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The Metaphor 'Is Like the Owner of a House Who Takes New and Old Things out of his Storedom'
(On Metaphor and Hermeneutics)

The traditional and most common interpretation of metaphor is based on the simple opposition of literal versus figurative sense. The terms of this dichotomy are also considered alternative and logically disjunctive. The theory of 'reconstruction' relies on these terms and supposes that a text always offers enough proof for deciding which alternative to choose. In the theory of 'deconstruction' the above decision is not required merely as a consequence of oversimplification, i.e. that interpretation is essentially so manifold that it is hardly more than accidental.

Origen set up a trichotomy of interpretation when writing on somatic, psychic and pneumatic senses. Though one may dispute what he meant by these terms, one cannot ab ovo reject the advantage of them in practice and in relation to the traditional and structuralist dichotomy and the vague freedom of deconstruction. Whereas the present author ascribes meanings to Origen's terms, which this way cover the spectrum spanned by the theories mentioned, the main point is that Origen excluded disjunction from interpretation. He thought that the three senses can be together, are inseparable, yet never confused. Some twentieth century opinions on the interpretation of metaphor (e.g. interaction theory) seem to be very close to Origen. At the same time his ideas may launch and stimulate new researches to come.

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I am going to explain three relationships:
1. Origen vs. ancient rhetoric, especially metaphor;
2. Origen vs. some recent developments in linguistics and rhetoric;
3. Origen vs. a possibility of developing his ideas (based on 1. and 2.).

According to Origen the literal sense of Scripture is an $\alpha i\sigma\vartheta\eta\tau\acute{o}\nu$, i.e. something sensible (cf. Hällström 1984: 47). Those who have only a simple faith ($\psi\iota\lambda\grave{\eta}$ $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$; ib. 11) are the outer men, the 'simplices'. They have access to the literal sense only. They are impressed by signs and miracles which are also 'sensibilia' and thus 'particulars'. These simplices are literalists, who do not draw inference from Scripture (ib. 35). Thus a story is only a 'history' to the simple reader (ib. 48). The simplices' above way of reading Scripture is a one level model which – in current linguistic terms – corresponds to everyday language behaviour. This behaviour can be qualified stylistically as 'colloquial' or 'informal'. If a husband asks his wife 'Did you open all the windows?', the situation or the language itself do not offer any 'stumbling block' to refer to a non-literal sense: „We mention all these examples in order to show that the purpose of the divine power offering us the holy Scriptures is not only that we understand what the plain text presents to us, for, taken literally, it is sometimes not only untrue but even unresonable and impossible. We wanted to show also that *some extraneous matter has been woven* into the historical

narrative of actual events and *into the code* of laws which are useful in their literal sense
... 'You shall not kill' etc. must be kept literally" (Philocalia III. 4. cf. also Caspary 1979:
13. Italics from the present author). This means that there are references ('stumbling
blocks') in texts and in situations which show a reader/listener what kind of level and how
many levels of meaning a reader/listener has to face. These references are clearly
apprehensible and therefore they are like 'stumbling blocks' or even 'scandals'. Usually
every speaker and writer organizes his text in a way that these references guide the
reader/listener unambigously (cf. Bencze–Szende 1991), like God did in Scriptures
according to Origen:

   ᾠκονόμησέ τινα οἰονεὶ σκάνδαλα καὶ προσκόμματα καὶ ἀδύνατα δυὰ
   μέσου εγκαταταχϑῆναι τῷ νόμῳ καὶ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ ὁ τοῦ ϑεοῦ λόγοσ
(in Latin: offendicula, inconvenientia, interruptio. De principiis 4.2.9. p. 321).

   I categorize these references (i.e. 'stumbling blocks', 'scandals' etc.)
   a. in linguistic terms, i.e. they can appear on phonemic, morphemic, lexemic,
       syntactic, sentence, utterance and 'turn' levels;
   b. in semiotic terms, i.e. they can appear on syntactic, semantic and pragmatic
       levels;
   c. in rhetorical or discourse analytical terms, i.e. they can appear on situatio-
       nal/contextual levels (who speaks/writes, to whom, about what etc.).

   If one says e.g. „Don't pull my leg", the absence of the plural suffix *s* in the word
leg unambigously declares the sentence as an idiom to every native reader/speaker of
English, i.e. a morphemic and syntactic reference in the language blocks the reader's/liste-
ner's way to a literal interpretation. On the other hand inadvertent readers/listeners, as well
as uneducated people and children are inclined to follow the one level model of Origen's
„simplices" as a rule, even if there happens to be a „stumbling block" to refer to a
non-literal level. In this way some old Hungarian peasent women sent money to Isaura, the
slave girl in a television series. The women disregarded the obvious „stumbling block" that
is was a television play, – not a documentary film. A touring company in the last century
had a performance in a village. In the drama that they played Hungarians faught against
Turks. The imitation of fighting was so successful that the peasents in the audience ran up
to the stage to help the Hungarians and actually bit the actors dressed as Turks. In 1989
live-shows, earlier unknown in the countryside, were staged at Lake Balaton. Once a man
from the audience went up to the couple playing and pushed the actor aside saying: „I
realized that your were unable to make love with her, I can do it". Everyone knows that
children feel endangered by thrillers, horror and criminal stories for the same reason. This
means that sometimes some people fail to recognize „stumbling blocks", „look outs" or
references of the linguistic, semiotic or rhetorical levels, i.e. a television broadcast, a
theatre performance or a show respectively. Mentally ill people. e.g. schizophrenics stick
to the literal sense extremely rigidly. If the doctor's surname is Dr. Cutter, they think he
will cut them into pieces (cf. Bencze 1985: 405). This is a pathological inadvertence. If this
„inadvertence" is deliberate in normal speech, it can be a joke for the speakers (cf. Fónagy
1982). To sum up the one level model of interpretation I compare a text or discourse to a
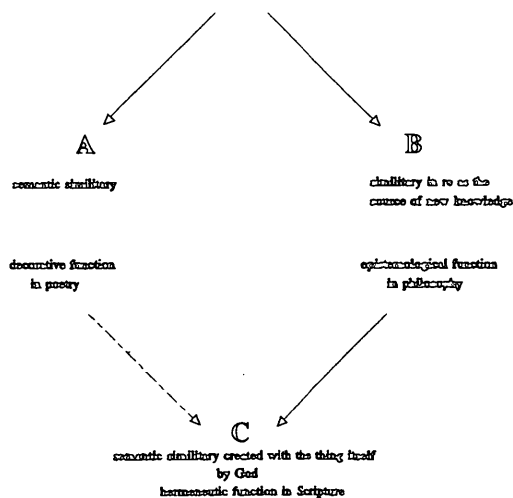textile. In the one level model one picks up a textile an pulls out only one thread. The

reason for this is that there is either no „stumbling block" in the text to prevent him, as in the everyday speech of a couple, or one disregards the „stumbling block" and pulls out the one thread of meaning from the woven text in which there are many threads.

There is a special case of the deliberate reduction of several levels to one and literal level. This has dangerous consequences in politics, mass media and society, and is called manipulation. A classical example of this was to consider the rebuke of the Apostle Peter a merely literal, historical and thus particular case by the fathers of the Constantinian era. Consequently the story of Peter and the sword in the Gospels (Luke 22:38, 49–51; Matthew 26: 51–52), especially the logion of Jesus in it – „All who take the sword die by the sword" – had no general doctrine (cf. Caspary 1979: 106). Consequently Origen's principle of „stumbling blocks" built in Scripture can be extended to every text and discourse and could prove a fruitful principle in various disciplines which deal with text/discourse (in literary criticism, linguistics, rhetoric, etc.).

„... to understand why Origen adopted some particular doctrine and formulated it in a particular way, regarding it as a true and legitimate interpretation of a Christian belief, one would have to be imbued oneself with the doctrines and methods of Greek philosophy" (de Faye 1929: 179). „Porphyry was not mistaken in regarding him as a Greek philosopher who had gone astray among the Christians" (ib.). „The thought of Origen is wholly permeated with Greek philosophy" (ib.). His thought is „manifestly composed of divers elements" of Alexandrian erudition (ib. 169) which included Plato, Aristotle, the Stoic, the Peripatetic, the Pythagorean and Neoplatonic schools, and last but not least Philo (ib. 170) and gnosticism (ib. 132). This is well known by scholars (cf. Pesty 1989a, 1989b). Here I would like to point to some elements which have not been investigated and which are relevant to Origen's trichotomy of interpretation and to the concept of metaphor.

Aristotle's concept of metaphor includes not only a poetic or decorative function; metaphor is primarily a means of obtaining new knowledge about the world (cf. Bencze 1983: 277–278): „Now strange words simply puzzle us; ordinary words convey only what we know already; it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh. When the poet calls old age 'a withered stalk' (Odyssey XI. 213), he conveys a new idea, a new fact, to us by means of the general notion of 'lost blossom', which is common to both things" (Rhetoric 1410b. Transl. by W. Rhys Roberts). The fresh and new knowledge which one can get from metaphor obviously corresponds to the higher and additional knowledge and meaning which Origen called spiritual (or psychic), and which is not available fo the simplices but only fo the erudite minority of the faithful (cf. De principiis. III. 6,6). (To the problem of why Origen did not like to use the term metaphor, see below). Quintilian followed Aristotle's dichotomy in defining the functions of metaphor: „... *there are some* (i.e. tropes) which are intended solely to the purpose of embellishment (*eruntque quidam tantum ad speciem accomodati;* VII. VI. 5. Present author's italics), ... some are for the sake of meaning, others for the sake of decoration" (quosdam gratia significationis, quosdam decoris assumi; VIII. VI. 2), ... tropes employed to express our meaning involve ornament as well, though the converse is not the case (qui significandi gratia adhibentur esse et ornatum, sed non idem accidet contra), ... to make our meaning clearer ... or to produce decorative effect" (quia significantius est aut decentius; VIII. VI. 6. Transl. by M.

E. Butler in Quintilian 1953–1960. cf. Bencze 1989: 699–700). Though Quintilian followed Aristotle's dichotomy, there is a significant difference between their views which has been neglected by scholars. While Aristotle quoted Homer to prove that metaphors have not only a decorative function but also an epistemological function even in poetry, Quintilian divided the two functions rigidly and alternatively. The roots of a certain distinction of the two functions and of the whole problem may be traced back earlier than Aristotle. The decorative function may have dominated in poetry and the epistemological function in philosophy: „Metapher bei Homer noch ganz im Dienst der dichterischen Aussage stehen, bei Heraklit aber bereits formelle Erkenntnisfunktionen übernehmen" (Bruno Snell: Die Entdeckung des Geistes. Studien zur Entstehung des europäischen Denkens bei den Griechen, 1955. 258–298. Quoted by Biser 1970: 43). The consequence of the clearcut division of the two function was that the decorative function was preserved in the tradition of European stylistics (cf. Bencze 1989: 699; Richards 1936/1970: 90), while a special development of the epistemological function was preserved in hermeneutics. The division of the functions of metaphor (in a wider sense, i.e. tropes):

A and C can happen to overlap each other from time to time in language but an interpreter of Scripture has to avoid relating A and C because in the case of C a thing is a part of divine creation, and as such, it has an inherent objective truthvalue (cf. Spitz 1972: 11, and below principles and consequences No. 6. cf. also Thiselton 1986: 82).

         According to Origen the details of literal meaning correspond to the details of hidden meaning (cf. Pesty 1989b: 62). This reminds us of the definition of proportional or

analogical metaphor by Aristotle where the related terms are applied in a way that they correspond to each other (cf. Poetics 1457b, Rhetoric 1407a).

„For just as the human being consists of body, soul, and spirit, so does Scripture..." (Philocalia II. 4. cf. Torjesen 1986: 40, and footnote 51. ib.). According to Danielou (1948: 34) Origen took this trichotomy from Philo (cf. Pesty 1989b: 37). Others denied this when they wrote that Philo's trichotomy concerns only the human being, not Scripture (Pesty 1989b: 39). In this case even the trichotomy of the human being could have been taken from Plato and Aristotle who must have been Philo's sources, too (cf. Bencze 1981: 218; Spitz 1972: 14–19). Origen had a holistic view of Scripture as he considered Scripture as a living human organism (cf. Spitz 1972: 17; cf. also below, principles and consequences No. 1.). Augustin made an extrem use of this trichotomous analogy of human organism. He wrote of „spiritus, anima et corpus", then „mens, notitia, amor", again somewhere else „memoria, intellectus, voluntas", and in a dynamic formulation „esse, nosse, velle". These trichotomies of the one human personality reflect the Holy Trinity of the one God (cf. Bencze 1981: 218).

Origen's trichotomy of interpretation was also rooted in the trichotomy of style types (genera orationis) of ancient rhetoric, which distinguished the simple, the middle and the grand style (e.g. Cicero 1968[IV. VIII. 11, IV. XI. 16). The simple style is brought down to the most ordinary speech of every day (ib. IV. X. 14). Origen's addition was that he connected this most ordinary speech of every day to the most ordinary people of every day, i.e. to simplices. Medieval rhetoric went on this way when it connected style-types even to characters and to social classes and environment (cf. John of Garland: low style – leisurely shepherd, crook, sheep, pasture, beech. Garland 1974: 41).

When Origen stated that typological interpretation is no longer practicable in the New Testament (Hällström 1984: 55), he took over the principle of classical rhetoric that the type of speech influences interpretation: „... each kind or rhetoric has its own appropriate style. The style of written prose is not that of spoken oratory..." (Aristotle: Rhetoric 1413b. Transl. W. Rhys Roberts). The current term in discourse analysis is text-type and in literary theory genre. Origen also distinguished literal and spiritual levels from the point of view of readers, not only from the point of view of text-type (cf. „Secondly, persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions...„. Aristotle: Rhetoric 1356a. Transl. W. Rhys Roberts). Spiritual laziness is a character of common people, one might say „uneducated people", while the spiritual level demands „laborious preparation", one might say a kind of „education and scholarship". This means that interpretation depends on the circumstances, i.e. „circumstantiae" in rhetoric: quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando, – who, what, where, by what means, why, how and when. These factors are called „situation" in recent discourse analysis and in the rhetoric of mass media. Thus starting from Origen's method of relying upon classical rhetoric and continuing his method I would suggest that future hermeneutics should rely upon the achivements of twentieth century discourse analysis and on the rhetoric of mass media and advertisements. I believe that social determination plays a dominant role in interpretation even if grammar and semantics remain prerequisites (cf. De principiis IV,2,1: p. 306), whereas grammar and semantics exist under the influence of society.

The above statements show that I want to draw attention to Origen's well-known hermeneutical principles in a way that they are sine qua nons of the interpretations of every discourse and text, not only of Scripture.

Other principles and consequences are as follows:

1. The possibility of not only one level but several levels of meaning simultaneously. The possibility of several levels itself is of course not Origen's discovery but of someone who first made poetry, the first homo sapiens sapiens, Adam in the Bible. As far as rhetoric is concerned it was discussed long before Origen by philosophers, e.g. by Aristotle, under the term metaphor in Poetics and Rhetoric. Origen's achievement is the holistic view in the simultaneity of levels which he stressed several times (cf. above, e.g. in De principiis I. 2,4–5):

'Ἀλλ' ἐπεί εἰσί τινεσ γραφαὶ τό σωματικὸν οὐδαμῶς ἔχουσαι, ὡς ἐν
τοῖς ἐξῆς δείξομεν, ἔστιν ὅπου οἰονεὶ τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς
γραφῆς μόνα χρὴ ζητεῖν. καὶ τάχα διὰ τοῦτο αἱ ἐπὶ καθαρισμῷ τῶν
Ἰουδαίων »ὑδρίαι« κεῖσθαι λεγόμεναι, ὡσ ἐν τῷ κατὰ Ἰωάννην
εὐαγγελίῳ ἀνέγνωμεν, »χωροῦσιν ἀνὰ μετρητὰς δύο ἢ τρεῖς«
αἰνισσομένου τοῦ λόγου περὶ τῶν παρὰ τῷ ἀποστόλῳ »ἐν κρυπτῷ
Ἰουδαίων«, ὡς ἄρα οὗτοι καταρίζονται διὰ τοῦ λόγου τῶν γραφῶν,
ὅπου μὲν »δύο μετρητάς«, τὸν ἰν' οὕτως ἔπω ψυχικὸν καὶ τὸν πνευμα-
τικὸν λόγον, χωρούντων, ὅπου δὲ »τρεις«, ἐπεί τινες ἔχουσι πρὸς τοῖς
προειρημένοις καὶ τὸ σωματικὸν οἰκοδομῆσαι δυνάμενον.

Simultaneity at least implicitly includes the mutual influences of levels of meanings, a possibility of interference of them, a permanent and dynamic revaluation of phenomena on various levels just like in metaphors (Bencze 1981: 216–217).

2. There are more texts that have only literal meaning than the ones which have other extra meanings:

πολλῷ γὰρ πλείονά ἐστι τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν ἀληθευόμενα τῶν
προσυφανθέντων γυμνῶν πνευματικῶν.

(De principiis IV. 3,4: p. 329). „Multo enim plura sunt, quae secundum historiam constat, quam ea quae nudum sensum continent spiritalem." This principle is perhaps more valid if we extend it to all kinds of texts, not only to biblical ones. (As far as the difference between the terms literal and historical, σωματικόν and κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν, cf. No. 5. below and Caspary 1979: 16).

3. In certain text-types, e.g. in poetry and in fiction, everything can have a second level of meaning, but not all of the text has a literal meaning as Origen wrote on the Bible: „... our opinion talking of this is that everything in the divine Scriptures has a spiritual meaning but not everything has a literal one" (De principiis IV. 3,5; 331. Transl. by the present author. – διακείμεθα γὰρ ἡμεις περί πάσης τῆς θείας γραφῆσ, ὅτι πᾶσα μὲν ἔχει τὸ πνευματικόν, οὐ πᾶσα δὲ τὸ σωματικόν.

4. In a text various items with various levels of meaning are woven into an integral whole. „Origen follows a certain strain of Hellenistic rhetoric and believes, that the Old Testament, like the Iliad, has woven into its narrative certain myths and allegories" (De Principiis IV. 2,9: 321. – Caspary 1979: 14).

5. „It is a well-known fact that Origen is not very consistent in his terminology" (Hällström 1984: 11). It may be illuminating and essential for future hermeneutical research to see when and to what extent he is consistent or he is not.

A. It is quite obvious that opposed to the everyday one level model (cf. above), which has been considered as the most common – with or without good reason –, and opposed to the two level model, i.e. the dichotomy of literal vs. figurative, which has dominated European thinking and not only primary and secondary but even higher education, – Origen clearly set up a trichotomy: σωματικόν, ψυχικόν, πνευματικόν (cf. De principiis IV. 2,2; IV. 2,4; IV. 2,5; pp. 312,314, 317).

B. The reason for the confusion here is that Origen himself regularly used only two levels in his practice, e.g. spiritaliter sive secundum litteram (II. 11,5; p. 189), figuraliter vel spiritaliter (II. 11,2; p. 185).

C. This practice lead to the strong dichotomy of the above mentioned European tradition, which at the same time followed Origen also in his theory of trichotomy. The tradition changed both the order (cf. below 5.D.) and the terms:

expositio **historica, moralis, mystica**

> **corpus, anima, spiritus** (Origenes: Homiliae in Exodum, In Genesim. hg. v. A. Baehrens, Leipzig, 1920: 1. 279. In: Meyer–Suntrup 1987: 224).

juxta **historiam**(litteram), juxta intelligentiam spiritalem, juxta **tropologicam** (Hieronym.

> Epistulae. hg. v. Isidorus Hilberg, Wien–Leipzig, 1912. 1–515. Commentarii in Ezechielem. hg. v. Francisens Glorie. Turnhout, 1964. 3–743. In: Meyer–Suntrup 1987: 224–225.)

historical, allegorical, tropological-moral (St. Gregor the Great, Venerable Bede. In:

> Meyer–Suntrup 1987: 225.)

historical, allegorical, anagogic (Venerable Bede. In: Meyer–Suntrup 1987: 225.)

secundum **litteram,** iuxta **allegoriam,** secundum futurum beatitudinem (Hieronym.

> Commentarii in prophetas minores. In: Meyer–Suntrup 1987: 225.)

Old testament – past, New testament – present, Eternal Gospel – future (cf. Hällström

> 1984: 55).

D. The three levels have also a proper order (cf. Caspary 1979: 15), which is hierarchic. The direction of this hierarchy depends on the starting point, however, this starting point differs in theory and in practice. The spiritual is of the highest value, yet in the procedure of an individual reading it can be the last phase: metanoia from letter to spirit (cf. Caspary 1979: 16, and „simplices" above). This approach is very similar to the Aristotelian epistemological principle which was formulated in the Middle Ages as follows: Nihil est in intellectu, quod prius non fuerat in sensibus.

E. If one considers Origen's trichotomy as a threefold classification one has to say that the criteria were not consistent from every point of view. The literal level was basically linguistic (grammatic and semantic). The second and third levels were supported by psychological, speculative religious and literary theoretical arguments. The (later) criteria of Old Testament, New testament, Eternal Gospel, and of past, present, future respectively were attractive for a theological attitude but opacated the trichotomy for a logical approach.

F. The inconsistency and confusion were increased by Origen's term of types – τύποι (De Principiis IV. 2,6; P: +L/), typical – τυπικῶς (ib. p. 318/4), and allegories (ib. IV. 2,6; pp. 316–317) in the sense that St. Paul interpreted Abraham's sons and wives (To the Galatians 4, 21–31. cf. also New Testament, Old Testament, Eternal Gospel above 7/C.). Probably the „interference of a 'typological' with an 'allegorical' vocabulary" (cf. Danielou and de Lubac, cited by Caspary 1979: 15) lead to the medieval fourfold model: historical, allegorical, tropological/moral, anagogic (Pope Gregory the Great: Homilia in Ezechielem prophetam. In: Meyer–Suntrup 1987: 338; cf. also LaSor 1986: 58).

G. In addition even the allegorical meaning may not be simple: two, three or even four concurrent level of meaning may be found in some passages (Comment. in Matthaeum XV. 3. In: Chadwick 1966: 75; cf. also the Song of Songs: lovers vs. God and Israel, Christ and Church, Logos and individual soul respectively). Venerable Bede may have followed this in distinguishing three spiritual levels: allegorical, tropological/moral, anagogic (In Samuelem prophetam. In: Meyer–Suntrup 1987: 225).

H. It is also quite clear that the term historical and literal – σωματικός are not simply synonims. The difference is based on text-type (genre) again: If a story is interpreted as a real story that took place in the past, then we face the historical level. If the text consists of laws or instructions (νομοι) which must be taken literally, we face the literal (σωματικός) level.

I. κατὰ τὴν λέξιν could have concerned written texts and τὸ ῥητόν oral texts (De Principiis IV. 3,5; 331). It is unlikely that Origen made this distinction, yet the two expressions contain the possibility of it for us in the twentieth century.

6. Origen's trichotomy and his and others' later practice of dichotomy is also very similar to Aristotle's trichotomy of words and his and his followers' practice of dichotomy (e.g. Cicero and Quintilian: literal vs. metaphorical): „In the language of prose besides the regular (κύριον) and proper (οἰκεῖον) terms for things, metaphorical terms can be used with advantage" (Rhetoric 1404b. Transl. by W. Rhys Roberts). This means that according to Aristotle there are three types of words from the point of view of clarity, of the type of style an of the „usual-unusual" (ξενικόν): κύριον, οἰκεῖον, μεταφορά. The kyriom usage appears when the word has its own, dominant, generally used meaning in the text, as Horace also wrote: „Non ego inornata et dominantia nomina solum verbaque, Pisones, satyrarum scriptor amabo" (Horace 1969: 234). This concept of kyrion-dominans corresponds to the somatikon interpretation of the simplices.
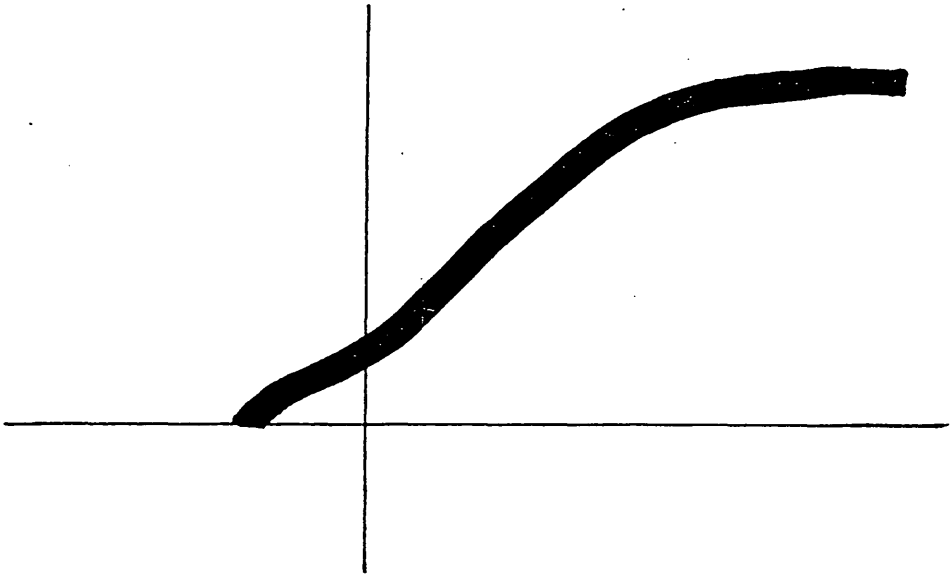
The oikeion usage appears when the meaning of the word is the most proper in a given context as Cicero wrote: „... quae propria sunt et certa quasi vocabula rerum paene nata cum rebus ipsis" (Cicero 1931: III. 149). This is the case when a word is so appropriate and exact as if it has been born with the named thing itself. Cicero's wording here („born with the thing itself") reminds us of the wording of hermeneutic tradition („sense created with the thing by God"; cf. above and below).

The metaphorical usage relies upon the kyrion usage. One has to realize whether a word is metaphorical in a given context or is not, whether e.g. a genus is a genus (i.e. kyrion) or a genus is used instead of one of its species, i.e. used metaphorically (cf. Aristotle: Topica 139b. The term metaphor is used by Aristotle in its wider sense, i.e. it

covers the tropes of Quintilian). Therefore I am convinced that a. the terms oikeion and kyrion are not synonyms in Aristotle's writings, b. the main cause of confusion here is the inconsistency of translation (except Hamilton–Fyfe; cf. Bencze 1983: 275–276).

If one uses only words of kyrion his style will be „low/mean". If one uses only metaphors his style will be enigmatic (cf. Aristotle's Poetics 1458a). Here the term „low/mean" style reminds us of the simplices, as it includes a qualification „low/mean", and the semantic features of „common" (kyrion), of a „beginning stage". Thus Aristotle's trichotomy and his sketchy remarks on his trichotomy were very much discussed by him from the point of views of apprehension and of interpretation. In doing so Aristotle may have opened the way for Origen to set up his trichotomy of apprehension and interpretation. I want to emphasize again that this does not really contradict the fact that the term „metaphor" was used rather rarely by Origen and that he opposed κύριος to κατάχρησις 'abusage'. It was important for him to draw the line between pagan aesthetic, rhetoric and Christian interpretation (cf. Neuschäfer 1987: 221–224) and to make a sharp theoretical distinction between an aesthetical/rhetorical speciality in language and a general feature of language itself (ib. 234). He usually avoids the terms allegory and metaphor because the deep sense of the Scripture is not a figurative decoration but an inherent new information in the language (cf. ib. 237, and above „born with the thing itself"). On the other hand Origen's distinction κύριος vs. κατάχρησις is rooted in Stoic linguistics (cf. Barwick 1957/1958: 88).
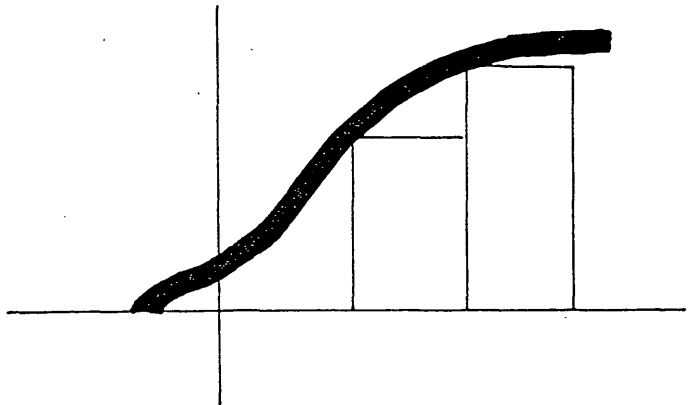
7. Both the introduction of more than three levels (cf. 5.F) and sublevels (cf. 5.G) were – at least in theory – not necessarily a matter of confusion and inconsistency. „There is in fact a scale of apprehension" (Chadwick 1966: 74) and of interpretation. Again in theory the more delicate a scale, a gradation, a classifying is, and the more levels we can distinguish, the more delicate and an the more accurate our interpretation will be. However close the three or more levels can get to each other in certain cases, like in Origen's exegesis of the sword in which he may have failed according to Caspary (Caspary 1979: 105), delicacy is a merit and not a failure (cf. Jasper 1989: 94). An analogy of mathematical functions can illustrate the significance of delicacy and the future task of hermeneutical research. Suppose text is a continous function:
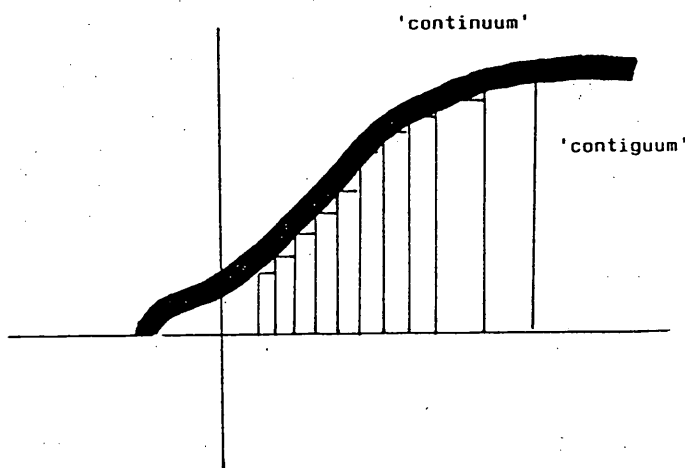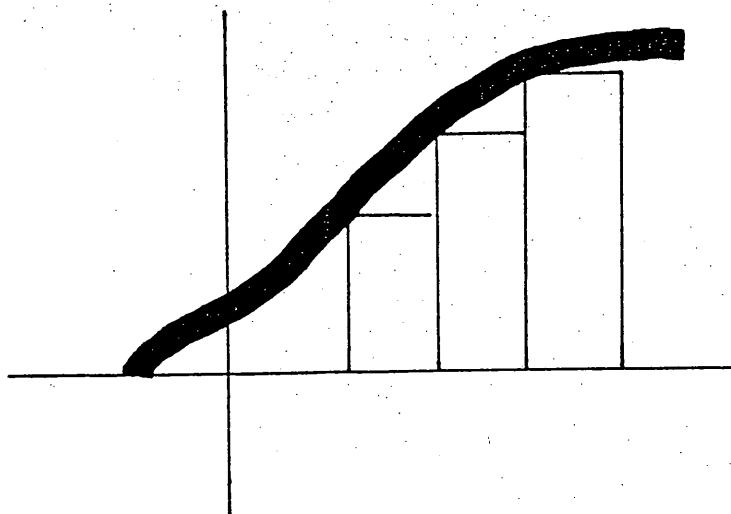
continuous curve ⁻ text
area which lies beneath the curve ⁻ the underlying meaning of the text

We can approximate the area/text which lies beneath the curve with various interpretation delicacy. E.g. with two levels (literal vs. figurative, or poetic vs. non-poetic; cf. Ricoeur 1977: 209, cited by Jasper 1989: 92):

With three levels (somatikon, psychikon, pneumatikon):

'continuum'

'contiguum'

With several levels according to ad hoc demands, reader's demand, text-type/genre demand (future research to do):
(This method of finding the area under a curve is called Lebesque integration, i.e. the method of using more and more levels to approximate the area enclosed by the curve). [(Paul Boisen, Dept. of Mathematics, Univ. of Minnesota. Personal communication)]

Thus we can achieve a „sensus plenior" and a more and more plenior sensus (cf. LaSor 1986).

Any type of scaling or gradation can be fruitful and even desiderable and justifiable depending on the individual text, individual interpreter, etc. (cf. social determination, etc. above; cf. Ricoeur 1981/1984: 56). This way between and beyond the simple and widespread dichotomy (literal vs. figurative), between and beyond subjectivism vs. objectivism, between and beyond the naive and selfcheating reconstruction theory of structuralism in literary criticism, that interpretation can be unambigous based upon

structures, and the vague and shoreless deconstruction theory, that interpretation is limitless, hermeneutics can achieve a scientific, though from time to time not invariant, model of interpretation. Thus hermeneutics could follow the continuum of a text with a contiguum of interpretation that is as delicate in scale as it is ad hoc demanded. Scaling can be modulated and coloured by mixing several criteria inseparably in a way that this procedure will not necessarily end up in confusion (cf. Jasper 1989: 90), which would be expected from a logical point of view. The above quoted „stumbling blocks" on the various linguistic, semantic, semiotic and pragmatic levels offer objective references/„stumbling blocks"/to an interpreter. The number of references can vary according to the interpreter's knowledge of language, knowledge of the world, knowledge of the world of a given text, emotional disposition, text-type, etc., i.e. according to the levels in a given text and in connection to the text/discourse in question (cf. Gadamer 1960/1975: 18, 360).

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