

The aim of the project is to analyze the impact of allegoresis on the development of post-Aristotelian theories of figurative language. The research hypothesis has it that the practice of allegorical interpretation created premises for theoretical considerations of the nature of metaphor, allegory and symbol. When inquiring into the reasons that made the poet or the prophet express a given idea figuratively, the allegorists put forward numerous valuable observations regarding the functions of these tropes. The present project will examine the extent to which ancient (Stoic, Alexandrian, Middle- and Neoplatonic) allegoresis can contribute to contemporary approaches to ambiguity, figurativeness and literalness.

The research hypothesis will be verified and corroborated by critical analyses of source texts. Adopting historical-philological methods will make it possible to reconstruct the specificity of ancient approaches to figurative language and to demonstrate the current relevance of the various problems put forward by post-Aristotelian allegorists.

There has been hitherto no study of the influence of the practice of allegoresis on the formation of post-Aristotelian theories of figurative language. Naturally, there have been quite a few studies that examined the contribution of ancient theories of allegory, but so far no real focus has been given to allegoresis.

The proposed project belongs primarily to the tradition of research on the cultural heritage of antiquity. Yet, the project results will be useful for researchers working in various other scholarly fields (e.g. philology, philosophy, theology, anthropology, cultural studies, religious studies, linguistics and history of art). The significant impact of the project is warranted by its original and innovative character: showing the relevance of allegoresis for the development of post-Aristotelian theories of figurative language will make it necessary to address issues as important as definition of literality, identification of expressions employed figuratively or distinguishing tropes (metaphor, allegory and symbol) from figures of speech. Analysis of ancient approaches to the aforementioned issues will reveal the profound debt that Western culture owes to the Greeks.