

- **Typology and its Theological Basis<sup>1</sup>**
- ***La Typologie et ses Bases Bibliques***
- ***Typologie und ihre theologische Grundlage***

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## RÉSUMÉ

*Sur la base du mot *tupos* employé dans 1 Cor. 10:11, nous proposons la définition suivante de la notion de typologie: c'est une compréhension néo-testamentaire d'une personne, d'un événement ou d'une institution de l'Ancien Testament comme des préfigurations voulues par Dieu et qui correspondent ainsi à des éléments de l'accomplissement eschatologique en Jésus-Christ.*

*En premier lieu, la substance théologique du type n'est pas contenue derrière ou sous l'événement historique, mais dans l'événement lui-même. En second lieu, Paul présuppose que la typologie est déterminée par Dieu. Troisièmement, le type est une représentation d'une réalité supérieure et eschatologique en Jésus Christ.*

*La typologie présuppose une continuité substantielle et fondamentale entre l'ancienne alliance et la nouvelle. Cette cohérence théologique se noue entre des personnes, des événements et des institutions des deux alliances. En même temps, il apparaît que nous ne connaissons cette cohérence que par le récit écrit. Il s'ensuit que l'usage que fait Paul de la typologie présuppose sa conviction que l'A.T. est Ecriture Sainte.*

*La question qui se pose est la suivante: nous est-il possible d'utiliser la typologie dans notre étude exégétique d'un texte de l'A.T.? Quand les auteurs du N.T. déclarent expressément qu'un élément de*

*l'A.T. a une fonction typologique, de manière positive ou négative, et qu'il possède un anti-type qui lui correspond dans la nouvelle alliance, l'exégèse de l'A.T. s'égara, si elle ignore ce fait.*

*Cependant, même lorsque les apôtres n'ont pas donné une interprétation typologique d'un élément présent dans l'A.T., il est légitime de rechercher une base théologique pour une interprétation de ce genre. La typologie implique une certaine façon structurée d'envisager la relation entre l'ancienne alliance et la nouvelle. Dans l'exégèse de l'A.T., il n'est pas seulement utile, mais aussi vital de discerner ces structures de pensée. Elles peuvent apporter une contribution valable à l'étude de l'A.T. Les auteurs du N.T. fondent leur typologie sur au moins trois présupposés: 1) ils sont attentifs à l'histoire du salut; 2) ils considèrent qu'il y a une continuité entre l'ancienne et la nouvelle alliances; 3) ils sont convaincus que l'A.T. est Ecriture Sainte. Ces présupposés constituent des lignes directrices fondamentales pour notre étude exégétique.*

*La typologie nous rappelle que l'Evangile est enraciné dans l'A.T. Si l'on méconnaît cette relation entre l'ancienne et la nouvelle alliance, il est impossible de rendre compte de manière satisfaisante du contenu du N.T. Ainsi la typologie ne se limite pas aux relations explicites entre les types et les anti-types, mais nous fournit des principes généraux pour notre interprétation de l'A.T.*



## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

*Ausgehend vom hermeneutischen τύπος-Konzept in 1. Kor. 10,11 soll die folgende Definition von Typologie vorgeschlagen werden: Typologie ist die neutestamentliche Interpretation von Personen, Ereignissen oder Institutionen des Alten Testaments, die als gottgewollte Vorausdarstellungen verstanden werden, welche mit bestimmten Faktoren der eschatologischen Erfüllung in Jesus Christus korrespondieren.*

*Erstens: die theologische Substanz des Typus ist nicht hinter dem historischen Ereignis zu suchen, sondern in dem Ereignis selbst. Zweitens: Paulus setzt voraus, daß die Typologie von Gott bestimmt ist. Drittens: der Typus ist die beispielhafte Repräsentation einer größeren und vollkommeneren Realität. Somit verweist er auf die eschatologische Erfüllung in Jesus Christus.*

*Typologie setzt eine grundsätzliche und weitgehende Kontinuität zwischen dem alten und neuen Bund voraus. Diese theologische Kohärenz findet sich in bezug auf Personen, Ereignisse und Institutionen der beiden Testamente, doch ist es zugleich offensichtlich, daß wir von der Kohärenz nur aufgrund ihrer schriftlichen Darlegung wissen. Folglich ist eine der Voraussetzungen von Paulus' Gebrauch von Typologie die Überzeugung, daß das AT als Heilige Schrift anzusehen ist.*

*Es stellt sich nun die Frage, ob es uns möglich ist, in unserer exegetischen Untersuchung eines alttestamentlichen Textes auf die Typologie zurückzugreifen.*

*Wenn die Autoren des NT ausdrücklich feststellen, daß ein alttestamentliches Ereignis als Typus eines korrespondierenden Antitypus' im neuen Bund fungiert (oder eben nicht fungiert), dann würde die alttestamentliche Exegese auf Abwege geraten, wenn sie dies ignorierte.*

*Doch für die Fälle, in denen kein apostolischer Gebrauch von Typologie vorliegt, ist es wesentlich, ihre theologische Grundlage ausfindig zu machen. Typologie setzt gewisse Gedankenstrukturen bezüglich des Verhältnisses von altem und neuem Bund voraus, und im Rahmen der alttestamentlichen Exegese ist es nicht nur nützlich, sondern entscheidend, daß diese Gedankenstrukturen klar erkannt werden. Typologie kann in hilfreicher Weise zum Studium des AT beitragen. Die Autoren des NT verwenden Typologie unter mindestens drei Voraussetzungen: (1.) sie lenken die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Heilsgeschichte, (2.) sie nehmen eine Kontinuität von altem und neuem Bund an, und (3.) sie sind überzeugt, daß das AT Heilige Schrift ist. Diese drei Voraussetzungen stellen fundamentale Richtlinien für die Exegese dar.*

*Typologie erinnert uns daran, daß das christliche Evangelium seine Wurzeln im AT hat. Wenn diese Beziehung zwischen dem alten und neuen Bund ignoriert wird, ist eine angemessene Auslegung von neutestamentlichen Texten unmöglich. Folglich ist Typologie nicht beschränkt auf das explizite Verhältnis von Typus und Antitypus, sondern stattet uns mit grundsätzlichen Prinzipien für die Interpretation des AT aus.*

In 1992 the Danish church got a new Prayer Book, authorized by the Queen. A liturgical committee had for years been preparing 'Den Danske Alterbog' as it is called in Danish. One of the innovations was the introduction of OT texts in the Danish service. In a report the committee explained the criteria for the selection of

OT texts, and in this connection it was said that in choosing and delimiting the OT texts the committee had followed the rule that the OT has to be read 'in its own terms'.

Nevertheless, the committee has proposed that OT texts be read in the Danish service, since from a historical and theo-



logical point of view, the OT way of thinking is the most important background for the Gospel. On the one hand the Church is a continuation of Israel, of Judaism, and the OT, and on the other hand also a rupture with Israel, Judaism and the OT. 'When this doubleness is kept in mind, it is possible for the Church to incorporate the OT texts in the service 'on the OT's own conditions'. Some of the texts are preparing for the Gospel in a positive way, others do it in a negative way, namely when the NT texts speak against the OT texts'.<sup>2</sup>

This understanding of the OT means disregarding the way of reading the OT which is found in the NT. It is well-known that there is a varied use of OT texts in the NT. In some cases the OT text is taken literally; in others it is interpreted allegorically or typologically. And sometimes the OT text contains a promise with fulfilment in Jesus Christ. It is impossible to describe the relationship between the OT and the NT in only one way. Nevertheless, it is obvious that typology plays an important role for the NT authors when they interpret the OT.

Typology has a theoretical background, and it is the aim of this paper to concentrate on some important aspects of this. The question is: What is the basic understanding of the OT when the NT authors read the OT typologically? Is it possible within the framework of typology to read the OT 'in its own terms'?

To begin with I want to stress that my interest is typology as it is used in the NT. I want to ask how the NT utilizes the OT. At the same time it is apparent that the NT use of the OT must be the basis for the Church in its reading of the OT, and that of course includes the reading of the OT in the Christian service.

## Typology

Among interpreters there are diverging opinions concerning the understanding of typology in the NT.<sup>3</sup> However, we may discern two main viewpoints. According to one position the types in the OT are

understood as anticipations with an inherent forward looking perspective;<sup>4</sup> others think that typology is a historical correspondence and analogy, which can be interpreted only retrospectively as an example of God's action in history.<sup>5</sup> It is outside the scope of this paper to discuss the wide variety of diverging opinions. My starting point is the hermeneutic τύπος-concept in the NT,<sup>6</sup> or more precisely, the words ταυτα δὲ τυπικως συνέβαιεν ἐκείνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη των αἰώνων κατήντηκεν in 1 Cor. 10:11<sup>7</sup>. I propose the following definition of typology: *Typology* is a NT interpretation of persons, events, or institutions in the OT.<sup>8</sup> These are understood as God-willed pre-figurations, and they correspond to elements in the eschatological fulfilment in Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup> I shall comment on some elements in this definition.

First, it appears that typology in contrast to allegory, respects the historical and literal dimension of the OT 'type'. The type is not a word, but a person, an event, or an institution, and its theological substance is said by Paul to be contained in its actual and original setting. By means of the word συνέβαιεν Paul stresses that the type was an event. It was a real incident in a concrete situation. In a modern historical critical tradition one will often doubt the authenticity of the actual type, but undoubtedly the authors of the NT regarded the types as historical realities. Consequently, the point is that the theological substance of the type is contained not behind or under the historical incident, but in it.

Secondly, Paul presupposes that the type is determined by God. There is a God-willed correspondence. Paul says: ταυτα δὲ τυπικως συνέβαιεν ἐκείνοις. He is convinced that God is Lord, that God controls and leads history. Paul shows that in the original situation the type had an important prospective character. He maintains that the links between the old and the new covenant are willed and governed by God.<sup>10</sup> It is not isolated persons, events, or institutions that are types, but a relationship with God is



manifested in these persons, events, or institutions.

Thirdly, according to Paul the type is an exemplary representation of a bigger and more perfect reality. It is not only an example, a pattern;<sup>11</sup> but the type denotes something that is not yet present. It anticipates something in the future. Accordingly, the type in the OT is not an ideal, which positively or negatively is to be imitated or repeated.<sup>12</sup> But in the relationship between the type and the antitype there is an ascent. The type looks forward to the eschatological fulfilment in Jesus Christ.<sup>13</sup> According to Paul the events in the OT are related to us on whom the end of the ages has come (εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη των αἰώνων κατήντηκεν). The type is an integrated part of the old covenant;<sup>14</sup> it is σκιά των μελλόντων (Col 2:17);<sup>15</sup> and the corresponding antitype belongs to the new covenant.

### The Theological Basis of Typology

In the NT we find both a horizontal and a vertical typology. In Heb 8:5 the author refers to the important statement in Exod 25:40. It is said that the tabernacle of the old covenant was only a pattern and a shadow of the tabernacle of heaven, which according to the words of God was the model (τύπος) for the construction of Moses' tabernacle.<sup>16</sup> From a terminological point of view it is striking that the tabernacle of heaven is called a τύπος in Heb 8:5, and consequently the word ἀντίτυπος designates the *hand made* (χειροποίητος) tabernacle of the old covenant in Heb 9:24. This terminology and way of thinking is unusual in the NT. One could be tempted to believe that the *typos*-structure in Heb. presupposes a static, two-world way of thinking, of a Platonic or Philonic nature, with a heavenly world of ideas in opposition to an earthly world of matter. But this interpretation of the background to the typology in Heb. is wrong. It ignores the fact that the vertical typology in Heb. is an integrated part of the horizontal typology. The fact is that the author of Heb. delineates the past

tabernacle not only as earthly, but first of all as belonging to the *first* covenant,<sup>17</sup> which is to be replaced by another and better covenant.<sup>18</sup> As mentioned earlier, precisely this relation of superiority characterizes the typological way of thinking. The vertical typology is not dissolved, but it is joined to the horizontal typology with its differentiation of the two covenants. It is against this background that the notion of vertical typology in Heb 8:5 and 9:24 is to be interpreted.

Generally in the typology of the NT, a factor in the old covenant is τύπος, while the analogous phenomenon in the new covenant is called ἀντίτυπος. Correspondingly, the designations τύπος and ἀντίτυπος do not belong to a two-world thinking, but to a line of thought dominated by salvation history. It is not the contrast between a heavenly and an earthly reality that is stressed, but the basic distinction between the old and the new covenant. The point is that the type looks forward to the fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

We can distinguish, in the NT, between a typology of creation, a typology of covenant, and a typology of judgment.<sup>20</sup> The typology of creation differentiates, for example, between Adam and Jesus, or Paradise and the Kingdom of God. The resurrection of Jesus introduces a new creation, in which God's original purpose is fulfilled. The typology of covenant relates to the covenants in the OT. The Flood is set against the Christian baptism. Jesus is the new Moses, etc. The death of Jesus is often brought into focus, since by it the new covenant is established. Finally the statements of Paul in 1 Cor 10:1–13 are a characteristic example of a typology of judgement. According to Paul the iniquity of Israel is a warning lesson to the Christian congregation.<sup>21</sup>

It is characteristic of typology that it is not interested in some timeless religious truths, but is preoccupied with the question how God acted, and how God acts. Furthermore, events are not regarded as isolated entities, separate from each other. They are not 'typical', that is to say they do not characterize how God acts at



any time and in any place, but they look forward to fulfilment in Jesus Christ. Since God has acted both in the old covenant and the new, the idea of salvation history is an essential foundation for understanding typology in the NT. Already in the OT this concept of typology is present, and it is taken over by the authors of the NT.<sup>22</sup>

In theological research the concept *salvation history* has been given diverging definitions,<sup>23</sup> but I use it here to mean the conviction that God has acted for salvation in actual historical events. The essential idea is that human beings meet the living God in a concrete historical situation, yet at the same time the historical event has a teleological dimension. It has intention; it aims at consummation. This reasoning forms the basis of the NT's use of typology.

In this way of thinking a theological coherence between the old and the new covenants is implied, and that coherence forms a further basis of typology in the NT. The authors of the NT never consider the books of the OT to be a 'non-Christian' collection. They don't believe that they function as a contrast to the Christian gospel. On the contrary, there is substantial and fundamental continuity between the old and new covenants.

Of course this continuity is not to be understood as unbroken harmony. Typology does not belittle the transgressions of Adam and of Israel. But it is assumed that in the history of the people of God there is a consistency in God's action in spite of human transgressions. It is manifest that the God of the OT is the Father of Jesus Christ. It is the same God who acts in both covenants. The NT authors never reject the perception of God in the OT and it is never suggested that there is a contradiction between the images of God in the OT and the NT, though there is, of course, a development in the divine revelation.<sup>24</sup>

While theological coherence is found between persons, events, and institutions in the two covenants, it is apparent that we know it only through the written account. By way of example Paul declares

in 1 Cor 10:11 that the accounts of transgressions of Israel were written to admonish the Christian congregation on whom the end of the ages has come (ἐγγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν). Paul maintains that not only the event as such, but also the written account of it was intended for the Christian congregation. Paul takes it for granted that there is a theological coherence between the text of the OT and his letter to the Corinthians.

Furthermore, it must be noticed that Paul uses the phrase ἐγγράφη in describing the text of the OT. Underlying this choice of words there is the conviction that the OT is Holy Scripture (ἡ γραφή). In this connection the most frequent verbal expressions are γέγραπται<sup>25</sup> and γεγραμμένος.<sup>26</sup> Yet ἐγγράφη too can be used in relation to the OT as ἡ γραφή.<sup>27</sup> In this connection it is notable that the phrase ἐγγράφη includes the thought of a *passivum divinum*: God is the originator of the Holy Scripture. Paul's use of typology, therefore, is based on the conviction that the OT is Holy Scripture. The types are not persons, events, or institutions as such. These are not types by virtue of their belonging to a popular narrative tradition or the like, but they are types because they form a part of Holy Scripture.<sup>28</sup>

It follows that the narratives were written down not only to warn Israel, but also with reference to the Christian community. The type as such has an inherent anticipatory outlook, and so too, correspondingly, has the biblical description and interpretation of it. Paul declares that the accounts of the transgressions of Israel were written down to admonish the Christian congregation (πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν). Similarly, the command in Deut 25:4 concerning the ox that is treading out grain was given δι' ἡμᾶς (1 Cor 9:10).<sup>29</sup>

For Paul, then, God is the authentic originator of Holy Scripture (1 Cor 10:11) and furthermore, Holy Scripture is intended for the Christian community. Paul thus formulates, or presupposes, a certain doctrine of inspiration: The Holy Scripture is in the original situation *inspired* by God, and in its reception, it



functions within the further *inspiring* process.

Thus the OT provides the primary background to the theology of Paul. As is well known, Paul and the other authors of the NT at times refer to Hellenistic poets<sup>30</sup> and to the world of ideas of Ancient Judaism<sup>31</sup>. However, phenomena in Rome and Athens, and in contemporary Jerusalem, are not portrayed as τύποι; they can merely be parallels, capable of confirming, but not normative. The authors of the NT find τύποι exclusively in the OT. Only here do we find historical phenomena which, in connection with salvation history, point forward to eschatological fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

### Typology and Exegesis

Now the question is if it is possible for us to use typology in the exegetical study of an OT text. Is it legitimate with Paul to declare: ταυτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη των αἰώνων κατήντηκεν (1 Cor 10:11)? This question cannot be answered unconditionally in the affirmative. Rather, we must distinguish between cases where the NT authors themselves use typology, and cases where they do not. When the authors of the NT expressly state that the OT factor was a type with a corresponding antitype, positive or negative, in the new covenant, OT exegesis will be led astray if it ignores this. Indeed, we may say that there is apostolic authority behind it.

Israel's crossing the Red Sea is an event of salvation history. *In itself* the narrative is a proclamation of God's redeeming intervention. But at the same time the event has an inherent forward looking perspective, prefiguring Christian baptism (1 Cor 10:2). Seeing that this is an apostolic interpretation, it is obvious to a Christian exegete that the factor in the OT is not sufficiently comprehended without this Christian reference. And it is not only a matter of *re-use* of the OT tradition, but according to Paul he depicts its true content.

But it is different in cases where there is no apostolic use of the typology. For the OT exegete the general point of view must be: ταυτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις. There is a universal analogy of structure.<sup>32</sup> But it is not possible for the expositor of Scripture to deduce a type-antitype connection from each and every *specific* event depicted in the OT. Typology is not an exegetical method,<sup>33</sup> and the interpreter can utilise it only in cases where the NT authors do so. Under other circumstances this path in the hermeneutical process is closed.<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand it is evident that typology implies certain thought structures that unite the old and the new covenants, and in the exegesis of the OT it is not only useful, but vital, that these thought structures be exposed. In this way, a typological awareness can contribute in a valuable way to the study of the OT.

The NT authors use typology on at least three premises: (1) They draw attention to the salvation history; (2) they assume a continuity between the old covenant and the new, and (3) they are convinced that the OT is Holy Scripture. These elements are of fundamental importance for the use of typology in the NT, and generally they characterize the NT's interpretation of the OT. With this in mind, we may discern fundamental guidelines for exegetical study.<sup>35</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the concept of salvation history plays a significant role in typology, and in that context the historical dimension is important. However, exegetes who minimize or neglect the historical context of a text and interpret it as a metaphor, a symbol, a myth in practice adopt an allegorical interpretation etc. One of the pioneers of the form critical method, Martin Dibelius, formulated the well known slogan, '... am Anfang war die Predigt'.<sup>36</sup> In the form critical school it was postulated that for the earliest Christian preaching it did not matter whether the content of the Gospel was historically reliable or not.<sup>37</sup>

In narrative theology one finds a similar point of view. It can be claimed that



the Jesus of the early Christian narratives has a more or less indifferent relation to the historical Jesus.<sup>38</sup> But a consideration like this is more related to allegory than to biblical typology. The historical dimension is not at all irrelevant for typology. The message of the type is closely determined by the concrete historical reality of the type in question. It is precisely in a concrete historical reality that God reveals himself. If this historical reality is challenged, then also the revelation of God is challenged.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, these ideas are integrated in the typological concept of a continuity in God's action in the old and the new covenants and that the OT is the Holy Scripture. The *foundation* of NT theology is not to be found in Hellenism or in Ancient Judaism, but in the OT. This fact has far-reaching consequences for NT exegesis. Obviously it is useful and necessary that the student of the NT includes religio-historical parallels from a Greco-Roman and Ancient Judaic background; indeed the authors of the NT lived in this atmosphere. But they found τύποι exclusively in the OT. Consequently the books of the OT are fundamental to an understanding of the NT texts.

Today only a few will endorse Marcion's rejection of the OT as Holy Scripture. Adolf von Harnack supported Marcion,<sup>40</sup> and Rudolf Bultmann presented a view of the OT which is substantially similar.<sup>41</sup> The History of Religions School found material in the Greco-Roman world of ideas for its interpretation of the NT, in a way that owed something to Marcion. In that way the organic connection between the old and the new covenant was evidently broken. But typology insists that the Christian gospel has its roots in the OT.

Typology, therefore, draws a line between the church and the synagogue. It is well known that Paul can employ rabbinic hermeneutical rules in interpreting the texts of the OT.<sup>42</sup> Obviously Paul, in handing on the Jesus tradition, observes rabbinic rules for the transmission of traditional material,<sup>43</sup> formally profiting from his rabbinic education. Conse-

quently it is important for the study of letters to know his roots in Rabbinism. Nevertheless it is apparent that typology separates Paul from the Ancient Judaic tradition. From a contemporary Jewish point of view Paul represents an unacceptable interpretation of the OT, based on the thought of salvation history with its fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

When it comes to NT exegesis, it appears that the OT texts are to be used as more than religio-historical parallels. The OT provides the most important background to the Gospel, and forms the basis for the interpretation of the NT books.<sup>44</sup> But typology implies that the OT is not only background material, which prepares the Christian gospel in a positive or negative way. Among other things the OT contains a description of a number of factors (persons, incidents, and institutions), which according to the authors of the NT point forward to the fulfilment in Jesus Christ. These types are not in line with other elements of the background and environment in which the authors of the NT lived. Rather, there is, in their view an essential coherence between the types in the OT and the antitypes in the NT. If this relation between the old and the new covenants is ignored, it will be impossible to give an adequate explanation of the NT text.

We do not deal with a faded or neglected connection of tradition between Israel and the Church. It is not only a matter of a mentality that the Church has in common with Ancient Judaism. But as the authors of the NT see it, it is a question of promise and fulfilment, of type and antitype. God guides the history of salvation forward to its eschatological fulfilment in Jesus Christ.<sup>45</sup>

To summarize, it appears that the theological principles attached to typology are of basic importance for the study of the OT. At the same time it is evident that it brings problems. For instance, it must be asked whether the use of the principles of typology presupposes that in the original situation *the OT factor itself* so to speak, was looking forward. Or was it acceptable for typology that the future perspective is



ascribed to the type, even though it is impossible to demonstrate it in the original text?<sup>46</sup>

In some cases it can be shown by means of careful study that the factor in the OT contains an eschatological dimension, which goes beyond the contemporary situation. This may not prove in itself that the factor in question is a type pointing forward to a corresponding and distinctly defined antitype in the new covenant. But it can be said that the eschatological motive is related to the fulfilment in the new covenant in Jesus Christ.<sup>47</sup> Even if a precise definition of the antitype is impossible, the conviction can remain that there is a continuity in the act of God, and in principle that means that there is a connecting line between the promise in the OT and the eschatological fulfilment in Jesus Christ.<sup>48</sup>

Almost the same thing can be said concerning the interpretation of those factors in which it is impossible to determine an eschatological element.<sup>49</sup> Of course it is difficult in such cases to lay down guidelines for the study of the OT, since the characters of the factors are so varied. Nevertheless, exegesis must aim to uncover the general disposition in the act of God in the history of salvation. This general disposition embraces a proclamation of salvation, which positively or negatively prepares for the Christian gospel. The relation between the gift of salvation in the old covenant and its counterpart in the new can in some cases be expressed as a contrast. In other cases the OT factor contains a message which preliminarily prepares the proclamation of Jesus Christ.<sup>50</sup>

My point is that whether or not the factor in the OT contains the future element, the student of the OT must endeavour to interpret the OT text in relation to the revelation of salvation in Jesus Christ. Of course the exegete has to be cautious. There is an obvious risk that interpretation might lead to arbitrary results, and that pious naivety should predominate. But this does not mean that the student of the OT should avoid relating the OT text to the new covenant in

Jesus Christ. Typology shows that not every model of interpretation which reads the OT text in the light of the new covenant in Jesus Christ is illegitimate. On the contrary, typology asserts that the factors in the OT are not fully understood unless the new covenant is taken into consideration. Only so is it possible to bring to light the full content and significance of the type.

Another considerable problem concerns the historicity of the OT factor. The question is: Does the factor lose its revelatory quality if it can be proved that in some sense it has a fictitious character?<sup>51</sup> It is outside the scope of this article to discuss this problem thoroughly. But as mentioned earlier, typology reminds us that the theological content of the type is linked to a real incident. Is it possible to conclude from this circumstance that the validity of the theological message of a factor depends on the historicity of the factor in question?

It is evident that the NT takes it for granted that salvation is deeply rooted in concrete historical events. The Christian gospel deals with historical occurrences. The content of the covenants is not timeless and history-less speculations in the world of abstractions. On the contrary the biblical texts recount God's revelation in a concrete historical reality. The Christian gospel has its basis in a known historical context. The preacher gives an account of historical incidents, and on this background he addresses his audience. In e.g. 1 Cor 15:1–3 Paul reminds the Corinthians of the Gospel (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) which he brought to them, and in that connection he combines rabbinic traditional terms with kerygmatic expressions.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, in 1 Cor 15:14 Paul states that if Christ was not raised from the dead, his preaching and their faith would mean nothing.

However it is not clear that there are borderline cases. Sometimes it must be admitted that the theological content of a text does not depend on the historicity of every detail in it. The NT contains four Gospels with diverging information about historical facts. Consequently, one must



distinguish between centre and periphery in the salvation historical incident. One example is found in Mark 10:46–52 par. in the account of the healing of the blind man in Jericho. The theological message of this text does not depend on whether on that occasion Jesus went in or went out of Jericho, and whether there were one or two blind persons. The Gospels contain many examples of such difficulties, but they do not prevent us from understanding the theological message of the texts.

A similar example is found in the descriptions of the words and acts of Jesus in the Gospel of John. All four Gospels are good sources for drawing a full picture of Jesus. The speeches of Jesus in the Gospel of John function as sources, even though they do not pretend to reproduce the *ipsissima verba Jesu*. The aim of John is to render the preaching and the work of Jesus in a right way, but not in a way that is 'photographically' accurate.

It is the same within an OT context. There are several examples of historical details which are of marginal importance for the theological substance. On this point the interpreter is forced to distinguish between centre and periphery, and to estimate when the assumption of historicity is required for the theological message and when it is not. In this respect, diverging opinions are inevitable, even if the biblical authors seem generally to suppose that the theological content of a text depends on the historical incident in question.

## Conclusion

The typological way of thinking in the NT is based on several basic assumptions. It is presupposed, for example, that there exists a theological continuity between the old covenant and the new covenant in spite of certain obvious contrasts. The use of typology is supported by the conviction that the OT is Holy Scripture, and by a salvation historical interpretation of the OT.

These are among other things the premises for typology in the NT, and it is against this background that the authors of the NT books read the OT. For the Christian church and Christian exegesis this is an essential starting point for the study of the OT.

Thus, typology is not limited to explicit relationships between types and anti-types, but rather it gives us general principles for the interpretation of the OT. In this connection it is inadequate to say, with the above mentioned liturgical committee, that the OT has to be read 'on its own terms'. If the exegete studies the description of a type in the OT 'on its own terms', he will not come to a satisfactory understanding of the type or of the text in question. The exegete must be aware of the basis of typology in terms of the relation between the old covenant and the new. Only so will the text of the OT be fully understood.

- 1 First published in: *Teologi for kirken. Festschrift i anledning af Menighedsfakultetets 25 års jubilæum*, Århus 1993, 132–149.
- 2 E. Nielsen: 'Om de gammeltestamentlige løsninger ved gudstjenesten', in: *Indledning. Forslag til Alterbog*. Betænkning afgivet af kirkeministeriets liturgiske kommission, København 1985, 35.
- 3 The word typology is derived from τύπος, which appears in the NT as a hermeneutical term in 1 Cor 10:6 and Rom 5:14. The term in 1 Cor 10:11 and 1 Pet 3:21 (ἀντίτυπος) is also related to τύπος. Cf. in addition Matt 11:14, 12:40; 17:12; 24:37–39; Mark 9:13, John 3:14, Rom 4:11, 1 Cor 5:7; Gal 4:21–31. I use the designation typology for both the relationship between the type and the antitype and for the study of this relationship. An explicit typology appears in all probability for the first time in the prophetic literature in the OT, for instance in the idea of a new Exodus (Hos 2:14f; Isa 43:16–21), a new covenant (Jer 31:31–37; Ezek 16:60–63), a new kingdom of David (Amos 9:11f; Isa 11:1–10), a new Zion (Isa 2:2–5) etc. But it has been argued that typology is a dominant motif in the OT more generally, seeing that in the OT there is a belief in the unchangeability of God: What God did, God will do again. And the new act of God will be characterized by a still greater



- glory than before (so F. Foulkes: *The Acts of God. A Study of the Basis of Typology in the Old Testament*, London, 1958, 9–40; moreover H. D. Hummel: 'The Old Testament Basis of Typological Interpretation', *Biblical Research* 9, 1964, 38–50). Cf., concerning prophetic typology, L. Goppelt: *Typos. Die typologische Deutung des Alten Testaments im Neuen*, Gütersloh, 1939 (= Darmstadt, 1981), 42–47. nl; G. von Rad: 'Das Alte Testament ist ein Geschichtsbuch' in: C. Westermann (hrsg.): *Probleme alttestamentlicher Hermeneutik*, München, 1968, 16f; G. von Rad: *Theologie des Alten Testaments* 2, München, 1975, 126f, 281f, 344–349, 388–398; L. Goppelt: *Art. τύπος κτλ.*, *ThWNT* 8, 254f; D. L. Baker: *Two Testaments, One Bible. A Study of Some Modern Solutions to the Theological Problem of the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments*, Leicester, 1976, 243–245 and E. E. Ellis: *The Old Testament in Early Christianity. Canon and Interpretation in the light of Modern Research*, Tübingen, 1991, 46f. Against this, typology is held by K. J. Woollcombe: 'The Biblical Origins and Patristic Development of Typology', in: G. W. H. Lampe & K. J. Woollcombe (ed.): *Essays on Typology*, London 1957, 42, 49 to have arisen in connection with the interpretation of the OT in the early Church. Cf. L. Goppelt: 'Apokalyptik und Typologie bei Paulus', in: *Typos. Die typologische Deutung des Alten Testaments im Neuen*, Gütersloh, 1939 (=Darmstadt, 1981), 281–287 and R. M. Davidson: *Typology In Scripture. A Study of Hermeneutical ΤΥΠΟΣ Structures*, Berrien Springs, 1981, 107f.
- 4 E.g. Goppelt, *Typos*, 18f; C. T. Fritsch: 'Principles of Biblical Typology', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 104, 1947, 214–216; G. W. H. Lampe: 'The Reasonableness of Typology', in: G. W. H. Lampe & K. J. Woollcombe (eds.): *Essays on Typology*, London, 1957, 29f and S. N. Gundry: 'Typology as Means of Interpretation: Past and Present', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 12, 1969, 237.
  - 5 Cf. the definition by Baker, *Testaments*, 267 and the explanation added, 239–243 and 251–262. Cf. A. T. Hanson: *The Living Utterances of God. The New Testament Exegesis of the Old*, London, 1983, 49–53.
  - 6 In a convincing way Goppelt has shown that a typological way of thinking is found in the NT even outside the very framework of the concept of τύπικως (Goppelt, *Typos*, 70–238).
  - 7 I assume on the basis of the context that τύποι and τυπικως in 1 Cor 10:6–11 are hermeneutical terms. The incidents in the old covenant are described not only as warning examples, but according to Paul they point towards the new covenant.
  - 8 Below I use the term *factor* as a unifying appllation for persons, incidents, and institutions.
  - 9 To a greater extent I follow Davidson, *Typology*, 421. Cf. F. Torm: *Nytestamentlig Hermeneutik*, København 1928, 222. A thorough and well-arranged survey of the history of research concerning the idea of typology is found in Goppelt, *Typos*, 9–18 and Davidson, *Typology*, 15–114. Moreover, C.-M. Edsman: 'Gammal och ny typologisk tolkning av G.T.', *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 12, 1947, 69–83. Comprehensive literature concerning typology is found in Baker, *Testaments*, 240–242 and Davidson, *Typology*, 426–496.
  - 10 Rightly pointed out by E. E. Ellis: *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, Edinburgh, London, 1957, 127f; R. A. Markus: 'Presuppositions of the Typological Approach to Scripture', *Church Quarterly Review* 158, 1957, 447f and O. Skarsaune: *Da Skriften ble åpnet. Den første kristne tolkning av Det gamle testamente*, Oslo, 1987, 31.
  - 11 Against Baker, *Testaments*, 253 and 262. In that case the terms εἰκών or ὁμοίωμα could have been used. Cf. Goppelt, *ThWNT* 8, 253.
  - 12 Often persons in the Scriptures of the OT are depicted as examples for comfort or for warning, e.g. Job (Jas 5:11), Elijah (Jas 5:17), and Esau (Heb 12:16), but in these cases the idea of an eschatological fulfilment is not found. Cf. K. Frör: *Biblische Hermeneutik. Zur Schriftauslegung in Predigt und Unterricht*, München, 3. Aufl., 1967, 87, 164.
  - 13 But this relationship of increase can be antithetical in terms of character, as in Rom 5:12–21 in the Adam-Christ-typology. Concerning a structural narrative interpretation of this typology I refer to O. Davidsen: 'Den strukturelle Adam/Kristus-typologi. Om Romerbrevets grundfortælling', *Dansk Teologisk Tidsskrift* 55, 1992, 241–261.
  - 14 I use the term *the old covenant* as a general designation of the history of the people of God preceding Jesus Christ and



- do not limit the term to designate only the explicit covenants in the OT.
- 15 Cf. the phrase τύπος του μέλλοντος in Rom 5:14. Cf. Goppelt, *ThWNT* 8, 253.
  - 16 Cf. Acts 7:44.
  - 17 Heb 8:7.13, 9:1.2.6.8.15.18.
  - 18 Heb 8:7; 9:15.
  - 19 Cf. e.g. Frör, *Hermeneutik*, 87, Goppelt, *ThWNT* 8, 258–260 and Davidson, *Typology*, 336–388. Cf. besides concerning the vertical typology in the OT e.g. Hummel, 'Testament', 39.n4 and C. T. Fritsch: 'TO 'ANTITYΠION', in: W. C. van Unnik & A. S. van der Woude (ed.): *Studia Biblica et Semitica* (FS T. C. Vriezen), Wageningen 1996, 100–107.
  - 20 Cf. Ellis, *Use*, 129–134; Ellis, *Old Testament*, 105–109 and E. E. Ellis: 'How the New Testament uses the Old', in: I. H. Marshall (ed.): *New Testament Interpretation*, Exeter, 1977 (reprinted in: E. E. Ellis: *Prophecy and Hermeneutics in Early Christianity*, Grand Rapids, 1978), 210–212.
  - 21 The above-mentioned examples show that the types and the antitypes reciprocally illuminate each other. One element is not truly understood unless the other is included. This is pointed out by Lampe, who states concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus, 'The fulfilment makes it possible for him to understand the past events, and the past events help him to grasp the meaning of Christ's redemptive work. It would be difficult for the Church to have come to any full understanding of the Gospel events if it had not been able to interpret Christ in terms of, and by reference to, the traditional imagery of Hebrew religious thought, imagery taken from Old Testament history' ('Reasonableness', 28). On the other hand Lampe had earlier said, 'The antitype must be used to illuminate the type. We must not turn to the Old Testament in order to read the New in its light; we should reverse that process' (G. W. H. Lampe: 'Typological Exegesis', *Theology* 56, 1953, 207).
  - 22 Goppelt often calls attention to this, e.g. 'Apokalyptik', 277f. Correspondingly Woolcombe, 'Origins', 68f, shows that exactly the salvation historical point of view distinguishes the biblical typology from e.g. the concept of τύπος by Philo.
  - 23 Cf. Frör, *Hermeneutik*, 89–109 and Aa. Pilgaard: 'Den frelseshistoriske tolkning', in: S. Pedersen (red.): *Skriftsyn og metode. Om den nytestamentlige hermeneutik*, Århus, 1989, 229–246, with definition of the concept 237. Cf. von Rad, 'Testament', 13.
  - 24 Cf. the prologues in John and Heb.
  - 25 E.g. Matt 2:15; Mark 1:2; Acts 1:20; Rom 1:17; 1 Cor 10:7; 1 Pet 1:16.
  - 26 E.g. Luke 4:17; 18:31; 24–44; Acts 24:14; 1 Cor 15:54; Gal 3:10.
  - 27 E.g. Rom 4:23; 15:4; 1 Cor 9:10 and 10:11.
  - 28 Cf. Goppelt, 'Apokalyptik', 273 and Gundry, 'Typology', 240. It is thus assumed that typology presupposes the idea of the unity of Holy Scripture. That has been emphasized by e.g. Fritsch, 'Principles', 218–220 and Lampe, 'Reasonableness', 14f, 22–29.
  - 29 Cf. the phrase οὐκ ἐγγράφη δὲ δι' αὐτὸν μόνον ... ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ἡμᾶς in Rom. 4:23f.
  - 30 E.g. Acts 17:28; 1 Cor 15:33 and Titus 1:12.
  - 31 E.g. 2 Cor 11:14; 2 Tim 2:19; Heb 11:37 and maybe also 1 Cor 2:9.
  - 32 Cf. concerning the notion *structure-analysis* von Rad, *Theologie* 2, 387.
  - 33 Rightly pointed out by e.g. Torm, *Hermeneutik*, 224–227 and Baker, *Testaments*, 258 and 268.
  - 34 At this point I am more reserved than e.g. Skarsaune, *Skriften*, 32–35.
  - 35 Cf. Ellis, *Old Testament*, 143–148.
  - 36 M. Dibelius: *Botschaft und Geschichte I*, Tübingen, 1953, 242.
  - 37 Cf. e.g. R. Bultmann: *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, Göttingen, 8. Aufl., 1970, 4f.
  - 38 Cf. e.g. the description of *narrative criticism* by A. G. van Aarde: 'Narrative Criticism applied to John 4:43–54', in: P. J. Hartin & J. H. Petzer (ed.): *Text and Interpretation. New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament*, Leiden, New York, København, Köln, 1991, 101–128, particularly 107–111.
  - 39 Also within the evangelical tradition a kind of exposition may be found, which, although termed typological, has unmistakable allegorical traits; cf. for instance J. F. Walvoord: 'The Incarnation of the Son of God. Christological Typology', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 105, 1948, 407–413.
  - 40 The famous thesis of Harnack is, 'das AT im 2. Jahrhundert zu verwerfen, war ein Fehler, den die grosse Kirche mit Recht abgelehnt hat; es im 16. Jahrhundert beizubehalten, war ein Schicksal, dem sich die Reformation noch nicht zu entziehen vermochte; es aber seit dem 19. Jahrhun-



dert als kanonische Urkunde im Protestantismus noch zu konservieren, ist die Folge einer religiösen und kirchlichen Lähmung' (A. von Harnack: *Marcion. Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott. Eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der katholischen Kirche*, Leipzig, 2. Aufl., 1924 (= Darmstadt, 1985), 217).

- 41 Cf. R. Bultmann: 'Die Bedeutung des Alten Testaments für den christlichen Glauben', in: R. Bultmann: *Glauben und Verstehen I*, Tübingen, 8. Aufl., 1980, 313–336. Bultmann declares that the OT throws light on the human understanding of existence. The OT sees man in his 'Zeitlichkeit und Geschichtlichkeit' (324). But according to Bultmann the Church cannot regard the OT as the word of God, 'für den christlichen Glauben ist das Alte Testament nicht mehr Offenbarung, wie es das für die Juden war und ist. Wer in der Kirche steht, für den ist die Geschichte Israels vergangen und abgetan. Die christliche Verkündigung kann und darf die Hörer nicht daran erinnern, dass Gott ihre Väter aus Ägyptenland geführt hat. . . . Israels Geschichte ist nicht unsere Geschichte, und sofern Gott in jener Geschichte gnädig gewaltet hat, gilt diese Gnade nicht uns. . . . Das heisst aber, dass die Geschichte Israels für uns nicht Offenbarungsgeschichte ist' (333). 'Selbstverständlich kann man sagen, dass für eine geschichtliche Besinnung, für eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit der geschichtlichen Vergangenheit, aus der wir kommen, auch die Geschichte Israels etwas Wesentliches sagt. . . . Aber im gleichen Sinne kann man auch sagen, dass jene Spartaner in den Thermopylen für uns gefallen sind und Sokrates den Giftbecher für uns getrunken hat. Und in diesem Sinne ist Jerusalem für uns nicht eine heiligere Stadt als Athen oder Rom' (333f).

A thorough investigation of Bultmann's understanding of the OT as the 'non-Christian presupposition' of the NT is found in Baker, *Testaments*, 155–187.

- 42 Cf. the important observations by J. Jeremias: 'Paulus als Hillelit', in: E. E. Ellis & M. Wilcox (ed.): *Neotestamentica et Semitica* (FS Matthew Black), Edinburgh 1969, 88–94 concerning the hermeneutical rules of Hillel and the use of those rules in the NT. Cf. in addition e.g. Ellis, *Use*, 41f, 46f and Ellis, *Old Testament*, 87–91, 130–138.

- 43 Cf. the terminology in e.g. 1 Cor 11:2,23; 15:1–3; Gal 1:9; Phil 4:9; Col 2:6; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6 and the information in Acts 22:3.

- 44 Cf. e.g. Nielsen, 'Læsninger', 35.

- 45 Cf. Markus, 'Presuppositions', 446, 'the New Testament reveals its detailed dependence on the Old—not simply as a literary influence, but as endowing the events recounted by the New Testament writers with their significance'. Cf. 450f.

- 46 Cf. for this the considerations of W. C. Kaiser Jr: *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, Chicago 1985, 106–110.

- 47 According to e.g. 2 Sam 7:13 expectations of a new temple are connected with the temple in the old covenant. But there is not one single clearly defined corresponding antitype in the NT as Jesus Christ, the Christian church and the Christian person can all be described there as the temple of God.

- 48 Cf. the explanation by von Rad, *Theologie* 2, 339–342, and his definition of the OT as 'das Buch der Erwartung'. He also says 'Wie war es denn möglich, dass sich die alttestamentlichen Überlieferungen, dass sich all die Erzählungen, Gebete und Weisungen, derart vom Neuen Testament aus in Beschlag nehmen liessen? Das wäre nicht möglich gewesen, wenn die Schrift des Alten Testaments nicht auch von sich aus der Deutung auf Christus hin offenstand und ihr in hermeneutischer Hinsicht entgegenkam' *Theologie* 2, 354.

- 49 An example is the account of the tower in Babel in Gen 11:1–9.

- 50 Consequently the exegete cannot preclude in advance a future related reading of the texts of the OT although they do not themselves contain an eschatological motif. Cf. the statements by Foulkes, *Acts*, 38–40, Markus, 'Presuppositions', 447f and G. R. Osborne: 'Type; Typology', *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* 4, 930f. Contrarily Kaiser, *Uses*, 17–23, 25f argues that it is only the opinion of the original author himself which is the content of the text in question. Cf. concerning the problem of the prophets' understanding of the contents of their own preaching e.g. Dan 12:6–9; 1QpHab 7:1f; 1 Pet 1:10f.

- 51 Cf. Hanson, *Utterances*, 186–189. He rejects the historicity of a number of types and consequently the validity of typology.



52 On the one hand e.g. παραλαμβάνειν, ἐστηκέναι, κατέχειν, παραδιδόναι; on the other hand εὐαγγελίζειν, σώζειν, πιστεύειν. A similar coherence between paradoxis

terms and kerygmatic terms is found in Gal 1:9 and 1 Thess 2:13. Cf. L. Goppelt: 'Tradition nach Paulus', *Kerygma und Dogma* 4, 1958, 215–222.

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