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ADRIAN'S ISAGOGE AND THE DIANOIA OF SCRIPTURE

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Tarmo Toom

Abstract

A fifth-century handbook on Scripture and its interpretation, Adrian's *Isagōgē in sacras scripturas*, is the only known and extant *introductio* in Greek which represents the Antiochean exegetical tradition. This treatise, which is available in two recensions, is largely an explanation of the stylistic idiosyncrasies of Scripture's God-talk. Although Adrian acknowledges the fact that Scripture uses allegory to say various things (i.e., the compositional allegory), he discourages the use of allegory for interpreting that which Scripture says (i.e., interpretative allegory). This paper provides a critical assessment of Adrian's hermeneutical advice and argues that the proposed disambiguation methods are not really sufficient for addressing the question of adequate interpretation of Scripture.

Keywords

Adrian, patristic hermeneutics, meaning, compositional and interpretative allegory

1. Introduction

The first Christian scholarly interpreters of the Bible were brought up in an educational system which focused heavily on texts and their interpretation. In school(s), these interpreters were introduced to 'an impressive array of procedures' for elucidating various texts.² This means that Christian scholarship both adopted and adapted various hermeneutical devices from the ancient literary theorists, as they applied these to Scripture.³ 'What they learned from (the grammarian and) the rhetor also opened up for them a sure methodological approach to their Holy Scriptures.'⁴ For example, another *introductio*, Junillus' *Instituta*, says

¹ This paper is revised for publication with the help of ETAG grant STP4 for 'Patristic Introductions (*introductiones*) to the Bible and Its Interpretation'.

² Peter W. Martens, *Adrian's Introduction to the Divine Scriptures*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1. For this article, I have used this recent edition for the Greek text and English translation of Adrian's *Isagōgē*.

³ Lewis Ayers, 'Irenaeus vs. the Valentinians: Toward a Rethinking of Patristic Exegetical Origins', *J ECS* 23/2 (2015): 153-187 (154-155), <https://doi.org/10.1353/earl.2015.0027>; Jaap Mansfeld, *Prolegomena: Questions Settled Before the Study of an Author, or a Text*, Philosophia Antiqua (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 4-5. Schäublin points out that evidently, Christians were satisfied with the existing 'pagan' educational institutions for quite some time and therefore, did not immediately create their own (Christoph Schäublin, 'Die Antiochenische Exegese des Alten Testaments', in *L'ancien testament dans l'église*, Études théologiques de Chambésy 8 [Chambésy: Éditions du Centre orthodoxe du Patriarcat oecuménique, 1988], 115-128 [115]).

⁴ Christoph Schäublin, 'The Contribution of Rhetoric to Christian Hermeneutics', in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 149-163 (151).

explicitly that Junillus presents the material about Scripture and its interpretation ‘in the same way that in a secular education (*in mundanis studiis*) grammar and rhetoric are taught in our cities’ (*Inst. Praef.*).⁵ Yet, for various reasons and despite the basic sameness of techniques and methodology, different Christian interpreters arrived at different understandings of interpretation, as well as at different interpretative conclusions.

Adrian was a fifth-century scholar who likewise adopted and adapted literary criticism as he introduced Scripture and its interpretation.⁶ His *Isagōgē in sacras scripturas* is the only extant Greek ‘introduction’ of its kind from late antiquity. It was translated into Latin ‘either at the Vivarium [i.e., in the sixth century] or earlier’, and then again, in the seventeenth century, by Aloysius Lollin(us).⁷ Adrian’s *Isagōgē* is also the earliest of the *introductiones* which represent the flourishing exegetical tradition of Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyr, and others.⁸ These theologians/exegetes are usually grouped together as ‘Antiocheans’,⁹ although such grouping under a common denominator significantly diminishes their differences and is unhelpful for several reasons.¹⁰ Nevertheless, locating Adrian’s *Isagōgē* broadly in a particular exegetical tradition enables a more contextual reading of his treatise.

2. The Content of Adrian’s *Isagōgē*

Adrian launches his ‘introduction’, his only fully extant work, by making a programmatic statement about the isagogical issues that he is going to consider.¹¹ Whether his opening statement is particularly illuminating for readers or not is another matter, because one immediately encounters a set of technical terms. Adrian announces that he will explicate on

⁵ Michael Maas, *Exegesis and Empire in the Early Byzantine Mediterranean: Junillus Africanus and the Instituta regularia Divinae Legis*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 17 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 120-121.

⁶ Peter W. Martens, ‘Adrian’s *Introduction to the Divine Scriptures* and Greco-Roman Rhetorical Theory on Style’, *JR* 93/2 (2013): 197-217, <https://doi.org/10.1086/669208>.

⁷ Martens, *Adrian’s Introduction*, 10, 66-74.

⁸ Another *introductio* from this tradition would be Junillus’ *Instituta regularia divinae legis* (Peter W. Martens and Alden Bass, ‘Junillus Africanus’ Hermeneutics: Antioch and Beyond’, in *Patristic Theories of Biblical Interpretation: The Latin Fathers*, ed. Tarmo Toom [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016], 133-159).

⁹ E.g., Manlio Simonetti, ‘Antioch of Syria: V. School’, in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, ed. Angelo Di Berardino, vol. 1 (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 157a-158b.

¹⁰ ‘There never existed a school in the strict sense of the word in Antioch’ (Sten Hidal, ‘Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Antiochene School with its Prevalent Literal and Historical Method’, in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation I: From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages*, ed. Magne Sæbo, vol. 1, pt. 1 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996], 543-568 [544]). Schor, in turn, takes the ‘Antiochenes’ not to be a school but more like a social network (Adam M. Schor, ‘Theodoret on the “School of Antioch”: A Network Approach’, *J ECS* 15/4 [2007]: 517-562, <https://doi.org/10.1353/earl.2007.0073>).

¹¹ The only other later author, next to Cassiodorus, to mention Adrian—Photius, a ninth-century patriarch of Constantinople—judged that Adrian’s *Isagōgē* was most useful for beginners (*chrēsimos tois eisagomenois*) (*Bibl. 2*) (*Fozio: Biblioteca*, ed. Luciano Canfora et al. [Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2016], 14).

Tarmo Toom, ‘Adrian’s Isagoge and the Dianoia of Scripture,’ *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 16 (2022) 32-49; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18573/jlarc.134>

the ‘peculiarities (*idiōmata*)’ of the Hebrew style¹² by reviewing its ‘message / meaning / thought (*dianoia*)’, ‘diction/letter (*lexis*)’, and ‘syntax/arrangement (*synthesis*)’ (*Isag.* 1).¹³ Nevertheless, the content of Adrian’s *Isagōgē* seems to be a fairly safe guide for determining his hermeneutical convictions and concerns.

In Part I (*Isag.* 2.1-15), Adrian focuses on explaining the stylistic idiosyncrasies of Scripture’s God-talk. That is, it provides a catalogue of problems coming from Scripture’s usage of anthropomorphic language for God. It also supplies a list of the possible interpretative solutions of various anthropomorphic analogies, illustrated by many biblical examples.¹⁴ In other words, the first things that Adrian mentions are the ‘peculiarities (*idiomata*)’, ‘examples (*hypodeigmata*)’, or ‘conventions (*epitēdeumata*)’ of the scriptural discourse (*Isag.* 1, 3, 18). He promises that getting to know these particularities of the Hebrew literary style (i.e., eliminating the main reasons for obscurity) will guide an interpreter to the meaning (*dianoia*) of the Word of God (*Isag.* 72).¹⁵

In Part II (*Isag.* 19-65), Adrian continues investigating Scripture’s irregular usage of words, tenses, and moods.¹⁶ It is a long list including metaphors, ellipses, comparisons, and other figures of speech.¹⁷ Several sections in Part II begin with words, ‘It signifies (*semainei*) . . .’ (e.g., *Isag.* 23, 29, 43), as Adrian attempts to ascertain the reference of the problematic word-signs (*res significata*) and the ways the words exactly signify (which eventually came to be known as *modi significandi*). The issue is that words as signs both reveal and obscure the realities to which they refer. This is the reason why Adrian attempts to address the irregular way (*kath’ apochrēsin*) that the signifying words are often used in Scripture (*Isag.* 73.10). For example, Adrian carefully detects the many comparisons / metaphors in Scripture, even if often without the word ‘like/as (*hōs*)’ (*Isag.* 38; cf. 27-28 and 49). He is worried that if word ‘like/as (*hōs*)’ is omitted, it is more difficult to recognize a comparison; that is, a literary trope.

In this context, another Greek translation—that of Symmachus—is mentioned twice (*Isag.* 29 [R2], 33 [R2]). As is evident from Theodore’s comments on Ps 55:7, Symmachus often expressed the meaning more clearly than the version of the Septuagint that Theodore used.¹⁸

¹² Schäublin, ‘Die Antiochenische Exegese’, 121-122. The operative scholarly understanding of the LXX has been that its vocabulary is Greek and syntax Hebrew (Trevor V. Evans, ‘Approaches to the Language of the Septuagint’, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 56 [2005]: 25-33 [25-27], <https://doi.org/10.18647/2581/JJS-2005>).

¹³ Martens explains that *lexis* is about individual words and *synthesis* about words in a sentence (*Adrian’s Introduction*, 127, n. 1-2).

¹⁴ The majority of the examples are taken from the Psalms and this is explicitly acknowledged in the end of *Isag.* 25. Occasionally, some New Testament texts are used as well. Yet, in *Isag.* 41, Adrian assures his readers that examples can be taken from every biblical book.

¹⁵ A similar hermeneutical optimism about the guaranteed results of a correct methodology can be found in yet another *introductio*—in Tyconius’ *Liber regularum* (Praef.).

¹⁶ Other patristic *introductiones* discuss similar issues: e.g., Augustine, *doc. Chr.* 2.36.54; 3.4.8-5.9, 29.40-41, 35.50, and Cassiodorus, *Inst.* 1.15.6-9, 27; 2.1-2.

¹⁷ Tyconius too assesses various figures of speech. For references, see Matthew R. Lynskey, *Tyconius’ Book of Rules: An Ancient Invitation to Ecclesial Hermeneutics*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 167 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 309-311, and especially 309, n. 117.

¹⁸ Theodore considered Symmachus’ translation superior because of its clarity (*Theodori Mopsuesteni commentarius in XII Prophetas*, ed. Hans N. Sprenger, Göttinger Orientforschungen, Biblia et patristica 1 Tarmo Toom, ‘Adrian’s *Isagoge* and the *Dianoia* of Scripture,’ *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 16 (2022) 32-49; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18573/jlarc.134>

This may be the reason why Adrian confirms his understanding of the particular examples of figures and tropes with Symmachus' clearer translation, although according to contemporary Septuagintalists, Symmachus' translation is a relatively free translation, toning down anthropomorphisms and employing paraphrases, as compared with the more literalistic translations of Aquila and Theodotion.¹⁹

Part III (*Isag.* 66-72) likewise deals with syntactical figures and tropes,²⁰ Adrian's *Isag.* 73 explains that these figures and tropes are part of Scripture's literary 'particularities (*idiōmatōn*)' (R1). This substantial passage is anticipating another similar list in the first Appendix (*Isag.* 73). Particularly eye-catching is the section about a trope 'allegory', which is the longest(!) section in Recension 2 (*Isag.* 73.13).²¹ In general, Adrian's task is to explain stylistic features and anomalies of scriptural discourse that may obscure its meaning.²² Curiously, he is not bothered much by the fact that he is talking about figures and tropes in a translation, which may or may not convey the original Hebrew with sufficient adequacy.²³ This, of course, may be due to the fact that he considers the Septuagint, rather than its Hebrew *Vorlage*, to be the inspired Christian Scripture. In addition, one should notice that Adrian takes his Septuagint as a uniform entity and says nothing about the stylistic differences between the particular books. The LXX, even its first and fairly homogeneous segment (i.e., the Pentateuch), was translated by various people in various linguistic communities and by using different translation techniques. Consequently, the language and style vary even within a given book and this must be acknowledged.²⁴

In Appendix 2 (*Isag.* 74.1-3.3), Adrian distinguishes between two kinds of scriptural discourse, 'prophetic (*prophētikon*)' and 'historical (*historikon*)' (*Isag.* 74). He may have had

[Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1977], 283-284). Eusebius and Jerome likewise praised Symmachus' translation as a more intelligible and clearer rendition (Eusebius, *Comm. Is.* 1.85; Jerome, *Comm. Am.* 3:11).

¹⁹ Peter J. Gentry, 'Pre-Hexaplaric Translations, Hexapla, Post-Hexaplaric Translations', in *Textual History of the Hebrew Bible. Volume 1A: Overview Article*, ed. Armin Lange and Emanuel Tov (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 211a-235b (227a-228a); Natalio F. Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 130-133; Michaël N. van der Meer, 'Symmachus', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, 469-479.

²⁰ Adrian does not seem to trouble himself with a precise classification of and differentiation between figures and tropes, as does, for example, Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 9.1-4-5. About the rationale of the structure of Adrian's discussion, see Martens, *Adrian's Introduction*, 155, n. 3; 221, n. 6.

²¹ Arguably, Recension 2 (R2) represents the more original version of Adrian's *Isagōgē* (Martens, *Adrian's Introduction*, 4, 71-72, 100-107).

²² In a veiled recommendation of his own 'Introduction' in the very end of the treatise, in *Isag.* 76, Adrian points out again the importance of knowing the literary peculiarities of Scripture, as well as its figures and tropes.

²³ However, see Alex Léonas, 'Patristic Evidence of the Difficulties in Understanding the LXX: Hadrian's Philological Remarks in *Isagoge*', in *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies 10: Oslo, 1998*, ed. Bernard A. Taylor, Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series 51 (Atlanta: SBL, 2001), 393-414.

²⁴ Hans Ausloos, 'Translation Technique', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, ed. Alison G. Salvesen and Timothy M. Law (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 165-179 (166); Trevor V. Evans, 'The Nature of Septuagint Greek: Language and Lexicography', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, 91-104 (94).

a mere distinction of style in mind.²⁵ Unfortunately, Adrian does not elaborate on this distinction. Yet, the categories ‘prophetic’ and ‘historical’ were a foundational premise for both figurative interpretation in general and justification of the Christian preference of the Septuagint in particular. Although clearly not on the radar of Adrian, Augustine, for example, contended that prophecy offered a ‘fuller meaning’ of history. This is to say that when Scripture had chosen to narrate some historical event, this certainly had a particular ‘prophetic’ or theological significance; more precisely, it had a figurative, salvation-historical, Christological significance.²⁶ For Adrian’s as well, prophecy indeed seems to be more than just a particular style of writing. It proclaims Christ (*Isag.* 74.3).

Appendix 3 (*Isag.* 75-78), which is a kind of mini-treatise on biblical interpretation, further underscores some of Adrian’s hermeneutical convictions. It emphasizes the importance of discerning the ‘purpose (*dianoia*)’ of a scriptural text, which can be determined on the basis of the content and/or the subject-matter of a text or a biblical book (i.e., on the basis of the *hypothesis*) (*Isag.* 75).²⁷ This, in turn, helps to understand how and why particular words are used to describe a given event or thing. In Adrian’s words, keeping the *hypothesis* in mind helps to perceive the ‘link (*systasis*)’ between the words and their particular ‘usage (*chrēsin*)’ (*Isag.* 75). The following ‘nautical analogy’ (Martens) compares the interpreter of Scripture to a steersman who, having a specific endpoint in mind, guides his ship toward an intended goal. The point is reasserted in *Isag.* 76.

This is pretty much the content of Adrian’s *Isagōgē*. The particular cases and textual illustrations are not in the purview of this article. Instead, what matters is the fact that Adrian’s whole treatise is almost exclusively about Scripture’s use of figurative discourse which tends to obscure its meaning (*dianoia*). Consequently, exegesis is about making clear what is unclear.²⁸ That’s precisely what Adrian’s treatise is aiming at.

3. Adrian’s Arguments

So, what does Adrian’s *Isagōgē* tell us about interpreting Scripture? How to interpret this patristic treatise on interpretation? As is evident, Adrian cannot, nor does he even want to deny the fact that Scripture often says what it has to say in a figurative way. At the same time, he is not about to be confused about the use of figurative discourse *in* Scripture with

²⁵ It may be analogous to classifying the prophets into prose and poetry (Adrian, *Isag.* 79; Martens, *Adrian’s Introduction*, 37). In *Inst.* 1.2-3, Junillus too calls ‘history’ and ‘prophecy’ ‘genres’ or ‘forms of discourse’ (*species dictiones*)” (Maas, *Exegesis and Empire in the Early Byzantine Mediterranean*, 126-127).

²⁶ Augustine, *civ. Dei* 15.8; 16.2, 37; 18.38-30. The paradigm for the historical accounts functioning prophetically and speaking about Christ was found in the New Testament (e.g., Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:46; 1 Pet 1:11). Augustine adds, ‘We must believe that the highest expression of prophetic meaning lies with the Septuagint (*altitudo ibi prophetica esse credenda est*)’ (*civ. Dei* 18.43 [CCL 48:639]; cf. 20.29). See Tarmo Toom, “Babel, Translations, and Polysemy in Augustine’s *civ. Dei* XV-XVIII,” *Augustinus: Werk und Wirkung* (Leuven: Brill, forthcoming in 2023).

²⁷ Martens explains that *dianoia* functions here as a synonym of *skopos* (*Adrian’s Introduction*, 44, 277, n. 1).

²⁸ Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 23, 149-150, 155-161.

figurative interpretation of Scripture. According to Adrian, the first is self-evident, the second is illegitimate. But why is that?

Already in the fourth century B.C., Plato's *R.* 378d suggested that underneath the apparent meaning of a text (*dianoia*), there was a hidden meaning (*hypnoia*).²⁹ Plutarch further explained that what was earlier known as *hypnoiai*, was known in his time as *allegoriai* (*Mor.* 19e-f). A leading Christian exegete Origen, in turn, launched his quest for the *hypnoia* as he reacted to Celsus' criticism that Scripture was a mediocre literature that was not even worthy of allegorical interpretation (*C. Cels.* 4.38, 7.18).³⁰ Consequently, Origen tried hard to show that everything in Scripture had a *hypnoia*, a spiritual meaning,³¹ even when it did not have a somatic meaning (*PArch.* 4.3.5).³² The distinction between literal and figurative meanings reflected the Platonic distinction between the sensible realm and the intelligible realm. Consequently, platonic interpreters always sought for the 'higher' intelligible meaning—just like Apostle Paul said, 'We are not looking at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen. For what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal' (2 Cor 4:18).

However, Adrian was no staunch Platonist.³³ Whereas he did not deny the existence of figurative 'fuller meanings' altogether and in particular occasions, he certainly lacked the urge to find the elusive *hypnoia* of every biblical text. In other words, Adrian is among those who seem to reject the idea that underneath the scriptural discourse, there is always a hidden meaning (*hypnoia*) which is intended by the author (either by the human authors, God, or both). He is convinced that 'the divinely inspired Scripture (*tēs theopneustou graphēs*)' (*Isag.* 73.22) has an intended meaning (*dianoia*) already at the level of its discourse *kata lexin*. There is no need to look for some *hypnoia* 'underneath' or 'behind' the letter.³⁴ Adrian compares the meaning of words *kata lexin* to a body, which can be wrapped in a cloak, into a figurative *theōria*. But the cloak is not the body and therefore, people should really not imagine (*phantazomenous*) anything beyond the body (*Isag.* 78). In other words, while Origen believed that the divine author of Scripture deliberately concealed the meaning of what was said (*PArch.* 4.1.7, 4.2.8, 4.2.9, 4.3.11)³⁵—just like the ancient sages did according

²⁹ Nevertheless, Plato evidently rejected the traditional allegorical interpretation of myths (*Phaed.* 229b-230a; *Rep.* 378d-e).

³⁰ Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.19.4 (about Porphyry's criticism).

³¹ Yet, it was not the kind of 'higher meaning' that various gnostics proposed.

³² For somatic meaning, which is literal but 'useful', see Elizabeth A. Lauro, *The Soul and Spirit of Scripture Within Origen's Exegesis*, *The Bible in Ancient Christianity* 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 51-58, 113-114.

³³ Although there is no need to postulate a stark contrast between Plato and Aristotle, if anything, the 'Antiochenes' were Aristotelians. At least so was argued in the twentieth century (Artur Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis*, CSCO 226, Sub. 26 [Louvain: Secrétariat du CSCO, 1965], 15 and 21; D. S. Wallace-Hardrill, *Christian Antioch: Study of Early Christian Thought in the East* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982], 15, 107-108). But what is true is that while pre-Socratics and Platonists considered language problematic for referring to realities, for Aristotle, referential language was relatively unproblematic (Peter T. Struck, *Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers at the Limits of Their Texts* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014], 51-63).

³⁴ Cf. Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 6.3 (about the exegetical approach of Diodore of Tarsus).

³⁵ The idea of the 'concealment' comes from Isa 29:11-2 and Dan 12:4; cf. Marguerite Harl, 'Origène et les interprétations patristiques grecques de l'obscurité biblique', in *Le déchiffrement du sens: études sur l'herméneutique chrétienne d'Origène à Grégoire de Nysse*, Collection des études augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 135 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1993 [1982]), 89-126 (105-110). 'Concealment' is also Tarmo Toom, 'Adrian's Isagoge and the *Dianoia* of Scripture,' *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 16 (2022) 32-49; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18573/jlarc.134>

to Plato, *Prot.* 316d—Adrian believes that the inspired authors of Scripture merely expressed themselves with the help of figures and tropes.

To get to the bottom of things interpretative, the meaning of the word ‘allegory’ needs to be brought into the discussion. There is indeed something to the generalization that while ‘Alexandrians’ followed the exegetical approaches of the philosophical schools, ‘Antiocheans’ followed that of the rhetorical schools.³⁶ Namely, the ancient practice of employing figurative discourse can be divided in ‘interpretative allegory’ and ‘compositional allegory’.³⁷

- *Interpretative allegory* or *allegoresis* was looking for some deeper, philosophical meaning in what was said; for example, looking for the hidden meaning in various mythical accounts which were taken, by themselves, to be unverifiable and fictional.³⁸
- *Compositional allegory*, however, concerned grammar and rhetoric; that is, the use of allegory in saying something.³⁹

It might be tempting to perpetuate the use of the rhetorical binary construct between ‘Alexandrians’ and ‘Antiocheans’, and to associate the interpretative allegory with the first and the uncovering of the compositional allegory with the second.⁴⁰ Arguably, Adrian would be fine with it, as he seems to lump together both ‘pagan’ (Greek) and Christian allegorists, both gnostic and catholic, by taking another jab at them in *Isag.* 75: their *interpretations* are said to be nothing but ‘some unfounded conjectures (*anhypostatois tisi stochasmois*)’. However, perhaps one should resist such temptation, because the interpretative and the compositional allegory are not some sort of mutually exclusive opposites. Christian allegorists (i.e., Origen and his followers) were far from claiming that it did not really matter what the text of Scripture said as long as it directed one’s attention to some spiritual truths. Quite the contrary, the text of Scripture mattered and mattered a lot, because it conveyed the divinely intended sense and not merely a humanly intended sense (Origen, *Parch.* Praef. 8; 4.1.7). It was the *euaggelion* and not mere a religious idea in the mind of an inspired human

mentioned by some Latin authors, such as Tyconius, *Reg.* Praef.; Augustine, *en. Ps.* 131.2; and Eucherius, *Form.* Praef.

³⁶ Schäublin, ‘Die Antiochenische Exegese’, 117; Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 169-176. This is not a stark contrast though where one would necessarily exclude the other.

³⁷ Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, trans. Matthew T. Bliss et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1998), §900; Richard Nate, “Allegory,” in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, ed. Thomas O. Sloane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 18a-21a (18b); Christoph Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zur Methode und Herkunft der Antiochenischen Exegese*, *Theophaneia* 23 (Köln: Peter Hanstein, 1974), 120-121; Jon Whitman, *Allegory: The Dynamic of an Ancient and Medieval Technique* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 3-4, 20, 264-266.

³⁸ Adrian, *Isag.* 75; Luc Brisson, *How Philosophers Saved Myths: Allegorical Interpretation and Classical Mythology* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), 23-24.

³⁹ Applying this distinction to Christian exegesis, Turner speaks about theological and literary forms of allegory, about ‘theological allegory’ and ‘literary trope’ (Denys Turner, ‘Allegory in Christian late Antiquity’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, ed. Rita Copeland and Peter Struck [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010], 71-82).

⁴⁰ Herbert N. Bate, ‘Some Technical Terms of Greek Exegesis’, *Journal of Theological Studies* 24 (1922): 59-66; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23950350>.

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author. After all, Origen composed his *Hexapla*, but Adrian evidently didn't. For good allegorists, compositional allegory was as important as interpretative allegory.

But what about Adrian? Why did he reject interpretative allegory? His reasoning here seems to be the following. According to Adrian, allegorists tend to debase or reduce the meaning of a described event and after that, to introduce a 'different meaning (*heteras* [. . .] *dianoian*)' (*Isag.* 73.13). The word 'allegory' comes from *allos* ("other") and *agoreuein* 'to speak (in an assembly [*agora*])' and it means indeed something like 'to say other things'.⁴¹ But while interpreting a scriptural text, Adrian finds the introduction of a 'different meaning', or a new referent, quite illegitimate.⁴² Allegory as a trope is just 'exchanging a term on a verbal level alone (*epi lexeōs monēs*)' (*Isag.* 73.13), just using another word to name something, and not changing the subject matter of the text, the signified referent, or going outside of the text's 'natural' boundaries. It is 'calling things that have one name by a different name (*to ta heterōs echonta tēn epōnumian heterōs prosagoreuein*)' (*Isag.* 73.13). That is, it is compositional and not interpretative, literary and not theological. Evidently, Adrian feels so strongly about the necessity to eliminate allegoresis (i.e., allegorical interpretation) that the only trope out of the twenty-two (*Isag.* 73.1-22) which begins with a negation is that of 'allegory' ('It is not [*ouch*] . . .') (*Isag.* 73.13).

Here is where Adrian's explanation of a trope 'correspondence (*kata sygkrisin*)' (*Isag.* 73.3 [R2]), the linking of past and present events, becomes relevant. He uses 1 Cor 10:1-4⁴³ as the first example of a correspondence between the Israelites' crossing the Red Sea and Christian baptism. The alleged correspondence or similarity is the unexpectedness of the divine graceful delivery of both Jews and Christians . . . and the element of water, of course. These phenomena are 'metonymic (*metōnymikōs*)' (*Isag.* 73.13). There is a certain fittingness to such comparison.

Recension 2 adds a second example, Gal 4:21-25.⁴⁴ Adrian explains that, in this text, Christian freedom is compared that of Sarah, and 'slavery under the law' to Hagar.⁴⁵ *Isag.* 73.13 (R2) reiterates the correspondence between the covenant of freedom and Sarah, as well as the covenant of slavery and Hagar. When Gal 4:21-25 comes up for the second time under a trope 'allegory' in *Isag.* 73.13, Adrian keeps insisting that, in fact, one encounters a 'correspondence (*kata sygkrisin*)' rather than 'allegory (*kata allēgorian*)'. Nevertheless, since Apostle Paul explicitly used the word *allēgoroumena* in Gal 4:24, Adrian indeed has to acknowledge, 'He called this an allegory (*allēgorian ekalesen*)' (*Isag.* 73.13). Yet, and

⁴¹ Tryphon, *Trop.* 1.1; Heraclitus, *Hom. All.* 5.2; Iunillus, *Inst.* 1.5; Whitman, *Allegory*, 263-264.

⁴² Allegory can certainly be arbitrary and even opposed to the meaning of words (Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 8.6.44).

⁴³ The same text is used in *Isag.* 38 as an example of a metaphoric comparison.

⁴⁴ Adrian provides yet another example of 'correspondence' by citing Eph 5:31-32, where Christ and the church are linked with Adam and Eve. The last sentence of *Isag.* 73.22 reminds the readers that there are many other such passages in Scripture which operate with a certain correspondence between past and present events.

⁴⁵ The correspondence that may have prompted Paul's comparison in the first place, and which Adrian does not mention, is Gal 4:25, 'Now Hagar represents Mount Sinai in Arabia'. Namely, in the Targumic tradition, there was a wordplay between Hagar and Hagra (a placename in Arabia, designating Sinai) (cf. Adrian, *Isag.* 10). Thus, the correspondence was etymological and not theological (Steven Di Mattei, 'Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants [Gal 4.21-31] in the Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics', *NTS* 52 [2006]: 102-122 [111-112], <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688506000063>).

despite the fact that Adrian considers hyperbole immediately after his remarks on allegory, in *Isag.* 73.14, he evidently misses the apostle's rhetorical exaggeration and takes Paul's admission in 1 Cor 11:6 ('I may indeed be untrained as a speaker') literally, as if suggesting that, unfortunately, the apostle got this allegory-thingy just wrong (*Isag.* 73.13).⁴⁶

It should be observed here that Apostle Paul was indeed interpreting texts (Gen 16:1-16; Exod 14) which, at the verbal level, had no intrinsic connection either with baptism or covenant. As he was linking various realities (cf. 'interpretative, theological allegory'), he also composed a new text (cf. 'compositional allegory'). Consequently, a new text says something about the 'fuller' meaning of an existing text and thus, 'interpreting' and 'composing' are at least partially overlapping activities. Or, to put this slightly differently, 'compositional allegory' can build on 'interpretative allegory'.⁴⁷ Adrian, however—and if I have understood him rightly—wants to retain the first and abandon the second and, by doing so, basically curtails the most important fact that the New Testament uses allegorical interpretation.

Another good illustration might be the case where Scripture speaks about the 'breasts' of Jerusalem (Ezek 16:7; cf. Isa 66:11). While Origen admitted that when he was told, "'Do not allegorize!'" he wondered, 'Jerusalem has breasts [. . .] How can these things be understood without an allegorical explanation?' (*HomEzek.* 6.3).⁴⁸ Adrian, however, contends in *Isag.* 73.12 (R2) under the category 'Representational language (*kata schēmatismōn*)' that Scripture merely presents something pictorially. That is, there is an obvious similarity/correspondence between the shape of breasts and that of the mountains of Jerusalem. No further allegoresis needed! The trope 'comparison (*parabolē*)', as it operates with the similarities of certain characteristics, enforces Adrian's point (*Isag.* 73.2). But in contrast, and at least according to Adrian's judgment, the dreaded allegoresis or interpretative allegory lacks any obvious similarity, resemblance, or correspondence to the events/things that it tends to allegorize.

Now, all this is extremely important for Adrian's case against the allegorists, real or imaginative.⁴⁹ He cautions against diminishing, ignoring, or even doing away with the event/thing, when it is taken to correspond to another thing/event. This was precisely the hermeneutical 'unforgivable sin' of all those who interpreted Scripture allegorically. They

⁴⁶ Among others, Martens has identified the dismissive comments of other 'Antiocheans' on Paul's use of the unwanted word 'allegory' (*Adrian's Introduction*, 259, n. 4).

⁴⁷ Dawson names such combined activity 'Allegorical Interpretation as Composition' (David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992], 129-131). Tambling observes, 'It appears then that allegorical interpretation [. . .] seems to be older than the conscious writing of allegory. Allegoresis predates the practice of consciously writing one thing and meaning another' (Jeremy Tambling, *Allegory*, The New Critical Idiom [London: Routledge, 2010], 20).

⁴⁸ Available at <https://archive.org/details/OrigenHomiliesOnEzekielEdHooker2014/page/507/mode/2up>; accessed Oct. 2022.

⁴⁹ Except when some names are explicitly mentioned, identification of the denounced 'allegorists' in the works of the 'Antiochenes' (including Adrian) has not been entirely successful. Edwards suggests that they may have existed 'only in the imagination of polemicists' (Mark Edwards, 'Figurative Readings: Their Scope and Justification', in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible. Volume I: From the beginning to 600*, ed James C. Paget and Joachim Shaper [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013], 714-733 [728]).

Tarmo Toom, 'Adrian's Isagoge and the Dianoia of Scripture,' *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 16 (2022) 32-49; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18573/jlarc.134>

merely invented 'random and disconnected explanations (*eikaias kai asynartētous tas hermēneias*)' of Scripture (*Isag.* 75), without 'real', detectable correspondence.⁵⁰

Consequently, it appears as if Adrian suggests that following the text-critical approach of rhetoricians and grammarians surely prevents various interpretative mistakes of allegorists.

One of the means that Adrian brings up for avoiding any 'random and disconnected explanations' is to preserve the proper literary sequence (*akolouthia*) of biblical words and narrative accounts,⁵¹ which can be interrupted by various digressions (*Isag.* 73.9; 77). Rather than taking individual words out of their sequence as indicators of the imagined *hypnoia*,⁵² the words need to be observed in the logic and context of the larger passage or narrative. After all, considering the *akolouthia* carefully has the promise of attaining the 'precise meaning (*tēs akribēous dianoias*)' and 'fitting sense (*dianoias [. . .] tou prefontos*)' (*Isag.* 77) of a passage.

Another related means is to keep the purpose or the overall intent (*skopos* [*dianoia*, *hypothesis*]) of a whole passage/text in mind (*Isag.* 75).⁵³ Ancient introductions to philosophical writings often began with *schema isagogicum*, with a discussion of a set of preliminary issues, although their precise number and order varied significantly.⁵⁴ An important item in such *schema isagogicum* was determining the overall purpose of the work (*prothesis* [= *hypothesis*], *skopos*) according to the intention of its author.⁵⁵ Likewise, Adrian takes the *skopos* as the key to the proper meaning of a given passage.

So far so good, but to what does Adrian's project as such amount? Will his 'introduction' equip the beginners with sufficient skill for interpreting Scripture?

4. Critical Evaluation

First, Adrian begins his treatise as if he was heading straight *in medias res*. He does not say a word about the bigger picture of why any God-talk—be it anthropomorphic, figurative,

⁵⁰ Based on available evidence, this would be an unfair criticism of at least most Christian allegorists. Charles Kannengiesser maintains that 'a constant and universal canon of patristic interpretation is the insistence on the intimate connection between the *littera* and any "spiritual" comments generated by it' (*Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, vol. 1, 175); so also Christoph Jacob, 'Allegorese: Rhetorik, Ästhetik, Theologie', in *Neue Formen der Schriftauslegung?*, ed. Christoph Dohmen et al., *Quaestiones disputatae* 140 (Freiburg: Herder, 1992), 131-163; Peter W. Martens, 'Origen Against History? Reconsidering the Critique of Allegory', *MT* 28/4 (Oct. 2012): 635-656, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0025.2012.01776.x>.

⁵¹ See Robert C. Hill, *Reading the Old Testament in Antioch*, *Bible in Ancient Christianity* 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 110-111.

⁵² Another 'Antiochean', Eustathius, accused Origen in focusing on individual words (*onomata*) rather than on things (*pragmata*) that the words were about (*Engast.* 1 [PG 18:613]).

⁵³ For the connotations of the terms *skopos*, *dianoia*, and *hypothesis*, see Martens, *Adrian's Introduction*, 277, n. 1. For *hypothesis*, Schäublin, *Untersuchungen*, 92-94.

⁵⁴ Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 7-12, 57; Martens, *Adrian's Introduction*, 21-22.

⁵⁵ Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 7.

akribēs, or just colloquial—is problematic in the first place.⁵⁶ Human languages (including Hebrew and the LXX Greek) are mutable and finite realities and thus, inadequate for talking about God, who is immutable and infinite.⁵⁷ A transcendent God is, by definition, ineffable and indefinable; such God is ontologically different from all linguistic statements about God.⁵⁸ That is, whatever linguistic or grammatical tricks one employs to say something about God (for instance, anthropomorphisms, metaphors, negations of negation, or superlatives), his/her expression still remains within the limits of an inadequate tool—a finite human language. Thus, by focusing on disambiguation of Scripture’s use of figurative language, Adrian may create a false hope that one can thereby get to a more precise understanding of the Word of God, and ultimately of God. This is to say that Adrian’s comments provide no apophatic qualification to the predominately kataphatic scriptural discourse. In *Isagōgē*, one cannot find an answer to the question of why any language, including the anthropomorphic discourse, proves to be inadequate in the first place. It is simply assumed that while some use of language is inadequate, imprecise, and unfitting, other use of language is presumably not. This leads into the related, second critical observation.

Second, disambiguation of figures and tropes, as well as analyzing the particularities of the Hebrew style, are not enough in themselves for unlocking the meaning(s) of Scripture. There is a deeper problem of all language being ambiguous and consequently, having no unambiguous words to explain the ambiguous ones.⁵⁹ And again, the whole business of promising one’s arrival at the ‘precise meaning (*tēs akribēous dianoias*)’ (*Isag.* 77) either denies the basic ambiguity of language (i.e., the ambiguity of any linguistic statement), polysemy, or both.⁶⁰ Yet, it is highly doubtful whether one can ever get into ‘the shrine of a single [and precise] sense’ of Scripture, if there even were such a thing.⁶¹ Many ‘Antiochenes’ did believe that there was such a ‘thing’ and evidently, so did Adrian.

Third, another problem with Adrian’s suggestions is determining which ‘correspondence (*kata sygkrisin*)’ or ‘link (*systasis*)’ proves to be ‘real’ and acceptable, and which does not.

⁵⁶ The closest he comes to mentioning apophaticism, is perhaps *Isag.* 18 (‘to the degree it was possible to philosophize [*philosophēin*] about God’) and *Isag.* 48 (‘Speaking about God’s “name”, instead of what he is [*anti tou hoper estin*]’).

⁵⁷ For the apophaticism of patristic authors, see Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition, Plato to Eriugena* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2015 [orig. 1995]); and Henny F. Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginning of Christian Apophaticism*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁵⁸ McCabe puts it this way, ‘We always have to speak of our God with borrowed words [. . .] God is always dressed verbally in second-hand clothes that don’t fit him very well. We always have to be on guard against taking these clothes as revealing who and what God is’ (Herbert McCabe, ‘God’, *New Blackfriars* 89/968 [2001]: 413-421 [413], <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43250616>).

⁵⁹ E.g., Chrysippus in Gellius, *Noct. Att.* 11.12.1-3, who is quoted, for example, in Augustine, *dial.* 9.

⁶⁰ Adrian likely agrees with Theodore’s postulation of an exclusive single sense of Scripture (Theodore, *Ps.* [frag.] 17) (*Théodore de Mopsueste: Fragments syriaques du Commentaire des Psaumes*, ed. Lucas van Rompay, CSCO 425 [Louvain: Peeters, 1982], 13). Line 21 reads, ‘To understand a single certain sense in all these things of divine.’ (I thank Prof. Jason Zaborowski for an English translation!)

⁶¹ Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 109. Jacob puts it rather resolutely: there is ‘no one “actual” (*eigentlichen*) meaning of the Bible’ (‘Allegorese’, 143).

How to decide this in the first place? Unfortunately, Adrian does not provide any criteria for distinguishing between the adequate and inadequate (or arbitrary) correspondence beyond his recommendations to concentrate on the *skopos*, *hypothesis*, and *akolouthia* —all of which are, after all, *interpretative* constructs and not some explanatory secret files attached to scriptural texts. Accordingly, one may want to ask, ‘What makes the correspondence between a rock and Christ, or the Israelites passing the Red Sea and baptism, a valid and acceptable correspondence?’ (1 Cor 10:1-4; *Isag.* 73.3). Is there some kind of detectable ‘sufficient’ similarity between the characteristics of the compared phenomena? And exactly how similar the compared entities have to be in order to constitute an acceptable correspondence? To explicate, what’s the difference between the pairing of rock/Christ and going through the Red Sea/baptism as ‘correspondences’ (*Isag.* 73.3), and the pairing of Assyrians/waters, ‘the first sea’/Palestine, and ‘summer and spring’/divine grace as ‘allegories’ (*Isag.* 73.13)? Are not both expressing comparisons metaphorically (*Isag.* 27)? And what’s the difference between metaphor and allegory, if both are, in fact, defined as linking one thing/event to another thing/event (*Isag.* 73.1 and 73.13)?⁶² Regrettably, Adrian offers no further help with any of these questions.

Fourth, it is not entirely clear what Adrian takes Scripture as such, and especially the Old Testament, to be about.⁶³ Is it about history, geography, abstract truths, mystical realities, moral lessons, old customs, contemporary problems, future predictions, or a combination of some or all of these? Depending on how one responds to this question, an interpreter either goes after the postulated ‘original’ meaning of a text, or a spiritually and universally ‘useful’ (*ōphelimos*)’ meaning of all texts (2 Tim 3:16). Furthermore, does the ‘usefulness’ concern the texts on the non-literal or literal level,⁶⁴ and should one seek to preserve the coherent sequence (*akolouthia*) of the sensible or the intelligible realities, on the narrative level or on the metanarrative (i.e., spiritual) level?⁶⁵ Indeed, in patristic exegesis, ‘The fundamental question for understanding meaning was discerning the reference’,⁶⁶ discerning of what a text was about. This is precisely where the major disagreements between Adrian and his unnamed opponents become most evident. Sure, there was a broad consensus that Scripture as such was about God, or the incarnated God, or salvation history. But what were the individual verses, paragraphs, and stories all about? To what did they exactly refer?

⁶² Schäublin’s analysis shows that comparison, metaphor, and metonymy were often discussed in the same breath (*Untersuchungen*, 113-120). Junillus too employs the traditional definition of allegory for defining both ‘proverbs’ and ‘types’ (*Inst.* 1.5 and 2.16). Lausberg offers a helpful definition though, ‘The allegory is to an idea what a metaphor is to a single word’ (*Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, §895).

⁶³ Other authors of the ancient *introductiones* were quite forthcoming about this: Scripture taught the double commandment of loving God and neighbor (Mark 12:30-31) (Augustine, *doc. Chr.* 1.26.27; 35.39-36.40; Cassiodorus, *Inst.* 1.16.2; and Junillus, *Inst.* 2.8, 28).

⁶⁴ Miriam De Cock, ‘The Spiritual Pay-Off of Searching the Scriptures: The Principle of the Bible’s Usefulness in the Exegesis of Origen and Chrysostom’, in *Late Antiquity: Hermeneutical, Institutional and Textual Perspectives*, ed. Anna Usacheva et al. (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2020), 87-106.

⁶⁵ Origen, *PArch.* 4.2.9; John D. Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 58-61.

⁶⁶ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 120, and her demonstration of the importance of ascertaining the reference on pages 117-139.

Fifth, Adrian does not particularly encourage Christological interpretation of the Old Testament, and presumably even less any figurative/allegorical reading of the New Testament.⁶⁷ Yet, it was precisely the Christological reinterpretation of Scripture by the New Testament authors that had made ‘the Hebrew Bible into an “old” testament’.⁶⁸ The fact of the matter is that Christians read the Old Testament Christologically and Christological reading is a figurative reading (2 Cor 3:6; Col 2:17).⁶⁹ There are, of course, no references to Jesus Christ in the Hebrew Bible *kata lexin*, but it can (and should) nevertheless be interpreted prophetically, typologically, and figuratively/allegorically as pointing to Christ—and not only the selected passages but all of it as such!⁷⁰ ‘Without figurative exegesis, there is no [Christian] Bible’, asserts Cavadini.⁷¹ And not only that Scripture *can* be thus interpreted, but the gospels and the epistles actually did so (e.g., Gen 1:1-5→John 1:1-5; Deut 25:4→1 Cor 9:9-10; Gen 2:24→Eph 5:31-32 [mentioned in *Isag.* 73.3]).⁷² No doubt, Adrian is aware of the idea that ‘what was done in the case of Abraham was an expression

⁶⁷ For comparison, in *c. Cels.* 2.69, Origen suggested, ‘The truth of the events recorded to have happened to Jesus cannot be fully seen in the mere letter (*en psilē tē lexei*) and historical narrative (*[en] tē historia*)’ (*SC* 132:446; *Origen: Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965], 118 [modified]).

⁶⁸ Daniel Boyarin, ‘Origen as Theorist of Allegory: Alexandrian Contexts’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, 393-54 (39).

⁶⁹ Christological/figurative reading of Scripture is one of the main characteristics of patristic exegesis, argues Charles Kannengiesser, ‘Scripture as a Legacy of the Fathers’, in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lorenzo DiTomasso et al., *Bible in Ancient Christianity* 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 529-541 (534-536). The Christological criterion was explicitly stated already in the earliest extant mini-treatise on biblical interpretation—Ptolemy’s *Epistula ad Floram* (Gilles Quispel, ‘Introduction’ to *Ptolémée: Lettre à Flora*, 2nd ed., *SC* 24; [Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1966], 9-44 [19]; Tarmo Toom, ‘Theological Basics: Ptolemy’s Theological Introduction to Biblical Interpretation’, *SP* 126/23 [2021]: 17-28.

⁷⁰ For the Greek and Latin terms and their semantic overlap, see Bate, ‘Some Technical Terms of Greek Exegesis’, 59-66; Edwards, ‘Figurative Readings’, 715-716, 729; Peter W. Martens, Revisiting Allegory/Typology Distinction: The Case of Origen’, *JECS* 16/3 (2008): 283-317 (298, n. 59; cf. 296, n. 46; 302, n. 75; 307). Typology and allegory have a definite conceptual “family resemblance.” The argument that the more specific typology, is a successful attempt, and the more general or unspecified allegory is an unsuccessful attempt at non-literal interpretation of Scripture needs to be put to rest (Martens, ‘Revisiting Allegory/Typology Distinction’, 283-317). Simonetti likewise argues that early Christian authors ‘did not distinguish *typos* from *allegoria*: in effect, every interpretation that is typological in content [. . .] is necessarily allegorical in hermeneutical procedure [. . .]’ (Manlio Simonetti, ‘Allegory-Typology’, in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, vol. 1, 86b-87a [87a]). So also Thomas Böhm, ‘Allegory and History’, in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, vol. 1, 213-227 (213); and H. Clifton Ward, “Symbolic Interpretation is Most Useful”: Clement of Alexandria’s Scriptural Imagination’, *JECS* 25/4 (2017): 531-560 (535-544).

⁷¹ John C. Cavadini, ‘From Letter to Spirit: The Multiple Senses of Scripture’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, 126-148 (126). Again, ‘All allegorical reading in the early church is governed by the axiom that Christ is [. . .] the universal subject of the scriptures’ (Edwards, ‘Figurative Readings’, 733).

⁷² Also, Matt 21:4-5; Luke 4:21; 24:27; John 5:46; 1 Cor 2:7, 10:6, 11; Heb 8:5, 9:9-10:25; 1 Pet 1:10-12. Even Hanson, who for his own modern reasons shares the ‘Antiochene’ abhorrence of allegory, admits the possibility of allegorical interpretation in the New Testament (R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen’s Interpretation of Scripture* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002], 65-96).

of Christ's plan of salvation (*tēs kata Christon oikonomias*)' (*Isag.* 74.3.3; cf. Rom 4:23-24). He acknowledges at least some legitimacy of reading the Old Testament Christologically.⁷³ Yet, his preference is to show that prophecy is, in fact, strictly twofold—some about Israel and others about Christ (*Isag.* 74.3.1-3). It is not that the Old Testament in its entirety is a prophecy about Christ (cf. *Isag.* 79),⁷⁴ but that certain passages certainly can be.⁷⁵

Finally, in his *Isag.* 78, Adrian also mentions a figurative technique *theōria*, but just in passing.⁷⁶ Evidently, 'even those who professed to be innocent of allegory were seldom faithful ministers of the literal sense'.⁷⁷ And indeed, Adrian's bringing up the term *theōria* is hardly more than paying lip service to non-literal senses. Namely, he sets up the meaning of words (*dianoia*) against *theōria*, which is said to be the speculative sense that merely 'clothes' the body (i.e., the meaning of words *kata lexin*) and is not intrinsic to it (*Isag.* 78). This means that for an interpreter, it is safer to stick with the 'body',⁷⁸ unless there are significant reasons to consider the body's 'clothing'.

5. Conclusion

So, what is one supposed to do with the hermeneutical advice found in Adrian's *Isagōgē*? Will it really lead an interpreter to the 'precise meaning (*tēs akribēous dianoias*)' of Scripture, and is there anything like this after all? Furthermore, how does Adrian's 'introduction' benefit contemporary interpreters of Scripture?⁷⁹ No doubt, this is definitely a hermeneutical virtue to be aware of the peculiarities of the Hebrew style, to be able to distinguish between figures and tropes, to pay close attention to what is said *kata lexin* (all this is listed in *Isag.* 76), and to determine, as much as possible, the *hypothesis*, *skopos*, and *akoluthia* of a given textual unit. All of these are indeed 'signs (*sēmeia*)' that guide the way for an otherwise lost interpreter (*Isag.* 76). But beyond that? Is investigating such things not dealing mostly with the 'apparent and superficial and surface aspect of Scripture (*to*

⁷³ It may seem that Adrian denies the traditional prosopological exegesis in the case of the Psalms (*Isag.* 66.3), but he may only defend the Christological reading that Jews did not accept (Martens, *Adrian's Introduction*, 223, n. 5).

⁷⁴ Here Adrian's reservations may seem rather prudent to contemporary historical-critical scholars.

⁷⁵ Most likely this is not his exhaustive list, but Adrian explicitly mentions Zech 14:8-9 and Mic 4:2-3 in *Isag.* 73.13 (R2)—and these are unequivocally identified as the tropes of 'allegory'—as well as Isa 7:14, Dan 7:9, and Gen 22:2 in *Isag.* 74.3.1-3 (R2).

⁷⁶ Arguably, *theōria* accomplished the same for 'Antiochenes' what the prophetic/figurative/ allegorical interpretation accomplished for others—the discovery of the salvation-historical purpose, the soteriological relevance of the Old Testament for Christians (Herbert W. Basser, 'What Makes Exegesis Either Christian or Jewish?' in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity*, 37-53; Schaublin, 'Die Antiochenische Exegese', 126-127).

⁷⁷ Edwards, 'Figurative Readings', 714.

⁷⁸ It is just like Apostle Paul said, but with a twist, 'Do not go beyond what is written' (1 Cor 4:6).

⁷⁹ Jacob recommends the title of van Noppen's book, *Erinnern, um Neues zu sagen*, for discussing the contemporary relevance of patristic allegorical interpretation ('Allegorese', 161).

blepomenon tēs graphēs kai to epipolaion autēs kai procheiron)’ (Origen, *PArch.* 4.3.11),⁸⁰ without addressing the larger and deeper hermeneutical issues?

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