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Biblical Typology and Its Counterparts in Ancient Religious Thought*

Typologia biblijna i jej odzwierciedlenia w antycznej myśli religijnej

ABSTRACT: The aim of the article is to analyse the concept of biblical typology in the context of its counterparts in ancient religions, including Greek, Babylonian, and Persian ones. The subject of the study is the phenomenon of describing earthly reality as a reflection of transcendent reality, with a focus on the differences between biblical typology and ancient allegorical and relational concepts. The article attempts to compare these ideas, demonstrating their evolution from cosmological and metaphysical models to historical and eschatological ones. The first part of the article introduces the origins and essence of typology and allegory, emphasizing their distinct cultural and theological roots. Subsequent sections investigate examples from Ancient Near Eastern literature, including the *Enuma Elish* and the Bodashtart inscriptions, as evidence of the idea of dependency between earthly and heavenly realities. In the biblical context, special attention is given to Old Testament references to typology, which set the stage for its development in New Testament texts. The article provides a novel perspective by highlighting the similarities and differences in the understanding of typology across ancient religions and the Bible, emphasizing their contribution to the interpretation of religious texts and the understanding of reality. The adopted research method combines literary, hermeneutical, and comparative analysis, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the topic.

KEY WORDS: typology, allegory, interpretation of Scripture, *Enuma Elish*, Bodashtart inscriptions, KAI 15, Old Testament, New Testament

ABSTRAKT: Celem artykułu jest analiza idei typologii biblijnej w kontekście jej odpowiedników w starożytnych kręgach religijnych, m.in. greckich, babilońskich czy

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perskich. Przedmiotem badań jest zjawisko opisywania rzeczywistości ziemskiej jako odbicia rzeczywistości transcendentnej z uwzględnieniem różnic pomiędzy typologią biblijną a starożytnymi koncepcjami alegorycznymi i zależnościowymi. Artykuł podejmuje próbę porównania tych idei, ukazując ich rozwój od wzorców kosmologicznych i metafizycznych do historycznych i eschatologicznych. W pierwszej części artykułu przedstawiono genezę i istotę typologii oraz alegorii, wskazując na ich odmienne korzenie kulturowe i teologiczne. W kolejnych częściach omówiono przykłady literatury starożytnego Bliskiego Wschodu, w tym *Enuma elisz* i inskrypcji Bodashtarta, jako dowodów na istnienie koncepcji zależności między rzeczywistością ziemską a niebiańską. W kontekście biblijnym szczególną uwagę poświęcono starotestamentowym odniesieniom do typologii, które wyznaczyły kierunek jej rozwoju w tekstach Nowego Testamentu. Artykuł wnosi nową perspektywę poprzez ukazanie podobieństw i różnic w rozumieniu typologii w kulturach starożytnych oraz Biblii, podkreślając ich wkład w interpretację tekstów religijnych i rozumienie rzeczywistości. Przyjęta metoda badawcza obejmuje analizę literacką, hermeneutyczną oraz porównawczą, co pozwala na kompleksowe ujęcie tematu.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: typologia, alegoria, interpretacja Pisma Świętego, *Enuma elisz*, inskrypcje Bodashtarta, KAI 15, Stary Testament, Nowy Testament

Introduction

Since the dawn of history, mankind has endeavoured to understand and describe reality, attempting to assign to it a meaning and place in a wider spiritual and cultural context. This truth is metaphorically expressed, for instance, by the fact that the very first pages of Scripture, the second chapter of Genesis, depict man as the one who names all creation and thus defines it (Gen 2:20). However, the human curiosity and desire to describe the world around him was by no means satisfied. Humanity from every corner of the Earth has therefore sought to establish a correspondence and points of reference between what is transcendent and real, feeling that the reality is but a copy and a poor reflection of something greater and more perfect. This correspondence applies both to man holistically, i.e., to the meaning and purpose of his life, as well as to the patterns of behaviour and systems of beliefs he practices, as well as to everything that he himself creates or that surrounds him independently. These interdependencies are embedded not only in the religious context, but also in the social, political and cultural one.

Ancient literature and archaeological excavations provide several examples of this interpretation and reasoning about the world. Although they are part of a particular culture and religion and differ in terms of time and place of functioning, they share some common features. This is the case, for example,

with the Babylonian epic *Enuma Elish* and the Sidonian inscription KAI 15. Interestingly, there are reminiscences of these concepts of all-encompassing correspondence in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, this idea came to be re-defined in later Old Testament texts, finding the final and full expression in the New Testament texts. Ultimately, in biblical studies, this idea is referred to as biblical typology.

The issue of biblical typology is well-developed in biblical theology and hermeneutics; however, most studies focus on its application in the analysis of biblical texts (e.g., the relationship between the Old and New Testaments). Studies of similar concepts in ancient cultures, such as Greek allegory, Babylonian cosmogonies and Persian belief systems, are often treated separately, making it difficult to fully understand biblical typology in a broader cultural context. Noteworthy are the works of Gerhard von Rad, Jean Daniélou and Henri de Lubac, who have highlighted both the differences and similarities between biblical typology and the dependency concepts of the Ancient Near East. Nevertheless, more research is needed on their mutual influence and evolution, which this text attempts to account for.

The article favours an interdisciplinary approach, combining the literary, hermeneutical as well as historical and cultural analysis. The literary analysis focuses on the typological relationships between the Old and New Testaments, taking into account the typological terminology characteristic of the New Testament. The comparative cultural analysis juxtaposes biblical typology both with analogous ideas in Ancient Near Eastern cultures, such as Babylonia and Persia, and with the Greek allegory, disclosing the similarities and differences. The typology was set in a historical and religious context, from vertical references between the “earthly” and the “heavenly” to horizontal temporal and eschatological relationships. The results of the analyses have been synthesised to show the development of typological thinking and its relevance to the interpretation of reality in different religious and cultural contexts.

1. Allegory Versus Typology

With the spread of Christianity in pagan environments, a new (for a religion with roots in Semitic culture and thought) method of reading and interpreting sacred texts finds its way into biblical hermeneutics: allegory. Its main representative, most often associated with this way of interpreting Scripture, is believed to have been Origen. Nevertheless, the beginnings of the influence of this truly Hellenistic method can already be seen in the writings of Philo

of Alexandria, who is considered the most prominent representative of this school of thought.¹

What allegory and typology have in common, most generally, is to read the content figuratively, non-literally, spiritually, in pursuit for a deeper meaning and significance. One needs to conclude, however, that this is where the similarities end, since both allegory and typology have a completely different genealogy. Allegory originated in Greek philosophy and culture. Its primary purpose was to save the normative character of myths and to give them a deeper, fuller meaning, since allegorical interpretation expressed the truth about the cosmos and man, especially in terms of his moral life.² Typology is an indigenously Jewish invention,³ although, as will be shown later, a similar concept of relationships is present in other cultures of the ancient Orient. Unlike allegory, typology does not formulate general rules or inclusive moral values. Its purpose is to show the fulfilment of God's promises present in the Old Testament and to point to the superiority of the new economy of salvation, which finds its fulfilment in the person of Jesus Christ and his salvific work. The meaning of this work, or of events in general, is not so much cosmic or moral, but eschatological.⁴

Another significant difference, between biblical typology and allegory (even the Christian one) is the "plane of meaning." Allegory is considered a vertical interpretation "because it presents timeless relationships between images and their symbols. . . . it aims to bring out universal metaphysical truths."⁵ Typologies, conversely, are regarded as a horizontal interpretation because it is intended to demonstrate the unity and coherence of God's plan in a historical perspective and "the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant, which is only an outline, a foreshadowing of it."⁶ This is this distinction that results in the following ones.

¹ Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Eerdmans, 1982), 42.

² Richard Lemmer, "Movement from Allegory to Metaphor or from Metaphor to Allegory? 'Discovering' Religious Truth," *Neotestamentica* 32, no. 1 (1998): 96.

³ Jean Daniélou, *Sacramentum futuri: Études sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (Beauchesne, 1950), 48.

⁴ Jean Daniélou, "Symbolisme et théologie," in *Interpretation der Welt: Festschrift für Romano Guardini zum achtzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Helmut Kuhn et al. (Echter-Verlag, 1965), 673.

⁵ Mikołaj Domaradzki, "Między alegorią a typologią: Uwagi o hermeneutyce Orygenes [Between Allegory and Typology: Notes on the Hermeneutics of Origenes]," *Przegląd Religioznawczy*, no. 1 (2011): 17–27, <http://hdl.handle.net/10593/8813>.

⁶ Marcel Simon, *Cywilizacja wczesnego chrześcijaństwa* [Civilization of Early Christianity], 2nd ed., trans. Eligia Bąkowska (Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981), 389.

If, then, allegory is a mental construct that treats the realities in question without a specific timeframes, one can assume, after J. Daniélou, that it is an ahistorical symbolism.⁷ This is intended to mean that allegory expresses truths that are not linked to a specific history, to a specific event; they are timeless and eternal (as is the case when interpreting myths or Homer's poems). In principle, for allegorists, little did the historical and real occurrence of the event being explained matter, because they sought in it universal and unchanging norms concerning man and the world.⁸ The case of typology is quite different. It is deeply rooted in history, for its purpose is to establish the connections between events, institutions and characters of the Old and New Testaments. Thus, it no longer refers to the relationship between the visible and the invisible, the earthly and the heavenly, but to the correspondence of historical realities in the different stages of salvation history, in which the Old Testament foreshadows and prepares the coming of the New Testament.⁹ In capturing the differences between typology and allegory, it is this distinction that comes to the fore in Daniélou's writings.

These differences were first recognised by the twentieth-century theologians such as J. Daniélou, H. de Lubac, Samuel Amsler, G. von Rad, Walter Eichrodt and many others. They noticed that the Greek allegory was partially accommodated to the interpretive requirements of the Old Testament, applied by early Christian exegetes and apologists and Church Fathers such as Philo, Origen, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa and Ambrose of Milan.¹⁰ Originally, it was impossible to distinguish between allegorical interpretation and typology, since both were concerned with the search for the hidden, spiritual sense.¹¹ Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that biblical allegory and typology, despite differences in their origins and purposes, are similar mental constructs. Both serve to uncover deeper, timeless meanings in texts and events, drawing on the idea of a connection between the visible and the invisible, the past and the future. In both cases, human reality is seen as a pathway to learn

⁷ Franciszek Szulc, *Struktura teologii judeochrześcijańskiej* [The Structure of Judeo-Christian Theology], 2nd ed., *Myśl Teologiczna* 47 (WAM, 2005), 124.

⁸ Antoni Paciorek, "Alegoria i teoria w egzegezie starożytnego Kościoła [Allegory and Theory in the Exegesis of the Ancient Church]," *Collectanea Theologica* 67, no. 1 (1997): 57–78.

⁹ Jean Daniélou, "Exégèse et typologie patristique," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, vol. 4, bk. 1 (Beauchesne, 1960), 134.

¹⁰ Cf. Jean Daniélou, *Essai sur le mystère de l'histoire*, Traditions chrétiennes 8 (Éditions du Cerf, 1982); Daniélou, "Exégèse et typologie patristique," 132–38; Henri de Lubac, "'Typologie' et 'Allégorisme,'" *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 34 (1947): 180–226.

¹¹ De Lubac, "'Typologie' et 'allégorisme,'" 184–85, 200. Cf. Paciorek, "Alegoria i teoria w egzegezie starożytnego Kościoła," 59.

greater moral and cosmic truths (allegory) as well as spiritual and eschatological truths (typology).

2. Mythological-speculative Typology¹²

Another, perhaps primordial, form of this analogous, dependency thinking can be observed in the culture and religion of some countries of the Ancient Near East – specifically Persia and Babylonia. A kind of mythological concept of all-encompassing correspondence is evident there, a congruence between the heavenly on the one hand and the earthly realm on the other. As the German Assyriologist Bruno Meissner observes: “according to the law of the correspondence of macrocosm and microcosm, the prototypes of all countries, rivers, cities and temples exist in heaven in the form of certain astral figures, while the corresponding objects on earth are merely copies of them.”¹³

This type of correspondence (whatever is on the earth is merely a copy of what is in heaven) can be read from Sidonian building inscriptions during the reigns of kings Eshmunazar II and Bodashtart, between 539–515 BC, when Sidon was under the Persian rule. These inscriptions include expressions ŠMM RMM ‘High-Heavens’ and ŠMM DRM ‘Magnificent Heaven’, which correspond to specific parts of the city of Sidon.¹⁴ An excerpt from an inscription referred to as KAI 15 or RES 766 reads:

King Bod’astart, King of the Sidonians, the grandson of the King Eshmūn’azor, king of Sidonians reigning in Sidon-of-the-Sea, High-Heavens, [and] the Resep District, belonging to Sidon; who built this house like the eyrie of the eagle; he built it [temple] for his god, Eshmūn the Holy Lord.¹⁵

¹² This was the phrase used by G. von Rad to describe the idea of correspondences found in ancient Oriental cultures; cf. Gerhard von Rad, “II. Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament,” *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 15, no. 2 (1961): 175, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002096436101500205>.

¹³ Bruno Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, vol. 2, Kulturgeschichtliche Bibliothek: Reihe 1, 4 (Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1925), 110.

¹⁴ Von Rad, “II. Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament,” 175.

¹⁵ Charles C. Torrey, “A Phoenician Royal Inscription,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 23 (1902): 161, <https://doi.org/10.2307/592387>.

When “High-Heavens” are mentioned, it is most likely referring to the temple area.¹⁶ According to the information on other inscriptions (KAI 14, 16 and CIS I 4), ancient Sidon was divided into at least two districts – “Sidon-of-the-Sea,” which included the urban area, and an out-of-town district referred to as “the Resep District, belonging to Sidon.” A toponymic reference in the name of a district or building is quite natural, even intentional from the historical perspective.¹⁷ In the KAI 15 inscription, King Bodashtart lists his constructing achievements according to the then prevailing pattern, which is also preserved in other inscriptions, and presents himself as a builder-king.¹⁸ However, it is interesting to note that the ruler refers a certain part of the city to a corresponding pattern located in heaven. Although the exact meaning is not known, it brings to mind some supernatural, heavenly reality. Perhaps this refers to the cult of Baal Shamen, the god of heaven, particularly worshipped in Tyre and Sidon. Above this, the term “High-Heavens” may refer to a celestial realm, the dwelling place of the gods, or to a divine reality in general.¹⁹ It can thus be concluded that the earthly Sidon or its temple quarter is merely a copy, a reflection, a substitute of its heavenly prototype.

An analogous way of thinking can be found in the ancient Babylonian epic about the creation of the world *Enuma Elish*. The work, written on seven stone tablets, was found in the ruins of the ancient Royal Library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh between 1848 and 1876.²⁰ It is difficult to determine the exact time of the work’s creation, but the oldest surviving editions of the text date to the first half of the first millennium BC. This period should be considered the final stage of the unification of views on the creation of the world.²¹ The poem describes the creation of the world by the god Marduk, which resulted from

¹⁶ Richard J. Clifford, “The Tent of El and the Israelite Tent of Meeting,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1971): 225.

¹⁷ José Á. Zamora, “The Inscription from the First Year of King Bodashtart of Sidon’s Reign: CIS I, 4,” *Orientalia* 76, no. 1 (2007): 111.

¹⁸ Paolo Xella and José A. Zamora, “Une nouvelle inscription de Bodashtart, roi de Sidon, sur la rive du Nahr al-Awwali près de Bvstan es-Seh,” *Bulletin d’Archéologie et d’Architecture Libanaises* 8 (2004): 287.

¹⁹ Paolo Xella, “Religion,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Phoenician and Punic Mediterranean*, ed. Brian R. Doak and Carolina López-Ruiz, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford University Press, 2019), 278–79, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190499341.013.19>.

²⁰ Ernest A. W. Budge, *The Babylonian Legends of the Creation and the Fight between Bel and the Dragon* (London: British Museum, 1921), 1.

²¹ Krystyna Łyczkowska and Krystyna Szarzyńska, *Mitologia Mezopotamii* [Mythology of Mesopotamia], 2nd ed., Mitologie Świata (Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1986), 193.

the defeat of the sea primeval serpent Tiamat in battle. In addition, the epic seeks to explain Marduk's elevation to the top of the Mesopotamian pantheon of deities, to legitimise his superiority over the other gods; it also reports on the struggle between "good" and "evil" and depicts the creation of man and the sense of his life.²²

There are both similarities and differences between the Babylonian cosmogony as presented in *Enuma Elish* and the biblical cosmogony. For the purposes of this article, there is no point in dwelling more on this comparison, but a few points should be mentioned. Namely, one can recognise some parallels in the process of human creation. In both cosmogonies, the aspect of imagery, of creation "in the likeness of,"²³ is emphasised. In the description in Gen 1:26–27, man is created "in the image and likeness" of God himself (Gen 1:27a), whereas in the poem *Enuma Elish*, mankind is created literally from the blood of the Kingu,²⁴ and was therefore in a sense his image.

A significant difference can be seen in the presentation of the sense and purpose of human life in both texts. The Babylonian cosmogony had an unambiguous view of this sense: the world is ruled by a pantheon of gods headed by Marduk, and mankind's task is to serve the gods by doing hard work on earth. This work makes the gods free and man becomes their slave.²⁵ The Jewish and Christian cosmogony, on the contrary, although emphasising the aspect of man as a creature, presents him as the "crown of creation." God entrusts man with the custody of the earth. This "dominion" (Gen 1:26) makes him God's representative; man assists the Creator in His ruling of the earth and the other created beings.²⁶

The idea of imagery and likeness is not only present in the Babylonian cosmogony. The concept of drawing a pattern from supernatural reality and attempting to reproduce it here on earth is recounted in several passages in Table VI of the epic. It should be noted that although biblical typology (as the

²² Svetlana Tamtik, "Enuma Elish: The Origins of Its Creation," *Studia Antiqua* 5, no. 1 (2009): 65–66, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/studiaantiqua/vol5/iss1/9>.

²³ Rebecca L. Kirk, "Genesis 1:1–2:3 and Enuma Elish: Ideological Warfare Between Judah and Babylon" (master's thesis, George Fox University, 2005), 68, <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/475>.

²⁴ W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths* (Eisenbrauns, 2013), 222–23.

²⁵ Ralph W. Klein, *Israel in Exile: A Theological Interpretation*, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Fortress Press, 1979), 128.

²⁶ Andrzej Oworuszko, "Człowiek i jego miejsce w świecie według biblijnych opowiadań o stworzeniu z Rdz 1–2 [Man and His Place in the World According to the Biblical Creation Stories of Genesis 1–2]," *Teologiczne Studia Siedleckie* 8 (2011): 69, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5564728>.

name implies) is only concerned with biblical texts and, as a way of interpreting and attempting to understand biblical theology, is only used in the study of Scripture, the very idea of dependence and the concept of similarity between different figures within various realities related to space (earthly and heavenly) or time (present or past versus future) is also present in other religions and cultures. An example of this is the description of the building of the sanctuary and the city of Babylon. The following passages accurately convey this message:

Then after he had finished making all of his declarations,
 Having made the Anunnaki reside in either heaven or earth,
 The Annuaki raised their voices to Lord Marduk, saying
 "Since you have now liberated us from our work, O Lord,
 What manner of kindnesses might you now bestow unto us?
 For we would like to construct a temple of great distinction,
 To have our sleeping quarters alongside yours, so as to rest,
 Thus, permit us to build a temple where we might find shelter,
 So that whenever we gather to you, we might lounge there."
 Once Marduk heard their words, his face shone like sunlight,
 "Then build Babylon, to be the construction project you seek!
 Have there be mud-bricks cast, and construct a lofty temple!"²⁷

After they had completed their work on the temple Esagila,
 And each of the Anunnaki made his own personal temple,
 Then the three-hundred Igigi gods, who inhabited heaven,
 Together with the Anunnaki gods of the Apsu, came together
 Then the Lord invited his forebears, the gods, to a feast,
 There in the vast place he had made as his own residence,
 "Truly, this 'Gate of God' [Babylon] will now likewise be your home!
 And so let there be signing and festivity, and be content!"²⁸

And certified his rule over every god in both heaven and earth²⁹

In this case one can recognise a correlation similar to that discussed within the analysis of the Sidonian building inscriptions from the time of King Bodashtart. It can be described as a vertical relationship, i.e. a correlation between what is

²⁷ Timothy J. Stephany, *Enuma Elish: The Babylonian Creation Epic* (Createspace, 2013), 40.

²⁸ Stephany, 40–41.

²⁹ Stephany, 42.

celestial, transcendent, inaccessible and what is earthly and material. What is evident in these texts is an idea akin to the concept of typology – the relationship between two realities within a particular figure (a temple in the case of the *Enuma Elish*). The earthly temple was there merely an archetype of the heavenly temple, and its construction was based on a model transmitted “from above.”³⁰ However, it is impossible to conclude that these ideas are identical and fully congruent. It is only necessary to point out the similarity in the attempt to comprehend and translate reality, which is expressed in a characteristic “dependency language.”

It is worth mentioning that the aforementioned example is not a unique account of temple construction based on a prior vision of a model or a command from a deity. This kind of message seems to have been popular in the literature of the Middle East. It can be seen in the Sumerian inscription “The building of Ningirsu’s temple” about the king Gudea of Lagash, or the Ugaritic “The Legend of King Keret” or in Egyptian descriptions of temple construction (god Thoth).³¹ It is impossible to analyse all these texts, as this is not the purpose of this article. It should only be noted that the earthly sanctuary, in a way typical of some ancient cultures, mirrored the heavenly prototype, making it present and bringing the divine presence to earth.³²

3. Typology in the Old Testament

The aftermath of this type of thinking, though fragmentary as will be shown later in this article, can be seen in the Old Testament texts. Exod 25–27 contains the instruction given to Moses by YHWH in a vision to build the tabernacle and all its furnishings. The summary of this injunction is: “According to all that I show you regarding the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of its furnishings, so you are to make it” (Exod 25:9).³³ The Hebrew *tabnîṭ* is used for the word ‘pattern’, which is translated as ‘plan, form, construction, structure,

³⁰ Jean Hani, *Symbolika świątyni chrześcijańskiej* [Symbolism of the Christian Temple], trans. Adam Q. Lavique (Znak, 1994), 20.

³¹ Marcin Majewski, *Mieszkanie Chwały: Teologia sanktuarium Izraela na pustyni (Wj 25–31; 35–40)* [The Abode of Glory: The Theology of Israel’s Sanctuary in the Desert (Exod 25–31; 35–40)] (Wydawnictwo Naukowe Papieskiej Akademii Teologicznej, 2008), 86–87.

³² Clifford, “The Tent of El and the Israelite Tent of Meeting,” 225–26.

³³ All Scripture quotations are from: *NABRE: New American Bible Revised Edition* (USCCB, 2011).

figure, image'.³⁴ The LXX, on the other hand, here translates *tabnît* as *typos*. This is an important and interesting term because it is used repeatedly in the New Testament, precisely in the context of defining explicitly or guiding the reader to certain relationships. Verse 9 instructs that the construction of the tabernacle and all the equipment is to be done by the Israelites "according to all that I show you regarding the pattern." In view of these contents, one can conclude that both the tabernacle and all its furnishings are a reflection of what Moses saw in the vision. This vision, described in lexically different ways though identical in terms of its meaning, is repeated four times over the course of these three chapters (Exod 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8). The expressions used suggest that the earthly tabernacle is only a substitute, an attempt to reproduce the heavenly tabernacle, so that man could participate in this *imago mundi* in this world.³⁵ This example reveals a clear reference to the descriptions of the construction of the temple in *Enuma Elish* or the city of Sidon as a reflection of its heavenly prototype.

Eventually, in the Jewish tradition, and consequently also in the Christian tradition, there was a radical change in the view of the concept. Typology began to be seen not on a vertical (heaven – earth) plane, but on a horizontal – historical and even eschatological – plane. The correspondence here is between the two extremes of time; between what was the first and the primordial and what is the last and the ultimate.³⁶ Such a correspondence can be seen, for example, in the event of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. The exodus was in the consciousness of the chosen people not only a past event that was remembered annually as part of the pilgrimage festivals (Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths), but also a foreshadowing of God's future intervention.³⁷ This was mentioned by the prophet Hosea when proclaiming that Israel would be reconciled to its God and be faithful to Him as in the days of the Exodus (Hos 2:15–18), or prophesying that Israel would again "live in tents" as it was in the days of the Sinai wandering (Hos 12:10). Isaiah recalls the miracles in

³⁴ "tabnît," in James Strong, *Hebrajsko-polski i aramejsko-polski słownik Stronga z lokalizacją słów hebrajskich i aramejskich oraz kodami Baumgartnera* [Strong's Hebrew-Polish and Aramaic-Polish Dictionary with Localization of Hebrew and Aramaic Words and Baumgartner Codes], trans. Aleksandra Czwojdrak, Prymasowaska Seria Biblijna (Vocatio, 2017), 1144.

³⁵ Mircea Eliade, *Sacrum a profanum: O istocie sfery religijnej* [Sacrum and Profanum: On the Essence of the Religious Sphere], trans. Bogdan Baran (Aletheia, 2008), 42–43.

³⁶ Tibor Fabiny, "Typology: Pros and Cons in Biblical Hermeneutics and Literary Criticism (from Leonhard Goppelt to Northrop Frye)," *Rilce: Revista de Filología Hispánica* 25, no. 1 (2018): 140, <https://doi.org/10.15581/008.25.26308>.

³⁷ Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Servant Books, 1979), 4.

the wilderness and assures us that they will be repeated (Isa 10:24–26). He said this in the context of the oppression of the Israelites by the Assyrians recalling the Egyptian captivity.³⁸ Moving away from the event of the exodus from Egypt and the idea of a new exodus, the prophet Amos foretells days of unimaginable abundance of harvest similar to that of paradise (Amos 9:13). The same prophet, two verses earlier, also announces the restoration of the “hut of David; . . . as in the days of old” (Amos 9:11).³⁹ This is an interesting example because it uses a phrase that refers to a point in time. Thus, one can see that a certain event that has a definite place in history is taken as a model, a point of reference, and a repetition of this event is to be expected in the future or in the end times. The assurance of the prophet Isaiah that the former Davidic Jerusalem would return (Isa 1:21–26) has similar overtones.

It seems that the Old Testament prophets were the first to interpret the Torah in a typological way, presenting the events described in it as a foreshadowing of future or contemporaneous events. De Lubac, citing the writings of Daniélou, writes of the “prehistory” of typological exegesis: “the prophets themselves give notice of a second Exodus, of which the first was a mere figurative symbol . . . and for Ezekiel the description of the first paradise is projected onto his vision of the last Jerusalem.”⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the Old Testament idea of typology should be construed not so much in terms of cyclicity, of repetition, but in terms of correspondence, of relationship. In the one case, the earthly dimension gains its legitimacy through its correspondence with the heavenly dimension; in the other, the relationship is linear and temporal – the primary event is a type of the final event.⁴¹ In this key, it is possible to speak of the prehistory of Christian typology, since past events, described in the pages of the Old Testament, become figures of future, final events. This is closely related to the anticipation of pending salvific goods, which are expressions of the messianic and eschatological hopes of the people of God.⁴²

³⁸ Andrzej Kowalczyk, *Wpływ typologii oraz tekstów Starego Testamentu na redakcję Ewangelii Mateusza* [The Influence of Typology and Old Testament Texts on the Redaction of the Gospel of Matthew], 2nd ed. (Bernardinum, 2004), 15.

³⁹ David L. Baker, “Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 29, no. 2 (1976): 139, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930600042563>.

⁴⁰ Henri de Lubac, *The Four Senses of Scripture*, vol. 1 of *Medieval Exegesis*, trans. Mark Sebanc (Eerdmans, 1998), 230.

⁴¹ von Rad, “II. Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament,” 176.

⁴² Jean Daniélou, “Qu’est-ce que la typologie?,” in *L’Ancien Testament et les Chrétiens* (Éditions du Cerf, 1951), 201.

The Old Testament not only announced that certain events or the coming of specific persons would be repeated; the emphasis is also on the intensification. This is particularly evident in the Gospel of Matthew, who more than once, when quoting the Old Testament texts, precedes them with an introductory formula to draw the reader's attention to a certain typological relationship. The prophets, referring to the past, foretold future events as typical, but on a larger scale. As the exodus from Egypt through Moses was the liberation of Israel from the hand of Pharaoh, so the idea of a new exodus is the liberation of all mankind from the bondage of sin through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Both event and person significantly surpass their Old Testament foretaste.⁴³

The ancient Hebrews believed that there was a bond between the type and the antitype; that the reality around them related to the type because all its experiences were part of God's plan. It was this presence of God's plan that was the determining interpretive factor that biblical authors and commentators assumed. This interpretive approach formed the ideological basis for all forms of typology, which have been widely commented on and elaborated in later centuries.⁴⁴

In view of the above, it is difficult not to agree with Daniélou, who insisted, following Thomas Aquinas, that typology is not the literal sense of Scripture, but the sense of the very events described in it. It has its biblical origin precisely in the Old Testament, which sees in the past events of Israel's history the figures of the events of the end times, and therefore, given its essence, it has an eschatological character.⁴⁵ As will be seen in the subsequent examples, Old Testament (eschatological) typology forms the basis and starting point for the formation of New Testament typology.

4. Typological Terminology of the New Testament

The assertion that the Old Testament contains types, prophecies or predictions of the anticipated events of the messianic era largely draws on the New Testament vocabulary. The texts cited below are marked by distinctive terminology

⁴³ Henry Wansbrough, "The Infancy Stories of the Gospels since Raymond E. Brown," in *New Perspectives on the Nativity*, ed. Jeremy Corley (T&T Clark, 2009), 4–22.

⁴⁴ Piotr Labuda, "Typological Usage of the Old Testament in the New Testament," *The Person and the Challenges* 1, no. 2 (2011): 178, <https://doi.org/10.15633/pch.859>.

⁴⁵ Jean Daniélou, *El misterio de la historia: Ensayo teológico*, trans. Javier Goitia (San Sebastián: Dinor, 1963), 184–85.

that more or less literally refers the reader to an event, figure or institution from the Old Testament.

There are five words in Paul's writings that lie at the heart of typological hermeneutics, with the word *typos* coming to the fore. The Letter to the Romans mentions: "But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin after the pattern of the trespass of Adam, who is the type of the one who was to come" (Rom 5:14). The noun *typos* is derived from the Greek verb *typtō*, which literally can be translated as 'to smite, strike, hit', and figuratively as 'to wound' or 'disturb someone's conscience'.⁴⁶ The term *typos* occurs sixteen times in the New Testament and is used in a wide range of meanings: from 'a mark (sign) after a blow or stike' or 'a print, impression' (John 20:25), to 'a pattern' (Act 7:44; Heb 8:5) or 'a model to imitate (NIV), an example, ensample to follow (KJV, ESV)' (2 Thess 3:9). In a deeper sense, *typos* denotes 'a type' (Rom 5:14), that is, a certain foreshadowing figure.⁴⁷

The Apostle of the Nations used derivatives of this word in one of his letters. In 1 Cor 10:6 there is the word *typoi* in plural which is rendered as 'examples' (NIV, KJV, ESV). On the other hand, in 1 Cor 10:11 the author uses the term *typinkōs* which is also translated as 'examples' (in the original it is an adverb).⁴⁸

The term *typoi*, before it found its way into the pages of the New Testament, was present in everyday usage. It meant the effigy of an emperor stamped on a coin or the image of a judge reflected on a document seal. Greek philosophers used the term figuratively in discussions about literary works to represent a substitute for certain events in a drama.⁴⁹

Another word that can be found in Paul's letters is *skia*, which is translated as 'a shadow'; 'an outline, silhouette, sketch'. The term occurs seven times in the New Testament⁵⁰ but only once in the *Corpus Paulinum*: "Let no one,

⁴⁶ "typtō," in James Strong, *Grecko-polski słownik Stronga z lokalizacją słów greckich i kodami Popowskiego* [Strong's Greek-Polish Dictionary with Greek Word Localization and Popowski Codes], trans. Aleksandra Czwojdrak, Prymasowska Seria Biblijna 42 (Vocatio, 2015), 781.

⁴⁷ "typos," in Geoffrey W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Clarendon Press, 1961), 1418–19; "typos," in Strong, *Grecko-polski słownik Stronga*, 781.

⁴⁸ "typoi," in Remigiusz Popowski and Michał Wojciechowski, trans., *Grecko-polski Nowy Testament: Wydanie interlinearne z kluczem gramatycznym, z kodami Stronga i Popowskiego oraz pełną transliteracją greckiego tekstu* [Greek-Polish New Testament: Interlinear Edition with Grammatical Key, with Strong's and Popowski's Codes and Full Transliteration of the Greek Text], 9th ed., Prymasowska Seria Biblijna (Vocatio, 2014), 913.

⁴⁹ Scott Hahn, *Letter and Spirit: From Written Text to Living Word in the Liturgy* (Doubleday, 2005), ch. 2, 18, Kindle.

⁵⁰ "skia," in Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1238; "skia," in Strong, *Grecko-polski słownik Stronga*, 703.

then, pass judgment on you in matters of food and drink or with regard to a festival or new moon or sabbath. These are shadows of things to come; the reality belongs to Christ” (Col 2:16–17). Cf. Heb 8:4–5.

The word *skia* translated as ‘shadow’ refers to the image cast by an object, which represents not so much the object itself but, as it were, its form – a sketch or outline. This shadow is similar in its shape to the person or thing casting it, though it retains a kind of otherness.⁵¹

In the Epistle to the Galatians (4:24), Paul uses the verb *allēgoreō*, in the form of present passive participle, which is rendered as ‘to speak allegorically’, ‘to speak figuratively’⁵²:

Now this is an allegory [lit. *hatina estin allēgoroumena* (NA28) “which are allegorized”]. These women represent two covenants. One was from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; this is Hagar. Hagar represents Sinai, a mountain in Arabia; it corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery along with her children. But the Jerusalem above is freeborn, and she is our mother. (Gal 4:24–26)

The word used here indicates the connection between the offspring born of the slave Hagar – these descendants continue in bondage, and the offspring born of Sarah – these are the children of the promise. Saint Paul notes that just as Ishmael once persecuted Isaac, this is still the case today, when those who are destined to live are persecuted by those enslaved by the Law.

There are other words in the Letter to the Hebrews that express the typological relationship between certain realities of the two Testaments. The word *hypodeigma*, occurring six times in the New Testament (three times in the Letter to the Hebrews), means ‘a model’, ‘a pattern’, ‘a copy’, ‘a sign bringing something to mind’, ‘an outline of a thing’ (Heb 8:5; 9:23), as well as ‘an example’ or ‘a warning’ (Heb 4:11).⁵³ Another word appearing in this book, occurring twice in the New Testament (Heb 9:24; 1 Pet 3:21) is *antitypon*.⁵⁴ This adjective can be translated as: ‘corresponding’, ‘resounding’, ‘a copy’, ‘a figure’. Saint Peter uses the same term in his first epistle in relation to baptism, claiming

⁵¹ James E. Smith, *Biblical Typology* (Lulu.com, 2018), 9.

⁵² “allēgoreō,” in Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 74; “allēgoreō,” in Strong, *Grecko-polski słownik Stronga*, 36–37.

⁵³ “hypodeigma,” in Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1447; “hypodeigma,” in Strong, *Grecko-polski słownik Stronga*, 795.

⁵⁴ “antitypon,” in Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 159; “antitypon,” in Strong, *Grecko-polski słownik Stronga*, 73.

that it was *antitypon* “prefigured” (“symbolized” [NIV]) in the Flood in days of Noah (1 Pet 3:19–21).

An interesting term, referring to typology, is *parabolē*. This noun occurs as many as fifty times in the New Testament, including twice in the Letter to the Hebrews (9:8–9; 11:19). It is characterised by a rich range of meanings, but its translation in Letter to the Hebrews can be limited to words such as ‘comparison’, ‘illustration’, ‘figure’ or ‘symbol’.⁵⁵

It is worth mentioning that there is no term in Scripture that denotes “typology” and, consequently, the biblical authors themselves never analysed or classified any types. As shown above, there are only words in the New Testament that indicate the possibility of a typological interpretation of the New Testament in the light of the Old Testament.⁵⁶ The term “typology” was only coined in the 19th century and seems to have a Lutheran origin.⁵⁷ The terminology used by Paul and other authors is often imprecise, suggesting one should focus on the content these terms are trying to convey, rather than on the terms themselves.⁵⁸ This content especially refers to Christ and the Church, and it is the key to the interpretation of the Old Testament prefiguration. From a theological perspective, Christocentrism constitutes an indispensable part of biblical typology.⁵⁹

Furthermore, in the New Testament texts, for some typological relationships none of the above Greek words were used.⁶⁰ These words are not so much intended to confirm the existence of a given relationship as to point the way, the manner and the key to a fuller understanding of the message. They are merely an interpretative paradigm, since on the basis of them and on the analysis of the relationship they connote, biblical scholarship has developed a series of criteria by which it is possible to determine with a greater or lesser degree of certainty

⁵⁵ “parabolē,” in Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1008; “parabolē,” in Strong, *Grecko-polski słownik Stronga*, 578–79.

⁵⁶ Łabuda, “Typological Usage of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” 173.

⁵⁷ Henri de Lubac, *The Sources of Revelation*, trans. Luke O’Neill (Herder / Herder, 1968), 15.

⁵⁸ Samuel Amsler, “La typologie de l’ancien testament chez Saint Paul,” *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 37, no. 152 (1949): 116–17, <https://doi.org/10.5169/SEALS-380510>.

⁵⁹ Manlio Simonetti, *Między dosłownością a alegorią* [Between Literalism and Allegory], trans. Tomasz Skibiński, *Myśl Teologiczna* 26 (WAM, 2000), 21–22.

⁶⁰ Rudolf Bultmann, “Ursprung und Sinn der Typologie als hermeneutischer Methode,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 75, nos. 4–5 (1950): 205, https://opendigi.ub.uni-tuebingen.de/opendigi/thlz_075_1950#tab=struct&p=113.

whether a typological relationship is present.⁶¹ The situation is of course analogous in the reverse case – not always can typological relationships be identified where these words are applied.

Typology, therefore, can be defined as a way of establishing historical connections between events, characters or objects described in the Old Testament and their analogous counterparts in the New Testament. In terms of a literary approach, typology involves the representation of persons, events or objects in the New Testament by means of language and images referring to their Old Testament prototypes.⁶²

Summary

This analysis shows that the idea of a reciprocal correspondence between different levels of reality was a key element in both ancient religions and biblical tradition. This idea facilitated the description of reality and the comprehension of its deeper meaning. It is challenging to claim unequivocally whether one can speak of the development and evolution of this idea, or whether it should rather be regarded as something peculiar within a given community and its system of beliefs.

The Middle Eastern cultures were dominated by cosmological relationships, where earthly structures were seen as reflections of heavenly patterns, as can be seen in the *Enuma Elish* and Bodashtart inscriptions. The Greek tradition, in turn, developed allegorical cosmological and moral interpretations. The Bible introduces a groundbreaking approach, as it were, transforming these patterns into horizontal and historical-eschatological dependencies. Earthly events, such as the Exodus from Egypt, are interpreted as elements of a dynamic plan of salvation culminating in New Testament events. Biblical typology gives them an additional eschatological and universal dimension, indicating the coherence of God's plan. The interdisciplinary approach adopted – combining literary, hermeneutical and cultural analysis – allowed for a better understanding of the relationship between biblical typology and its ancient counterparts, as well as highlighting the differences in their goals and structure.

⁶¹ These criteria are presented, among others: Daniélou, "Exégèse et typologie patristique," 135; Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Fortress Press, 1993), 19–20.

⁶² Geoffrey W. H. Lampe and Kenneth J. Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology* (SCM Press, 1957), 39–40.

The results of the study suggest that biblical typology not only helps interpret religious texts, but can also inspire contemporary research in the fields of theology, hermeneutics and classical philology. Its universal nature makes it possible to combine transcendent and historical aspects of the narrative in a coherent interpretation of reality. Ancient literature, such as *Enuma Elish*, provides the context for a deeper understanding of the evolution of typological thinking, which the Bible reinterprets and enriches with a new theological perspective. Von Rad was right when he wrote that “typological thinking is an elementary function of all human thought and interpretation.”⁶³

Translated by Monika Szela-Badzińska

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⁶³ von Rad, “II. Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament,” 174.

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