, iniquitatis et peccati sorde pollutur; et propterea dictum esse illud, quod iam superius memoravimus quia: *Nemo mundus a sorde, nec si unius diei sit vita eius* (Jb 14:4-5). To these things can be added the reason why it is required, since the baptism of the Church is given for the forgiveness of sins, that, according to the observance of the Church, that baptism also be given to infants; since, certainly, if there were nothing in infants that ought to pertain to forgiveness and indulgence, then the grace of baptism would appear superfluous.200

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

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

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200 Origen, *Homiliae in Leviticum* VIII 3; Sch 287, 20; transl. G.W. Barkley, 157-158.
201 A. Orbe, *Antropologia de San Ireneo*, 306-307.
202 J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 106.
203 Origen, *Homiliae in Lucam* XIV 5; Sch 87, 222; transl. J.T. Lienhard, 58-59.
L. Scheffczyk claims that when Origen speaks about washing *sordes peccati* in the baptism of children he does not mean sin as such but the sinful weakness all people have because of carnality. Such an interpretation does not force-tie two seemingly separate hypotheses. It is also symptomatic that talking about washing the stain of birth Origen refers to the Old Testament cleansing.

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

A similar reasoning is found in *Contra Celsum*:

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204 L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 81.
205 Origen, *Homiliae in Leviticum* XII 4; SCH 287, 178; transl. G.W. Barkley, 223-224.
206 Origen, *Contra Celsum* VII 50; SCH 150, 130-132; transl. H. Chadwick, 437.
L. Scheffczyk’s elucidations are confirmed by yet another fragment from the *Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*. Origen explicitly says that the stain of birth has nothing in common with previous sins of the souls but means sinfulness arising from corporeality.

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

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

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207 Origen, *Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos* V 9, 12; Sch 539, 496-498; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 366-367.
208 F.R. Tennant, *The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin*, 300-301.
4.1.6 Are There People Without Sin?

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

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

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

209 Origen, Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos V 1, 33-34; Sch 539, 392; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 323-324
Cum iudicium habitum sit de Adam ex uno ipso delinquente condemnatio in omnes homines uenerit, e contrario uero per Christum ex multis delictis quibus omne genus hominum tenebatur iustificatio data sit in omnes, ut sicut mors per unum regnauerat in delictis ita et per unius oboedientiam uita regnaret per iustitiam.

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

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

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

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

210 Origen, *Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos* V 2, 1; SCh 539, 406; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 329.
In the latter text Origen betrays his favourite method of professing theology: he gives two seemingly contradictory explanations without resolving which of them he considers to be right. He says that the universality of sin may originate from the presence of all in the loins of Adam or may be an effect of the example given by Adam and which was voluntarily followed by everyone. The fact that he leaves the problem open in this way has — in my opinion — a very important goal. It is to focus our attention not on the question how, but on the statement of the universality of sin which Origen treats as an incontestable fact.

4.1.7 Man’s Freedom and Universality of Sin

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

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

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211 Origen, Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos V 4, 1-3; SCh 539, 430-432; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 340-341.
It is true that Origen nowhere explains how free will and the universality of sin can exist simultaneously. He only stresses that this is how our present reality looks like as if the question of coexistence of those two facts was of lesser interest to him whatsoever, or perhaps he himself did not know how to reconcile those two contradictions. I have an impression that the divergent concepts in the writings of Origen have their source in his deep conviction, first, of the free will of rational beings and, secondly, the universal sinfulness of people. The idea of the fall of minds in pre-existence is to defend free will against suspicions of any determinism, while the concept of mankind in the loins of Adam is to explain the cause of the universality of sin.

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

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

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212 Origen, Commentaria in Epistulam B. Pauli ad Romanos V 3, 2; SCh 539, 422-424; transl. Th.P. Scheck, vol. 1, 336-337
213 M. Simonetti, Alcune osservazioni sull’interpretazione origeniana di Genesi 2, 7 e 3, 21, 381.
214 H. Crouzel, Origène, 75.
215 J.P. Laporte, Models from Philo in Origen’s Teaching on Original Sin, 194.
216 J.P. Laporte, Théologie liturgique de Philon d’Alexandrie et d’Origène, Paris 1995, 229-300.
Although in the chapter on original sin in Origen Laporte speaks about the fall in pre-existence, he does not try to inscribe it in any way into the history of mankind which begins with Adam. What is interesting is that, he sees in the teaching of Origen yet another explanation of the sources of sin, namely the natural development of man occurring in several stages from childhood to old age – in the concept the focus is on the example of others and education, also as a way of passing of sin.\textsuperscript{217}

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

G. Teitchtweiter links the fall of pre-existing souls with Adam differently. He believes that Adam is only one of the fallen people or pre-existing minds, and whoever falls – like Adam – does it of his own free will.\textsuperscript{220}

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

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

\textsuperscript{217} J.P. Laporte, \textit{Théologie liturgique de Philon d’Alexandrie et d’Origène}, 202-205.
\textsuperscript{218} G.S. Gasparo, \textit{Doppia creazione e peccato di Adamo nel Peri Archon di Origene: Fondamenti biblici e presupposti platonici dell’esegesi originiana}, in: \textit{La doppia creazione dell’uomo negli Alessandrini, nei Capadoci e nella gnosti}, Roma 1978, 67-68 and P. Pisi, \textit{Peccato di Adamo e caduta dei NOES nell’esegesi originiana}, in: \textit{Origeniana Quarta}, Innsbruck 1987, 322-335.
\textsuperscript{219} M. Szram, \textit{Nauka o grzechu Adama w Komentarzu do Listu św. Pawła do Rzymian Orygenesa}, in: \textit{Grzech Pierworodny}, Kraków 1999, 48-49.
\textsuperscript{220} G. Teitchtweiter, \textit{Die Sündenlehre des Origenes}, Regensburg 1958, 98.
\textsuperscript{221} J. Gross, \textit{Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas}, 108.
is why Scheffczyk believes he so often underlines the fact that no man is free from personal sin even if he were to live only for one day.\textsuperscript{222}

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

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

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

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

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

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{222} L. Scheffczyk, \textit{Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde}, 79-80.
\item \textsuperscript{223} \textit{Ibid.}, 77-78.
\item \textsuperscript{224} M. Szram, \textit{Nauka o grzechu Adama w Komentarzu do Listu św. Pawła do Rzymian Orynesa}, 63.
\item \textsuperscript{225} J. Turmel, \textit{Histoire des dogmes}, vol.1: \textit{Le péché originel. La rédemption}, Paris 1931, 46.
\item \textsuperscript{226} P.F. Beatrice, \textit{Tradux peccati: alle fonti della dottrina agostiniana del peccato originale}, Milano 1978, 216.
\item \textsuperscript{227} P.F. Beatrice, \textit{Tradux peccati}, 219.
\item \textsuperscript{228} A. Gaudel, \textit{Péché originel}, in: \textit{Dictionnaire de théologie catholique XII}, Paris 1933, 334.
\end{itemize}
sin occurred in the spiritual world; sin consisted in merging souls with bodies; we were all in Adam's loins. That latter hypotheses is an anticipations of Augustine's theory. Further on in his analysis Gaudel underlines that Origen's teaching contains elements that are characteristic of Paul's teaching and the universal conviction of the Church, that is the belief of the original stain (une souillure originelle) and the need of baptism to remove it. To explore the dogma Origen presents hypotheses which under the influence of Plato and Plotinus depart from the tradition and combine the conviction of the descent of souls into bodies with the Christian idea of the solidarity of all in Adam. Thus, Gaudel's thesis is similar to that of Beatrice's – they both emphasize the tension between personal conviction of Origen and his faith resulting from participation in the community of the Church.

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

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

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229 Ibid., 336-337.
230 Ibid., 339.
231 B. Bennet, The Soiling of Sinful Flesh: Primordial Sin, Inherited Corruption and Moral Responsibility in Didymus the Blind and Origen, “Adamantius. Annuario di Letteratura Cristiana Antica e di Studi Giudeoellenistici” 11 (2005), 81-82.
232 F.R. Tennant, The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin, 296-306; N.P. Williams, Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin, 228-229.
233 F.R. Tennant, The Sources of the The Fall and Original Sin, 298.
234 Ibid., 299.
N.P. Williams offers a similar interpretation of Origen’s teaching. He believes that Origen’s writings may be divided into two groups: those written in the Alexandrian period and those written in the Caesarean period, and that chronological division corresponds with the significant differences in the writings themselves.\(^{235}\) In the initial Alexandrian period Origen put forward a hypothesis of the fall in pre-existence; later on, after he encountered the practice of the baptism of children, he wrote about the stain of birth in connection with what happened in paradise and Adam’s transgression, ultimately to combine both theories (in *Contra Celsum*) talking about Adam as man in the general sense.\(^{236}\)

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

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

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\(^{235}\) N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 210.

\(^{236}\) Ibid., 216-229.

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

\(^{238}\) Ibid., 85.

\(^{239}\) L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 80.
4.2 Augustine of Hippo

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

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

240 However, not all agree with the statement that Augustine underwent such a change. B. Leeming puts this as follows: Augustine changed his views around 397, though not under the influence of the polemic with Pelagians but semi-Pelagian, and not on original sin or massa damnata, but on initium fidei, cf. Augustine, Ambrosiaster and massa perditionis, “Gregorianum” 11 (1930), 83.
241 Augustine, De libero arbitrio III, XX, 56-58.
242 L. Scheffczyk, Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde, 215.
243 H. Rondet, Le Christ novel Adam dans la théologie de s. Augustin, “Etudes Mariales” 13 (1955), 35-36.
244 L. Scheffczyk, Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde, 213.
I would personally opt for the former. Several different concepts may be found in his works virtually side by side. Williams divides Augustine’s teaching on passing of sin into two main currents: original sin understood as vitium is passed through biological procreation (the sexual act constitutes a nexus, through which the heritage of passion is passed from the parent to the child), while passing of sin understood as reatus from Adam onto his descendants is explained according to the theory of seminal identity. Gross enumerates the following views of the problem: sometimes Augustine sees Adam’s sin as the common sin of entire mankind because we were all in Adam when he transgressed, other times as the sin of nature because all of human nature sinned in Adam, or the original transgression passed through propagation, that is original sin proper (eigentliche Erbsünde).

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

### 4.2.1 Adam Means the Human Race

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

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245 N.P. Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 372.
246 J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 367.
247 J. de Blic, *Le péché originel selon saint Augustin*, “Recherches de Science Religieuse” 17 (1927), 526.
Expertus ergo malum Adam: omnis autem homo Adam; sicut in his qui crediderunt omnis homo Christus, quia membra sunt Christi: expertus ergo malum quod non debuit experiri, si crederet dicenti, Noli tangere.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

248 J. de Blic, Le péché originel selon saint Augustin, “Recherches de Science Religieuse” 17 (1927), 526.
249 Augustine, Enarrationes in Psalmos 25, II, 4; PL 36, 190, CCL 38, 144; transl. M. Boulding, vol. 1, 260 with alteration.
250 Augustine, De Genesi ad litteram X 11, 19; PL 34, 416, CSEL 28, 308-309; transl. J. Hammond Taylor, vol. 2, 110.
In illis enim duobus hominibus totum genus humanum: inde propago mortis, inde et in parvulis debita, delicta. In these two original humans [Adam and Eve] our whole race was comprised. From them was death propagated and from them the debt of sin in babies.\textsuperscript{251}

And elsewhere even more clearly:

Creatum est in primo homine genus humanum. In the beginning the human race was created in the first man.\textsuperscript{252}

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

Sed fortasse injuste tibi Deus iratus est, o Adam, o genus humanum, injuste iratus est Deus! Perhaps, Adam, o human race, God has been unjustly angry with you!\textsuperscript{253}

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

De ira Dei enim mortales sumus, et de ira Dei in ista terra in egestate et labore vultus nostrorum manducamus panem. Hoc enim audivit Adam, quando peccavit; et Adam ille omnes nos eramus, quia in Adam omnes moriuntur: quod ille audivit, secutum est et nos. Non enim eramus jam nos, sed eramus in Adam: ideo quidquid evenit ipsi Adam, secutum est et nos, ut moreremur; omnes quippe in illo fuimus. As a consequence of God’s anger we are mortal, and in consequence of his anger we eat our bread on this earth in poverty and the laborious of our faces. This is the sentence Adam heard when he sinned, and we are all Adam, for in Adam all die. What he heard concerns us equally. In our persons we did not yet exist, but we were present in Adam, and therefore whatever befell Adam was our fate too. We too therefore had to die, inasmuch as we were in him.\textsuperscript{254}

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

\textsuperscript{251} Augustine, \textit{Enarrationes in Psalmos} 103, IV, 6; PL 37, 1381, CCL 40, 1525; transl. M. Boulding, vol. 5, 171 with alteration.
\textsuperscript{252} Augustine, \textit{Enarrationes in Psalmos} 77, 4; PL 36, 985, CCL 39, 1069; transl. MP.
\textsuperscript{253} Augustine, \textit{Enarrationes in Psalmos} 37, 7; PL 36, 400, CCL 38, 387-388; transl. M. Boulding, vol. 2, 152.
\textsuperscript{254} Augustine, \textit{Enarrationes in Psalmos} 84, 7; PL 37, 1072, CCL 39, 1165; transl. M. Boulding, vol. 4, 208.
Fratres mei, videte ex quo vapulamus. In omnibus qui ab initio generis humani nati sunt, in omnibus qui nunc sunt, in omnibus qui postea nascentur, Adam vapulat. Vapulat Adam, id est, genus humanum; et multi sic obduruerunt, ut nec plagas suas sentient.

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

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

4.2.2 Sin of Nature

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

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

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

255 Augustine, Enarrationes in Psalmos 122, 6; PL 37, 1635, CCL 40, 1819; transl. M. Boulding, vol. 6, 36.
256 J.E. Ménard, Le péché originel: pensée grecque, polygénisme et monogénisme biblique, in: Pecado original; XXIX Semana Española de Teología, Madrid 1970, 70.
257 Augustine, De nuptiis et concupiscentia II 5, 15; PL 44, 444; CSEL 42, 266-267; transl. R.J. Teske, in: Answer to the Pelagians II, 61.
Most deliberations on the voluntariness of original sin and sin of nature are found in *Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem*. Augustine starts out with a statement that original sin which is shared by all is someone else’s fault but led to the damage of the whole of human nature.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

260 Augustine, Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem IV 90; PL 45, 1392; transl. R.J. Teske, in: Answer to the Pelagians III, 457.
to the words of the Apostle concerning the first man, in whom all have sinned (Rom 5:12), they continue to resist the propagation of sin and raise in objection the idea of imitation to cloud over the issue.261

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

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

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

261 Augustine, De peccatorum meritis et remissione I 10, 11; PL 44, 115-116, CSEL 60, 12-13; transl. R.J. Teske, in: Answer to the Pelagians, 39-40.
262 Augustine, De civitate Dei XIII 14; PL 41, 386-387, CCL 48, 395-396; transl. R.W. Dyson, 555-556.
And, so that it may be clear that this is not being said to a sanctified spirit but to fleshly clay, look at what follows: *Or does not the potter have the power to make one vessel for honor and another for shame out of the same lump?* (Rom 9:21) Inasmuch as our nature sinned in paradise, then, we are formed by mortal generation by the same divine providence not along the lines of heaven but along those of earth (that is, not in accordance with the spirit but in accordance with the flesh), and we have all been made from one mass of clay, which is a mass of sin.\(^{263}\)

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

### 4.2.3 Massa Peccati

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

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\(^{263}\) Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII* 68, 3; PL 40, 71, CCL 44A, 177; transl. B. Ramsey, in: *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions*, New York 2008, 117.

\(^{264}\) L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 215.

\(^{265}\) J. Gross, *Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas*, 271.

\(^{266}\) A. Gaudel *Péché originel*, 382.

\(^{267}\) S. Lyonnet, *Rom. V, 12 chez s. Augustin*, in: *L’homme devant Dieu*, vol. 1: *Exégèse et patristique: mélanges offerts au Père Henri de Lubac*, Paris 1963, 329.

\(^{268}\) L. Scheffczyk, *Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde*, 215.
group of texts, however, which cannot be interpreted in the Platonic spirit. Augustine talks therein about massa peccati in conjunction with Rom 9:21: Does the potter not indeed have the power to make from the same lump of clay one vessel for honor and another for reproach? In those texts Augustine stresses the carnal dimension of massa, which one irrefutably associates with Stoicism. Whatever the sources of this concept (undoubtedly to some extent biblical) it is important that Augustine recognizes human nature as one and – what is significant – carnal substance: massa peccati. Augustine presents this concept most extensively in On Diverse Questions to Simplicianus. He starts with a simple statement that all constitute a kind of single massa peccati:

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

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

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

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

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

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

269 Augustine, De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum II 16; PL 40, 121, CCL 44, 41-42; transl. B. Ramsey, in: Responses to Miscellaneous Questions, 198.
270 Augustine, De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum II 17; PL 40, 121-122, CCL 44, 43; transl. B. Ramsey, in: Responses to Miscellaneous Questions, 198-199.
Later on Augustine combines three terms in his discussion: *solum*, -i/ ground; *massa*, -ae/ lump, mass and *conspersio*, -onis/ bread dough, substance. In this way he emphasises that creation had a carnal aspect and likewise our unity or solidarity in sin has its physical dimension.

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271 Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* II 19; PL 40, 124, CCL 44, 47-48; transl. B. Ramsey, in: *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions*, 201-202.
When analysing the above fragments interpreters of Augustine’s thought focus on the teaching on grace, for me the most interesting is, however, his starting point. Indeed, he mentions that some are chosen and others rejected, but before it happens we all constitute a single lump / mass/ substance – massa. Augustine does not have here in mind only that we all share one nature or the entire human race is included in Adam, but the carnal, physical communion of all.

You think that one cannot call just the body of a human being a human being, though you know that the only Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried, as his whole Church confesses and many heresies too, of which yours is one. And yet only the body of Christ was buried. According to you, we ought not to say that Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord, was buried since Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord, is not the body alone, but the Word of God and the rational soul and the body, and when the confession of faith came to these words: He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, it ought to have added, And his body was buried. Nor should scripture have said of the first man who is under discussion, God formed man from the dust of the earth (Gen 2:7), because only the human body comes from the earth. […] Because, then, Adam existed, and all of us existed in him, as Catholic teachers before us learned and taught in the holy Church in accord with the holy scriptures, I said, All were that one, because even those two, the man and the woman, were then no longer two, but one flesh. And I said about all their offspring that, when the sin was committed, they all
Our entanglement in original sin is not a result from the fact that we are born as members of the human community (because Christ does not share sin) but because of the solidarity with Adam that we had from the very first day, the fact that we were to receive a body from him through a series of consecutive generations. Therefore, our solidarity with Adam is physical.275

4.2.4 The Unity in Adam and Inheriting Sin

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

It would seem that Augustine very explicitly speaks about inheriting sin, for instance in Retractationes:

274 Augustine, Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem II 178; PL 45, 1219; transl. R.J. Teske, in: Answer to the Pelagians III, 244-245
275 J. de Blic, Le péché originel selon saint Augustin, 528-529.
276 L. Scheffczyk, Urstand, Fall und Erbsünde, 217.
277 J. Gross, Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas, 334.
278 J. Gross, Das Wesen der Erbsünde nach Augustinus, in: Augustinus magister: Congrès International Augustinien Paris, 21 - 24 septembre 1954, vol. 2, Paris 1954, 775.
And what is called original sin in infants, for they do not as yet use free choice of the will, is not improperly called voluntary also, because, inherited from man’s first evil will, it has become, in a certain sense, hereditary.279

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

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

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

279 Augustine, Retractationes I 13, 5; PL 32, 604, CCL 57, 38; transl. M.I. Bogan, 54.
280 Augustine, Contra Julianum IV 10, 28; PL 44, 838-839; transl. R.J. Teske, in: Answer to the Pelagians II, 495.
According to Augustine sin is not “transmitted” by birth or procreation. On the contrary, the natural law of birth causes that all people who were ever to be born from him in a mysterious way were in Adam. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between participation in sin and physical reproduction, but sin is not inherited. We were all genuine participants in the transgression by the very fact that we have been born from Adam. This participation is as real as the participation of Levi in the tithe Abraham paid to Melchizedek described in the Epistle to the Hebrews 7:9-10. Levi paid the tithe because he had been in the loins of Abraham. Being gifted with fertile imagination Augustine wonders how is it possible that the semen from which all people were to be born throughout the history of the world fitted in the loins of one man. Of course, it did not. The phrase in the loins means the real presence of the progeny in the parents but it is the presence under the law of birth or propagation as the term lex propaginis should be perhaps translated. However, N.P. Williams is wrong when he writes that all people sinned in Adam in the sense that at the moment of the transgression they were infinitely small particles of Adam who sinned.  

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

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

281 N.P. Williams, Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin, 372.
Then Augustine transfers his thoughts about Levi and Abraham onto Adam and his transgression. He discerns an analogy between Levi’s tithe and our participation in Adam’s sin – both those realities exist on the basis of the same law of propagation – lex propaginis.

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

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

282 Augustine, Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem VI 22; PL 45, 1552; transl. R.J. Teske, in: Answer to the Pelagians III, 658.
283 Augustine, Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem VI 22; PL 45, 1554; transl. R.J. Teske, in: Answer to the Pelagians III, 660.
Augustine uses different terms to denote the same – as he himself says – mysterious force thanks to which all people existed in Adam. In the same work he talks about the reason or right of semen – ratio seminis:

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

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

284 Augustine, Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem IV 104; PL 45, 1399-1401; transl. R.J. Teske, in: Answer to the Pelagians III, 466-467.
“carrier” of the law of propagation and it is also a habitat of sin. Although Augustine hesitated between creatianism and traducianism it was clear to him that all sinned in Adam. From such a viewpoint the origin of the soul is of secondary importance and that is why Augustine leaves it open:

| Et qualibet ergo, et quantalibet parte, omnes qui ex illo nati sunt, ille unus fuerant, sive secundum solum corpus, sive secundum utramque hominis partem. | In whatever manner and to whatever extent, all who have been born after him [Adam] were that one, whether only in terms of the body or in terms of both parts of the human being. |

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

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

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

285 J. Gross, Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas, 321.
286 Augustine, Opus imperfectum contra secundam Juliani responsionem II 178; PL 45, 1219; transl. R.J. Teske, in: Answer to the Pelagians III, 245.
unum hominem dixit, a quo generatio utique, hominum coepit, ut per generationem doceret isse per omnes originale peccatum.

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

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

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

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

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

288 Augustine, *Sermo* 294, 14-15; PL 38, 1344-1345; transl. E. Hill, 190.
In another text the idea of the law of propagation (\textit{lex propaginis}) was linked with the vision of the sin of nature:

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

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

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

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

\footnote{289} Augustine, \textit{De peccatorum meritis et remissione III 7, 14}; PL 44, 194, CSEL 60, 141; transl. R.J. Teske, in: \textit{Answer to the Pelagians}, 129.
\footnote{290} N.P. Williams, \textit{Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin}, 372.
Quia enim ab uno vero Deo et summo per impietatis iniquitatem resilientes et dissonantes defluxeramus, et evanueramus in multa, discissi per multa et inhaerentes in multis: oportebat nutu et imperio Dei miserantis, ut ipsa multa venturum conclamarent unum; et a multis clamatus veniret unus, et multa contestarentur venisse unum; et a multis exonerati veniremus ad unum, et multis peccatis in anima mortui, et propter peccatum in carne morituri, amaremus sine peccato mortuum in carne pro nobis unum; et in resuscitatum credentes, et cum illo per fidem spiritu resurgentes, justificaremus in uno justo facti unum: nec in ipsa carne nos resurrecturos desperaremus, cum multa membra intueremur praecessisse nos caput unum; in quo nunc per fidem mundati, et tunc per speciem redintegrati, et per Mediatorem Deo reconciliati haereamus uni, fruamur uno, permaneamus unum.

By wickedness and ungodliness with a crashing discord we had bounced away and flowed and faded away from the one supreme true God into the many, divided by the many, clinging to the many. And so it was fitting that at the beck and bidding of a compassionate God the many should themselves acclaim together the one who was to come, and that acclaimed by the many together the one should come, and that the many should testify together that the one had come, and that we being disburdened of the many should come to the one; and that being dead in soul through many sins and destined to die in the flesh because of sin, we should love the one who died in the flesh for us without sin, and that believing in him raised from the dead, and rising ourselves with him in spirit through faith, we should be made one in the one just one; and that we should not despair of ourselves rising in the flesh when we observed that we the many members had been preceded by the one head, in whom we have been purified by faith and will then be made completely whole by sight, and that thus fully reconciled to God by him the mediator, we may be able to cling to the one, enjoy the one, and remain forever one.\footnote{291 Augustine, \textit{De Trinitate} IV 2, 11; PL 42, 895-896, CCL 50, 175-176; transl. E. Hill, 160-161.}

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