Rufinus did not die an untimely death. He was spared involvement in the Pelagian controversy, which broke out only a few months after his demise in 411 with the condemnation of Pelagius' disciple Caelestius by a council at Carthage for the denial of original sin. We may regard Rufinus as fortunate to have escaped the polemics of the following years. He shared the same friends with Pelagius: Paulinus of Nola, the ascetic couple Pinian and Melania, and the family of Anicia Proba ('). Pelagius had been influenced in the development of his ideas by Rufinus' translations of Greek works ('). In particular he had used Rufinus' translation of Origen's Commentary on Romans immediately it became available in about 406 in order to compose his own commentary on the Pauline Epistles ('). Since the extant manuscripts of the translation of Origen on Romans derive from a copy found by Rufinus' friends after his death which they describe as not yet published or revised it would seem that Pelagius was able to use this work in advance of its publication ('). Like Rufinus Pelagius and Caelestius left Rome as refugees from the Gothic invasion. Rufinus died on the island of Sicily, where Pelagian ideas were soon afterwards found to be flourishing. Pelagius and Caelestius travelled on to Africa and, while Caelestius was coming under attack at Carthage, Pelagius continued his journey to Palestine, where he came into conflict with Jerome. Pelagius revived ac-

(2) Cf. Torgny Boström, Die Theologie des Pelagius und ihre Genesis (Uppsala 1957).
cusations against Jerome originally made by Rufinus and Jerome re-
sponded by attacking Pelagius as a disciple of Rufinus (*).

It may therefore be interesting to ask whether Rufinus' transla-
tions did indeed support Pelagian views and where he would have
stood in relation to the issues debated in the Pelagian controversy.
The translation of Origen's Commentary on Romans is of particular
interest because the exegesis of Romans played an important role in
the controversy. Indeed the Pelagian ideas condemned at the Council
of Carthage had been developed in reaction against the earlier exe-
gesis of Romans published by St Augustine between 394 and 396.

The charges against Caelestius concerned Adam's sin and its re-
sults for the rest of the human race, and the possibility of leading a
sinless life for those under the law before the coming of Christ.
During the debate at the Council the practice of infant baptism was
used as evidence for the view that newly born infants already have
sin (**). It is not surprising that Caelestius' views were condemned at
Carthage since they contradicted the views already expressed by
Augustine. In his De Diversis Quaestionibus ad Simplicianum of
395-6 addressed to Simplician of Milan Augustine had taken Romans
chapter 9 as a basis in developing his characteristic view of original
sin, according to which as a result of Adam's sin all men are a lump
of sin or "massa peccati" deserving punishment by divine justice (**).
God's mercy is shown in his forgiving some men and calling them
by his grace, his justice in his punishing others. This is combined
with a view of law based on Romans chapter 7 according to which
the function of the law is not to prevent sin but to give knowledge
of sin and even to increase sinful concupiscence by its prohibition
so that men may become aware of their need for grace. Already in
his Expositio quarundam propositionum epistulae ad Romanos of
394-5 Augustine had depicted human development in four stages:
firstly "before the law" when we follow the desires of the flesh in

(*) Cf. ROBERT F. EVANS, Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals (London 1968),
pp. 6ff.

(**) Cf. OTTO WERMEILINGER, Rom und Pelagius (Stuttgart 1975), pp. 4ff; EUGENE
61ff.

(****) He had taken the potter's clay of Rom 9,20-21 as a "massa peccati" al-
ready in his De Diversis Quaestionibus 83 chapter 68.3, but draws the consequences
more forcefully in the De Diversis Quaestionibus ad Simplicianum.
ignorance; secondly “under the law” when we know that these desires are forbidden and struggle against them in vain; thirdly “under grace” when our past sins are forgiven and divine help enables us to refrain from following the desires of the flesh; and fourthly “in peace” after the resurrection, when we are no longer troubled by fleshly desires (9). Augustine’s picture of a God who condemns men to punishment for a sin committed by their remote ancestor and who gave the law not to help men but merely to show up their sinfulness had provoked a reaction which led to the enunciation of the “Pelagian” views for which Caelestius was condemned.

I will return to this point later. At the moment I suggest that we turn to Rufinus’ translation of Origen’s Commentary on Romans in order to see what statements it makes on the disputed points. We shall not be the first to do so. In the earliest manuscript of this work, Lyons Bibliothèque de la Ville ms. 483, which was written in the fifth century and preserved until the ninth century at Verona (9), a contemporary reader has left marginal notes at four significant points. The most striking of these notes states “Against those who deny the propagation of sin” - “contra eos qui traducem negant peccati” - and directs attention to a passage which discusses the phrase “body of sin” in Rom 6,6 and does indeed give a striking affirmation of the hereditary transmission of sin. It is stated here that our flesh is the flesh of sin, but the flesh of Christ is only similar to the flesh of sin because of his virginal conception. It was only after the fall that Adam knew his wife Eve and begat Cain. Newborn infants are already unclean with sin at birth, and it is for this reason that the law prescribed a sacrifice for them and that the church baptises them (9).


(9) On this manuscript cf. Caroline P. Hammond Bammel, Der Römerbrieftext des Rufin (Freiburg 1985), pp. 110ff. and the articles referred to there.

(98) De Salvatore quodam loco cicit: quia uenerit in similitudine carnis peccati (Rom 8,3)... In quo ostendit quod nostra quidem caro peccati sit caro Christi autem caro similis sit carni peccati. Non enim ex semine uiri concepta est... Corpus ergo peccati est corpus nostrum quia nec Adam scribitur cognouisse Euan uxorern suam et genuisse Cain nisi post peccatum. Denique et in lege pro paruulo qui natus fuerit iubetur offerri hostia... Pro quo peccato offertur unus hic pullus? Namquid nuper editus paruulus peccare potuit? Et tamen ibat offeratum pro quo hostia iubetur offerri a quo mundus negatur quis esse nec si uniis diei fuerit uita eius (Job 14,4-5)....
Another note, which is partly destroyed and no longer legible, draws attention to a comment on Rom 1,24 which gives a very strong assertion of the human soul’s freedom of choice, without which reward or punishment would be unfair (19).

A second illegible and only partially preserved note marks a passage in Book I which discusses the impossibility of obedience to the Mosaic law according to the letter (12).

The fourth note reads “requirendum et animaduertendum diligenter” - “to be inquired into and noted carefully”. It refers to a discussion of Rom 5,13 “sin is not imputed when there is no law”. Origen states here that a four - or five - year old child who hits his father or mother in anger is not guilty of transgression of the commandment forbidding this, because he has not yet reached the age of reason and therefore is not yet subject to the natural law (13).

The questions therefore that interest this fifth-century annotator of Origen’s Commentary on Romans concern original sin, the freedom of the will, the impossibility of obedience to the Mosaic law and so on.

Pro hoc et ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit etiam paruulis baptismum dare (Lommatzsch, p. 396-7). Quotations from the Commentary on Romans are according to the text of my forthcoming critical edition in the series Vetus Latina, Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel, 16ff. (Freiburg 1990ff.), but with the page numbers of the edition of C.H.E. Lommatzsch, Berlin 1836-7.

(19) Non enim ui res agitur neque necessitate in alteram partem anima declinatur; alioquin nec culpa ei nec uirtus possit adscribi nec boni electio praeium nec declinatio mali suppliantium meretur; sed seruatur ei in omnibus libertas arbitrii ut in quod uoluerit ipsa decline sit scriptum est: “ecce possui ante faciem tuam uiam et mortem ignem et aquam” (cf. Dt 30,15, Sir 15,16-17). (Lommatzsch, p. 57).

(12) Sed et cum dicit: “etiam in quo infrinhamatur lex per carmen...” carmen legis sine dubio litteram legis dicit. Per litteram namentque infirmatur lex ut non possit impleri. Quis enim impleret uel de sabbato... uel de legibus leprae in stamine...? (Lommatzsch, p. 37).

(13) Legem naturalem, quae certo aetatis tempore ubi rationis capax esse quis coeperit et iusti iniquitate aequi atque inequi habere discernit... Puer ergo paruuulus quattuor fere aut quinque annorum si ut fieri solet indignatus uirga percutiat patrem aut matrem, quantum ad praeceptum mandati spectat mortem debet. Sed qua lex in illo nondum est naturalis quae eum doceat non debere iniquam facere patri uel matre nec scit in hoc crimine impietatis amnimit; et est quidem species peccati quod facit; matrem enim percutit uel maledicit sed mortuum est in eo peccatum quia per absentiam naturalis legis quae in eo nondum est peccatum ei non potest reputari; nondum enim est intra eum ratio tanta quae eum doceat hoc quod facit fieri non debere, et ideo etiam a parentibus non solum non reputatur ad culpam sed ad gratiam iucunditatemque suscipitur (Lommatzsch, pp. 334-5).
and the question whether children can become guilty of sin before reaching the age of reason. We may note that he was interested in issues debated at an early stage of the Pelagian controversy and that he was not an adherent of Pelagianism himself.

It would be possible to find many other statements in the translation of Origen's Commentary on Romans relevant to the questions of original sin, the impossibility of leading a sinless life, the role of the law and the status of just men under the law (*) . Instead of discussing these I shall take a second line of approach and look at Augustine's earliest anti-Pelagian writings in order to see whether he shows the influence of Rufinus' translation of Origen. As far as I know this question has not been examined. An article by Altaner on Augustine's use of Origen (*) does not include the Commentary on Romans, although it is not unlikely that copies would have been brought from Sicily to Africa after Rufinus' death or perhaps even earlier direct from Rome carried by Rufinus' friend Melania the elder when she visited Augustine in 407 (*). If we turn to Augustine's first anti-Pelagian work, the *De peccatorum meritis ac remissione et de baptismo parvulorum* of 412, we are struck almost immediately by an argument for the propagation of sin derived from Origen's commentary. In Book I chapter 9 Augustine states that his opponents are said to believe that sin is transmitted from Adam not by propagation but merely by imitation. He argues that if this were correct, St Paul in Romans 5,12 would have ascribed the origin of sin not to Adam, from whom the human race is propagated, but to the devil whom men imitate in sinning (*). The same argument occurs in Rufinus' translation of Origen's

(*) Rufinus' translation of the Commentary on Romans is looked at for points of relevance to the Pelagian controversy by Bolin, op. cit., and J. Patout Burns, "The interpretation of Romans in the Pelagian Controversy", *Augustinian Studies* 10 (1979), pp. 43-54.


(*) Sentient... ipsum peccatum non propagavisse... Sed si peccatum apostolus illud comminorare uoluisse... quod in hunc mundum non propagavisse... Sed imitatione intraverit, eius principem non Adam sed diabolum dicere... Proinde apostolus cum illud peccatum...
commentary on Rom 5,12, where Origen gives the same reason for Paul’s wording in this verse, namely the descent of the human race from Adam (\textsuperscript{(*)}). In addition the passage on original sin marked by the fifth-century annotator of the manuscript Lyons 483 has also left traces in Augustine. At Book II chapter 38 Augustine states that Christ was only born in the likeness of the flesh of sin, not in the flesh of sin, because his conception was not by the impulse of carnal concupiscence (\textsuperscript{(*)}). At Book II chapters 11 and 15 he states that the reason that all men are by nature children of wrath according to Ephesians 2,3 is that they are the offspring of carnal concupiscence (\textsuperscript{(*)}). The view which Augustine came to adopt is stated more explicitly in the translation of Origen’s commentary on Rom 8,3: Christ had the nature of our body, but not the pollution of sin, which is transmitted to those conceived by the impulse of concupiscence (\textsuperscript{(*)}).
It is even more interesting to find that Augustine has been influenced by the passage marked by the early annotator on the freedom from sin of the child who hits its parents. In Book I chapters 65-66, in arguing that in the baptism of infants it is original sin not individual sin that is remitted, since infants do not commit sins, he uses Origen’s illustration, adapting it to fit a yet younger child, and states that such a child cannot have committed sin, since it lacks the capacity of reason and is not subject to either the natural or the written law (\(^2\)). This passage is all the more striking, since it contradicts Augustine’s earlier exegesis of Romans, which had made no mention of the natural law and depicted the stage of life before the law as one of sinful ignorance. He now appears to take awareness of sin as a precondition of committing sin, whereas previously he had not done so (\(^3\)).

How are we to explain these parallels between Augustine’s first anti-Pelagian treatise and Rufinus’ translation of Origen’s Commentary on Romans? At the one extreme we might put forward the theory that Augustine himself is the annotator of the surviving fifth-century manuscript, at the other we might ascribe the parallels to chance and to indirect influence on Augustine through other writers who had used the works of Origen. The possibility that Augustine himself annotated our manuscript cannot, I think, be totally excluded, but I regard it as more likely that the annotator was some other early reader familiar with the issues discussed by Augustine and his opponents (\(^4\)). On the other hand I am convinced that Augustine read Rufinus’ translation of Origen’s Commentary on Romans during the period when he was producing his earliest anti-Pelagian works.


\(^2\) *Doceamus quomodo per propriam voluntatem nihil mali commiserint infantes ... nulla omnino praecepti capacitas, nullus uel naturalis uel conscriptae legis sensus aut motus, nullus in alterutram partem rationis usus ... At hoc ignorantiae est, in qua profundissima iacet, qua etiam matrem, cum post exiguum tempus ualuerit, percutiet iratus ... Haec non modo feruntur, verum etiam diliguntur in paruulis.* AUGUSTINE, *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione*, I.65-6 (CSEL 60, pp. 65-6).

\(^3\) See above p. 132-133.

There is further evidence in these works of Augustine’s reactions to Origen’s exegesis both in certain ideas which he adopts and in those which he opposes (\(^5\)). To examine this however would take us away from our initial question, namely: Did Rufinus’ translations support Pelagian views and where would Rufinus have stood in relation to the issues debated in the Pelagian controversy?

We have just seen that with regard to the doctrine of original sin Rufinus’ translation of Origen on Romans was clearly opposed to Pelagian views. The same work makes very clear statements about free will, which are known to have influenced Pelagius (\(^8\)), but on the other hand the opponents of Pelagianism never claimed to deny free will. It is possible for example to cite a parallel from Jerome to the passage on free will marked by our fifth-century annotator (\(^7\)). Should we then regard Rufinus not as a proto-Pelagian but as a proto-Augustinian? The answer to this question must surely be a firm “no”. The characteristic views of both Augustine and his Pelagian opponents were formed as a result of the rejection of ideas of Origen, in particular of Origen’s belief in the pre-existence of the soul. Rufinus however refused to condemn this doctrine and maintained that the question of the origin of the soul was as yet undecided (\(^9\)). In translating works of Origen he was making available ideas which were different from those of both Augustine and the Pelagians. It is probable that he was doing this deliberately and that he was aware of the points under discussion. To make this clear it is necessary to look at the background to the Pelagian controversy.

Augustine had started to form his ideas about free will and original sin before the controversy about Origen arose. These ideas are expressed in his early anti-Manichaean works and his *De Libero Arbitrio*. At this period he was strongly influenced by Neoplatonism and also by the attitudes of Origen as mediated through Ambrose. He states that the rival theories on the origin of the soul, namely creationism, traducianism or pre-existence, are open to discussion,

\(^{(*)} I \) hope to discuss this in a separate publication.

\(^{(5)} \) Cf. BOHLIN, op. cit., pp. 87-103.

\(^{(7)} \) Cf. RUFINUS, *Apologia ad Anastasium*, 6, ed. Simonetti, p. 27.

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and he often speaks of the fall as if it were the fall of every soul in a previous existence. In his earliest letter to Jerome, Epistle 28 written in 395, he welcomed Jerome's translations of Origen's biblical commentaries, but soon after this he became concerned about the attacks on Origen's errors and wrote to Jerome again asking for information. By the time that he wrote his De Diversis Quaestionibus ad Simplicianum in 395-6 he no longer writes as if the fall were the individual fall of every soul. His own alternative view however presented a picture of divine justice, which, as I said previously, was found offensive and provoked a reaction. Both Origen and Augustine take a negative view of human life in the body under the conditions to which Adam was condemned in Genesis chapter 3, weighed down by the burden of the flesh and its lusts. Whereas however Origen is able to explain this by stating that it is as a result of each individual soul's own fall that God has sent it into this life for its own correction and education, Augustine finds himself having to draw the conclusion that God's justice is shown in his having taken Adam's sin alone as sufficient reason for condemning human beings not only to the penal conditions of life in the body but also to eternal damnation thereafter. The contrast between Origen and Augustine is increased by the fact that for Origen divine punishment is primarily corrective and purgative, for Augustine it is primarily retributive. In addition Augustine's discussion of God's calling of Jacob and rejection of Esau seemed to leave very little role for human free will.

The earliest surviving writing to put forward characteristically Pelagian ideas such as were condemned at Carthage in 411 is the De Fide of a different Rufinus - Rufinus the Syrian. This work attacks the views of the fall to be found in both Augustine and Origen. With regard to the origin of the soul it denies traducianism and critic-

(29) De Libero Arbitrio, I. 24 and III. 57-59.
(31) The enquiry and Jerome's reply to it are lost but they are referred to in Augustine's Epistle 40.
ses Origen by name for his doctrine of pre-existence (\(^1\)). It rejects the idea that the conditions of human life are punitive as a result of Adam's fall and states that those who convict the whole world of iniquity and crime because of the one man Adam are mad and proclaim God to be unjust \(^{(5)}\). It denies that infants are baptised on account of Adam's sin \(^{(6)}\) or that children are punished for the sins of their parents \(^{(7)}\). The author of this work was no friend of Rufinus of Aquileia but on the contrary was probably one of the presbyters sent by Jerome from Jerusalem to Italy in 399 to campaign against Origenism. According to Caelestius' statement at the Council of Carthage he lived at Rome with Jerome's friend Pammachius \(^{(8)}\). It is likely that Caelestius was influenced by him in his own lost treatise entitled *Contra Traducem Peccati* \(^{(9)}\).

The other two surviving writings which put forward Pelagian ideas prior to 411 are the anonymous treatise *De Induratione Cordis Pharaonis* and Pelagius' own Commentary on the Pauline epistles. Both take issue with the views of Augustine and both were influenced by Rufinus' translations of Origen. The unnamed author of the *De Induratione Cordis Pharaonis* attacks Augustine indirectly without naming him, giving a positive view of the function of the law, emphasising the importance of free will, and refuting the idea that men are punished for the sins of their ancestors. In providing an alternative interpretation of Rom 9 to that given by Augustine he seems to have adopted certain ideas from Rufinus' translation of Origen on Romans \(^{(10)}\). It has been suggested that this work was written at the request of Rufinus' friend Paulinus of Nola, \(^{(11)}\) whose

\(^{(1)}\) 27, ed. Miller, p. 88.
\(^{(2)}\) 39, ed. Miller, p. 112.
\(^{(3)}\) 40, ed. Miller, p. 114.
\(^{(4)}\) 38, ed. Miller, p. 110.
\(^{(6)}\) Cf. Nuvolone, cit., col. 2891; TeSelle, cit., especially pp. 74-6.
\(^{(8)}\) Cf. Nuvolone, “Pelage et Pélagianisme”, col. 2919; TeSelle, cit., p. 83.
interest in its subject matter is known from the fact that he had written a letter to Jerome enquiring about the same questions (*2).

That Pelagius himself made use of Rufinus' translation of Origen's Commentary on Romans in his own Commentary on the Pauline Epistles is well known. He follows Origen particularly in his strong assertion of human free will (*4). Rufinus will have been aware of the contemporary interest in this question and deliberately have provided a contribution to it. He was in Rome or its environs between about 404 and 408 and in contact with Paulinus of Nola and no doubt also with Pelagius (*5). The first sentence of his translation of Origen's preface to the Commentary states that one of the chief difficulties of the epistle to the Romans is the basis it provides for the deterministic theories of heretics who use texts from it to attempt to overthrow the biblical doctrine of free will (*5). Earlier he had undertaken the translation of Origen's De Principiis in order to help a friend called Macarius who was writing a book against fate (*6). On the other hand it is interesting to note that although Pelagius shows awareness of the debates about the transmission of sin he does not yet in his Commentary on the Pauline Epistles state his own view on the matter but only quotes arguments that have been used by others (*7). It would seem that his opposition to Augustine at this period, about which we know from Augustine himself as well as from the internal evidence of his commentary (*6), centered on his fear that Augustine was discouraging moral effort by denying human free will and responsibility.

(*2) The letter is lost but Jerome's reply is his Epistle 85 of 399 or soon after. Paulinus' interest in Adam's fall during these years is also shown in his Epistles 23.44 and 30 to Severus (ed. Hartel, C.S.E.L. 28, pp. 199 and 262ff.)

(*3) See above note 3.


(*5) Ed. Lommatzsch, p.l.

(*6) Rufinus, Apol. contra Hieronymum I.11, ed. Simonetti, pp. 44-45. It is striking that Jerome when questioned by Paulinus of Nola about the texts in Romans 9 which appear to remove free will had referred him to Origen's De Principiis for an answer (Epistle 85; cf. note 42 above).

(*7) He does this in his commentary on Rom 5,15, ed. Alexander Souter (Cambridge 1926), pp. 46-7.

(*8) Cf. TeSelle, art. cit., p. 82; Giovanni Martinetto, “Les premières réactions anti-augustiniennes de Pélagie”, Revue des Études Augustiniennes 17 (1971), pp. 83-117. It is likely that it was Paulinus of Nola who made available Augustine's writings to Pelagius and others during this period.
It has only been possible in this paper to look briefly at two or three of the issues debated in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Pelagian controversy. Rufinus of Aquileia, Augustine, Jerome, Pelagius, Caelestius, Rufinus the Syrian and Paulinus of Nola no doubt each had their own individual viewpoints on these matters. During the lifetime of Rufinus the later protagonists of the controversy had not yet formed themselves into two opposing parties and the many and various ideas under discussion were not yet linked to form two opposing complexes of thought. The period was one of intellectual turmoil (\(^\text{(*)}\)). The controversy over the ascetic movement had fueled debate and disagreement and the theological readjustments necessitated by the condemnation of Origenism had produced a variety of diverging views. Augustine’s new ideas were provoking concern but not open attacks. Rufinus’ own chief contribution was to make available a great wealth of relevant material in his translations of Origen. In these translations he may have played down Origen’s characteristic ideas on the pre-existence and fall of the soul and on the purgative nature and limited duration of hell-fire, but he did not cut them out. It is likely that during his life-time he and his followers continued to regard Origen’s own views as a viable alternative to the views being developed by Augustine and Caelestius. For those who did not, his translations provided not only expert biblical exegesis but also a storehouse of arguments and ideas and the challenge of finding a way of retaining the good in Origen’s viewpoint while rejecting what were regarded as his characteristic “errors”.