

**UNIVERSITY „LUCIAN BLAGA” SIBIU
THE FACULTY ORTHODOX THEOLOGY „ANDREI ŞAGUNA”**

**ROMANS 9-11 IN THE INTERPRETATION AND THE LIFE
OF THE CHURCH UNTIL THE IIIRD CENTURY**

Summary

Coordinator: Pr. Prof. Dr. Vasile Mihoc

Author: Liviu Alexandru Ioniţă

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In 2011 the prestigious publishing house Oxford offered to the public a reference work. It is an edition of the New Testament in the well known translation in the area of the English language (New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation) but this time, it was published for the first time in the history by a team of Jewish biblical researchers and not by Christian ones.¹ It is a premiere because the publishing event is unique and extremely important for the relationship between Christianity and Judaism in the third millennium. The publishers, Jews, specialists in biblical studies and Judaism, begin the preamble selecting a motto from Romans in which the Apostle Paul emphasizes the irrevocability of the appeal of Israel and the gifts he has received from God (Chapter 9,3-5 and 11,29).²

Despite the history of two thousand years of controversy, hatred, reciprocal persecution, which ended with the Holocaust - a period in which the New Testament was a prohibited document for the Jews, they say now they want, with this new edition of the New Testament, that the writings of the apostles and of the primary Church to be received by the contemporary Judaism as writings resulting from a Jewish milieu. This could contribute to a better understanding of the Christian literature that form the New Testament and also to a better understanding of Christianity and its origin among the Jews of today³. If these Jewish scholars found in Romans 9-11 first access to the writings of the New Testament and the Paul's statements about the restoration of Israel, it is surprising that the Christian does not know about these passages of major importance for the argument of the apostle in the epistle of his mature mission. Also, the comments recorded in recent years show that as little the Jews believers know the New Testament, on so little are the Christian aware of affirmations Paul's statements about Israel in Romans 9-11.

Present work is dedicated to the great theological field, many times neglected in Christian theology, which was recently discovered and valued under the name **israeology**⁴. We intend to study the text from the three chapters of Romans 9-11, using the newest existing instruments, to get both a literary viewpoint and a historical perspective.

The first chapter presents the methodology used, the goal, but also the limits of the present paper, and provides a brief history of research. The chapter ends with a report on the current state of research and the Status Quaestionis, having the role to open the reader's interest on the subject attacked.

¹ Amy-Jill LEVINE & Marc Zvi BRETTLER (eds.), *The Jewish Annotated New Testament. New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford - New York u.a., 2011, 637p

² „For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and from whom according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. ... For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

³ *The Jewish Annotated New Testament...*, p. xi-xiii

⁴ The term can be used in theological field mainly through the efforts of the new publication „Edition Israeologie” chez Peter Lang. The last volume published this year belongs to Michael G. VANLANINGHAM, *Christ, the Savior of Israel: An Evaluation of the Dual Covenant and Sonderweg Interpretations of Paul's Letters*, EDIS 5, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main - Berlin - Bern u.a., 2012

It must be remembered from this introductory part the following things: first, in Romania, the Epistle to the Romans has never been the subject of a doctoral thesis, but only indirectly or fragmentarily, on topics such as baptism or Christian doctrine of sin.⁵ It is also in Romania and Greece⁶, it seems that young researchers prefer other Pauline epistles as I Corinthians, Ephesians and the Gospel of John than Romans. This is why we can say without hesitation that this thesis is the first dedicated exclusively to the Epistle to the Romans and especially in chapters 9-11.

As Orthodox theologian one of the hardest aspects of biblical research is the **methodology** used. We speak of the historical-critical method, while in the Orthodox Church efforts are being made for the recovery of patristic method. Being convinced of the importance of both method, we attempted a synthesis that satisfies both the requirement of studying an ancient text and the expectation of our Church that we should consider the subsequently influences generated by the text in different eras (Wirkungsgeschichte).⁷ So I started to realize an exegesis of the text to identify objectively as possible the claims of the apostle in Romans 9-11, and then I followed their reception in the early Christian centuries.

If the **purpose** of the work is to observe the extent to which the Pauline theology of Israel is received and transmitted in the first centuries, the limits can firstly be observed from the fact that the work can not get further that Origen.⁸ However, this limit has also certain advantages: the first three centuries, before Christianity became the state religion, is the period when the relationship between the Church and Judaism are crystallized, so that after the year 300 a.Chr. we already have two religions differentiated as such by the pagans to. We do not have many Bible commentaries of this period but other literary forms in which Christian writers speak of the verses of our Epistle. It is Origen who wrote the first detailed commentary on this epistle and that is why we dedicate the last part of the work.

So, while the first part concerns with the research of the text and of the context of Romans 9-11, the second part focuses on the reception of the Pauline theology of Israel in the second century and the last part explores the interpretation of Origen to the Romans 9-11.

⁵ „Teze de doctorat susținute la Facultatea de Teologie Ortodoxă „Andrei Șaguna” din Sibiu 1992-2010”, *Revista Teologică* 4 (2011), pp. 371-389.

⁶ Ioannis KARAVIDOPOULOS, *Ἑλληνική Βιβλική Βιβλιογραφία τοῦ 20οῦ αἰῶνα (1900-1995)*, Βιβλική Βιβλιοθήκη ἀρ. 10, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1997 și articolul său „The Apostle Paul's Message: Theological Bridge between East and West”, in: ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE, *In the Footsteps of St. Paul: An Academic Symposium. Papers Presented at the Pauline Symposium October 11-16 2008*, edited by Archbishop Demetrius Trakatellis and Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline - Massachusetts, 2011, S. 37-46. On biblical research in Russia see Vasile Mihoc, „Le développement des études bibliques” chez Pr. Prof. dr. Viorel IONIȚĂ (Hg.) „La théologie Orthodoxe au XXeme siècle eu au début du XXIeme siècle Ed. Basilica, Bucarest, 2011, p. 175ff

⁷ For a synthesis between the two methods see Prof. K. NIKOLAKOPOULOS, *Das Neue Testament in der Orthodoxen Kirche. Grundlegende Fragen einer Einführung in das Neue Testament*, LSOT 1, LIT Verlag Dr. W. Hopf, Berlin, 2011, p. 316-17.

⁸ About „The Parting of the Ways” see Adam H. Becker (ed.), *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages*, Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 95, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2003.

Part I: Romans 9-11. A short analysis of the Text

Before discussing the text of exegetical point of view, in the first part of the work, we made some observations on the argumentative structure and on the quotations from the Old Testament used here by the apostle Paul. Experts agree on the fact that the Romans contain the most numerous quotations from the Old Testament⁹ used by a biblical author. This observation, beside those on the rhetorical structure of the Pauline argument of Romans 9-11, have already established, to a large extent, the way in which we look at the Pauline text. The fact that the apostle frequently uses the ancient diatribe in dialogue with the speaker (Jewish Christian versus Gentile Christian) together with the biblical quotations and especially the apostle's theological-prophetic position on themselves, give us, "the double perspective" on Scripture (here we understand the Old Testament), which are found in all three chapters.

It is the wish of the apostle to convince those which it addresses the epistle of some essential truths, but there is also the danger that they are not well understood. The most obvious places in this direction are the rhetorical questions in Romans 9.6, 11.1 and verse 11. In all these places the apostle comes with negation $\mu\eta\ \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota\tau\omicron$ who wants to make us attentive to the danger of interpretation. The perspective provided by the apostle wants to be prophetic, but at the same time biblical and that is why his arguments are consistently based on the writings contained in all three parts of the Hebrew Scriptures (TaNaK).¹⁰

Looked this way, the text proves an indestructible unit¹¹ but also a gradation in the argument, with its peak in Romans 11.¹² Chapter 11 of Romans is the only place in the New Testament where the problem set by the unbelief of Israel is discussed in detail by a biblical author during three chapters.¹³ The message localized in the climax of the Pauline argument of Romans 11 is simple at first sight: "and so all Israel will be saved", but the discussions about what symbolizes Israel here, who will be saved and when will be saved seem be endless. Our study came to the conclusion that speaking of Israel, the apostle Paul does not refer to the Church, "the new Israel", as she called herself later through different patristic theologians. When the apostle Paul uses the term Israel is only the people where it comes from that he has in view and, in addition, this indication has always a theological connotation by the Apostle, or, at least, he speaks of his people from a biblical perspective, but not ethnic or geographical, in these cases using the term $\iota\upsilon\delta\alpha\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$.

It is neither only the practicing Jews, that is to say, the Jewish-Christians who are in sight of the apostle when he made the statement in Romans 11,26; that because, throughout the Chapter 11 he discusses about "the remaining" believer, but also about unbelieving "rest", who are the subject of the sadness of the apostle starting with Romans 9,1-5. So, if the

⁹ Filippo BELLI, *Argumentation and use of scripture in Romans 9 - 11*, Gregorian & Biblical Press, Roma, 2010.

¹⁰ P. N. TARAZI, *Romans: A Commentary*, The Chrisostom Bible: A Commentary Series for Preaching and Teaching, Orthodox Center for the Advancement of Biblical Studies, OCABS Press, St Paul, Minnesota, 2010.

¹¹ Other opinion has Christoph PLAG, *Israels Wege zum Heil: eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9 bis 11*, Calwer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1969, p. 41,60,65

¹² John ELIOTT, „Romans”, in: Michael D. COOGAN (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible*, vol. 2, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 271-9.

¹³ J. GNILKA, *Altes und neues Gottesvolk*, in *Paulus von Tarsus, Apostel und Zeuge*, HThKNT Sup. VI, Herder, Freiburg u.a., 1996, p. 281.

unbeliever Jews are, in any case, the subject of the Pauline thesis in Romans 11,26, we only have to accept the fact that $\pi\tilde{\alpha}\varsigma$ Ἰσραὴλ means exactly what the apostle says in his simple words, that is to say "all Israel". From Chapter 10 we saw that the apostle is very aware of the unbelief of his people when he said, using the critical words of the prophet Isaiah: "I stretched out my hands all the day to a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom 10,21). But the plan of God to the world and, by implication, with Israel does not stop here and that is why the apostle puts rhetorically after the text, the following question: I say: "Did God rejected his people? Far from it! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew " (Rom. 11,1-2). So, Paul is aware of the unbelief of the majority of the Jews of his time, but he is convinced that they can be saved by believing in Jesus.

Some modern exegetes, especially after Holocaust developed the theory of the "double alliance" (Dual Covenant)¹⁴, thanks to which the Jews will be saved by their covenant with God, that is Tore, and Christians will be saved by their faith in Jesus Christ. Others argue here for an open path (Sonderweg) according to which Judaism has its way towards God, which runs parallel with that of Christianity, but in the end, every Jew believes in Jesus either by his own revelation, or by the eschatological revelation, that of the second coming of Jesus in glory. The church and the traditional exegesis never accepted these arguments, on the contrary the church argued that here is the salvation of believers among the Jews and Gentiles also, within the same Israel renewed by Jesus.

Our view is that in Romans, when the Apostle Paul speaks of Israel does not consider the Gentiles, but he pleads for an integration of the Gentile believers within the people of God, without explaining this. It is only the Romans 15,10 where he says: "nations, rejoice with his people..." which shows us that for the Apostle, at the end of the letter, the two groups of believers are not simply blended into one, "the new Israel". The reason for jealousy, zeal or emulation that should arouse within the Israel (11,11.15) the Gentiles coming to faith, is a pretty clear indication that the apostle expects a return to his brethren to the faith in Jesus as the Christ / Messiah, not only in eshaton, but during his lifetime, and that through the mission always started in Synagogues. Thus, the citation of Romans 11.26 seems to result of the firm belief of apostle expressed through the most optimistic words of the New Testament: if Israel is not saved, the word of God from Scripture (Old Testament) and all its promises become obsolete. In other words, who could he come before individual citizens of the Roman Empire, from all over the world, preaching realization through Jesus Christ of all the prophecies in the Hebrew Bible, if the people to whom have been entrusted all this prophecies is abandoned by God? These are the questions which led the Apostle Paul to a more profound and more theological attitude towards the fate of Israel than other New Testament author.

¹⁴ See further explanation in Christopher ZOCCALI, *Whom God Has Called: The Relationship of Church and Israel in Pauline Interpretation, 1920 to the Present*, Pickwick Publications, Eugene, 2010.

The second part: the reception

With this view on the text of Rom. 9-11, we are in the second part of the work, that is to say, in the rich history of its reception in the patristic era. It begins especially since fourth and fifth centuries to be rich when the comments on Romans multiply itself, but a pass through it all, so throughout history interpretation, is impossible in the frames of a single paper. MH Robert tried sketching several authors selectively passing through the Middle Ages, but his brief information given to each author are not only questionable, but sometimes too subjective summarized.¹⁵ Other authors have attempted a comparison between two or three patristic commentators¹⁶ or a study to a single patristic commentary on Romans¹⁷, but none showed a clear history of interpretation of these chapters.

However, we can say that the research on the reception of letter in the patristic era is just beginning, but there have been very consistent steps in this regard in recent years¹⁸. Our contribution is to provide the reader with a chronological overview of how Romans 9-11 was received into the Church. Surprisingly enough pages in this part of the writing reveal the lack, or even deliberate exclusion of these chapters in the case of some authors in second century (Marcion). Due to the fact that the authors treated here have not written comments to the Romans, we proceed by following the way and the extent to which the Christian writers of the second century received the Pauline theology about Israel, as was presented in the first part of our study. Even if we can not find exact references to citations of Romans 9-11, every other allusion, paraphrase or conceptual reference, as every other contention about Israel is very interesting for us, in finding the way in which the most important authors of this century develops the attitude of Christianity over Judaism. The period evoked here is a very rich source, because the second century is the century of conflicts and wildest struggles, carried by the two parties: on the one hand it is played for the identity's accuracy of a Christianity aroused in its more part of Judaism, but also of a Judaism that is organized under the command of the rabbis after the destruction of the Temple in 70 and especially after the Bar Kochba revolt in 135¹⁹.

Gnosticism, the first and major challenge to early Christianity, already perceptible in the writings of the New Testament is becoming very difficult to be defined in the last time. Unlike the beginning of the twentieth century, when Gnosticism was considered primarily a philosophical part within Christianity, especially of Hellenistic origin, we find in previous

¹⁵ She is interested especially in the mission to the Jews: Marie-Hélène ROBERT, *Israël dans la mission chrétienne: Lectures de Romains 9 - 11*, Cerf, Paris, 2010.

¹⁶ For example Peter J. GORDAY, *Principles of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9-11 in Origen, John Chrisostom and Augustine*, SBEC 4, New-York & Toronto, 1983.

¹⁷ Michel FÉDOU, „Le drame d'Israël et des Nations: un mystère caché. Lecture de Rm 9-11 par Origène”, in: *L'exégèse patristique de Romains 9-11. Grâce et liberté, Israël et les nations, le mystère du Christ*, Médiasèvres, Paris, 2007, pp. 13-28 și Peter J. GORDAY, „The 'justus arbiter': Origen on the Paul's Role in the Epistle to the Romans”, *SP* 18:3 (1988-90), pp. 393-402.

¹⁸ Jeffrey P. GREENMAN (ed.), *Reading Romans Through the Centuries: From the Early Church to Karl Barth*, Brazos Press, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2005.

¹⁹ Peter SCHÄFER, *Die Geburt des Judentums aus dem Geist des Christentums: fünf Vorlesungen zur Entstehung des rabbinischen Judentums*, Tria Corda 6, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2010.

decades more and more the contours of a Gnostic Judaism in this period of first Christian centuries.²⁰ The Gnostic attitude towards Judaism, Hebrew Scriptures and Hebrew ritual generally, is one of the most virulent, at least at the theoretical level. The Gnostics rejected any link between the material and the divine sphere and in case they were Jews, they are away from their Jewish existence in the deepest way. It is not impossible that many of the first generation of Christians were Gnostics such that the writings of St. John the Evangelist accused strongly at the end of the first century.

As regards Didache, it was written at the turn of the first and second century in a clear Judeo-Christian context, located by the specialists in Antioch of Syria. It shows a "non Pauline"²¹ character, but there are also similarities with Pauline view, in that it accepts the entry of Gentiles within the people of God through faith in Messiah. Statements about "hypocrites" in chapters 8-10 are rather some "internal" one, i.e. intra-Jewish, because Judeo-Christians and "hypocrites" - perhaps Pharisees / rabbis - are not seen yet in complete opposition, as it happens several decades later.

At St. Ignatius of Antioch we have attested the first discussion about Judaism and Christianity (ιουδαϊσμός - χριστιανισμός) and he write a new letter to the Romans. This author can not give up so easily on the positive aspect of the Jewish religion, but the positive aspect is of relevance as long as the Old Testament and all about him refer to Christ.²² As a result of our study it appears that St. Ignatius is one of the first Christian authors who write from a clear external-Jewish perspective, i.e. a church leader with a clear conscience that the Church is different from Judaism.²³ The fact that St. Ignatius cares so much defending the unity of the Church in front of Judaizing heresy but without problematizing its relationship with Judaism itself shows that in his age and in his community the "parting of ways" had already been. The advocacy of Judaism presents a danger to the Church, but non-Christian Jews were not more necessarily a common topic for the Antiochian bishop. For these reasons it seems that St. Ignatius has not necessarily found necessary to invoke the Pauline point of view about Israel, as it was formulated more than half a century before in Romans 9-11. But this option of St. Ignatius is now ungrateful for the researchers of biblical texts; that it's why some accuse St. Ignatius of an incipient Marcionism.²⁴

The next treated writing, **Epistle of Barnabas**, mainly provide to the less informed reader a rich material to support an anti-Jewish theology. For the author of the epistle, it is only the Christians who inherit the divine Covenant, which is in contradiction with Romans 11, and the circumcision represents actually the deception to which Jews have fallen, through

²⁰ Klaus KOSCHORKE, „Paulus in den Nag-Hammadi-Texten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Paulusrezeption im frühen Christentum“ *ZThK* 78 (1981), pp. 177-205.

²¹ „Didache's distinctly non-Pauline character and the uncertain relationship with Ignatius make it very hard to reconcile the document with an Antiochene setting.” Cf. Jürgen K. ZANGENBERG, „Reconstructing the Social and Religious Milieu of the Didache: Observations and Possible Results”, in: Huub VAN DE SANDT & Jürgen ZANGENBERG (eds.) *Matthew, James, and Didache...*, p. 68.

²² Carl B. SMITH, „Ministry, Martyrdom, and Other Mysteries: Pauline Influence...”, p. 46.

²³ M. ZETTERHOLM, „Judaism, Christianity and Ignatius of Antioch”, in: idem, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch...*, p. 203.

²⁴ Clayton N. JEFFORD, *The Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament*, Hendrickson, Peabody, Massachusetts, 2006, p. 168.

the frames of a “demonic illusion”.²⁵ It seems that Barnaba knows nothing about, the salvation of Israel” or about the irrevocability of Israel’s gifts and call, which are the Paulian theses that constitute the climax of the argument in Romans 9-11. This thing has fundamental consequences for the Christian theological understanding of Israel, in the formative centuries of Christianity.

The epistle of Barnabas is anti-Jewish, but at the same time deeply rooted in Judaism, of which it is in force to detach. This fact proves that the detachment of the Synagogue Church was not at all sure.²⁶ It is very important to emphasize once again that the polemic of the Epistle attests extremely virulent conflict between the two communities, which simply meant the struggle for existence, perhaps at least on the side of Christianity. This does not justify anti-Jewish language of the letter, but it better reveals the sociocultural reasons that determined the theology of this writing. At the same time, an unfavourable situation to the Christian community is not an excuse for lack of a biblical view of Israel, as the Apostle Paul try in Romans 9-11.

Under the title ‘the greatest challenge’²⁷ is the **chapter on Marcion**, a character of the second Century which directs the attention of biblical scholars also today, especially in Western Europe. This is extremely interesting for our work, because he is the first in the history of Christianity who suggests a clear exclusion of Romans 9-11 from the Pauline corpus. For Marcion, the God of the Old Testament was a demiurge evil and brutal, which should be left for good and gracious God revealed to the world by Christ. Therefore, the Old Testament must be rejected by all true Christians and the New Testament writings purged of all Jewish elements. From the monograph of A. von Harnack²⁸ and other more recent studies²⁹ we learn that Marcion held the ten epistles of Paul as the most precious Biblical scriptures and that was only the gospel of Luke that he kept, of course eliminating certain texts of Jewish character, such as the first two chapters. In such a system of rationing, Rom 9.11 must have been an interpolation, or a fake from the original text that Marcion cleaned with the utmost seriousness by foreign influences, to convey the real message to practitioners of the apostle. Because of his teaching, Marcion was expelled four years after his arrival in Rome (144 years), but using his considerable material possibilities he creates a parallel church. It competed with the "Orthodox" Church with great success, until the bishops have succeeded to reduce the influence of these Marcionite communities only with the help of the force of the state in the late fifth century. That Marcion was active and influential in the east of the

²⁵ W. HORBURY, „Jewish-Christian Relations in Barnabas and Justin Martyr...”, p. 332.

²⁶ „the separation between Jews and Christians was *not*, from the perspective of the author, secure.” Cf. Michele Murray, *Playing a Jewish Game: Gentile Christian Judaizing in the First and Second Centuries CE*, Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 2004, p. 50

²⁷ This expression belongs to Archdeacon Prof. Dr. IOAN I. ICĂ Jr., *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, vol. I Deisis/Stavropoleos, 2008.

²⁸ Adolf VON HARNACK, *Marcion. Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 21996 [1924]

²⁹ Heikki RÄISÄNEN, „Marcion”, în: Stephen WESTERHOLM (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, MA [u.a.], 2011, pp. 301-315 și Todd D. Still, „Shadow and Light: Marcion’s (Mis)Construal of the Apostle Paul”, în: Michael F. BIRD & Joseph R. DODSON (eds.), *Paul and the Second Century...*, 2011, pp. 91-107

empire, and after the fifth century, especially in the Syrian and Arab space³⁰, has important implications for understanding the Christian attitude towards Judaism in medieval Byzantine. If Marcion was accused of de-judaizing the Scripture³¹, we must now look if our church is or is not in the same danger. Therefore, we can say with A. Lindemann that Christian theology is continually challenged by Marcion, which should be an impetus to reconsider the important chapters of Christian theology.³²

The next two authors must necessarily be read from the perspective of reaction to the theology of Marcion, because both write against him. Firstly, at the St. Justin Martyr and Philosopher was the first event with the title "Dialogue" (**Dialogue with the Jew Tryfon**), which is almost unique in the history of Christianity for his irenic tone in conversation with a Christian with a Jewish contemporary (written ca. 160).³³ It should be noted that the work of Saint Justin as the writings of the Apostolic Fathers have been seen in modern scientific research more from a philosophical point of view, than a biblical-theological one. The doctrine of the Logos, the Christology, the relationship of a first Christian writer with the philosophy of his time – these were the interesting topics for the theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries, but after World War II "on revealed the existence of a movement of the objective of the studies from the Justin the philosopher (author of Apologies) on Justin biblical exegete (author of the Dialogue with Trypho the Jew)".³⁴ This is rediscovery of his work in biblical perspective and the accrued interest to Judaism in recent decades, led initially to a very positive evaluation of the dialogue.³⁵

Today, some authors think that Justin is interested in a genuine dialogue with Jew Tryfon because of using many details as on various biblical themes³⁶, while others see only 60% from the dialogue that Tryfon seems to be active and this activity is reduced mostly to ask questions that St. Justin gives long answers.³⁷ The requirement to find a dialogue between two peers is clearly anachronistic, but renouncing to give the exact percentage, in all cases the *Dialogue* of St. Justin did not receive the message of Romans 9-11 in his entirety. So we have to see the opinions of experts are different on receipt of Pauline writings. Following things presented in detail to the test, we have the tendency to believe that St. Justin knew the Romans, but he deliberately avoided the text of Rom 9-11, for reasons which illustrate the

³⁰ Marco FRENCHKOWSKI, „Marcion in arabischen Quellen”, în: Gerhard MAY & Katharina GRESCHAT (ed.), *Marcion und seine kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung/Marcion and His Impact on Church History*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 2002, pp. 39–63.

³¹ P. FREDRIKSEN & Oded IRSHAI, „Christian Anti-Judaism: Polemics and Policies”, în: Steven T. KATZ (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism, vol. IV: the Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, Cambridge University Press, NY – Madrid u.a., 2006, p. 979.

³² A. LINDEMANN, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum...*, p. 395

³³ Stephen G. WILSON, „Jewish-Christian Relations 70-170”, în: *ABD* 3, p. 837.

³⁴ M. SLUSSER, „Justin Scholarship: Trends and Trajectories”, în: Sara Parvis & Paul Foster (eds), *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2007, pp. 13-21, aici pg.19

³⁵ Stephen G. WILSON, „Jewish-Christian Relations 70-170”, în *ABD* 3, p. 837.

³⁶ C. D. ALLERT, *Revelation, Truth, Canon...*, p. 58.

³⁷ M. HIRSHMAN, „The Exegetical Debate: Justin Martyr and the *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*”, în: idem, *A Rivalry of Genius...*, p. 33: „Trypho plays an active role only until Chapter 90, about 60 percent of the book. His main task is to ask leading questions, which Justin answers thoroughly and skillfully. Trypho does not hide that he is highly impressed by Justin and by the force of his arguments (63:1).”

situation of his time (the persecution of Christians, the struggle for identity, the status of leader) as Christian teacher in Rome, where the Jewish community was strong and numerous.

St. Justin is defending on the one hand the Christian community from the Marcionite ideas, for which purpose he had to prove that the Old Testament is constitutive for the teaching of the Christian faith. On the other hand, the dialogue is a challenge in terms of the relationship with rabbinic Judaism, to which St. Justin had to prove the legitimacy of the Christian heritage of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament). To the writing against Marcion we no longer have access today, but we find that from *Dialogue* that Saint Justin's Christianity is unquestionably the "true Israel", and Scripture belong to Christians also, because the Jews, refusing to believe in Christ, do not understand them correctly. We found here a Christian argument developed for the first time in the affirmation that the Church replaces Israel. The last part of the chapter dedicated to Saint Justin's *Dialogue* concerning the salvation of a faithful remnant of Israel may be a resemblance to St. Paul and Romans 11, but we already know from the short exegesis of this text that Saint Paul clearly does not remain at the idea of the faithful remnant. Full appreciation of the *Dialogue* and its negative attitude towards Judaism cannot be completely overcome by these little more positive passages. St. Justin remains the first Christian theologian who develops a replacement theology by the explicit and argued affirmation in favor of Christians as "new" and "real" Israel. His exclusivist position and especially the absolute silence regarding the Apostle Paul are topics that raise many questions with many implications for later Christian theology. What became clear from this study is that St. Justin does not present an irenic image of a tolerant Judeo-Christian interaction nor simply a theology that removes everything that means Judaism.³⁸ Apart from the position of St. Justin, the present study has highlighted a context and some plausible arguments for the absence of the Pauline theology of Israel in St. Justin.

Melito of Sardis. The second author who wrote against Marcion - and trying to defend the Christian heritage of the Jewish Scriptures - this is St. Melito of Sardis. From him we have access to a homily on Easter, the first of its kind known in the history of Christian literature. It does not provide a receipt of the Romans, but as Easter sermon is an invaluable source for the relationship Church - Israel in the last decades of the second century (about 170). Melito's attitude towards Judaism can be characterized by "ambivalence between continuity and boundaries."³⁹ Because, on the one hand, Melito takes upon itself massively existing Jewish tradition - as, perhaps, himself a converted Jew - and secondly he fights for clear delineation of the community of the Synagogue. On the criticism to Israel I. Angerstorfer concludes that it must necessarily be considered in the intra-Jewish liturgical context where the pericope *Ex 12* was used just to lead the community of believers (the Jews) to repentance in the context of the feast of Easter. Thus, the author can say that "his statements cannot be considered necessarily negative... " - but she still continues - „but for understanding today, or especially from the point of view of the text of Rom 9-11, they are absolutely unsatisfactory.”⁴⁰

³⁸ M. H. ROBERT, *Israël dans la mission chrétienne: Lectures de Romains 9 - 11*, Cerf, Paris, 2010, p. 120: „Seule une théologie du transfert d'alliance est présentée: le judaïsme doit se convertir au christianisme, l'ancien Israël n'a plus lieu d'être.”

³⁹ I. ANGERSTORFER, *Melito und das Judentum...*, p. 231.

⁴⁰ I. ANGERSTORFER, *Melito und das Judentum...*, p. 232.

The anti-Jewish attitude toward Israel Melito can be summarized as follows: 1) The collective guilt for the suffering and death of Jesus, 2) Israel is the only culprit, while Pilate is presented in a positive image 3) guilt is decided, because Jesus is God. Do not forget that this sermon is addressed to Christians and not to Israel, but a sermon must strengthen the identity and Christian faith and should not convert unbelieving Jews of Sardis.⁴¹ The absence of references to his contemporaries Melito Sardis Jews unlike the concrete criticism of St. John Chrysostom at the synagogue of Antioch of his time it is a new indication on the fact that the conclusion of the sermon against Israel has an educational role rather than competitive and combative one. But we observed an omission or deliberate avoidance in the absence of ideas Rom 11 in Melito's sermon, then we saw that Rom 10,4 or ideas of chapters 1-8 are known to the author. The recognition of this reality confirms the cataloguing of Melito as one of the first representatives of a replacement theology⁴², which triggered in the history of Christian literature and liturgical theology a whole avalanche of anti-Jewish authors and works.⁴³

Conclusions to the second part. We have seen that the Didache is still a Jewish writing confirms the tensions between Jews converted to belief in Jesus as the Messiah and those "hypocrites" – perhaps rabbinical Pharisees. The Epistle of Barnabas proposed depreciatory Program to Judaism, and St. Justin and St. Melito of Sardis arrive at statements that used throughout the Middle Ages in the denigration of Judaism by Christians. Besides the categorical position represented by Barnabas, Justin presents however passages of particular frankness, like that about Gentiles who lived before Jesus Christ in "wars, murders and all the wickedness," but in Jesus Christ they found refuge to the God of Israel.⁴⁴ However, it is clear that for the theology of Rom 9-11 and even Pauline theology in general, the Apostolic Fathers, St. Justin and Melito are rather non pauline⁴⁵, the theology of the Apostle Paul on Israel remaining without actually reception at that time.⁴⁶ It is generally presented a theology

⁴¹ „Melito of Sardis (d. 190) was equally concerned to show potential converts from Judaism that Christian liturgy preserved the best of all that was in Jewish tradition (*On the Pascha*) but now expressed in a more universally appropriate form. Melito was actually writing to encourage a Christian community that was numerically and socially much inferior to the Jewish community.” J.MCGUCKIN, „Judaism, the Church and”, in: idem, *Westminster Handbook of Patristic Theology*, John Knox Press, Louisville-London, 2004, pp. 195-6.

⁴² „Our homilist was concerned to prove the superiority of Christianity over the Judaism. Careful focus on the homily's images of "Israel" drawn from biblical traditions and its supersessionary evaluation of Judaism, coupled with little or no contemporary descriptions of Jews, suggests caution in re-creating possible interaction between our author and second- or third-century Jews. our author's anti-Judaism is closely linked to his supersessionary theology.” Cf. Lynn H. COHICK, „Melito's *Peri Pascha*: Its Relationship to Judaism...”, p. 136, 140, 134.

⁴³ I. ANGERSTORFER, *Melito und das Judentum...*, p. 227.

⁴⁴ «We the Christians, who knowing the worship of God and the law of the word from Jerusalem, we found with the apostles of Jesus the refuge at the God of Jacob and the God of Israel. » *Dialogue...*, 110, p. 221.

⁴⁵ „Es ist festzustellen, dass die apologetischen Schriften für die Geschichte der Paulusrezeption in der Alten Kirche nicht kennzeichnend, sondern im Gegenteil ausgesprochen atypisch sind.” A. LINDEMANN, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum...*, p. 367.

⁴⁶ „Le regard posé sur les juifs, tour à tour polémique, intégrateur, réducteur, méfiant, voire hostile, n'est jamais contrebalancé par la proposition de Paul.” Cf. Marie-Hélène ROBERT, *Israël dans la mission chrétienne: Lectures de Romains 9 - 11*, p. 137.

of the transfer of God's covenant with the Jews Christians, the Jews are required to convert to Christianity, and Israel and his faith before Christ have no place in history.⁴⁷ This opens the possibility of a long tradition of theorizing Judaism in support of replacement theology, which is not present in Saint Paul and is now discussed.

Regarding "forgetting" St. Paul in the second century, we believe that it is not possible to support something like, once we saw that his theology is actually known. More precisely, we could say that historical events (mutual exclusion, persecution) have played a key role in the choice of texts for interpretation, because the reality of life was most often harder, biting and crushing the power of the pulse arriving from the irenic Saint Paul's concern about Israel and the Church of Rom 9-11.

Part three: Interpretation of Romans 9-11 in Origen

Entire third part is devoted to Origen for several reasons. First, he wrote the first comment Romans known in the history of Christian literature. This comment exists only in the Latin translation by Rufinus of Aquileia made in the early fifth century, and it was transmitted to the Middle Ages under a pseudonym because of the posthumous condemnation of the person and work of Origen in the fifth Ecumenical Council. Then, the critical edition made in the 90s of last century⁴⁸ and countless translations and studies in recent decades⁴⁹ have revealed a completely particular commentary. In our case, it is distinguished by the fact that Origen provides a picture really positive towards Israel and the Jewish Scriptures. The position of Origen is very interesting especially considered in the prosecution mentioned in the second part, because it was clear that he had read all the works treated here. Unlike Melito, Barnabas, or Marcion, for Origen the Jewish Scriptures are the Biblical Canon par excellence, that Christians need to know in as much detail. His commentary on Romans is distinguished by the fact that extremely detailed reading the text of Rom 9-11. Other than interpreters who later selected some passages here and develop theological themes more or less relevant to the Pauline argument, Origen succeeded like no other before him and after him in patristic literature to follow and comment exemplarily the three chapters of Romans 9-11.

⁴⁷ Dans le *Dialogue* de St. Justin, A. M. Ritter voit la rupture claire de l'église de Synagogue. . Cf. A. M. RITTER, *Der Bruch zwischen Synanoge und Kirche: Das Zeugnis des Justins (Dialog mit Tryphon 16:4)*, dans: *Kirche- und Theologiegeschichte in Quellen. Band I: Alte Kirche*, ausgewählt, übersetzt und kommentiert von Adolf Martin RITTER, 3. Auflage, Neukirchener Verlag, 1977, p. 13.

⁴⁸ *Der Römerbriefkommentar des Origenes. Kritische Ausgabe der Übersetzung Rufins*, von C. P. HAMMOND BAMMEL, Vetus Latina 16, Freiburg, le livre 1-3 (1990), le livre 4-6 (1997), le livre 7-10 (1998).

⁴⁹ Only English and French translations are made after the critical edition. See *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, translated by Thomas P. Scheck, Washington D.C., cărțile 1-5 (2001); cărțile 6-10 (2002); *Commentaire sur l'Épître aux Romains*, Tome I (livres 1-2) introduction par Michel FÉDOU s.j., traduction, notes et index par Luc Brésard o.c.s.o., SC 532, Cerf, Paris, 2009; Tome II (livres 3-5), introduction par Michel Fédou s.j., traduction, notes et index par Luc Brésard o.c.s.o., SC 539, Cerf, Paris, 2010; Tome III (livres 6-8), par Michel Fédou s.j., traduction, notes et index par Luc Brésard o.c.s.o. et Michel Fédou s.j., SC 543, Cerf, Paris, 2011.

The most striking thing for a patristic writer is that Origen recognizes the Pauline arguments from Rom 11,26 and 11,11 as essential to the conduct of the apostolic argumentation of our passage, something that can be more easily confirmed on the using statistical tools as *Biblia Patristica*.⁵⁰ Already the interpretation of the first verses of Rom 9 Origen brings to the reader the optimistic outlook of Rom 11,26, showing the unity of the text that is considered by the author when he explains Rom 9-11 and at the same time giving evidence that his interpretation is very "actual", because Origen reaches conclusions and observations as a philological scholar of the last decades.⁵¹

Related to the interpretation in the commentary to the Romans itself and interpretation of Rom 9-11 found in other writings of Origen, we can say that this is constant. The Commentary, although more elaborate, does not offer a different perspective vis-à-vis the interpretation of our chapters in other contexts, influenced by other biblical themes and motifs. Instead, we see how Origen used citations as key texts from Rom 11,11 or 11,26 to complete the interpretation of some texts of the Gospels to Israel, most often with a clear tendency to flatten the possible appearance of some anti-Jewish interpretations early, despite the experience of a tense relationship between the community and the synagogue. Thus, the text of Rom 11 never went to oblivion or changed in his initial message by the various new contexts in which it is invoked, but instead, it is the perspective from which Origen studied other statements apostolic concerning Israel.

For Origen Israel and the Gentile Church are closely related, so much so that the most unexpected details of the sacred text provide the opportunity for the biblical interpret to shed new light on this delicate relationship. Beyond the language of Origen which is sometimes hard (for modernity) we can say that the presence of Roman texts 11 in many other places that the commentary itself, confirms the fact that Origen is certainly more interested in the continuity of the Church with Israel, that the destruction of Jewish roots.⁵²

With all these ideas clearly before us, we can say with Bietenhard that "Origen is not the enemy of the Jews, he cannot be because he understood Romans 9-11"⁵³ But our goal here is not to Origen highlighted as a friend of Israel, especially today when the problems of relations with Israel, the Church has elements that cannot be discussed here. More important for us is the fact that Origen recognizes Romans 9-11 as an essential text for all a theological program and you can even say that it "governs" the reflection on the relationship between Israel and the Church. It is not by chance that he discovers the importance especially in the latter part of his life to maturity of his thinking, and he recognizes both as a decisive element of the Pauline theology, written after long experience of missionary journeys. If we consider the whole

⁵⁰ LA BIBLE PATRISTIQUE. *Index des citations et allusions bibliques dans la littérature patristique, vol. III: Origène*, Édition du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 1980, pp. 372-376.

⁵¹ For details about this statement, see the study that parallels the comment of Origen with the latest scientific comments written by L. A. IONIȚĂ, „Die Aktualität des ersten Kommentars zum Römerbrief: Origenes Auslegung zu Röm 9,1-5“, *Sacra Scripta* 1 (2012), pp. 39-53.

⁵² H. J. VOGT, *Das Kirchenverständnis von Origenes*, Bonner Beiträge zur Kirchengeschichte 4, Böhlau Verlag, Köln-Wien, 1974, p. 204

⁵³ „Origen himself is no enemy to the Jews; he cannot be, because he understood Romans 9-11.” Cf. H. BIETENHARD, *Caesarea, Origenes und die Juden*, Franz-Delitzsch-Vorlesungen 1972, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart [u.a.], 1974, p. 72.

legacy of Origen to the universal Church, the devotion and the ecclesiastical service throughout his life⁵⁴, we may regret the fact that Origen remains a damned person in the Church, and thus his commentary on Romans not a well known patristic work.

Part Four: application to Romanian context, conclusions and perspectives

In the fourth section we apply the results of the whole work in the context of biblical research Romanian, looking particularly to the theological literature written in Romania on Romans 9-11. This survey over the Romanian studies and commentaries follow also the extent to which the Epistle to the Romans 9-11 is received in an Orthodox Church. The result may have already guessed by our readers, if we remind briefly that the two existing Romanian commentaries from the period are written before the First⁵⁵ and the Second World War respectively.⁵⁶ The communist period did not research the Romans 9-11⁵⁷ and after the revolution is just the last few years⁵⁸ we have studies on the proposed theme of the Apostle Paul. Reporting and provocative to the Romanian Orthodox Church is the fact that these studies were from evangelical authors⁵⁹, Greek Catholic or Roman Catholic⁶⁰. Far from making a denominational presentation, we want to draw attention to an extremely relevant to Christian ecclesiology.

The conclusions drawn from the whole ordeal can really be considered insufficient to draw an integral vision of the Orthodox Church about Israel, because it requires a research of the patristic literature from the later centuries. But this work could be a good start, showing the manner in which the attitude of the Church in relation to Judaism developed from St. Paul to Origen. With the condemnation of Origen and the destruction of his writings, the Church loses on the one hand the best and most detailed commentary on Romans 9-11, and secondly, the influence of Justin, Melito, Barnaba and finally, that of John Chrysostom, led the attitude of the Church towards a clearly hostile and resistant tone.

Professor Vasile Mihoc showed us that we could observe a significant difference between the anti-Jewish sermons of John Chrysostom and his homilies on Romans but this is

⁵⁴ R. E. HEINE, *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church*, Christian Theology in Context, Oxford University Press, 2010.

⁵⁵ Iosif OLARIU, *Epistolele S. Apostol Pavel către Romani, Corinteni, Galateni și Efezeni*, Tipografia diecezană, Caransebeș, 1908, 742 p

⁵⁶ Vasile GHEORGHIU, *Epistola către Romani a Sfântului Apostol Paul. Introducere, traducere și comentariu*, Editura Glasul Bucovinei, Cernăuți, 1938, 368 p

⁵⁷ One exception is the study of Ioan BUDE, *Poporul ales și rolul său în istoria mântuirii după învățătura biblică neotestamentară*, Glasul Bisericii 6 (1987), pp. 73-85

⁵⁸ I. MELNICIUC-PUICĂ, *Răbdarea și mângâierea care vin din Scripturi. Argumentația veterotestamentară în Epistola către Romani*, Performantica, Iași, 2009. I. MELNICIUC-PUICĂ, „Retorica paulină evidențiată în Epistola către Romani (9-10)”, *Text și discurs religios* 2 (2010), pp. 205-214

⁵⁹ Ciprian-Flavius TERINTE, „Raportul dintre Israel și Biserică în calitate de popor al lui Dumnezeu în Romani 9-11”, *Plērōma* 1 (2009), pp. 83-108.

⁶⁰ Vladimir PETERCĂ, *Apostolul Paul și așteptările lui Israel*, în *Biblie și misiune creștină. Popas aniversar Pr. Prof. Dumitru Abrudan*, volum coordonat de Pr. Prof. Dr. Aurel Pavel și Pr. Conf. Dr. Constantin Oancea, Ed. Universității Lucian Blaga & Ed. Andreiana, Sibiu, 2010, pp. 140-164

only a beginning to the process of upgrading the rich patristic reception of the letter and the exegesis in Romans 9-11, which could be of great interest for the Orthodox Church.

Thus, it seems that this work may instead offer a complete patristic vision about Israel it opens the following perspectives related to the study and use of the text of Romans 9-11:

1. The adequate reception of Romans 9-11 is a benefit of the last decades of Christianity. The fact that this rediscovery and reevaluation of the positive message of the Apostle about Israel was influential especially in the scientific field of Biblical studies, it raises questions about the received patristic and liturgical tradition of the Church concerning Romans 9-11. Here is where the Orthodox Church must make great efforts to analyze the history of interpretation, which is also a component of the ecclesial tradition.
2. The Romans 9-11 is a good example for the necessity to emphasize the importance and of the 'historic criticism of the biblical text' and not only that the 'patristic' or, 'spiritual' can be the relevant one. Attention to the text primarily as a standard for subsequent exegesis without to relativize the importance of patristic exegesis of the Church, in its different periods, would it benefit a good point of view.
3. This reevaluation of the text of Romans 9-11 and the Christian theology of Israel, can bring many benefits to the field of Christian ecclesiology. If each denomination considers exclusively the true Israel", then it is difficult to achieve ever Christian unity. We know that after 60-70 years of last century, the Western churches have abandoned this title and promoted a theology which renounces anti-Jewish elements. Of course, here there are other issues that require special treatment, but we can say that giving up a replacement theology in the Orthodox Church, we can develop a more favourable ecclesiology approach to confessions.
4. With the authors studied in this work we could show how the anti-Jewish polemic has already become in the early centuries a constituent part of Christian theology, primarily determined by the conflict with the Jewish community, as well as heretics, such as Marcion. The influence of this 'arch-heretic' in Eastern Christianity until the tenth century, with its highly exclusivist theology of Judaism and the Old Testament - should be sought deeper, because there are enough clues about the relevance of these facts to the appearance of the 'new religion' of Islam.

There is sufficient evidence to support the thesis that the beginnings of Islam – which until today is considered a religion that would replace the previous religions (Judaism and Christianity) – have been developed in the context of Christian theology heavily influenced by the Christian anti-Jewish tendency. Could be possible that Islam learned the "wrong lesson" in form of the replacement theology from Aramaic, Syrian, Byzantine and Arab Christianity? And now, if Christian theology today corrects his ecclesiology relying more on the continuity of Church with Israel as their discontinuity, and their shared paths and also on the need to support the uniqueness of the covenant

between God and his people, can Islamic theology be considered an effect now of uncontrollable exaggeration of the ancient doctrine of the 'replacement' of Israel?

Keywords: Pauline theology, Israelologie, Romans 9-11, patristic exegesis, Origen, Apostolic Fathers, Apologetic Fathers, ecclesiology.

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