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## Paul's Missionary Duty Towards Gentiles in Rome: A Note on the Punctuation and Syntax of Rom 1.13–15

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Although scholars have long been aware of syntactical difficulties in Rom 1.13–15, few have approached the problem by challenging the established punctuation. Readings of the text by some earlier interpreters, e.g. Origen of Alexandria, indicate that there may be good reasons to do so. In this article it is argued that current readings of Rom 1.13–15 are based on inaccurate punctuation and syntax. A different punctuation of the passage is suggested, upon which a more plausible reading is based. This reading may, in turn, have some significance for the interpretation of Romans as a whole.

It is sometimes asserted that Rom 1.13–15 includes statements about Paul's 'universal' obligation towards 'all humanity'. So Friedrich Hauck states: 'Paul, once a persecutor of the Gospel, is after his visitation and calling by Christ committed to be a messenger to all mankind, R[om]. 1:14: "Ἑλλήσιν τε καὶ βαρβάρους . . . ὀφειλέτης εἰμί."<sup>1</sup> Hauck's words are to some extent descriptive of

1 F. Hauck, 'ὀφείλω κτλ.', *TDNT* 5:565. Consider also, e.g., D. Starnitzke, "'Griechen und Barbaren . . . bin ich verpflichtet'" (Röm 1,14): Die Selbstdefinition der Gesellschaft und die Individualität und Universalität der paulinischen Botschaft', *WD* 24 (1997) 187–207, who argues that 'die Unterscheidung "Ἑλλην – βάρβαρος in 1,14 . . . die gesamte Menschheit meint' (196); O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (MeyerK 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, <sup>14</sup>1978) 84–5: 'Allen Völkern und Bildungsschichten gegenüber ist Paulus verpflichtet. . . Die Wendung [in V. 14] ist besonders stark und besagt, daß Paulus sich in seiner ganzen Existenz den Völkern verpflichtet weiß. . . Die ganze Menschheit in ihren Unterschieden, die anerkannt werden, steht unter der Liebe [Christi], aber auch unter dem Gericht des Evangeliums.' Cf. also J. A. Fitzmyer's comments on v. 14 (*Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993] 251–2): he begins with 'both to Greeks and to barbarians I am indebted. So Paul expresses his debt to the non-Jewish world.' When it comes to the phrase σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις, however, he claims: '[T]he first pair [i.e. Greeks and barbarians] sums up the Gentiles, the second is a description of all humanity. . . Paul moves from a restricted group to a larger one. His experience with all levels of humanity has taught him much . . . [H]e is obligated to all levels of humanity, precisely as an apostle. No one is excepted from this obligation of his.'

the conventional aim of focus when dealing with this passage in Paul's letter to the Romans. Questions such as who these people were to whom Paul was obligated,<sup>2</sup> and what potential indications the passage may include of Paul's person and apostleship,<sup>3</sup> have been and continue to be of main interest among interpreters of the text.

Another closely related assertion is that there is a discrepancy between Paul's words in Rom 1.15 and 15.20, i.e. between his stated 'eagerness' to proclaim the good news in Rome and his canon of not proclaiming the gospel 'where Christ has been named'. Since most scholars assume that it is Paul's belief that 'Christ has [already] been named' in Rome,<sup>4</sup> attempts to adjust the text in 1.15 to Paul's canon in 15.20 are not infrequent. Peter Stuhlmacher, for instance, argues that '[v]erse 15 ... explains Paul's original plan, not what he means to do at the time of writing ... [T]his verse in no way indicates that Paul is still intending to come as a missionary to preach his gospel in Rome.'<sup>5</sup> In order to support such a reading, Ernst Käsemann adds the verb ἐγένετο to v. 15.<sup>6</sup>

Of a slightly different kind is the tendency among scholars to treat Rom 1.13–15 as a structural unity. Indeed, almost universally, v. 15 is considered to be structurally separated from v. 16. This kind of reading, I presume, is based on modern text editions of Romans, which surprisingly make such a distinction in spite of clear connective marks in the text.

In the following study I will show that the above claims about the content and structure of Rom 1.13–15 are among those that may have to be reconsidered if justice is to be done to the text's grammar. The purpose of this paper is, on the one

2 See, e.g., Starnitzke, 'Griechen und Barbaren' as well as most standard commentaries on Romans.

3 Especially noteworthy in this regard are S. Pedersen's 'Theologische Überlegungen zur Isagogik des Römerbriefes', *ZNW* 76 (1985) 47–67, in which he argues that 1.14 is the 'Schlüssel zum Römerbrief' in that it contains 'das fundamentale Wort über das Apostolat des Paulus' (47), and P. S. Minear's 'Gratitude and Mission in the Epistle to the Romans', *Basileia: Walter Freytag zum 60. Geburtstag* (ed. J. Hermelink and H. J. Margull; Stuttgart: Evang. Missionsverlag GMBH, 1959) 42–8. Minear reads 1.14 (within the context of 1.8–17) as an example of passages 'in which the apostle indicates a strong connection between his sense of obligation and gratitude, on the one hand, and his motivation as an apostle on the other' (42), strangely concluding that 'if men are converted from life on one side of the line to the other, the change will be most authentically indicated by the emergence of a radically new indebtedness/thankfulness. For we, too, are debtors "both to Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish"' (48).

4 See, e.g., the discussion in K. P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991). See also Fitzmyer's (unsuccessful) attempt to minimize the discrepancy between 1.15 and 15.20, after claiming that 'it is clear that [Paul] did not found the Roman church and that some other Christians must have done so' (*Romans*, 715).

5 P. Stuhlmacher, 'The Purpose of Romans', in Donfried, ed., *Romans Debate*, 237.

6 E. Käsemann, *An die Römer* (HNT 8a; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1973) 14, 18.

hand, to argue that prevailing readings of Rom 1.13–15 are based on inaccurate punctuation and syntax, and, on the other, to suggest a more plausible reading of the passage.

### Current punctuation and syntax of Rom 1.13–15

13 οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο, ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν. 14 Ἑλλησὶν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις ὀφειλέτης εἰμί, 15 οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι.<sup>7</sup>

According to current readings and critical text editions the proper punctuation<sup>8</sup> of Rom 1.13–15 may be detected by following the verse division of the text.<sup>9</sup> Thus, a period mark is put after τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν ('the rest of the gentiles') at the end of v. 13. Accordingly, v. 14 begins a new sentence with the dative phrase Ἑλλησὶν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις understood as an object to the predicate ὀφειλέτης εἰμί ('I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish' [NRSV]).<sup>10</sup> In v. 15, then, another sentence begins, the reading of which, however, has been marked with some uncertainty:<sup>11</sup> (a) In line with a number of scholars, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, for example, holds that the entire phrase τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον functions as the subject and εὐαγγελίσασθαι as the predicate. Thus his translation goes: 'Hence my eagerness to preach the

7 Rom 1.13–15 according to Nestle-Aland, 27th edn.

8 Punctuation of ancient manuscripts is, of course, a later invention, the purpose of which is to provide helps for readers who are not used to read texts in *scriptio continua*. Hence, unless originally found in the text, the proper punctuation of an ancient writing always involves interpretation of some kind. As B. M. Metzger observes: 'Marks of punctuation occur only sporadically or not at all in the most ancient manuscripts. . . . Although the exegete can learn something concerning the history of the interpretation of a passage by considering the punctuation of a passage in the manuscripts, neither the editor nor the translator need, of course, feel bound to adopt the punctuation preferred by scribes' (*Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography* [New York: Oxford University, 1981] 31–2). So also F. C. Burkitt, 'The Punctuation of New Testament Manuscripts', *JTS* 29 (1927–8) 397: 'In a certain sense the punctuation of an ancient Greek work is no part of the original tradition; a properly written Greek paragraph goes in theory from the beginning to the end without punctuation, the beginnings and the due subordination of the several sentences being sufficiently indicated by the appropriate particles.'

9 The present division of the text into verses follows the edition of Robert Stephanus (Estienne) published in 1551. See Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 41–2; idem, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (New York: Oxford University, 1992) 103–5.

10 Unless otherwise noted, translations from the Greek and Latin are mine.

11 See esp. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975–9) 1.85. See also BDF § 224 (1).

gospel . . .';<sup>12</sup> (b) Whereas C. F. D. Moule also considers εὐαγγελίσασθαι to be the predicate, he believes that 'more probably τὸ κατ' ἐμέ is a self-contained adverbial phrase, *as far as I am concerned*'. He argues further that πρόθυμον is a 'slip, or a case of attraction, for [the adjective] πρόθυμος' (approximately 'Hence, as far as I am concerned, I am eager to preach the gospel . . .');<sup>13</sup> (c) William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, on the other hand, argue that, instead of εὐαγγελίσασθαι, πρόθυμον should be read as the predicate and τὸ κατ' ἐμέ as the subject. In spite of this difference, however, their translation stands surprisingly close to the foregoing: 'Hence, so far as the decision rests with me, I am bent on delivering the message of salvation . . .'<sup>14</sup>

These different readings of v. 15 may be seen as potential marks of syntactical incompleteness or ambiguity. That the differences are minor ones does not reflect the problem at hand. Rather, what they exhibit are examples of unsuccessful attempts to reconcile an ambiguous syntax. Essentially, this ambiguity seems to be generated by reading v. 14 as an independent sentence, i.e. putting a period mark after ἔθνεσιν. As a consequence, the dative phrase Ἑλλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις can only be taken as an object to ὀφειλέτης εἰμί.<sup>15</sup> That, in turn, leaves the following text in v. 15 'pleasantly ambiguous',<sup>16</sup> i.e. in an uncertain syntactical position, regarding the identification of both the subject and the main verb.<sup>17</sup> To be sure, it is quite possible to read v. 14 as an independent sentence, but when the reading is continued it becomes evident that something has been overlooked or left out. That is what the different suggestions of reading v. 15 indicate.

12 Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 251–2. J. D. G. Dunn offers identical translation in his *Romans* (2 vols; WBC 38; Dallas: Word, 1988) 1.27. See also the translations of the NRSV, NEB, and Moffatt.

13 C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1959) 58. Moule himself does not offer a complete translation of v. 15 (only of the phrase τὸ κατ' ἐμέ). Cf. the close translations of the RSV, NAB, and TEV, where the phrase τὸ κατ' ἐμέ seems to be taken as a neuter periphrasis for the personal pronoun ἐγώ.

14 W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902) 19, 21–2. Unfortunately, the authors explain neither the function of the infinitive εὐαγγελίσασθαι in this reading nor which part of Paul's text they are translating as 'bent on'. Cf. also the similar translations of the KJV and ASV.

15 T. Zahn notes: '[V.] 14 [bildet] ein befremdliches Asyndeton, und es bleibt unklar, wie die Hellenen und Barbaren, die Gelehrten und die Unverständigen sich zu den λοιπὰ ἔθνη verhalten' (*Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer ausgelegt* [KNT 6; Leipzig: Deichert, 1910] 65).

16 K. E. Kirk, *The Epistle to the Romans in the Revised Version* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1937), as cited by H. Parkin, 'Romans i. 13–15', *ExpT* 79 (1967–8) 95.

17 So M. Kettunen states: 'Es fällt auf, dass diesem Satz ein Verbum finitum fehlt. Seine Bedeutung und damit der Sinn des ganzen Zusammenhangs ist deswegen ganz von der Ergänzung des Verbes abhängig' (*Der Abfassungszweck des Römerbriefes* [AASF 18; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedakatemia, 1979] 124).

### Alternative punctuation and syntax of Rom 1.13–15

Despite apparent awareness of syntactical difficulties involved in prevailing readings,<sup>18</sup> few scholars have challenged the established punctuation in order to search for alternative solutions to the problem. Indeed, I have only been able to find one single publication in which this has been seriously attempted.

In the 1967–8 issue of the *Expository Times*, Harry Parkin published a short note in which he suggested an alternative reading of Rom 1.13–15 based on different punctuation of the passage.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, Parkin's note has been largely unnoticed.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, it is appropriate to offer a summary of his argument and suggestion of reading. First, according to Parkin, the phrase Ἑλλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις is to be taken in apposition to the preceding τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν, 'providing a natural division of the non-Jewish peoples'. This kind of expression is normal for Paul, as shown in 1.16 where Ἰουδαίῳ τε . . . καὶ Ἑλληνι stands in apposition to παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι. Second, ὀφειλέτης εἰμί is employed with the infinitive εὐαγγελίσασθαι. This accords with Paul's use elsewhere of the word ὀφειλέτης (4× in Paul):<sup>21</sup> in Rom 8.12 and Gal 5.3 he uses ὀφειλέται ἐσμέν/ἐστίν with the infinitives ζῆν/ποιῆσαι respectively.<sup>22</sup> In Rom 15.27 – which stands closest to the prevailing reading of 1.14 in that it has no infinitive – Paul does not use ὀφειλέτης with the dative case (which is classical) but with the genitive. Further, a survey of the cognate verb ὀφείλω shows that in 12 out of 13 instances in the letters of Paul it is used with the infinitive.<sup>23</sup> Third, as for οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον Parkin notes: 'No new light is brought to bear upon this awkward construction except to relieve it of the full burden of the sentence. It becomes a parenthesis.' Parkin summarizes his conclusions by providing the following translation of the passage:

I want you to know, brethren, that I have often intended to visit you, but have been hindered more than once, in order to have some fruit among you also, even as I have among the remainder of the Gentiles, both cultured and primitive, both wise and simple. I am under an obligation, that is why I am eager, to preach the Gospel also to you in Rome.

18 See esp. Zahn, *An die Römer*, 65–7.

19 Parkin, 'Romans i. 13–15'.

20 Somewhat surprisingly it gets no mention in Fitzmyer's *Romans*, in spite of its extensive bibliography. It is not mentioned either in, e.g., Käsemann, *An die Römer*; Cranfield, *Romans*; H. Schlier, *Der Römerbrief* (HTKNT 6; Freiburg: Herder, 1977); Dunn, *Romans*; P. Stuhlmacher, *Der Brief an die Römer übersetzt und erklärt* (NTD 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).

21 Elsewhere in the NT only in Matt 6.12; 18.24; Luke 13.4.

22 According to Parkin, the fact that Paul uses an articular inf. in Rom 8.12 does not undermine the parallel use.

23 Rom 13.8; 15.1, 27; 1 Cor 5.10; 7.36; 9.10; 11.7, 10; 2 Cor 12.11, 14; 2 Thess 1.3; 2.13. Phlm 18 is the only exception (with acc.). Cf. Eph 5.28 (with inf.).

Important as it is, Parkin's note is unfortunately too short to provide any adequate presentation of the problem under discussion. A glance at the history of interpretation, however, reveals that Parkin, in fact, is not the only reader of Romans who has noticed the close syntactical relationship between τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν and Ἑλληνσίν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις, on the one hand,<sup>24</sup> and ὀφειλέτης εἰμί and εὐαγγελίσασθαι, on the other.<sup>25</sup> Such alternative readings of Rom 1.13–15 did exist among earlier interpreters, of which no traces are left in modern text editions.

In his *Annotationes* (1535) Erasmus of Rotterdam tells us that *sunt qui malint infinitum εὐαγγελίσασθαι referre ad nomen uerbale ὀφειλέτης* ('some would rather take the infinitive εὐαγγελίσασθαι as referring to the noun ὀφειλέτης'),<sup>26</sup> paraphrasing the passage in 1.13–15 thus: *Sicut alijs gentibus iam praedicaui, quum omnibus debeam . . . debeo & uobis qui Romae agitis, tametsi sapientes, potentes, & doctisitis, praedicare euangelium Christi* ('As I have already preached to other nations, in that I am indebted to all . . . I am indebted to preach the gospel of Christ also to you who live in Rome, even if you are wise, powerful, and learned').<sup>27</sup> Erasmus's reference shows two things: first, there were those who would understand ὀφειλέτης as forming a construction with the infinitive εὐαγγελίσασθαι, i.e. ὀφειλέτης εἰμί εὐαγγελίσασθαι ('I am obligated to tell good news'). At the same time, it also exhibits that some would understand ὀφειλέτης εἰμί as having

24 Cf. also Zahn, *An die Römer*, 66–7, albeit on other grounds. Zahn claims: 'Alle diese Schwierigkeiten [in 1,13–14] schwinden, wenn man den mit καθὼς beginnenden Satz in V. 14 sich fortsetzen läßt und übersetzt: "gemäß dem, daß ich auch unter den übrigen ἔθνη sowohl Hellenen als Barbaren, Gebildeten wie Ungebildeten ein Schuldner bin"' (66). That is, he reads καθὼς . . . ὀφειλέτης εἰμί as a distinct (subordinate) clause. However, since Zahn fails to provide any examples of the use of ὀφειλέτης (εἰμί) with the preposition ἐν, his reading must be considered doubtful at best.

25 Kettunen, *Abfassungszweck*, 123–6, has also noticed some relationship between the latter. However, he appears to have missed the point of Paul's grammar. Kettunen argues that vv. 14–15 should be read thus: Ἑλληνσίν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις ὀφειλέτης εἰμί, οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ, εὐαγγελίσασθαι, i.e. with a comma before εὐαγγελίσασθαι (see further n. 44 below). Then he states: 'Paulus ist also verpflichtet, allen Heiden das Evangelium zu predigen. Grammatisch ist deswegen der οὕτως-Satz bis einschliesslich ἐν Ῥώμῃ parenthetisch, inhaltlich jedoch von zentraler Bedeutung' (123–4; cf. also on p. 125: 'Paulus betont ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ'). This is a rather peculiar statement: how is it possible for the clause to be both 'grammatically parenthetical' and 'of a central meaning' as regards 'content'? If Paul wanted to highlight the significance of a specific textual content he surely would have grammaticalized it accordingly!

26 See A. Reeve and M. A. Screech, eds, *Erasmus' Annotations on the New Testament: Acts – Romans – I and II Corinthians: Facsimile of the Final Latin Text with All Earlier Variants* (Studies in the History of Christian Thought 42; Leiden: Brill, 1990) 344.

27 See Reeve and Screech, *Erasmus' Annotations*, 344–5. The words left out, indicated by ellipsis points, are *sic quantum ad animi mei promptitudinem attinet* (presumably for οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον).



a double function, referring to the preceding dative phrase as well as the infinitive εὐαγγελίσασθαι. This is made clear by the repetition of the verb *debeo* in the paraphrase (*omnibus debeam . . . debeo . . . praedicare*).

This ambiguity of the syntactical function of ὀφειλέτης εἰμί was not unknown still earlier in the history of interpretation. While many, or most, church fathers seem to have read the passage as is commonly done today,<sup>28</sup> John Chrysostom's (347–407) commentary on Romans gives clear evidence of the ambiguity. In his discussion of the passage ad loc. he reads 1.14–15 with the familiar period mark between ὀφειλέτης εἰμί and οὕτως. However, in his preface to the commentary he notes: Διὸ καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἔλεγεν [Παῦλος]· Ὅφειλέτης εἰμί, τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον, καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι ('Therefore [Paul] says in the beginning [of the letter]: I am obligated . . . to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome'),<sup>29</sup> taking the infinitive as a complement to ὀφειλέτης εἰμί.

Most enlightening is the treatment of the text by the prominent exegete Origen of Alexandria (185–c. 254). His studies of the passage – virtually the earliest we have<sup>30</sup> – are mainly preserved in the Latin translation of his commentary on Romans by Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 345–410),<sup>31</sup> and in several Greek fragments of the commentary.<sup>32</sup> These texts reveal that Origen was fully aware of the syntactical problem at

28 This is actually difficult to estimate, since those church fathers who mention the passage often do so in passing only. Nevertheless, Theodoret of Cyrrhus (393–466) (see PG 82.56) may serve as an example of the reading which appears to be the most common. He reads Rom 1.14–15 as follows: "Ελλήσι τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις ὀφειλέτης εἰμί. Οὕτω τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι. On the former sentence he comments (in Paul's voice): Τῶν ἐθνῶν ἀπάντων ἐχειροτονήθην [i.e. Παῦλος] διδασκαλός. Οὐ δὲ χάριν πᾶσιν ὀφείλω τῆς διδασκαλίας τὸ χρέος, καὶ οὐχ Ἑλλήσι μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ βαρβάροις ('[i.e. Paul] was appointed teacher of all the nations. Therefore, I owe my obligation of teaching to all, not only to Greeks but also to barbarians').

29 See PG 60.394, 407.

30 See P. Gorday, *Principles of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9–11 in Origen, John Chrysostom, and Augustine* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 4; New York: Mellen, 1983) 43–6.

31 Dated c. 406. The text used here is the Latin–German edition of T. Heither, *Origenes: Commentarii in epistolam ad Romanos* (Fontes Christiani; Freiburg: Herder, 1990), which follows the Latin text of PG 14. Rufinus's 'translation' is in fact more of a paraphrase (*consequentia*) of the commentary, as pointed out by Rufinus himself in his preface to the work. However, that does not seem to affect the following study of Origen's text, since, despite concerns for syntactical details, I am dealing with Origen's general understanding of the passage in Rom 1.13–15. The major differences between Rufinus's text and the extant Greek fragments of the passage (see next note) may be explained by Rufinus's main concern, viz. to offer a sketch of Origen's commentary (originally in 15 vols). While the fragments include more detailed discussion of specific issues, such as Paul's syntax and rhetoric, nothing in them runs counter to the observations made below.

32 Frg. 4 in A. Ramsbotham, 'The Commentary of Origen on the Epistle to the Romans', *JTS* 13 (1912) 214; and frgs. 9–11 in K. Staab, 'Neue Fragmente aus dem Kommentar des Origenes zum Römerbrief', *BZ* 18 (1928) 78–80.



hand. In his preface to the commentary Origen complains that Paul's letter to the Romans is the most difficult to understand of all his letters. Origen himself sees two main reasons for this, of which the one is that *elocutionibus interdum confusis et minus explicitis utitur* ('[Paul] sometimes uses expressions that are obscure and not completely without difficulties'). The text under discussion seems to be one of those Origen has in mind.<sup>33</sup> He is much concerned about the proper syntax of Paul's text and wonders therefore why Paul would place καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο in v. 13 in so syntactically awkward a position.<sup>34</sup> Origen's answer to the question is that Paul is using the rhetorical technique of ὑπερβατόν, i.e. a transposition of words or clauses.<sup>35</sup> His conclusion is that the text (vv. 13–14a) should be read as follows:

*Nolo autem vos ignorare fratres, quia saepe proposui venire ad vos, ut aliquem fructum habeam et in vobis sicut et in ceteris gentibus Graecis ac barbaris sapientibus et insipientibus, et prohibitus sum usque adhuc* ('But I do not want you to be ignorant of, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you, in order that I may have some fruit among you as I have among the rest of the gentiles, Greeks as well as barbarians, wise as well as ignorant, but have been hindered until now').<sup>36</sup>

But, Origen proceeds, it is also evident that the utterance is 'defective'; there is something lacking in the text:

*Defectio vero elocutionis hoc modo adimplebitur. In eo ubi dicit: 'et in ceteris gentibus Graecis ac barbaris sapientibus et insipientibus,' videtur deesse:*

<sup>33</sup> So Heither, *Origenes*, 62 n. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. the discussion of Photius of Constantinople (c. 820–91) in K. Staab, *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche: Aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben* (NTA 15; Münster: Aschendorff, 1933) 473. Photius's comments are briefly presented in K. H. Schelkle, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter: Die altkirchliche Auslegung von Römer 1–11* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1956) 33–4.

<sup>35</sup> Whereas the Greek fragments include somewhat detailed (but short) discussion of the reason *why* Origen would make use of this technique, Rufinus is more interested in providing the result of it, i.e. *how* Origen reads the text. On ὑπερβατόν see R. D. Anderson, Jr, *Glossary of Greek Rhetorical Terms: Connected to Methods of Argumentation, Figures and Tropes from Anaximenes to Quintilian* (CBET 24; Leuven: Peeters, 2000) 121–2. Anderson notes that among ancient rhetorical theorists ὑπερβατόν was 'normally considered poor use of language, leading only to ambiguity' (122).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Origen's reading in frg. 4 in Ramsbotham, 'Commentary', 214: πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν, Ἑλληνσί τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις, καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο. Ramsbotham's edition is based on the text of cod. Vat. Gr. 762 from the 10th century. Staab (frg. 10 in 'Neue Fragmente', 79), on the other hand, prefers to follow cod. Vindob. Gr. 166 from the 14th century and adds ὀφειλέτης εἰμί between ἀνοήτοις and καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο. Apparently, this choice goes against standard criteria in textual criticism: not only is cod. Vindob. about 400 years later than cod. Vat. (external evidence), but also potentially influenced by the text of Romans (internal evidence, e.g. cod. Vat. has the *lectio brevior* as well as the *lectio difficilior*).

*'quibus,' ut ea, quae subsequuntur, sic legantur: 'quibus debitor sum'* ('The utterance's defect must be complemented as follows: Where Paul says "among the rest of the gentiles, Greeks as well as barbarians, wise as well as ignorant" [the relative] "to which" is clearly missing, so that one may continue and read: "to which I am indebted"').

This gives the following paraphrase (*consequentia*) of vv. 13–15:

*Sicut fructum habeo in ceteris gentibus Graecis ac barbaris sapientibus et insipientibus, quibus debitor sum, ita quod in me est, promptus sum etiam vobis, qui Romae estis, evangelizare* ('Just as I have [gathered some] fruit among the rest of the gentiles, Greeks as well as barbarians, wise as well as ignorant, to which I am indebted, so, as far as I am concerned, I am ready to proclaim the good news to you also who are in Rome').

Thus, Origen sought to solve the text's syntactical problem by reading ὀφειλέτης εἰμί relatively. To be able to do this he had to form a relative clause by adding the pronoun *quibus* to Paul's text.<sup>37</sup> This strongly suggests that it never occurred to Origen to read the dative phrase Ἑλλησὶν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις apart from the preceding τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν. Instead, he read the former as an apposition to the latter, with Ἑλλησὶν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις clearly understood as a natural description for Paul of τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν in the letter. In other words, rather than making a clear syntactical distinction between ἔθνεσιν and the following dative phrase, he made great effort to fit ὀφειλέτης εἰμί into the syntax, eventually settling upon an emendation of the text. On the reason why he did not think of εὐαγγελίσασθαι as a complement to ὀφειλέτης εἰμί one can only speculate: perhaps it was a matter of reluctance on his behalf to give up the notion of the text speaking of Paul as an obligator to all people<sup>38</sup> – a popular notion indeed among interpreters of the passage, as previously noted. But, again, this remains pure speculation. Most importantly, by reading the dative phrase in v. 14 as an apposition, Origen presented the initial step towards the proper punctuation and syntax of the passage.

### **Suggested punctuation and syntax of Rom 1.13–15**

I would concur with Origen et al. that the phrase Ἑλλησὶν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις stands in an appositional relationship with the preceding dative phrase τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν. A comma should therefore be put after the word ἔθνεσιν and a period mark after ἀνοήτοις (on οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον see further below). In addition, I would also agree with Origen in

<sup>37</sup> The equivalent pronoun in Greek would be οἷς.

<sup>38</sup> See his subsequent discussion of the passage (Heither, *Origenes*, 128–31).

reading καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο as an ὑπερβατόν (marked by hyphenation).<sup>39</sup> Hence, Rom 1.13–15 should be read as follows:

Οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, – καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο, – ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν, Ἑλληνσὶν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις.  
Ὁφειλέτης εἰμὶ οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι.

This reading will be supported and explained by the following four points:

First, there is no need to extend further the arguments presented above of the dative phrase in v. 14 being an apposition. With respect to the text's syntax, this reading seems to be the most natural one.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the following additional examples with parallel usage of the conjunctive τε καὶ are in order: Rom 2.9 (πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνος); 2.10 (παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι); 1 Cor 1.24 (αὐτοῖς δὲ τοῖς κλητοῖς, Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἑλλήσιν).

Second, Harry Parkin has argued convincingly for the probability of Paul using ὀφειλέτης εἰμὶ with the infinitive.<sup>41</sup> To be sure, this cannot be stated beyond doubt because of the relatively few occurrences of the word ὀφειλέτης in Paul's letters<sup>42</sup> (one of which includes some syntactical uncertainty).<sup>43</sup> However, there is

39 Or, strictly speaking, what the ancient rhetorical theorists would label ὑπερβατόν. This could perhaps be marked by placing the clause at the end of the former sentence, thus: Οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν, Ἑλληνσὶν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις, καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο. That, however, would involve some alteration of Paul's text.

40 It provides, for example, a reasonable solution to the mystery of the 'odd asyndeton' in v. 14 (Zahn, *An die Römer*, 65 ['ein befremdliches Asyndeton']). Note also that nowhere does Paul seem to initiate a sentence with words or phrases joined by the conjunctive τε καὶ (see Rom 1.12, 16, 20 [app. nom.]; 2.9, 10; 3.9; 10.12; 1 Cor 1.24, 30 [probably app. nom.]; 2 Cor 12.12; Phil 1.7), except in Rom 1.27 where the joined elements stand in the nominative case as subjects (but notice the widely supported variant δε instead of τε).

41 It may be mentioned that there are virtually no examples of an independent use of the inf. εὐαγγελίσασθαι in Paul's letters. In fact, instances of independent infinitives are very rare in the Pauline letters, mostly confined to imperatival usage (e.g. Rom 12.15; Phil 3.16). See S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1994) 201–2.

42 As for comparative material, it should be noted that the word ὀφειλέτης does not occur, e.g., in the LXX or the writings of Philo. Cf., however, Sophocles *Aj.* 589–90: οὐ κάποισθ' ἐγὼ θεοῖς ὥς οὐδὲν ἄρκειν εἴμ' ὀφειλέτης ἔτι ('Do you not know that I owe the gods no service any more?' [trans. H. Lloyd-Jones, LCL]) – an excellent example from classical Greek literature of ὀφειλέτης εἰμὶ with the infinitive.

43 Viz. regarding the function of the articular inf. in Rom 8.12. On the difference between articular and anarthrous inf. Porter observes: 'Most scholars are agreed that the difference between the two structures does not warrant a major distinction in meaning' (*Idioms*, 194).

hardly any doubt about Paul's usage of the cognate verb ὀφείλω:<sup>44</sup> he nearly always uses it with the infinitive<sup>45</sup> (see above) and virtually never with a dative object.<sup>46</sup> These facts become even more important when it is noticed that the semantic difference between the form ὀφειλέτης εἰμί and ὀφείλω is mostly a matter of emphasis.<sup>47</sup> Hence, there is ample evidence for concluding that it is not only possible, but also more probable, that the infinitive εὐαγγελίσασθαι is a complement to the predicate ὀφειλέτης εἰμί.<sup>48</sup>

Third, as for the more problematic οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον, I would make the following comments and suggestions. It seems no longer to be a reasonable option to follow Moule et al. in reading πρόθυμον as the adjective πρόθυμος ('eager', 'willing', 'ready'), with τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ understood as an adverbial phrase ('as

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Porter reads the inf. in Rom 8.12 as epexegetic or appositional: 'we are debtors not to the flesh, i.e. to living according to the flesh' (198). Differently, e.g., N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* 3. *Syntax* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963) 141, who takes it as consecutive or final ('so that...'). Observe that the dative τῇ σαρκί need not be an object to ὀφειλέται ἐσ- μέν. It may, for instance, be read as a dat. of advantage ('in favour of the flesh').

44 Again (see n. 25 above), Kettunen fails to do justice to Paul's grammar. He states (*Abfassungszweck*, 123): 'Bei Paulus bleibt dieser Ausdruck [i.e. ὀφειλέτης εἰμί] nie ohne Objekt. Wenn es sich um ein Genetivobjekt handelt, ist die Bedeutung "schuldig sein", [Röm] 15,27... geht es aber wie hier um ein Dativobjekt – und das gilt auch für das Verb ὀφείλειν – kommt dazu noch ein Verb, um zu zeigen, worin die Verpflichtung besteht, 8,12; 2 Kor 12,14; vgl. [Röm] 15,1; 1 Kor 5,10; Gal 5,3. Der Sinn ist dann "verpflichtet sein, etwas zu tun"'. Although Kettunen is right in his judgement of ὀφειλέτης/ὀφείλω being in a close relationship with the inf., he seems to have misunderstood the grammar of the passages to which he refers: in 2 Cor 12.14 the dat. is a direct object to the inf., but not to the verb ὀφείλω; in Rom 15.1 and Gal 5.3 there is no dat. object, only acc. object to the inf.; in 1 Cor 5.10 there is no direct object at all, only prepositional phrase with the inf. (on Rom 8.12 see the previous note). In fact, Kettunen fails to provide any example of the verb ὀφείλω with a dative object.

45 When he does not, namely in Phlm 18, he uses it with the acc. and not the dat. case: εἰ δέ τι ἡδίκησέν σε ἢ ὀφείλει, τοῦτο ἐμοὶ ἐλλόγα.

46 The only possible exception may be Rom 13.8 (μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν), but it is probably more accurate to read μηδενὶ as a dative of respect, i.e. lit. 'with respect to nothing (= anything)' (*contra*, e.g., RSV and NRSV: 'Owe no one anything', in which μηδενὶ = 'no one').

47 See LSJ, s.v. ὀφειλέτης and s.v. ὀφείλω II. So H. Lietzmann, *Einführung in die Textgeschichte der Paulusbriefe an die Römer* (HNT 8; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1971 [first publ. 1906]) 29, comments: 'ὀφειλέτης εἰμί heißt bei [Paulus] einfach "ich bin schuldig, ich muß" ... (also nicht "ich bin Schuldner")'. Note that in the LXX ὀφείλω with the inf. occurs exclusively in later (Hellenistic) Jewish writings, i.e. near contemporary with Paul's, viz. Wis 12.15; 4 Macc 11.15; 16.19. Hauck, 'ὀφείλω', 560, observes: 'In view of the copious number of examples in general Gk. literature it is surprising how rare ὀφείλειν is in the LXX. In the OT proper it occurs only 5 times [Deut 15.2; Job 6.20; Prov 14.9; Isa 24.2; Ezek 18.7], with a further 10 instances in the Apocrypha [1 Macc 10.43; 13.15, 39; 3 Macc 7.10; 4 Macc 11.3, 15; 16.19; Tob 6.13; Wis 12.15, 20].'

48 On the complement use of the inf., see Porter, *Idioms*, 196–8.

far as I am concerned').<sup>49</sup> Perhaps it would be so if τὸ κατ' ἐμέ were to be read as a neuter periphrasis for ἐγώ and the whole phrase as a subordinate (explanatory) clause (cf. Parkin's translation above). But, although this latter reading is possible, it still presupposes that the adjective πρόθυμος is to be preferred as the intended word in the text. However, I would argue that this reading probably grew out of a necessity to fill the assumed empty slot of a main verb within the sentence, thus supplied by the adjective πρόθυμος with an absent εἰμί<sup>50</sup> (or an absent ἐγένετο<sup>51</sup>).<sup>52</sup> Since the verb is present in the preceding ὀφειλέτης εἰμί, it is unnecessary to adapt the text in this way. Instead, a search for a reading of the text as it stands is required.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, I suggest that the phrase τὸ κατ' ἐμέ πρόθυμον may be taken adverbially as an accusative of respect (comprising what is variously labelled adverbial accusative and accusative of manner).<sup>54</sup> The prepositional

49 Moule, *Idiom Book*, 58 (see also above). Cf. BDF § 224 (1), who appear to support this reading (cf. § 283 [3]), as well as, e.g., the Latin versions of Origen (Rufinus), Ambrosiaster (c. 366–84), d (5th or 6th cent.), and several Vg MSS (*quod in me est* [τὸ κατ' ἐμέ (ἐστίν)], *promptus sum* [πρόθυμος (εἰμί)]). For arguments against the possibility of this reading, see Lietzmann, *Einführung*, 29. The problem with reading τὸ κατ' ἐμέ as a phrase can be exemplified by reference to J. B. Lightfoot's *Notes on Epistles of St Paul: From Unpublished Commentaries* (London: Macmillan, 1904 [first publ. 1895]) 249. Lightfoot understands τὸ κατ' ἐμέ to be a phrase similar to the plural τὰ κατ' ἐμέ in Phil 1.12. As a result, he claims: 'Πρόθυμον cannot be taken as a substantive, and rendered, "there is readiness on my part." The absence of the article and of the substantive verb is fatal to this interpretation.' Cf. Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 21 ('τὸ κατ' ἐμέ will = "I, so far as it rests with me," i.e. "under God", equivalent to the Vg tradition *quod in me promptum est*). Note that the adjective πρόθυμος does not occur (elsewhere) in Paul's letters.

50 Compared to its presence, the absence of the first person singular εἰμί is actually quite rare in Paul's letters (cf. Rom 7.24; 2 Cor 10.1; 11.6, 22, 23 [without εἰμί] and Rom 1.14; 7.14; 11.1, 13; 1 Cor 1.12; 3.4; 9.1, 2; 12.15, 16; 13.2; 15.9, 10; 2 Cor 12.10; Phil 4.11 [with εἰμί]). See Turner, *Syntax*, 302, who notes that '[a]lmost universally in NT, εἰμί is inserted' (297).

51 So Käsemann, *An die Römer*, 18; Lietzmann, *Einführung*, 29; Michel, *An die Römer*, 85 n. 29; Kettunen, *Abfassungszweck*, 124–5.

52 Of course, one does not have to assume that an absent verb is thought of as a necessary element in the clause; as some readings imply (cf. Fitzmyer's reading above), v. 15 may simply be a nominal clause with τὸ πρόθυμον as the subject and εὐαγγελίσασθαι as the predicate. However, since I have not been able to find any example in Paul's letters of a nominal clause that has an identical syntactical structure, I consider this possibility to be unlikely. On nominal clauses in the NT, see Porter, *Idioms*, 85.

53 After all, why did Paul not write πρόθυμός εἰμι or προθυμοῦμαι with the inf. if this was what he meant to say?

54 Cf. Rom 9.5 (τὸ κατὰ σάρκα); 12.5 (τὸ καθ' εἶς). On this usage of the acc., see Porter, *Idioms*, 90, who notes the flexibility of the use. See also Turner, *Syntax*, 247–8 (220); BDF § 160; Moule, *Idiom Book*, 33–4; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, preface dated 1914) 486–8. Robertson observes that this acc. is sometimes called 'the accusative of general reference' (486).

phrase κατ' ἐμέ may then be read as a circumlocution for the possessive genitive (= τὸ πρόθυμόν μου).<sup>55</sup> Further, as widely attested in ancient Greek literature,<sup>56</sup> the word πρόθυμον should probably be regarded as equivalent to the feminine προθυμία ('willingness' or 'goodwill').<sup>57</sup> Thus understood, the phrase could be rendered 'with respect to my goodwill', or, more precisely, 'with (my) goodwill'.<sup>58</sup>

The adverb οὕτως is a bit more difficult to deal with, not least because of its functional flexibility.<sup>59</sup> With regard to Paul's non-correlative use of it elsewhere, οὕτως in Rom 1.15 could probably either be taken in an absolute inferential sense ('thus', 'so', 'then'),<sup>60</sup> or as a denotation of degree ('so [very] . . .'),<sup>61</sup> modifying the accusative phrase τὸ κατ' ἐμέ πρόθυμον with respect to what has previously been stated. The latter occurs in Gal 1.6 with an adverb (οὕτως ταχέως ['so quickly']). Read as 'so' or 'in this manner', οὕτως could therefore be taken as wholly embedded in the adverbial τὸ πρόθυμον<sup>62</sup> (which, as we recall, denotes Paul's manner of proclaiming his good news). On the other hand, the former use of οὕτως is far more common in Paul's letters and, therefore, perhaps, preferable. Its function

55 This use of the preposition κατά is frequently found in Hellenistic Greek, mostly confined to pronouns in NT literature (e.g. Acts 17.28; 18.15; Eph 1.15; cf. Acts 26.3). See L. Radermacher, *Neutestamentliche Grammatik: Das Griechisch des Neuen Testaments im Zusammenhang mit der Volkssprache* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1925) 139; BDF § 224 (1); Turner, *Syntax*, 268; BAGD, s.v. κατά II.7.b and s.v. πρόθυμος; Lietzmann, *Einführung*, 29; Robertson, *Grammar*, 608.

56 E.g. Euripides *Med.* 178 (τό γ' ἐμὸν πρόθυμον [= ἡ ἐμὴ προθυμία]); *Iph. taur.* 1023; Thucydides 3.82.8; Plato *Leg.* 9.859b; Josephus *A.J.* 4.42, 213; 3 Macc 5.26.

57 So LSJ, s.v. πρόθυμος I.4. Suggestions of translations of προθυμία include: (1) 'readiness', 'willingness', 'eagerness', and (2) 'goodwill', 'ready kindness'. So also BAGD, s.v. προθυμία, who suggest 'willingness', 'readiness', 'goodwill'. Cf. προθυμία in 2 Cor 8.11, 12, 19; 9.2 – the only occurrences of this word in the letters of Paul (besides the neuter πρόθυμον in Rom 1.15).

58 So also C. Spicq, 'προθυμία κτλ.', *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire* (3 vols; OBO 22; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978–82) 2.748 n. 3: 'Lorsque saint Paul déclare aux Romains qu'il ira leur porter l'évangile τὸ πρόθυμον (Rom. I, 15), on peut traduire "de bon cœur" au sens de bonne volonté, bien disposé.'

59 See LSJ, s.v. οὕτως; BAGD, s.v. οὕτω.

60 This usage occurs in several forms: (a) comp. use with an adv. καί (Rom 6.11; 1 Cor 2.11; 9.14; 14.9, 12; 15.42, 45; Gal 4.3; 1 Thess 4.14); (b) with connecting particles (Rom 11.5, 26; 15.20; 1 Cor 7.7, 17, 36; 8.12; 11.28; 14.25; 15.11c; Gal 6.2; 1 Thess 4.17); (c) without connecting particles (1 Cor 9.24; 15.11b; Phil 4.1; and so in dep. clauses: 1 Cor 7.26, 40; 9.15); (d) within participial phrases (1 Cor 5.3; Phil 3.17). In addition, it is found in scriptural citations (Rom 4.18; 9.20 [οὕτως added by Paul]; 1 Cor 14.21 [add.]).

61 This usage occurs before adjectives and adverbs. See esp. Gal 1.6 (with adv.); 3.3 (with adj.). Cf. also the potential example in 1 Cor 6.5 (with σοφός).

62 Note that John Chrysostom's reference to Rom 1.14b–15 in his preface (see further above) does not include the adv. οὕτως. Since this absence of οὕτως does not seem to bother him, it is possible that he considered οὕτως to be embedded in τὸ κατ' ἐμέ πρόθυμον.

would then be to contribute to the text's natural flow by reducing the need for a connecting particle in the sentence.<sup>63</sup>

Fourth, the asyndeton in ὁφειλέτης εἰμί etc. introduces a new phase in the discourse. This accords well with Paul's language elsewhere: in addition to the frequent use of asyndeton within smaller units (e.g. Rom 12.9–13.1, 8, 10), Paul occasionally uses it to indicate macro-structural developments in his letters<sup>64</sup> (as evident in Rom 9.1).<sup>65</sup> In light of this, Rom 1.13–15 could be translated as follows:

But I do not want you to be ignorant of, brothers, that I have frequently intended to come to you – but was hindered until now – in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the gentiles, Greeks as well as barbarians,<sup>66</sup> wise as well as ignorant.<sup>67</sup>  
I am bound, then, to announce the gospel<sup>68</sup> with goodwill to you also who are in Rome.

63 Cf. the comments made by J. D. Denniston on classical usage of asyndeton: '[A] backward-pointing pronoun or demonstrative adverb [e.g. οὗτος], usually at or near the opening of the sentence, . . . diminishes the necessity for a connecting particle' (*The Greek Particles* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1954] xlv). Cf. also R. Kühner, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache* 2 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1904) 2.343–4. Kühner notes that in asyndeton 'das Demonstrativ [kann] von dem Anfange des Satzes entfernt sein' (344).

64 So also Turner, *Syntax*, 341. On p. 340 he comments: 'Except occasionally for effect, this [i.e. the use of asyndeton] is contrary to the genius of Greek, but Paul and Hebrews are full of it.' See also idem, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* 4. *Style* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976) 85. Denniston observes: 'In deciding whether asyndeton is tolerable in a particular place, the usage of the author and the character of the passage must be taken into account' (*Greek Particles*, xlv).

65 Cf., e.g., 1 Cor 5.1; 6.12; 2 Cor 6.11; Gal 4.12, 21; 6.11; Phil 3.17. Note also that, with Romans as the only exception, the transition from opening to body in Paul's letters always has asyndeton (1 Cor 1.4; 2 Cor 1.3; Gal 1.6; Phil 1.3; 1 Thess 1.2; Phlm 4. Cf. 2 Thess 1.3; Col 1.3; Eph 1.3).

66 Paul probably uses the phrase Ἑλλῆσιν τε καὶ βαρβάροις simply to denote all non-Jews (τὰ ἔθνη, cf. 1.5), as was common among contemporary Jews, such as Philo and Josephus. See esp. H. Windisch, 'βάρβαρος', *TDNT* 1.549–53; idem, 'Ἑλλην κτλ.', in *TDNT* 2.512–16. So also already in Lightfoot, *Notes*, 249 ('A comprehensive description of the Gentile World'). The phrase, however, cannot but also include some cultural and/or linguistic distinctions (cf. 1 Cor 14.11 for the latter). Obviously, the Roman audience would consider themselves as belonging to the former category, and Paul's subsequent discussion shows that he does too (see 1.16; 2.9, 10; 3.9; 10.12).

67 If by Ἑλλῆσιν τε καὶ βαρβάροις Paul means all non-Jews (see the previous note) it may be assumed that he uses the phrase σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις to denote a different grouping of the gentile people (so also Cranfield, *Romans*, 83–4), most likely according to educational level. On the other hand, if the cultural/linguistic distinction is primarily in his mind σοφοῖς may be identical with Ἑλλῆσιν and ἀνοήτοις with βαρβάροις. In that case, Paul probably intends to flatter his audience as Ἑλλῆνες.

68 On this meaning of εὐαγγελίσασθαι, i.e. primarily referring to the *content* of Paul's εὐαγγέλιον, see Rom 10.14–18; 15.18–21; 1 Cor 1.17–18; 15.1–8; Gal 1.6–9, 11–23 (esp. v. 16). Cf. also the interesting occurrence in 1 Thess 3.6.



### Conclusions: the reading of Rom 1.13–15

While I do not claim to have provided *the* solution to the difficult phrase (οὕτως) τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον, I do consider my suggestions of punctuation and syntax of Rom 1.13–15 to be less problematic in whole than the current one(s). Hence, there is good reason to conclude that the reading suggested above is a plausible one. But how does this affect the interpretation of the text? In what way does my reading differ from previous readings, which, again, have been based on different punctuation?

To begin with, my reading suggests that in Rom 1.13–15 Paul does *not* declare that he is under an obligation towards all humanity. It also suggests that Paul does *not* state that he is under an obligation towards 'Greeks as well as barbarians, wise as well as ignorant'. In fact, according to my reading, Paul does *not* say anything about his willingness to proclaim the gospel in Rome being a result of an obligation towards certain people. Furthermore, my reading suggests that Paul does *not* state that it is no longer, or never was, his intention to proclaim the good news in Rome. Thus, there is no sign of discrepancy between Rom 1.15 and 15.20. Finally, the above reading strongly suggests that Rom 1.13–15 should *not* be read as a structural unity.

What, then, *does* the text imply according to my suggestion? In general, the reading implies that Rom 1.13–15 comprises the end of one phase in the discourse and the beginning of another.<sup>69</sup> Ὁφειλέτης εἰμί ... εὐαγγελίσασθαι constitutes therefore a transition<sup>70</sup> from the first part of the letter's 'body'<sup>71</sup> to the second.

After the opening (vv. 1–7) Paul begins the main part of his letter by praising the audiences' faithfulness (v. 8) and expressing his concern for them as well as his yearning to make a visit (vv. 9–12). This is introduced by πρῶτον μὲν, followed by

69 Observe the subordinate (explanatory) function of the clauses immediately following (vv. 16 [γράφ ×2], 17 [γράφ], and 18 [γράφ]). So R. D. Anderson, Jr, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (CBET 18; Kampen: Pharos, 1996) 185, remarks (his emphasis): 'Formally the proposition for the letter as a whole might be considered to be v.15. It is this statement (that it is Paul's desire to preach the Gospel to the Roman Christians) that forms the basis for Paul's following remarks (indicated by the ensuing series of causal conjunctions [γράφ]), and also seems to be reflected upon again at the end of the "sermon" (15.5ff).' On the widespread tendency to cut off vv. 16–17 from the surrounding discourse, on the assumption that it constitutes 'the theme' of Romans, N. Elliott comments somewhat ironically: 'Numerous commentators follow text editions (e.g., Nestle-Aland<sup>26</sup>) in isolating 1.16–17 as the letter's "theme", almost as if the superscription περὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου or περὶ τῆς δικαιοσύνης θεοῦ stood in the text at this point' (*The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism* [JSNTSup 45; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990] 84 n. 2).

70 The transitional force may be softened a bit by the inferential οὕτως.

71 I.e. the main part of the letter, viz. everything between the epistolary opening (1.1–7) and closing (16.1–23 [or 27]).

two explanatory sentences with γάρ (vv. 9 and 11),<sup>72</sup> which indicates that the main sentence is found in v. 8. Πρῶτον μὲν is then answered by δέ in v. 13;<sup>73</sup> After his attempt to convince the audience of his willingness to visit them,<sup>74</sup> Paul apologizes for not having been able to do so. The reason Paul gives for his serious<sup>75</sup> delay is that he has been occupied with ‘reaping the harvest’ among other gentiles (cf. 15.19–22). By giving a further description of these people as ‘Greeks as well as barbarians, wise as well as ignorant’, he intensifies his previous missionary work, thus providing additional support for his delay. This first part of the letter’s body may therefore be seen as Paul’s *captatio benevolentiae*, i.e. his effort to capture the audience’s goodwill before turning to the main subject.<sup>76</sup>

At the beginning of the next phase in the discourse (in 1.14b–15) Paul presents his main concern with the letter. He refers to his ‘goodwill’ towards the audience, so distinctly marked out in his previous words, and states that it is his duty to announce the good news also to them, as well as to other gentiles. Since Paul has completed his work in the eastern part of his missionary province (cf. 15.19b, 23),<sup>77</sup>

72 Note that v. 12 contains a subordinate purpose clause with additional explanation (indicated by τοῦτο δὲ ἐστίν) of the preceding purpose clause (εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς).

73 Πρῶτον μὲν is frequently answered only by δέ, see LSJ, s.v. πρότερος B.III.3.a. Cf. the observations made by Theodore of Mopsuestia (350–428), in Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 115: Ζητεῖται δὲ πῶς ἀνταπέδωκεν ‘πρῶτον μὲν εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν,’ οὐ γὰρ εἶπε ‘δεύτερον δέ.’ ἡγοῦμαι τοίνυν ὅτι ἐνταῦθα ἡ ἀνταπόδοσις γέγονεν εἰς τὸ ‘οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί,’ καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς (‘The question is in what way [Paul] gives an answer to “First, I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for all of you,” for he does not say “Second, . . .” Well, I hold that here the answer has become “But I do not want you to be ignorant of, brothers” and so on’).

74 Cf. the frequent mention of visiting in 15.22 (τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς), 23 (ἐπιποθίαν δὲ ἔχων τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς [cf. ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς in 1.11]), 24 (διαπορευόμενος θεάσασθαι ὑμᾶς), 28 (ἀπελεύσομαι δι’ ὑμῶν), 29 (ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ὑμᾶς . . . ἐλεύσομαι), 32 (ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς). By this recurrent theme Paul probably wants to assure the audience of his intention to visit them, in spite of the fact that not even now, when he has finished his work ‘from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum’ (15.19 [NRSV]), will he turn to the city of Rome.

75 See 15.23 (ἀπὸ πολλῶν ἐτῶν).

76 So Origen comments (see frg. 9 in Staab, ‘Neue Fragmente’, 79): ἀπολογεῖται ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἐφέλκεται τὴν τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίας ἀγάπην πρὸς ἑαυτόν (lit. ‘[Paul] speaks in defence of himself and draws [thereby] the love of the Roman church towards himself’). Theodore of Mopsuestia notes Paul’s convention of praising his audience in the introductory part (τῷ προοιμίῳ) of his letters, and speaks of the passage in Rom 1.8 and following as a ‘praise of the Romans’ (Ῥωμαίων ἔπαινον), intended to secure the audience’s goodwill (ὥστε ταῖς εὐφημίαις προθυμότερους αὐτοὺς πρὸς τὴν τῶν γραφομένων παρασκευάζειν ἀνάγκωσιν); see Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 113–14. Cf. the comments of Gennadius of Constantinople (d. 471) (ἐπαινέσας αὐτούς); see *ibid.*, 353. So also Ambrosiaster and Pelagius (c. 354–420); see Schelkle, *Paulus*, 31.

77 On Paul’s missionary province, see esp. Gal 2.7–9. Cf. 1.16; 2.2; Rom 1.5–6; 15.15–16, 18.

it is now the Romans' turn to hear of his good news. In other words, it is Paul's missionary duty to present his message to gentiles in Rome.<sup>78</sup> Presumably, then, that is what he subsequently carries out in this extensive letter.

<sup>78</sup> In 15.14–33 it becomes clear that Paul is not on his way to Rome in the nearest future; he is on his way to Jerusalem (see esp. v. 25). Accordingly, he cannot deliver his message in person. In light of what he states in 1.14b–15, then, it follows that his letter, or some portion(s) of it, constitutes the announcement of his good news.