

Introduction to the Hermeneutical Concept of the Third AIBI-Conference

– Harald Schweizer, Tübingen –

We all know that the history of writing is intimately connected with the Ancient Near East. And the Alphabet which is the main basis even in our work with computers is a Phoenician invention during the second millennium b.c. We are more or less acquainted with the predecessors of the alphabetic northwest Semitic languages: Egyptian Hieroglyphic is a mixture of pictograms and logograms, the Akkadian script is known as syllabic, the Proto-Sumerian as pictographic. You all are familiar with the famous schema presented by I. GELB, (1952) which shows within Hittite cuneiform signs the process of abstraction where we have a picture at the beginning and only a stylized combination of cuneiform impressions at the end. I have been struck by the idea of WILLIAM FRAWLEY to read that history of the development of writing in a semiotic way¹ and I want to add: it is possible to interpret that history in respect to questions of methodology, too.

Let us take the first stage, the iconic representations. Such a picture gives me very quickly an idea of what is meant. Linguistically speaking: the »reference«, the relation between picture and facts of the world, is no great problem. Here we are confronted with an important insight: the reference is very clear but the icon as such is isolated. The icon points to an extralinguistic reality but intralinguistically there is no possibility to relate this one picture to other pictures or to form a sentence or a text.² There are expressions = icons, yes, but they have no linguistic meanings. The expressions don't need them because they have referential meanings. That's an advantage and a disadvantage at the same time. To be very clear, that's certainly an advantage. To see a graphically stylized fish tells me that the sign points to a real fish. But referential meanings are very restricted. It's only possible to point to real existing facts. And for each fact you need a separate picture. It's not possible on the level of written language to dream, to think, to hope, to love, to command. All »mental spaces«, all »possible worlds« are excluded. There is no imagination, no poetics, no polysemy, no homonymy, no wit. Therefore – methodologically – it is well possible to analyze the expressions as such. But there is no semantics.

Let's have a short look at our work and at our instruments. Normally, we aren't working with pictures. But with expressions, at least graphic items. And I think it can be said that existing text-processing software works on the level of expressions, on the surface level – even in the case where a lexicon is integrated. You may manipulate and analyze texts in whatever way you like. You are always treating the structure of expressions. If this is correct, then a remarkable schizophrenia surprises us: while we are handling them, every day the expressions are normally neglected, regarded as pure unimportant vehicle, and the level of materiality of a text usually is overlooked in favor of the meaning, the linguistic system.³ So we need reflections and algorithms for the analysis of the expressions. A semantic-free morphology has to be envisaged!⁴ »Relations between signifiers and/or between signifiers and signified can always produce effects, whether conscious or unconscious, and this cannot be set aside as irrelevant to language.«⁵ And the

1 (kpa(Frawley, W Text and Epistemology, Norwood 1987. ch. 1.

2 Cf. YUEN REN CHAO Language and Symbolic Systems. Cambridge 1968, p. 101: »if a sign represents a specific part of language, it is writing; if it represents things directly, it is not.« Cf. HOLENSTEIN, E Von der Hintergebarkeit der Sprache. stw 316. Frankfurt 1980, p. 127: »Eine Schrift (in einem engen Sinn verstanden) ist ein sekundäres Zeichensystem (vorwiegend in visueller oder taktile Gestalt), das auf das Bezeichnete nicht direkt bezogen ist, sondern unter Evokation des primären Zeichensystems, als dessen Vertreter es fungiert«.

3 Cf. HOLENSTEIN, E (1980) 128: »Wie bei den Gedächtnisleistungen zeigt sich bei der Entwicklung von Schriftsystemen und vor allem auch beim Leseprozess eine Tendenz zur Privilegierung semantischer Einheiten und Zusammenhänge. Syntaktische und phonologische Strukturen haben nur eine Hilfsfunktion. Auf sie wird nur rekurriert, wenn es auf den genauen Gedankengang und Wortlaut ankommt«.

4 Cf. SCHWEIZER, H Sprachkritik als Ideologiekritik. Zur Grammatikrevision am Beispiel von QRB. THLI 1. Tübingen 1991, ch. 3 and – in the Appendix (168–172) – the review of : BAUER, L Introducing Linguistic Morphology. Edinburgh 1988.

5 CULLER, J Towards a linguistics of writing. Arguments between language and literature. Manchester 1987. p. 181. – For a

meaning of these expressions, the semantics, is contained in one's head and not in the software. So the common text processing software is still situated on the pictographic level – if you allow for a moment that analogy to the development of script.⁶ – But now let's go back to the third millennium b. c.

In the course of time the pictographic kind of writing underwent a process of abstraction and simplification. The loss of referential meaning was counterbalanced by a gain of meaning as product of a linguistic convention. The single sign – originally showing e.g. the head of an ox – was reduced, symbolizing now only a syllable – without any independent meaning. But the graphic simplification allowed an easy combination of such symbols. And the linguistic community decided – in an unconscious way – that such a combination of expressions would be spelled out in a certain way and should have this or these meaning/s. Everyone who has tried to decipher Akkadian writing knows what it means to say that now »schools and scribes« became necessary. Writing became a complicated science. On the level of referential meanings schools aren't necessary. But now writing is a secret science, requires scholars. »Schools« are the institutionalized echo of the »arbitrariness« of every linguistic sign DE SAUSSUREA spoke of. Here, and not at the later stage in the development of alphabetic writing, lies the crucial point for Hermeneutics, Semiotics, and Methodology. After the twofold change (a) from pictures to abstract expressions (b) from referential to arbitrarily conventional meanings the whole range of »mental spaces«⁷ and »possible worlds« has been opened. Now one is no longer bound to the presence of crude objects. It is now possible to formulate within the large field of modality, to express feelings, commands, perceptions, etc. And so the language allows the construction of textual worlds. The real revolution for the human mind did not take place with the Phoenicians but with the Akkadians (or Egyptians who invented their writing at about the same time, perhaps influenced by the Sumerians). So, I think that W. FRAWLEY, is right in giving his ch. 1 which describes this development the title: »The triumph of opacity and the emergence of textuality«. But just that »opacity« is our infinite task. It includes – of course – the correct decipherment, the correct editing of ancient documents. But it includes, too, that which was new in the transition from pictographic to logographic writing: We need a conception independent of an individual language suggesting how the human mind may work.⁸ What do we mean in speaking of sentences, modality, speech acts? We need semantic reflections, based on philosophical insights. Because these questions are not only questions of linguists. Such an independent meta-language may serve as a lens which allows further discoveries in the semantic dimension of a text.⁹

Let's have another look at our situation. Normally we don't want to restrict ourselves to counting the letters of the Pentateuch, to editing the text of the Codex Leningradensis, to producing concordances – all these procedures could be undertaken by working only with the expressions and without the meanings attached to them.¹⁰ We are interested in understanding the meaning, we want to translate it in our modern

thorough computer assisted analysis of the level of expressions, cf. BADER, W Simson bei Delila. Computerlinguistische Interpretation des Textes Ri 13–16. THLI 3. Tübingen 1991. ch. III.

- 6 Just a few years ago a specialist in the computer assisted analysis of natural languages noticed a fundamental methodological helplessness: At least there are some results in syntactic (in the Chomskyan sense, not as pure analysis of the expressions!) analysis. But there is neither agreement about a theory of semantics nor of pragmatics; Cf. GUENTHNER, F; LEHMANN, H Verarbeitung natürlicher Sprache – ein Überblick: Informatik-Spektrum 9 (1986) 162–173.
- 7 Cf. FAUCONNIER, G Mental Spaces. Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Language. Cambridge Mass. 1985. F. stresses the fact that »we bring in the cognitive interface between expressions of language and the world.« (159). »Linguistic expressions help to set up and identify space elements, but do not refer to them . . . The construction of spaces represents a way in which we think and talk but does not in itself say anything about the real objects of this thinking and talking« (152). Therefore: »theories of reference based on the use of language cannot bypass mental spaces; they will have to forsake the idea of a direct link between linguistic structures and referents and take into account the important intermediate process of space construction« (158). F. thinks of such mechanisms (and their effects) as connectors, indefinites, pronouns, roles, presuppositions, counterfactuals, comparatives. Within my own terminology I would like to speak of the large field of the Codes = Modalities and the different steps of analysis within the field of Pragmatics. Cf. SCHWEIZER, H Metaphorische Grammatik. Wege zur Integration von Grammatik und Textinterpretation in der Exegese. ATS 15, St. Ottilien 1981. ch. 4 + 5.
- 8 Cf. HOLENSTEIN, E (1980) 40: »Wer richtig und verständlich spricht, hält sich an Gesetze, die sich aus der Struktur des Lautmaterials einerseits und der Struktur einer reinen »Bedeutungslehre« (den Gesetzen der Kombination und Modifikation von Bedeutungen) andererseits ergeben und die unabhängig von einer zielorientierten Verwendung gelten.«
- 9 Building the bridge between the semantic meta-language and the text under analysis is best done by a software of the type »data base«. Over the past few years we have been acquiring a lot of experience in this respect analyzing the story of Joseph (Gen 37–50) with the help of the data-base JOSEF. With such a software you are free to learn and register new ways of speaking. However all automatic procedures – *per definitionem* – don't widen my knowledge about language. There may be a considerable quantitative assistance by the computer. But the possibility of a qualitative growth of my knowledge is barred.
- 10 But I know that e. g. concordances usually aren't only lists of words (as they should!) but the items are additionally sorted according to the meaning found in the dictionaries.

languages. To do this requires the use of classical grammars. They help us to find the meaning and – at the same time – they lead us into a dilemma. It has been my contention for a decade:¹¹ Using the computer as an instrument which is enormously quick and precise requires on the level of reflection and deduced from that level in the field of software a precision in terminology and a precision in thinking which have to be analogous to the efficiency of the hardware. And for me there is a great discrepancy between using the computer on the one hand and on the other following unquestioningly the concept of traditional grammars which generally didn't integrate the insights of DE SAUSSURE and the linguists who followed him. The traditional grammars neither separate the level of expressions from that of semantics nor do they offer a consistent terminology of semantics. Only within such a current methodological discussion are the results of our work more than toys.

The momentary stage of our reflection is insufficient. This must be stressed although exegetes often are content with this level. They restrict themselves to the relation between linguistic expression and meaning.¹² And often the distinction between referential and intralinguistic meaning is not respected. But the relation: expression + meaning – in whatever sense – is insufficient. Let's go back to the first millennium b.c. Take the famous texts Isaiah 2:2–4; 7:10–17; 8:23b–9:6; 10:33–11–9. I won't deal extensively with questions of authorship and dating the text in time. But I have the impression that whether or not one undertakes a pragmatic analysis – the result obtained depends directly on that preliminary methodological decision.

Isa 2:2–4: Phantastic imagery. All nations shall flow to the mountain of the Lord with the conviction: »he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.«¹³ Taken literally, one may find an universalism in the text, a message of salvation, possible from the exile on, namely, about 200 years after the original Isaiah. But if you take into account briefly and hypothetically that the prophet is directing these words to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, then you'll be astonished at not finding these addresses among those who will be praising the Lord. All nations will perceive the Lord in the last days. But shouldn't the addressees be mentioned among these peoples? For the actual listeners of Isaiah's words the question gradually arose: we as Israelites are the genuine followers of the Lord. Why doesn't Isaiah mention the Lord's own people? Is he consciously excluding and so condemning the present inhabitants of Jerusalem? – So – through implications provoked by the literal meaning of the text – the hearers begin to understand that instead of giving a message of salvation Isaiah in reality pronounces a condemnation. The literal semantic meaning is a message of grace. The hidden but central pragmatic meaning, resulting from the kind of usage of the language in an actual situation, is the message of condemnation.

The same with Isa 7: V.14 has always raised questions: »Behold, a young woman shall conceive, and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel«. How does this sign of hope fit into the literary context with a message of condemnation and judgment? And who is that »young woman«? – Futile questions if one attempts a pragmatic analysis and if one abandons the search for a referential meaning. We only have the text at our disposal. Therefore, only the search on the literary level seems to be successful. And there it is enough to see that king Ahaz hears the message that an anonymous woman receives a human sign, a child, who represents the interconnection with the Lord. The king may ask himself, why he, the מְשִׁיחַ, doesn't receive this sign. These words – so friendly in themselves – turn out to be a reproach. And so, on the pragmatic level, V.14 fits very well in its literary context.

The beginning of Isa 9, too, sounds very hopeful, which is why this text can be heard in our churches at Christmas. »The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light . . . For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff on his shoulder«. But of which people did Isaiah speak? Probably – that's our assumption – he stayed in Jerusalem. But the prophet in that text doesn't speak of Jerusalem or Judah but of – cf. 8,23 (9,1) – Naphtali, Zebulun and the land on the other side of the Jordan, regions under the occupying power of the Assyrians. These regions will receive salvation. And Jerusalem? – It isn't mentioned. Again a provocation because of the exclusion from salvation, a provocation not on the level of the literal meaning but of the pragmatic one.

And finally Isa 11. A nice image: »And there shall come forth a rod out of the stern of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.« But the nice image – in the literal meaning – presupposes a hard and cruel action. To have a stump a tree must be felled. And at the end of ch. 10 there is mention of that: »Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror . . . And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron . . .« So here it is possible, too, that the nice image of the future in the actual speech situation of Isaiah means a radical condemnation of his addressees, i.e. the davidic dynasty.

11 Cf. SCHWEIZER, H (1981)

12 A good indicator for this contention is the manner in which metaphors are treated, especially historical ones. Very often they are translated into the »very« meaning, skipping the literal meaning. Whereas the Hebrew offers: »turn back to yourself!« the verb »remain« is chosen and the dynamic understanding is replaced by a static one, Cf. ISA 65:5 and SCHWEIZER, H (1991) 162. But restricting oneself to only one layer of meaning is equivalent to the loss of any feeling for a creative use of language.

13 With many exegetes V.5 is excluded here on reasons of literary criticism.

Well, those exegetes who only base their arguments on a single level of meaning in a text will argue that these four texts cannot have an Isaian authorship. The texts sound too positive whereas from other texts we know the prophet as a prophet of judgement. Those exegetes who take into account that a text always has several layers of meaning and that in any case one has to differentiate between the level of literal meaning and that of the pragmatic use of the literal meaning – those exegetes won't have any difficulty in attributing these four texts to the original Isaiah.

Each one of us uses the play of double meanings in everyday life. Speaking in such a way may be a kind of politeness, may prove the humor of the speaker, may express his or her anxiety, or may underline his or her message in a stylistically excellent manner. In any case: Such pragmatic influences on the literal meaning are very widespread. And we cannot conceive of an exegetical methodology and consequently software solutions which do not take pragmatics into account.

But facing these tasks one could be inclined to flee back to very elementary questions as expression of a deep uncertainty: What, alas, is a text? What is my very function as an exegete?

It's our profession to deal with texts, texts written in an old language, biblical Hebrew, κοινὴ-Greek. Or we are dealing with texts written in Aramaic or Old Syriac. In any case we want to understand these texts. But what does this mean? A superfluous question? Since we often are confronted with problems of textual criticism, problems of grammar, we may be happy to have found a good »textcritical« solution and a good translation. Then – we may conclude – the meaning of the text could be cleared up with the result of having understood the text. From that level we may go further: given the background of the meaning of the text we now are able to understand the historical origin of that text, the political, spiritual and sociological aspects of its production. – If we argue in such a way then we would regard the linguistic layer, the object of our research, the text, like a piece of glass. The old biblical text as an old and dirty piece of glass which has to be washed so that it will again be possible to have a look through it onto the extralinguistic reality. And textual criticism on the one hand, the preoccupation with dictionaries, grammars, language comparison, on the other, would be the cleaning rags.

In the sense of a hermeneutical reflection I want to emphasize here that such a view as I have sketched it probably is widespread. But it overlooks the most primitive insight of linguistics, namely: extralinguistic reality and linguistic meaning are totally different levels simply combined arbitrarily, by convention within a linguistic community. That's what we learned by looking at the transition from pictographic to logographic writing. That's what we meant by speaking of the »Triumph of Opacity«. There is no way leading from the linguistic sign (e. g. the text) to the extralinguistic reality (not even by the term »reference«). There are always human subjects who are mentally reconstructing their meaning of the world or of that which the text wants to express. And the stimuli for our work are not meanings given to me by the old text. It only gives me physical signals, sounds or graphic items, no meanings, sometimes hardly readable. The reader or biblical scholar – with or without the computer as aid – is the instance which builds up in his or her mind that which seems to be the meaning of the text actually read. There is no way to leave the linguistic level, the level of subjectivity, in other words: the level of communication.¹⁴

Therefore, I appreciate very much what the Austrian poet PETER HANDKE expressed. He said that normally one uses language as a number of labels for things. The language in itself is regarded as dead, without dynamics, as pure instrument for informing us about things but not as an instrument to move things. But HANDKE wants to emphasize¹⁵ that the language is not a piece of glass through which we may look on reality. On the contrary, he stresses that with language it is possible »to turn things«.¹⁶ That's a German expression with a double sense. First, he wants to say that indeed the language always »turns the things of the objective world«. So, we never are receiving an objective impression of the world.¹⁷ Cons-

14 HABERMAS, J *Erkennung und Interesse*. Frankfurt 1968. p.2. 61, with his methodological reflections aims at »die kritische Auflösung des Objektivismus, nämlich des objektivistischen Selbstverständnisses der Wissenschaften, das den Anteil subjektiver Tätigkeit an den präformierten Gegenständen möglicher Erkenntnis unterschlägt.«

15 cf. PETER HANDKE, *Ich bin ein Bewohner des Elfenbeinturms*. st 56. Frankfurt 1972. p.25–30

16 HANDKE: »Dabei denkt man aber nicht daran, daß es möglich ist, mit der Sprache buchstäblich jedes Ding zu drehen. Ich brauche ja nicht die Dinge aufzuzählen, die schon mit Hilfe der Sprache gedreht wurden und noch gedreht werden. Es wird vernachlässigt, daß Sprache manipulierbar ist, für alle gesellschaftlichen und individuellen Zwecke. Es wird vernachlässigt, daß die Welt nicht nur aus den Gegenständen besteht, sondern auch aus der Sprache für diese Gegenstände.«

17 That truth is valid even in instances which are less impressive than the following: When I described the text of 2 Kings 3 where we are informed about a coalition of Juda of Israel, about an important role of the prophet Elisha during the campaign, about a

ciously or unconsciously – every author turns things by his or her language. The second meaning of that German expression: »to turn a thing« – to commit a crime. Every utterance – if we follow this word game for a moment – has a criminal aspect. I fear that this is valid for my own lecture here, too. Particularly a serious looking scholar may be misleading. From his attitude he gives the impression of speaking the objective truth. But behind this attitude he is combining scientific results with the attempt to impress his wife, with his fight against the opinion of colleagues and with his hope, the addressees of his speech will take his subjective »recipe« as the objective truth . . . Therefore, that's Handke's conclusion, we have to smash the glass of the language. Then it will be impossible to continue to look through it to a pretended reality. Instead, we are forced to look at the language itself, language in pieces, but now we are able to perceive the elements of language, to determine the function and the possibilities of the language.¹⁸

Therefore in comparison with the first item in this paragraph we have to add a complete further methodological level. It is not enough to prepare a text, to clean it, by means of language-comparison or textual criticism so that by means of a text now well readable we are able to look to the reality like through a window. No, after the text has been made readable its language has to be smashed into pieces. Or – let me translate this poetic imagery – we have to analyze the language of our text. The »Preparation of the Text« must be followed by its description¹⁹ and interpretation, p.e. within the frame: Syntax – Semantics – Pragmatics.²⁰ Preparation on the one side, Description/Interpretation on the other are the two focuses of that ellipse constituting our entire study of texts.²¹

I'm convinced: we not only are dealing with textual interpretation but we ourselves are products of textual interpretation.²² With biological birth we started to live in a »discursive space«, we learned to discern sounds and to use these sounds in combination of a certain behavior. »By producing and assimilating texts and by linking texts to other texts . . . , individuals, through this linguistic activity, continually construct mind as they, furthermore, construct the discursive space. The discursive space which individuals construct and which has been historically given to them in which to construct new texts is the sociotextual environment which provides the conditions for mind. – »²³ – Beginning with parents, relatives, friends, hearing fairy tales, our experiences at school, the reading of books, newspapers, our lives within a religious community with its »sacred texts« – all this motivated the construction of our minds by ourselves. We never are receiving ideas, meanings, contents from our contemporaries or from biblical texts but only marks, sounds, visual or phonetic items. To change these senseless items into ideas and meanings is the task of the receiver. And he or she will do so on the basis of his or her acquired experience in combining senseless signals with a certain behavior.

This constructivist²⁴ conception of hermeneutics meanwhile is rather widespread.²⁵ It excludes any conception of an »objective« sense to be found in a text and – because of the lack of objectivity – it forces

victorious battle against Moab, about Gods wonderful help, and – finally – about the voluntary retreat of the two armies after they saw with abhorrence the king of Moab sacrificing his own son on the wall of the town. After my narrative description I'm convinced that all these reported events never happened. On the contrary: the text aims to gloss over, to cover up the defeat of the king of Israel in a battle against Moab. cf. SCHWEIZER, H *Elischa in den Kriegen. Literaturwissenschaftliche Untersuchung von 2 Kön 3; 6,8–23; 6,24–7,20.* StANT 37. München 1974.ch.I.

18 After the laborious description of many linguistic mechanisms (ch. 4–7) it has been a very interesting return of research to summarizing the ideological implications of some selected texts with QRB: SCHWEIZER, H (1991) ch. 8+9.

19 The contrary would be: Prescription and it is well-known that the traditional grammars following their Greek/Latin antecedents are prescriptive in character. They give rules and say which linguistic item is »wrong« and which is »right«, cf. BUSSMANN, H *Lexikon der Sprachwissenschaft.* Stuttgart 1983. p.353.549s. A »descriptive« attitude of the scholar presupposes that a writer may speak even through »wrong« or unusual forms. The literary context normally gives enough helps for the interpretation.

20 Cf. my presentation of that structure in: *Elektronische Datenverarbeitung und Textinterpretation: Actes du Premier Colloque International »Bible et Informatique. Le Texte«.* Paris-Genève 1986. p.297–310.

21 Being confronted with an individual text, describing it in linguistic terminology, by databases etc. entails the chance that not only my technical and cognitive knowledge will be increased. At the same time my understanding of the feelings of the agents in the text and of the emotions combined with that specific situation of communication will be improved. See the two aphorisms, HANDKE, P, *Das Gewicht der Welt. Ein Journal* (November 1975 – März 1977). Salzburg 1977: »Das Betrachten so lange aushalten, das Meinen so lange aufschieben, bis sich die Schwerkraft eines Lebensgefühls ergibt (324) . . . Eine genaue, gefühlvolle Geschichte: das Gefühl liegt in der Genauigkeit des Erzählens, nicht in dem Beschreiben von Gefühlen« (252).

22 Cf. WAHL, H, *Emphatie und Text. Das Selbstpsychologische Modell interaktiver Textthermeneutik:* ThQ 169 (1989) 201–222.

23 FRAWLEY (1987) 151.

24 But cf. HOLENSTEIN, E, (1980) 46s: »Eine (konstruktivistische) logische Sprachtheorie orientiert sich bei der Erklärung primär an den Kriterien der Einfachheit und der Einheitlichkeit der Theorie. Eine (rekonstruktivistische) phänomenologische Sprachtheorie hat es dagegen primär auf die Übereinstimmung der metasprachlichen Erklärungsprinzipien der observablen sprachlichen Fakten mit den psychologischen und neurologischen, kurz mit den (im weitesten Sinn des Wortes) mentalen Organisationsprinzipien

scholars to start an intensive, precise, i. e., rational communication about that what they think the text wants to say. And I see in this communication the computer as a catalyst: this powerful, highly sophisticated but silly and stubborn instrument forces us to concentrate our work on a homogeneous level, on the literary level. I'm convinced that it is due computer-assisted biblical research that we again have a growing interest in questions of grammar, methodological reflections, text editions, hermeneutic questions. The catalyst computer has intensified the work in all these fields.²⁶

So the computer is not only a practical and powerful aid but it is also a hermeneutical challenge and a catalyst in the different exegetical fields.²⁷ Methodologically, this instrument doesn't solve our problems. But it requires a huge degree of consciousness. Those who accept that provocation certainly will achieve new results. Those who do not often are failing in a very expensive way, wasting time and money.

It is my hope that with more and more improved communication between biblical scholars our research will not only lead to highly sophisticated scientific results and hypotheses among which the original text has been lost. Instead, I hope that our work will lead back to the text, will enable the nonscholars in our religious communities to read the ancient texts with better understanding and more interest. For reading a text attentively entails the chance that my own discursive space, my own ideology, may be changed in some respect. And that's always a kind of liberation and salvation.²⁸

At a very large stage in its work, namely, in a certain Jeremite restaurant in Jerusalem, during AIBI-II in 1988, the Programm Committee agreed that this Congress should reflect on the different steps of exhaustive and thorough empirical research.²⁹ So we have 5 elements:

- › Background theory, hermeneutical questions – section 5
- Is it possible to transform these theoretical insights into a practical methodology? Questions of grammar conceptions. – section 2
- Are there experienced procedures and software solutions which make my research successful? – section 4
- What is the actual object of my research? Is it possible to read (textual criticism), to understand it (dictionaries, grammatical solutions)? – section 3

derselben Fakten abgesehen . . . (52) Die Entwicklung der Sprachwissenschaft der letzten 50 Jahre wird heute gerne als eine (in verdächtiger Weise beschleunigte) Einwicklung von unten nach oben dargestellt, ausgehend von der Phonologie über die (meist unterschlagene Morphologie und) Syntax zur Semantik. Beim gegenwärtigen Vorstoß über die Semantik und damit über die Sprache im engeren Sinn hinaus gabelt sich der Weg. Während die einen . . . eine »pragmatische Grundlegung der Semantik« anstreben, fordern andere . . . von einem phänomenologischen Standpunkt aus nicht nur radikaler, sondern auch richtiger, eine kognitive Grundlegung der Semantik und der Sprache insgesamt.«

- 25 Cf. SEEL, M, Die Kunst der Entzweiung. Zum Begriff der ästhetischen Rationalität. Frankfurt 1985. – SCHMIDT, S.J, Der Beobachtete Beobachter: ThQ 169 (1989) 187–200. Objections to this hermeneutical position come from »Postmodern Deconstruction« (DERRIDA): »Der Dekonstruktivismus wittert in der hermeneutischen Idee der Verständigung eine Perpetuierung (!) des metaphysischen Willens zur Macht, der allen sein (hier dialogisches) Rationalitätsmodell aufzwingt und auf diese Weise davon abweichende Individualität, Differenz und Dissidenz totalitär unterdrücken müsse«, GRONDIN, J, Einführung in die philosophische Hermeneutik. Darmstadt 1991. p.174. The main objection to this position lies in the fact that we never have the meaning of an utterance. We are always vacillating between the literal meaning and further indirect, implied meanings. So, such a conception of language is not able to exert dictatorial power, instead it has to rely on dialogue. cf. GRONDIN p. 176–178.
- 26 Whereas it can be said that the famous and dominant school of form criticism established by GUNKEL wasn't particularly interested in grammatical questions. Moreover, it can even be shown that they neglected the literary text. Cf. SCHWEIZER, H Wovon reden die Exegeten? Zum Verständnis der Exegese als verstehender und deskriptiver Wissenschaft: ThQ 164 (1984) 161–185. The famous »Sitz im Leben« and all the related questions is not a literary but a sociological complex of questions.
- 27 Speaking of the results of the computer-assisted research in semantics W. LENDERS didn't think primarily of the final software solutions but: « . . . daß durch den Zwang zur Algorithmisierung der Ablauf kognitiver Prozesse und damit der Umgang mit Bedeutungen aufgeschlüsselt werden kann«, in: Linguistische Datenverarbeitung – Stand der Forschung: Deutsche Sprache H. 3/1980, 213–262, p.244.
- 28 A remarkable convergence is to be found between – as cited – modern hermeneutical reflections on the one side and the hermeneutical position of M. LUTHER on the other: He stressed the personal reading of the biblical text by the believer, a reading as a confrontation with the literal meaning (cf. LUTHERS repulsion of an allegorizing interpretation), a reading without the intermediary of an authority (e. g. church). Within such a confrontation – L. was sure – the Holy Ghost will arise. But such a »dynamic« understanding of the »word of the Lord« was forgotten soon after L.
- 29 Cf. SCHWEIZER, H Biblische Texte verstehen. Arbeitsbuch zur Hermeneutik und Methodik der Bibelinterpretation. Stuttgart 1986, p.30.

All these preliminary stages lead to a reflected interpretation of a specific text, the analysis of its expressions (Syntax), its content (Semantics) and its use (Pragmatics) – section 1

I wish you productive participation in the congress and a pleasant stay in Tübingen!