

Origen the Allegorist and the Typology/Allegory Distinction

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I. Introduction

In this paper I will attend to how Origen's allegory has been defined in the literature that endorses the distinction between the typological and allegorical interpretations of Scripture. This divide between typology and allegory, prominently introduced nearly 60 years ago into the Origenian scholarship by J. Daniélou, has itself divided the scholarship.¹ At its inception, this distinction was criticized and numerous scholars have subsequently dismissed it.² However, a

¹ This distinction is not, of course, restricted to the Origenian scholarship. Most standard reference works on the Bible, theology, and antiquity, as well as handbooks on patristic exegesis, have articles on both "allegory" and "typology." A representative sampling of recent works indicates a preference for a clear distinction between these two ways of reading – cf. M. Simonetti, "Allegory-Typology," in *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, ed. A. Di Berardino, trans. A. Walford (New York: OUP, 1992); J. E. Alsup, "Typology," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman, et al., vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992); "Types," in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1997); H.-P. Mathys, "Typologie," in *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon: Internationale theologische Enzyklopädie*, ed. E. Fahlbusch, et al., vol. 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); W. A. Bienert, "Allegorie/Allegorese: IV: Kirchengeschichtlich," in *RGG*, ed. H. D. Betz, et al., 4th ed., vol. 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998); G. R. Osborne, "Types, Typology," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. W. A. Elwell, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001); S. G. Hall, "Typologie," in *TRE*, vol. 34 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2002); "Allegory" and "Typology" in D. E. Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003). There are some articles that occupy middle ground, either conceding the difficulty in making the distinction – e.g. J. R. Darbyshire, "Typology," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. J. Hastings, vol. 12 (New York: Scribner's, 1920s); V. Greiselmayer, "Typologie," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, ed. W. Kasper, et al., vol. 10 (Freiburg: Herder, 2001) – or accepting its validity, nevertheless expressing some degree of skepticism as to its applicability to the early church – cf. K. Pollmann, "Typologie," in *Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike*, ed. H. Cancik, et al., vol. 12/1 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler: 2001); R. Suntrump, *Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike: Rezeptions- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, ed. H. Cancik, et al., vol. 15/3 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler: 2003). Finally, there are those who in effect deny it, even if the reference work has two separate entries for "allegory" and "typology," as is the case with G. Ward, "Allegory" and A. Louth, "Typology" in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, ed. A. Hastings, et al. (Oxford: OUP, 2000) and J. Trigg, "Allegory," in *The Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. E. Ferguson, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (New York: Garland, 1997) where there is no article on "typology." For a full bibliography on the literature for "typology," consult S. G. Hall, "Typologie," in *TRE*.

² H. de Lubac, "'Typologie' et 'Allégorisme,'" in *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 34 (1947): 180-226; W. den Boer, "Hermeneutic Problems in early Christian Literature," *VigChr* 1 (1947) accepts the validity of the distinction, including its presence in patristic literature, but concludes that Origen does not make any distinction at the practical or theoretical level between typology and allegory (161ff); R. Göglér, *Zur Theologie des Biblischen Wortes bei Origenes* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1963): 98-105, esp. 194 note 50; 361-363; H. Crouzel, who takes umbrage with Daniélou, though the latter's name is never explicitly mentioned, in: "La distinction de la 'typologie' et de l' 'allégorie,'" in *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* 65 (1964): 161-174; A. Louth, *Discerning the Mystery: An*

parallel trajectory can also be plotted, beginning with Daniélou and extending to the most recent literature in the field, that insists upon the validity of this distinction. In this paper I will first survey the scholarship that has endorsed the differentiation between typology and allegory and then offer a threefold critique of this position in which I will also define Origen's allegory. In my estimation this topos has been examined with insufficient care, both by those who have adopted it, as well as by those who have discarded it – while I will argue for a dismissal of this distinction largely on lexical grounds, I will also indicate what aspect of it does in fact have traction in Origen's corpus and cannot, as a result, be rejected.

II. Survey

The application of this distinction to Origen's biblical exegesis is most commonly associated with an influential and prolific scholar of early Christianity, J. Daniélou.³ In a slew of publications beginning in 1946,⁴ Daniélou insisted upon this distinction and introduced it prominently into Origenian studies with his 1948 biography, *Origène*, where, after a short chapter on "Origen and Biblical Criticism" there followed two lengthy chapters, the first entitled "The Typological Interpretation of the Bible," and the second, dealing with allegory, called "The Non-Christian Traditions of Exegesis." It was with his little-known publication, "Qu'est-ce que la

³ J. Daniélou was not, however, the first to introduce this distinction into the patristic literature. For example, cf. the literature in the first note of H. de Lubac's "'Typologie' et 'Allégorisme,'" G. Zimmermann, *Die hermeneutischen Prinzipien Tertullians* (Würzburg: K. Tritsch, 1937): 9-10, and L. Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. D. H. Madvig (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982): 5-6 (ET of *Die typologische Deutung des Alten Testaments im Neuen* [Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1939]). Daniélou was also not the first to apply it to Origen – cf. P. Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture: or, The doctrine of types investigated in its principles, and applied to the explanation of the earlier revelations of God, considered as preparatory exhibitions of the leading truths of the Gospel* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1845): 1-7.

The earliest version of the distinction (according to B. Strengé, "Typos, Typologie," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. J. Ritter and K. Gründer, vol. 10 [Basel: Schwabe]: 1590 and A. C. Charity, *Events and Their Afterlife* [Cambridge: CUP, 1966], 172, ft.2) appears to have been made by Johann Gerhard (1582-1637), professor of theology at the University of Jena, and arguably the leading Lutheran theologian of his day. He drew the distinction between a "type" and an "allegory" in his treatise first published in 1610, *Tractatus De Legitima Scripturae Sacrae Interpretatione*, a widely-circulated and immensely influential work in Protestant hermeneutics, in part because it was incorporated as a discrete chapter in his oft reprinted *Loci theologici*, a standard work of Lutheran theology into the 19th century. The distinction was also found in the three other leading works of Protestant hermeneutics, in Gerhard's pupil, Salomon Glass', *Philologia Sacra* (first published in 1623, but also reprinted in the late 18th century), in J. F. Buddeus' *Isagoge historico-theologica ad theologiam universum singularisque eius partes* (1727), and in later editions of the first Protestant work on biblical interpretation, M. Flaccius' *De Ratione Cognoscendi Sacras Literas* in his *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae* (originally published in 1567, but underwent numerous new editions, and in post-Gerhard editions, Gerhard's distinction between a "type" and "allegory" was inserted).

⁴ "Taversée de la Mer Rouge et Baptême aux premiers siècles," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 33 (1946): 402-430; "La Typologie d'Isaac dans le christianisme primitif," *Biblica* 28 (1947): 363-393; "Les divers sens de l'Écriture dans la tradition chrétienne primitive," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 24 (1948): 119-126; *Origène* (Paris; Table Ronde, 1948); "La Typologie de la Semaine au IV^e siècle," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 35 (1948): 382-411; "La Typologie millénariste de la semaine dans le Christianisme primitif," *VigChr* 2 (1948): 1-16; *Sacramentum futuri: Études sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1950); "Qu'est-ce que la typologie," in *L'Ancien Testament et les chrétiens*, ed. P. Auvray, et al. (Paris: Cerf, 1951): 199-205.

typologie?"⁵ in 1951, that Daniélou offered a crisp summary of his views on this subject. The contents of this article will be summarized here, though the position is also found in *Origène*.

"The object of typology is the research of the correspondences between the events, the institutions and the persons of the Old covenant and those of the New covenant, which is inaugurated by the coming of Christ and will be consummated with his parousia."⁶ What is figured by the OT has many aspects, but these find their unity in Christ. Thus, with different aspects of Christ come different sorts of typology – there is christological typology, ecclesiastical typology, mystical typology, and eschatological typology, corresponding to Christ in his historical existence, Christ in his life in the church, in his union with the soul, and his parousia.⁷ While typological exegesis is already evident within the OT itself,⁸ in the NT it receives a decisive new emphasis: the realization of the OT in Jesus Christ who is the new Adam, the true Noah, second Moses, etc.⁹ Daniélou saws two sorts of typology in the NT. The Matthean, which had an influence at the same time in the West and in Jerusalem, which saw events in the OT as types of historical events in Jesus' life – e.g. Rachel weeping for her lost children figures Herod's massacre of the infants (Matt 2:16-18). This sort of typology Origen rejected in favor of the Johannine, which saw in the events of the OT not figures of "circumstances" in Jesus' life but of the "mysteries" in that life – e.g. the serpent in the wilderness is a figure of the mystery of

⁵ Cf. previous note for the bibliography.

⁶ J. Daniélou, "Qu'est-ce que la typologie?," 199.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 200-201.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 201-202.

salvation (Jn 3:14-15).¹⁰ "This exegesis is a part of the common tradition of the church"¹¹ – i.e. it can be seen throughout the early church, in the West and East, in Antioch *and* Alexandria.

But this is not the whole story. In the intellectual milieu in which patristic exegesis developed there were two other currents of OT interpretation which exerted an influence on the fathers: the rabbinic and philonic. These influences were responsible for the distinguishing and dubious features of the different schools' readings of Scripture. While Philo's exegesis was complex, it was, nevertheless, strongly allegorical in its search for the symbolical signification ("signification symbolique") of the text. Philo's allegory was characterized by three features: first, the details of the Bible have a symbolical sense which only our lack of insight stops us from seeing¹²; second, the realities of Jewish history were an image either of the cosmos, or of the soul, or of the intelligible world¹³; and finally, Philo utilized for interpreting the Old Testament a symbolism borrowed from Hellenistic culture. These three points were in clear conflict with biblical typology's concern for realities (and not texts) and for Christological figures (and not cosmological, etc.).¹⁴ Philo's influence was detected in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Ambrose, to cite only the main figures, and it will become the characteristic trait of the Alexandrian school.¹⁵ Daniélou wished to emphasize, however, that these were only the

¹⁰ Ibid., 202.

¹¹ Ibid., 203.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 204.

¹⁴ The statement – "On voit que sur les deux premiers points, l'allégorisme philonien s'oppose directement à la typologie biblique" (204) – is not entirely clear. Even though he has listed three features of philonian allegory, the "first two points" he is referring to here are the opening two points he made about typology.

¹⁵ In what follows Daniélou turns to the Rabbinic tradition of OT exegesis and sees in it the characteristic features of the Antiochene school. Alongside Alexandrian Judaism, the account continues, there is the Palestinian Judaism of Rabbis which has its own tradition of symbolical interpretation (interprétation symbolique) of the Old Testament.

distinguishing features of Alexandrian exegesis, and that it still had, in common with other schools and exegetes, the "la tradition typologique commune."¹⁶

Daniélou's approach was quickly criticized. A year after he had first floated his thesis, H. de Lubac (1947) responded with a disapproving article.¹⁷ A year thereafter Daniélou (1948) mentioned this article in the footnotes to his biography on Origen, though the note did not contribute real clarity to the issue:

As Fr. de Lubac very properly observes, it is only recently that these two terms have been used as opposites. It is, however, convenient to use them in that sense. The main thing, after all, is to make the distinction between the two things quite clear – which Fr. de Lubac does not, perhaps, altogether succeed in doing.¹⁸

While there are scholars who have followed de Lubac in glancing askance at this distinction,¹⁹ it is difficult to overlook the long line of scholars who have adopted it.

R. P. C. Hanson's *Allegory and Event* is the most significant English language work on Origen's exegesis and it bears striking similarities with Daniélou's scholarship on our topic – both accept the distinction and both are convinced that allegory is unacceptable.²⁰ There are,

Here we find past events in Israel history presented as figures of eschatological realities and of a future world. Also see past events in OT fulfilled within OT. "C'est cette exégèse qui sera reprise par l'École d'Antioche et qui en constituera le caractère propre." Whereas this is closer to Christian typology (in that it studies a small number of figures and the relation between historical moments) it is opposed, however, to the extent that it stays within the OT (205)

¹⁶ 205.

¹⁷ "'Typologie' et 'Allégorisme,'" in *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 34 (1947): 180-226. The same distinction was criticized in his later article, "Sense spirituel," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 36 (1949): 180-226 –double check pagination. In his recent article "Typologie" (in TRE), S. G. Hall erroneously attributes the upholding of this distinction to H. de Lubac.

¹⁸ Quoting from ET (327, note 2). J. Daniélou, *Origène* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1948): 175, ft. 1.

¹⁹ Cf. ft. 2 above.

²⁰ Note Hanson's praise for Daniélou at *Allegory and Event*, 252.

however, notable discrepancies in how these scholars distinguished typology from allegory.

Hanson opened his work with a rather different set of definitions²¹:

Typology is the interpreting of an event belonging to the present or the recent past as the fulfillment of a similar situation recorded or prophesied in Scripture. Allegory is the interpretation of an object or person or a number of objects or persons as in reality meaning some object or person of a later time, with no attempt made to trace a relationship of "similar situation" between them.²²

For Hanson, the fundamental criterion is similarity – typology is successful because it discerns the similar situation between two sets of events whereas allegory fails to convince that there is such a link. Hanson not only departed from Daniélou in emphasizing this principle of similitude that is underplayed in the latter's discussion of typology and allegory, but Hanson was also less interested in Daniélou's concern with Christological referents and was critical of his account of the cultural backgrounds to these two ways of reading.²³

In 1972 Wolfgang Bienert pressed for this distinction.²⁴ He admitted that the term "typology" did not exist in the early church,²⁵ but this was because it was so similar to allegory.²⁶

²¹ Hanson's definitions are quite similar to those offered by G. W. H. Lampe, "The Reasonableness of Typology" and K. J. Woollcombe, "The Biblical Origins and Patristic Development of Typology," in *Essays on Typology* (Naperville, Ill.: A. R. Allenson, 1957): 29; 39-40. Note that "historical typology" is juxtaposed to "symbolic typology or allegorism" in Woollcombe's essay, and it is the latter that characterizes Alexandrian exegesis over and against Antiochene (70; distinction explained on 65).

²² R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, 7. It is important to note that Hanson thought there were *two* distinct sorts of allegory in antiquity, Hellenistic and Palestinian. The former "knows nothing of typology" whereas the latter "is full of typology" (ibid., 63-64). When speaking of Palestinian allegory and its influence on early Christianity, Hanson can sometimes speak of typology and allegory synonymously (ibid., 36). However for Hanson, Origen's allegory (Alexandrian allegory) is derived from Hellenistic allegory and not Palestinian, and so the "allegory" he is referring to in this definition at the start of his work is Hellenistic/Alexandrian/Origenian (ibid., 63-64; 125-126).

²³ R. P. C. Hanson wrote the first section of *Allegory and Event* (entitled "Sources of Christian Allegory") in part to improve upon and correct Daniélou's history of typology and allegory (ibid., 125-129).

²⁴ W. A. Bienert, "*Allegoria*" und "*Anagoge*" bei Didymos dem Blinden von Alexandria (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), 40-43.

²⁵ Ibid., 41.

²⁶ Ibid., 42.

He was convinced that there were two distinct ways of interpreting Scripture, so that even when early Christian authors spoke of ἀλληγορία, Origen included, they could, in fact, be referring either to allegory or typology.²⁷ Why, when there was no terminological basis for a distinction between "typology" and "allegory," should one insist upon a fundamental differentiation? For Bienert, there were two reasons. First, these ways of reading came from divergent backgrounds – allegory had its origin above all in Stoic scholarship, whereas typology's roots sank into "messianic and eschatological prophecy."²⁸ Second, typology and allegory were distinct modes of exegesis. After citing Hanson's distinction between typology and allegory which he found inadequate,²⁹ Bienert suggested the following distinction:

allegory is the vertical manner of interpretation, since it establishes unhistorical-timeless relationships between images (allegories) and their spiritual archetypes; typology, in contrast, is the horizontal manner of interpretation, since it transports the historical events of the past into the present and future.³⁰

Here Hanson's concern for similitude is not expressed and the character of the nonliteral referent takes precedence – if the nonliteral referent is "historical," then we have "typology," if it is "unhistorical," we have "allegory."

²⁷ Ibid., 42-43.

²⁸ Ibid., 41. Bienert is citing R. Gögler, *Zur Theologie*, 98 who, in turn, refers to this as drawn from J. Daniélou. Note, however, that Gögler did not accept this distinction (ibid., 361-363).

²⁹ Cf. ft. 22 above.

³⁰ Man hat deshalb zur besseren Veranschaulichung des Unterschieds davon gesprochen, die Allegorese sei die vertikale Auslegungsform, da sie ungeschichtlich-zeitlose Beziehungen zwischen Bildern (Allegorien) und ihren geistigen Urbildern herstelle; die Typologie sei demgegenüber die horizontale Auslegungsform, da sie geschichtliche Ereignisse aus der Vergangenheit in Gegenwart und Zukunft übertrage (Ibid., 42). Also see his slightly elaborated definitions on 43. The "horizontal/vertical" definition can be found in H. Crouzel, "La Distinction," 162-3; R. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, by R. A. Greer and J. L. Kugel (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986): 178; 181, 183; B. de Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis; Vol. 1: The Greek Fathers*, trans. L. Maluf (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's, 1993): 111.

In Frances Young's *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (1997) the distinction between typology and allegory is again found, and like most of her predecessors, the former is accepted whereas the latter is censured. While Young expresses some reservations about the distinction,³¹ and despite her awareness that "'typology' is a modern coinage," she insists that it is "a useful term."³² Young associates typology with Antiochene exegesis and allegory with Alexandrian, especially Origen's. Typology, she writes:

requires a mirroring of the supposed deeper meaning in the text taken as a coherent whole, whereas allegory involves using words as symbols or tokens, arbitrarily referring to other realities by application of a code, and so destroying the narrative, or surface, coherence of the text.³³

The distinction she frequently draws in this work is between ikonic and symbolic mimesis, the former referring to "typology" and the latter to "allegory." There are three emphases in her distinction: first, that typology is sensitive to narrative coherence whereas allegory destroys this coherence with its myopic fascination with individual words;³⁴ second, that allegory is characterized by an arbitrary connection³⁵; and third, like Daniélou and Hanson before her, she

³¹ She does express reservations about making the distinction too firmly. Cf. *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997): 161; 191; 198; 263-264.

³² *Ibid.*, 193.

³³ *Ibid.*, 162. Northrop Frye's *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1981), 85 is drawn upon for help in making this distinction.

³⁴ The charge is clearly leveled against Origen: "Coherence lay not in the text or narrative itself, but in what lay behind it. Origen was happy to decode symbols without worrying about textual or narrative coherence, and the symbols were tokens" (*Biblical Exegesis*, 184; also cf. 200). On the other hand, of the Antiochenes she writes: "What they resisted was the type of allegory that destroyed textual coherence" (176), or that they objected to the Alexandrian "tradition of exegesis which had a different background, and which shattered the narrative coherence of particular texts, and the Bible as a whole" (182).

³⁵ "The question is whether the mimesis happened through genuine likeness or analogy, an "ikon" or image, or by a symbol, a token, *something unlike* which stands for the reality" (*ibid.*, 191, my emphasis). Again: "What is different is the assumption that the narrative provides a kind of "mirror" which images the true understanding, rather than the words of the text providing a code to be cracked" (162-63); "The objection to Alexandrian allegory is that it treats texts as a collection of arbitrary tokens, not as "mirroring" in its narrative coherence the truths which may be discerned within it" (175).

too tries to map out the cultural backgrounds of Antiochene typology and Alexandrian allegory, though quite differently, locating the former in the rhetorical schools and the latter in the philosophical schools of antiquity.³⁶ This distinction between typology and allegory is once again substantially different, particularly her different account of the cultural backgrounds for these two ways of reading and her emphasis on what the ancients referred to as the ἀκολουθία or εἰρμός of a passage, its coherence or sequential arrangement.

In John David Dawson's *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (2002) this distinction we have been tracing bulks large,³⁷ though instead of the labels "typology" and "allegory," Dawson prefers "figural" and "figurative" respectively. A figural reading is one that honors, and extends the literal sense – it is based upon a conception of language as a series of figures which preserve literal meaning. To be distinguished from this

³⁶ Cf. esp. 169-176, though note how she blurs the distinction between rhetorical and philosophical exegesis on 183. In an earlier essay, "The rhetorical schools and their influence on patristic exegesis" (in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. R. Williams [Cambridge: CUP, 1989]: 182-199) she developed the idea that the way of reading in rhetorical schools, where one derives moral and ethical principles from literature, differed from the "symbolic allegory" that characterized the philosophical schools and, in turn, Alexandrian exegesis. While she agrees that both rhetorical and philosophical schools were interested in philology, philosophy "found abstract doctrines or virtues through verbal allegory" whereas rhetorical schools "looked for concrete ethical examples in a narrative, and for models of excellence both stylistic and moral in the construction and presentation of the whole" (188). On 188-189 she uses "allegory" for the Origenist tradition in Alexandria and "typology" for the reaction in Antioch (also cf. 191-192).

³⁷ Though differently from his earlier work, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992): 15-16. There Dawson defines the two as follows:

Typology, it is argued, is a mode of composition or interpretation that links together at least two temporally different historical events or persons because of an analogy they bear to one another. Because it is said to preserve the historical reality of both the initial "type" and its corresponding "antitypes," typology is said to differ from allegory, which dissolves the historical reality of type and/or antitype into timeless generalities or conceptual abstractions (15).

But he goes on to note that:

the decision to divorce typology from allegory has obscured the underlying formal similarity of the two procedures by focusing on material theological considerations Consequently, in this book, typology is understood to be simply one species of allegory; the historical practice of giving texts other meanings (allegory) includes a certain subpractice of giving texts other meanings according to certain "rules" (typology). On this view, typology is simply a certain kind of allegorical reading promoted as nonallegorical for specific theological and rhetorical reasons (16).

acceptable nonliteral exegesis is the "figurative" way of reading which betrays or undermines this literal sense – it is based upon a conception of language as a series of tropes which replace literal meaning with nonliteral meaning.³⁸ This way of distinguishing typology from allegory, novel in the Origenian scholarship, is drawn from E. Auerbach and H. Frei,³⁹ though Dawson departs from both scholars in two notable ways. First, he insists that Origen's nonliteral exegesis is a good deal more typological, i.e. figural, than these scholars were willing to grant; second, Dawson wishes to use the label "allegory" as synonymous with "figural" or "typological" exegesis and prefers "figurative" for what Auerbach and Frei called "allegorical."⁴⁰ Thus, even though "figural," "typological" and "allegorical" can all be used synonymously in this study, this does not mean that the old typology/allegory distinction is being jettisoned – the terminology has been altered, but the distinction and the substance of the definitions still hold.

The last literature that I will survey is the recently published guide, the *Westminster Handbook to Origen*, which includes articles on both "allegory" and "typology."⁴¹ In the article on "allegory," J. J. O'Keefe writes the following:

Some commentators, however, recognizing that figural reading in one form or another is a necessary component of Christian faith, have distinguished between "allegorical

³⁸ Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading*, 12-15.

³⁹ Dawson claims dependence upon Auerbach and Frei for this distinction (ibid., 10-15; 84-97; 147-149). Key texts include E. Auerbach, "Figura," in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, ed. W. Godzich and J. Schulte-Sasse, trans. R. Manheim (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984): 53-55; H. W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974), 28-29; H. W. Frei, "The 'Literal Reading' of Biblical Narrative in the Christian Tradition: Does It Stretch or Will It Break?" in *The Bible and the Narrative Tradition*, ed. F. McConnell (New York: OUP, 1986): 75. Note also that Dawson wishes to see their definitions already in Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*. Dawson paraphrases Quintilian as follows: "Tropes, said Quintilian, were figures of speech in which words undergo a change in meaning; by contrast, the words in rhetorical figures, although they change their patterns, retain their literal meanings" – Dawson refers the reader to 8.6.1; 9.14; 9.1.4, 7 of the *Institutio Oratoria* (*Christian Figural Reading*, 14). Again, on Quintilian: "Tropes *replace* literal meaning with nonliteral meaning, while figures *preserve* literal meaning in their generation of figurativeness" (ibid., 14).

⁴⁰ Cf. *Christian Figural Reading*, note 6 on 263.

⁴¹ There is also an article on "anagogical interpretation" by J. J. O'Keefe!

reading" and "typological reading." The former, it is argued, detaches a text from historical events, while the latter continues to value history by maintaining a connection.⁴²

Yet O'Keefe sounds a skeptical note: "While this modern distinction between allegory and typology may seem an attractive way to reconcile patristic sensibility with modern exegetical concerns, it must be admitted it does not do much to illuminate ancient principles of exegesis."

Yet there is an article on "Typology" by R. A. Norris in that very same work. While conceding that the term is only modern, he proceeds to define it as:

a traditional form of Christian biblical exegesis that reads Old Testament reports of certain events, persons, or items as containing "types," that is, as bearing, in addition to their original contextual meaning, a reference forward to analogous events, persons, or practices in the New Testament, or, to speak more broadly, to the work of Christ and to Christian believers' life [sic] "in Christ."⁴³

Norris notes that typology was inherited from Paul and that by Origen's day it was an established tradition of exegesis, whereas allegory was derived from Philo and certain Stoic and Platonic philosophers. Yet Norris notes that Origen would have been uncomfortable with the gulf modern scholars fashion between typology and allegory. Typological and allegorical exegesis are not related to one another by juxtaposition, but rather, based upon a definition of allegory as "language that says one thing and means either something more than what it says or something other than what it says" that:

allegory seems to have labeled a large class of varying strategies in literary composition and interpretation; and any argument over the relative importance of allegory and typology in Origen's exegesis might best be settled by insisting that for him what we call typology counted, in practice, as a species of allegory, which, like all its other species, worked on the basis of some perception of "likeness" between two items or situations or levels of reality.⁴⁴

⁴² J. J. O'Keefe, "Allegory," in *Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. J. A. McGuckin (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004).

⁴³ R. A. Norris, "Typology," in *Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. J. A. McGuckin (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004).

Conclusion: Striking Pluriformity

The foremost (and I think still largely underappreciated) conclusion to be drawn from this survey of the literature is that very little agreement exists upon how one ought to define "typology" and "allegory." The range of issues which the scholarship as a whole has incorporated into its definitions of these terms is substantial – issues like the religious and cultural backgrounds, disparate patristic schools of biblical interpretation, the sorts of nonliteral referents, the literary context of the passage to be interpreted, and the relationship between the literal and nonliteral referents are all considered viable elements in the definitions of typology and allegory. Some of the definitions surveyed above are elaborate, incorporating numerous issues, whereas others are basic. There are other factors contributing to the pluriformity in definitions. There is disagreement, for instance, over whether current literary theory ought to shape these definitions, and if so, which theorists ought to be privileged. There is also disagreement over how typology and allegory relate to one another – most scholars have defined them *in opposition* to one another, however for some typology is a *subset* of allegory. Perhaps most vital is the disagreement over whether this distinction harbors a polemic. For most scholars this distinction not only describes, it also evaluates – Origen the allegorist troubles whereas Origen the typologist is tolerable and perhaps even laudable. With all these variables it should not surprise, then, that there should be disagreement as to whether Origen practiced both of these sorts of exegesis or whether he was to be located more or less on one side of the divide. Here too the literature is in disagreement. *This survey of the scholarship indicates that there is little*

⁴⁴ R. A. Norris, "Typology." Locating typology as a species of allegory is not that uncommon in the literature: cf. R. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London: S. P. C. K., 1957): 137; M. Simonetti, *Lettera e/o Allegoria: Un contributo alla storia dell'esegesi patristica* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum "Augustinianum," 1985), 24 ff 32; M. Simonetti, "Allegory-Typology," in *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*; D. Dawson, *Allegorical Readers* in ff. 37 above.

uniformity in the definitions of typology and allegory, which, as a result, not only casts doubt as to whether there is any real scholarly value in continuing to insist upon this distinction, but also arouses the suspicion that there may, in fact, be little historical merit to it.

III. Evaluation

In the evaluation that follows I will not enter into a detailed critique of each position, but rather attend to the leading patterns that have emerged from the preceding survey.

A. Step One

To begin with, it is important to detect the claim being consistently made in the literature surveyed above, that "allegory" is an unacceptable form of nonliteral exegesis and that it is clearly demarcated from the acceptable sort, "typology." Scholars have offered us their definitions not simply with the intent of distinguishing these two forms of nonliteral exegesis, but also with the aim of *evaluating* them (e.g. if the sequence is violated, then it is "allegory" and not "typology"; if there is no similar situation, then it is "allegory" and not "typology"). It is certainly the case that Origen himself spoke with some frequency about the criteria that mark the successful nonliteral reading of Scripture, and while it is not the task here to articulate what all these are, it should be noted that the definitions are at times inaccurate and on the whole quite reductive – inaccurate, because decidedly non-Origenistic evaluative criteria are inserted into this distinction⁴⁵; reductive, since none have offered an adequately comprehensive portrait of the sort of criteria that would have been significant to Origen. There are numerous factors integral to a successful allegorical interpretation, e.g. interpreting Scripture in accordance with the ecclesiastical rule,⁴⁶ developing sound allegorical meanings,⁴⁷ following the previous allegorical

⁴⁵ Dawson comes to mind here.

interpretations of authoritative exegetes, Paul in particular,⁴⁸ discovering the allegorical meaning by etymological analysis,⁴⁹ by relying on another passage in Scripture ("interpreting Scripture with Scripture"),⁵⁰ attending to the ἀκολουθία of a passage,⁵¹ but also attending to where it has been intentionally broken by the Holy Spirit,⁵² etc. This, then, is the first problem with the definitions of allegory and typology surveyed above, that they hardly do justice to the complexity of successful and unsuccessful nonliteral exegesis as Origen understood it.

B. Step Two

The next step in this evaluation requires determining whether successful and unsuccessful nonliteral exegeses were respectively defined by Origen with the terms "typology" and "allegory."

1. Typology

There are several reasons why it is objectionable to associate "typology" with successful nonliteral exegesis. As has often been pointed out, even by the defenders of this term, the English noun "typology" can only claim modern lineage. It apparently goes back to the mid-nineteenth century and was ultimately derived from the Latin *typologia*, a term not attested in

⁴⁶ Hom 4.1 on Ps 36/SC 411, 188.103-105: Si vero spiritaliter intellegant [haeretici], in ipso autem spiritali intellectu apostolicae non teneant regulam veritatis.

⁴⁷ Comm Jn 13.51.

⁴⁸ Repeatedly in the OT homilies, cf. Hom Gen 3.4; Hom Ex 5.1; Hom Lev 7.4.2; Hom Josh 3.1; PA 4.2.6; 4.3.6; 4.3.8, etc. Also cf. F. Cocchini, *Il Paolo di Origene: Contributo alla storia della recezione delle epistole paoline nel III secolo* (Rome: Edizioni Studium, 1992): 137-148.

⁴⁹ Hom Jer 10.4.2; Comm Jn 2.4, etc.

⁵⁰ This principle is often traced back to 1 Cor 2:13 (πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες): Hom Num 16.9.4; Phil 2.3; CC 4.71; Comm Matt 14.14, etc. Used to allegorize: Comm Jn 13.361; Comm Matt 10.1; Hom Jer 19.13.2.

⁵¹ Hom Num 27; PA 4.2.9; Comm Jn 32.11, etc.

⁵² PA 4.2.7-8; Comm Jn 13.364-367; Comm Rom 3.1, etc.

ancient and patristic Latin usage.⁵³ Similarly, there was no Greek word for "typology" in antiquity.⁵⁴ Quite obviously, then, this English noun is anachronistically applied to Greek patristic literature and is not a term with which Origen could have indicated a distinct sort of nonliteral exegesis, let alone an acceptable one. At the same time, this argument against "typology" is not very strong. "Typology" and "typological" perform for us today what "typic" and "typical" did for previous English speakers – and these older terms certainly have Greek precedents.⁵⁵ Furthermore, what scholars mean by "typology" is, at the very least, the nonliteral reading of Scripture's τύποι, a topic that Origen himself addressed.

It is when we examine Origen's use of τύπος and related terms that several strong arguments against "typology" can be adduced. To begin with, Origen did not envision the nonliteral interpretation of types as an inherently successful enterprise, as many do who have defined "typology" as the acceptable sort of nonliteral exegesis. Recall his criticism of the *simpliciores'* nonliteral interpretation of the tabernacle-as-τύπος in book 4 of *Peri Archon*. These simpler Christians correctly understand that the tabernacle is a type of something, but of what, they are in the dark.⁵⁶ There are two further arguments against "typology" which contradict

⁵³ Based upon a search of the PL Database and Cetedoc. According to A. C. Charity, *Events and their Afterlife*, 171, ft 2, the Latin "typologia" first appeared ca. 1840 and "typology" in ca. 1844. A. Louth ("Allegory," in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*) suggests that the English noun can be traced back to E. B. Pusey in the 1830's. It appears the first book with "typology" in its title was P. Fairbairn's, *The Typology of Scripture: or The Doctrine of types investigated in its principles, and applied to the explanation of the earlier revelations of God, considered as preparatory exhibitions of the leading truths of the Gospel* (Edinburgh, Clark: 1845).

⁵⁴ Though fascinatingly, modern Greek *does* attest to τυπολογία.

⁵⁵ In P. Fairbairn's, *The Typology of Scripture* the adjectives "typical" and "typological" are used interchangeably. For older English titles where "typical" is preferred, cf. F. V. Woodhouse, *The Book of Esther in its Typical Application to the Christian Church: with remarks on the Inspiration of Holy Scripture* (London: Bosworth & Harrison, 1859); S. Johnson, *An Explanation of Scripture Prophecies: both Typical and Literal* (London: Newberry and Micklewright, 1742); J. Turner, *A Discourse concerning the Messiah, in three chapters the first concerning the preparatories to his appearance in the types and prophecies of the Old Testament; the second demonstrating that it was typically and prophetically necessary that he should be born a virgin . . .* (London: Randolph Taylor, 1685).

the root claims made for the term. First, "typology" is hardly distinct from "allegory." The terms Origen uses to describe the nonliteral interpretation of Scripture's τύποι, terms like ἀνάγω⁵⁷ or πνευματικός,⁵⁸ are the very terms that he uses interchangeably with ἀλληγορέω or ἀλληγορία.⁵⁹ Indeed, he can even treat an event that has a typic quality as synonymous with one that is allegorical.⁶⁰ And second, terms like τυπικῶς, τυπικός, and τύπος can even be implicated in *unacceptable literal* exegesis. There is no instance in Origen's extant corpus where the adverb τυπικῶς modifies verbs for "interpreting" (i.e. "interpreting typically"), but when used, it is ambiguous: usually it indicates an action that is symbolic of another referent,⁶¹

⁵⁶ PA 4.2.2. At the same time, Origen does not seem to disapprove of Heracleon's interpretation of the Passover as a type of Christ's passion at Comm Jn 10.117-118 – which shows that even his exegetical opponents can render types properly.

⁵⁷ Cf. PA 4.3.7 where Eve and Cain are ἐκτυπώματα (types) of the church because Paul interpreted Eve as εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀναγομένη (PA 4.3.7); also cf. Comm Jn 10.266-267.

⁵⁸ PA 4.2.6; in Comm Jn 13.109-110 and CC 2.2 Origen speaks of types being reading "literally" or "spiritually."

⁵⁹ For ἀλληγορία and ἀλληγορέω as interchangeable with ἀναγωγή, cf. Comm Jn 4.22/GCS 4, 111.7; 13.101/GCS 4, 240.31-32; as interchangeable with ἀνάγω, cf. Comm Jn 1.180/GCS 4, 33.23-24; 10.174/GCS 4, 201.26-27; 13.270-271/GCS 4, 267.1, 4, 6; 13.454/GCS 4, 297.11-13; 20.166/GCS 4, 352.14-15. For examples of ἀλληγορία/ἀλληγορέω as interchangeable or at least closely related to πνευματικός, cf. Comm Jn 13.51/GCS 4, 233.23; PA 4.2.6; CC 2.4, etc.

I have been unable to find a passage in the extant Greek where Origen refers to a τύπος receiving an "allegorical interpretation" (ἀλληγορία or ἀλληγορέω). This may not be insignificant – perhaps it struck the Greek ear harshly to speak of an "allegorical" reading of a "type" since an allegory was already a figure of speech (like a type). It would be like an English speaker advocating a "metaphorical reading" of a "simile."

⁶⁰ Cf. esp. Comm Cor sect 35 where Origen puts Gal 4:24 and 1 Cor 10:11 back-to-back: "Ἀτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα," καὶ "αὐταὶ γὰρ εἰσι δύο διαθηκαὶ ταῦτα" γὰρ "τυπικῶς συνέβαινε ἐκείνοις, ἐγράφη δέ "δι' ἡμᾶς" εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντηκεν (JTS 9 [1908], 504.28-30). In PA 4.2.6 Origen cites Heb 8:5 (doing all things κατὰ τὸν τύπον shown on the mountain) and immediately thereafter Gal 4:24 in a long list of texts which prove his point that there is such a thing as a πνευματικὴ διήγησις of Scripture. It is also compelling evidence against a distinction between type and allegory when Celsus modifies the noun ἀλληγορία in CC 6.29/SC 147, 250.7 with the adjective τυποειδής [τυπώδης] – i.e. "in the form of a type" (unattested in LSJ, cf. Lampe, s.v. τυποειδής, 2).

⁶¹ The adverb τυπικῶς appears 10 times in Origen's extant corpus, 7 times when Origen cites or paraphrases 1 Cor 10:11 ("all these things happened τυπικῶς . . ."). In all these instances, something happening "typically" equates to something happening symbolically, i.e. significant of another reality – in CC 4.43 the verse applies to an event in Jacob's life and in the immediate context Origen uses the adverb τροπικῶς synonymously; in PA 4.2.6 the verse is cited twice to show that the OT is capable of a "spiritual interpretation"; in Comm Jn 1.34 where the law Moses contains a copy and shadow of future truth, since these things happened τυπικῶς to them; in Frg Lk 125 where the gospel narrative can be read profitably if it is read σωματικῶς, but since all these things happened τυπικῶς the

however there are at least two passages where the person who performs an action τυπικῶς fails to recognize the symbolic character of the act, i.e. performs "typically" because he or she is unaware of the deeper reality (ἀλήθεια) of the typical action.⁶² When we survey Origen's use of the adjective τυπικός and the noun τύπος, we discover the same ambiguity. A particularly important example of how this ambiguity wreaks havoc with all the understandings of "typology" above can be found in the *Commentary on John* 13.109-11. Commenting on John 4:23 ("But the hour is coming and now is when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth"), Origen contrasts those who worship the Father "in truth" (ἐν ἀληθείᾳ) from those who worship in "types" (τύποις).⁶³ But who is this false worshipper who is fixated on "types"? This is the interpreter of Scripture "who is enslaved to the letter that kills" (ὁ γράμματι δὲ τῷ ἀποκτιννόντι δεδουλωμένος) (2 Cor 3:6) and "does not follow the spiritual meanings of the law" (μηδὲ τοῖς πνευματικοῖς ἀκολουθῶν τοῦ νόμου).⁶⁴ This one "is full of types and bodily meanings" (ὅλος τῶν τύπων καὶ τῶν σωματικῶν ὤν).⁶⁵ A passage like this shows just how misleading our language of "typology" can be, since by it scholars mean an *acceptable* form of *nonliteral* exegesis, but in this passage the interpreter of τύποι performs an *unacceptable* sort of *literal* exegesis!

reader can press on for another sense; finally, a very important passage in Comm Cor sect 35 where Origen links Gal 4:24 ("Ἀτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα) with 1 Cor 10:11 (τυπικῶς συνέβαινε ἐκείνοις)! Also note Comm Jn 13.161 where the things recorded in the law refer τυπικῶς and αἰνιγματώδως to Christ (similarly in Comm Cor sect 46).

⁶² In CC 6.70 where the Samaritans and Jews were fulfilling the commands of the law σωματικῶς καὶ τυπικῶς; so also in Comm Jn 1.35 where there are those who worship God πνευματικῶς but others who still worship τυπικῶς.

⁶³ Comm Jn 13.109/GCS 4, 242.16-17. Note that Origen prefers ἀλήθεια to ἀντίτυπος which helps explain why Jn 4:23 should trigger a discussion of τύποι.

⁶⁴ Comm Jn 13.110/GCS 4, 242.18-20.

⁶⁵ Comm Jn 13.110/GCS 4, 242.21-22.

In sum, then, "typology" is anachronistic, but more critically, several pieces of evidence pertaining to the use of τύπος (and related terms) preclude the conclusion that "typology" must always indicate nonliteral exegesis, or a way of nonliteral exegesis distinct from allegory, let alone an acceptable manner of exegesis.

2. Allegory

The obstacles for the scholarship surveyed above are no less insurmountable when we examine Origen's use of the terms ἀλληγορία and ἀλληγορέω. The one decisive counter-argument is that these terms were not reserved for defective nonliteral exegesis – in fact, it is frequently the case that Origen referred to *his own acceptable nonliteral exegesis* with this pair of terms.⁶⁶ In other words, he does not reserve "allegory" for troublesome nonliteral exegesis, but can actually use it in precisely the opposite way from those who defined "allegory" pejoratively.

The second problem with the typology/allegory distinction is that the linguistic evidence does not permit it on various levels. Not only can the reading of types be associated with literal exegesis, but even when Origen does refer to the nonliteral interpretation of τύποι, the evidence does not suggest two distinct ways of interpretation, but rather one and the same act of nonliteral exegesis. The evidence certainly does not indicate that acceptable and unacceptable nonliteral interpretations of the Old and New Testaments can be termed "typology" and "allegory" respectively – more often than not, the latter indicates not fanciful nonliteral exegesis, but rather precisely the opposite, commendable nonliteral exegesis. In fact, it would be difficult to contend that *any* of the terms which are customarily used to indicate nonliteral exegesis –

⁶⁶ Cf. PA 4.2.6; Comm Jn 1.180; 10.174; 13.131; 13.270; 32.137; Comm Matt 17.35; CC 2.4; 4.44; 4.48-50; etc. Of course, this is not to say that there are unsound allegorical and spiritual meanings (Comm Jn 13.51), but simply that the term ἀλληγορία cannot be restricted to these.

terms like ἀλληγορία, τροπολογία, ἀναγωγή, πνευματικός, etc. – are held in reserve to indicate either good or bad nonliteral interpretations.⁶⁷ This is not to deny trends and preferences in Origen's exegetical terminology, rather simply to assert that he does not develop a technical vocabulary for proper and improper ways of doing nonliteral exegesis.

C. Step Three

The previous stages in this analysis raise the question of how the pair ἀλληγορία/ἀλληγορέω (and its extensive list of synonymous terms⁶⁸) ought to be defined. While Origen never offered a straightforward definition of these terms in his extant writings, there are sufficiently clear indications interspersed throughout the surviving corpus.⁶⁹ One of the more illuminating discussions can be found in *Against Celsus* 2.69. Origen writes:

⁶⁷ Here are a few examples of the exegetical terms used in conjunction with the readings of other religious communities. The "Gnostics" rejoice in the ἀλληγορία of a passage, their nonliteral interpretation can be described with the verb ἀνάγω (Comm Jn 20.166), the read "spiritualiter" (prob. πνευματικῶς) but wrongly (Hom 4.1 on Ps 36), and Heracleon reads κατὰ τὸ νοούμενον (Comm Jn 13.115). Philo is famous for his ἀλληγορία (CC 4.51; Comm Matt 17.17). Celsus fails to examine a passage κατὰ τὴν ἀναγωγὴν (CC 4.45); Numenius the Pythagorean is the subject of the verb τροπολογέω (CC 4.51), as are the Greeks when they read their myths (CC 4.17).

⁶⁸ It is difficult not to come away from Origen's writings with the distinct impression that most of his exegetical terminology for nonliteral exegesis is synonymous, since he quite clearly uses these expressions interchangeably. For example, ἀλληγορία and ἀλληγορέω are used interchangeably with τροπολογία (CC 4.38; 4.44; 4.48; 4.49) and τροπολογέω (cf. CC 1.17; 1.18; 4.49), with ἀναγωγή (Comm Jn 4.22/GCS 4, 111.7; 13.101/GCS 4, 240.31-32) and ἀνάγω (Comm Jn 1.180/GCS 4, 33.23-24; 10.174/GCS 4, 201.26-27; 13.270-271/GCS 4, 267.1, 4, 6; 13.454/GCS 4, 297.11-13; 20.166/GCS 4, 352.14-15), with πνευματικός (CC 4.49 compared with PA 4.2.6) and πνευματικῶς (CC 2.4).

⁶⁹ What scholars would give for a sentence that begins 'Ἀλληγορία ἔστιν . . . ! Cf. E. Klostermann, "Überkommene Definitionen im Werke des Origenes," *ZNW* 37 (1938): 57 who refers to Jerome's definition of allegory in his Comm Gal on 4:24. There Jerome writes: "Allegoria proprie de arte grammatica est, et quo a metaphora, vel caeteris tropis differat, in scholis parvuli discimus. Aliud praetendit in verbis, aliud significat in sensu. Pleni sunt oratorum et poetarum libri" (PL 26.389B-C). It is well known that Jerome's commentaries on Paul's epistles were dependent upon Origen's earlier work – cf. M. A. Schatkin, "The Influence of Origen upon St. Jerome's *Commentary on Galatians*," *VChr* 24 (1970): 49-58. A. von Harnack considered this definition of Jerome's to be Origen's, though no evidence for this conclusion was provided (*Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag*, vol. 2, 153) and the "parvuli discimus" points against this conclusion. It is unlikely that as a child in the school Jerome was learning about tropes from Origen.

The events recorded to have happened to Jesus do not possess the full view of the truth in the mere letter and history; for each recorded event is shown to be also a symbol of something else by those who read Scripture more intelligently.⁷⁰

Here we have the basic account of allegorical exegesis – it searches for the "something else" of which an event or passage is a symbol. In the case of the passage here cited, Origen recognizes that Jesus' crucifixion was an event that took place and had a significance for its time and place, but it also symbolized the truth indicated in the verse: "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal 2:20) and Origen provides several other Pauline texts where the crucifixion and death of Christ are referred symbolically, i.e. allegorically, to something other than itself, namely to the "crucifixion" and "death" of Christians. A little later in the same section, though now not with σύμβολον but rather with σημαντικόν, Origen again describes allegorical exegesis:

However, the explanation of these matters and ascent [ἀνάβασις] from the events recorded to have happened up to the realities of which the events were signs [σημαντικά], someone would set forth at both greater length and in a more divine manner⁷¹

In this excerpt from *Against Celsus* Origen defines *compositional* allegory as a twofold communication: words (or the events which they signify) have their basic referent, but are also symbolic of some other referent.⁷² Allegorical and literal *interpretation*, in turn, are each responsible for one of these communications: the task in allegorical exegesis is to identify this

⁷⁰ Τὰ συμβεβηκέναι ἀναγεγραμμένα τῷ Ἰησοῦ οὐκ ἐν ψιλῇ τῇ λέξει καὶ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ τὴν πᾶσαν ἔχει θεωρίαν τῆς ἀληθείας· ἕκαστον γὰρ αὐτῶν καὶ σύμβολόν τινος εἶναι παρὰ τοῖς συνετώτερον ἐντυγχάνουσι τῇ γραφῇ ἀποδείκνυται (CC 2.69/SC 132, 446.3-7).

⁷¹ Τὰ μὲν οὖν τῆς διηγήσεως καὶ τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν γεγονέναι ἀναγεγραμμένων ἀναβάσεως ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα, ὧν τὰ γενόμενα ἦν σημαντικά, καὶ μειζόνως ἂν τις καὶ θειοτέρως διηγῆσαιτο (CC 2.69/SC 132, 450.45-48; Chadwick modified). For other indications of the formal understanding of allegory, cf. PA 4.2.2; 4.2.6; Comm Matt 12.3.

⁷² Also recall the famous definition of compositional allegory in the *Homeric Problems*: 'Ο γὰρ ἄλλα μὲν ἀγορεύων τρόπος, ἕτερα δὲ ὧν λέγει σημαίνων, ἐπωνύμως ἀλληγορία καλεῖται (Heraclitus, *Héraclite: Allégories d'Homère*, ed. by Félix Buffière, 2nd ed. [Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1989]: 5.2). "Allegory is named eponymously, for it is the trope which proclaims one set of things but in fact signifies another of which it speaks."

other (lofty, deeper) referent and literal exegesis, on the other hand, identifies the basic (immediate, at hand, obvious) referent.⁷³ This standard, formal definition is the most plausible explanation for why ἀλληγορία and its synonyms could be used so interchangeably and applied to the nonliteral interpretations of various groups of readers.

How then does this formal definition of allegory relate to the definitions of "typology" and "allegory" surveyed above? It is now clear that in most cases (with the exception of Norris), the definitions were not accounts of allegory *per se* but rather supplemented accounts of allegory. Origen's understanding of allegory (or figural exegesis, or spiritual exegesis) is formal enough to be included *not only* within these scholars' accounts of "allegory" *but also within their accounts of "typology."* Whether the second referent is "horizontally" or "vertically" related to the first referent, was discovered by maintaining the sequence of a passage or not, was Christological or not, the common denominator in all the distinctions drawn between typology and allegory surveyed above is that both were understood to be forms of the sort of exegesis that looks for the second referent. The task these supplements to Origen's definition perform, as already indicated above, is to specify what, in each scholar's opinion, constitutes proper and improper allegorical exegesis. This, then, is the third major problem with most of the distinctions between typology and allegory surveyed above – they obscure this basic, formal definition of allegory.

⁷³ Note how the adjectives πρόχειρος (Phil 27.12) and ἐπιπόλαιος (PA 4.3.11; Hom Jer 18.4.1), both of which mean "within reach," "obvious" can describe literal exegesis. On the other hand, βαθύτερον ("deeper") (CC 3.7; Comm Matt 16.4) and the terms associated with ἀναγωγή ("ascent") are affiliated with allegorical exegesis.

IV. Conclusion

The linguistic evidence gathered from Origen's corpus points overwhelmingly against the typology/allegory distinction. More often than not "allegory" means precisely the opposite of what scholars contend when they affiliate it with fanciful nonliteral exegesis; every time Origen uses it of his own nonliteral exegesis the absurd scenario would emerge where the reader would be misled into turning him into a critic of himself! When it comes to "typology" the evidence is equally compelling. The interpretation of Scripture's τύποι is not unambiguously a reference to nonliteral interpretation, and even when Origen does have nonliteral interpretation of types in view, it does not have to be tantamount to disciplined exegesis. Furthermore, the notion that a distinction can be drawn between typology and allegory is challenged by the fact that the terms by which Origen speaks of the nonliteral exegesis of Scripture's types are synonymous with ἀλληγορία and ἀλληγορέω. Finally, the distinction not only misleads the reader of Origen, it also almost always obscures the basic, formal definition of allegorical, figural, spiritual exegesis as the quest for the second referent of a passage. Regardless of the modern scene in biblical scholarship and theology that has wanted to define allegory pejoratively and typology positively, we cannot afford to be insouciant about this matter when it touches on Origen (and indeed all biblical interpretation from the NT through the 17th century) – the distinction between the typological and allegorical reading of Scripture, in whatever form it is articulated, should be dismissed. Of course, this does *not* mean that we should discard attempts to determine the criteria Origen thought marked the successful allegorical interpretation of Scripture – this is something that actually needs to be done with far greater care than has up until now been done. Rather, it means discarding attempts to redefine Origen's exegetical terminology to express what it does not express.