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АННОТАЦИЯ

научной статьи по языкознанию и литературоведению, автор научной работы – Tantlevskij Igor

Analyzing the famous passage Eccl. 12:5b-7, the author of the article comes to the conclusion that the expression "the almond tree blossomed" (12:5ba) contains the **allegory** of man's birth and his young years; the phrase "the locust/locust tree became loaded" (12:5bβ) can be interpreted as an indication of the mature, productive/fruitful years of human **life** activity; the **allegory** of the caper, falling to winter ("and the caper bush fell"; 12:5by), correlates with the metaphorical description of **old age** and the approach of **death** in Eccl. 12:1b-2. So, one can assume that the passage Eccl. 12:5ba-γ includes the allegories of man's earthly birth, making up of his personality, **maturity** and **old age** in the form of natural phenomena that take place in Judea throughout the year approximately from the second half of January to December. The **allegory** of the breaking "silver cord" (Eccl. 12:6aa), symbolizing the earthly demise, can be understood as a break in the connection between the spirit and the flesh of man (cf.: Eccl. 12:7). In 12:6aβ-b, Ecclesiastes adduces the allegories of **death**, expressed through the broken vessels ("golden bowl", "jar", a certain "vessel"), symbolizing the human body. The context also suggests that an allusion to the human spirit implicitly present in these allegories as well, which is symbolized by olive oil (in the "golden bowl") and water (in the "jar" and in the "vessel"), not directly called, but contextually implied returning to their eternal Fountain (cf.: Jer. 2:13, 17:13, also: Ps. 36:10) when their temporary receptacles are broken. The "spring" and the "well" (Eccl. 12:6b) are veritable symbols of **life**, and in the light of Eccl. 12:7b perhaps symbols of eternal **life** in the Book of Ecclesiastes. As for the **allegory** of "the golden bowl", it clearly goes back to Zech. 4:2-3. In the light of the allegorical picture attested in Zech., chap. 4, and the text of Eccl. 12:7b, the **allegory** of Eccl. 12:6aβ "the golden bowl will crack" can presuppose implicitly not only the **death** of the body/"the golden bowl", but also that its contents "oil", symbolizing the spirit abided in the body will merge with the "oil" of the Divine Luminary, scil., with the Spirit of God.

Ecclesiastes in the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament of the Christian Bible. The book contains philosophical speeches by a character called 'Qoheleth' ("the Teacher"), composed probably between the 5th to 2nd century BCE. Peshitta, Targum, and Talmud attribute the authorship of the book to King Solomon. This chapter continues the previous one in the sustained

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## АЛЛЕГОРИИ ЖИЗНИ, СМЕРТИ И БЕССМЕРТИЯ В КНИГЕ ЭККЛЕСИАСТА 12:5В-7

Анализируя знаменитый пассаж Эккл . 12:5в-7, автор статьи приходит к выводу, что выражение «и зацвел миндаль» (12:5вa) содержит **аллегория** рождения человека и его юных лет; фраза «и отяжелела саранча (вар.: “рожковое дерево”)» (12:5вb) может быть истолкована как указание на зрелые, продуктивные/плодотворные годы человеческой жизнедеятельности; **аллегория** куста каперса, осыпающегося к зиме («и осыпался каперс», 12:5вy), коррелирует с метафорическим описанием **старости** и приближением **смерти** в Эккл . 12:1б-2. Таким образом, можно предположить, что текст Эккл . 12:5вa-y содержит **аллегории** земного рождения человека, становления его личности, **зрелости** и **старости** в корреляции с природными явлениями, которые имеют место в Иудее в течение года примерно со второй

половины января по декабрь. Аллегория разрывающегося «серебряного шнура» (Эккл . 12:6аа), символизирующая земную кончину, может быть понята как разрыв связи между духом и плотью человека (ср.: Эккл . 12:7). В 12:6аβ-в Экклезиаст приводит аллегории смерти, выраженные через разбивающиеся сосуды («золотая чаша», «кувшин», некий «сосуд»), символизирующие человеческое тело. Контекст также предполагает, что в этих аллегориях имплицитно присутствует и аллюзия на дух человека, символизируемый оливковым маслом (в «золотой чаше») и водой (в «кувшине» и в «сосуде»), прямо не называемых, но контекстуально подразумеваемых возвращающихся к своему вечному Источнику (ср.: Иер . 2:13, 17:13, также: Пс . 36:10) при разбиении своего временного вместилища. «Источник» и «колодец» (Эккл . 12:6b) являются истинными символами жизни, а в свете Эккл . 12:7b возможно, символами вечной жизни у Экклезиаста. Что касается аллегории «золотой чаши», то она явно восходит к Зах . 4:2-3. В свете аллегорической картины, изображенной в Зах ., гл. 4, и текста Эккл . 12:7b, аллегория Эккл . 12:6аβ «и треснет золотая чаша» вероятно, имплицитно предполагает не только смерть тела/«золотой чаши», но и то, что ее содержимое «масло», символизирующее пребывавший в теле дух, сольется с «маслом» Божественного Светоча, т. е. с Духом Божиим.

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## ТЕКСТ НАУЧНОЙ РАБОТЫ

на тему «Allegories of life, death and immortality in the Book of Ecclesiastes 12:5b-7»

Allegories of life, death and immortality

in the book of Ecclesiastes 12:5b-7

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Abstract. Analyzing the famous passage Eccl. 12:5b-/, the author of the article comes to the conclusion that the expression "the almond tree blossomed" (12:5b«) contains the allegory of man's birth and his young years; the phrase "the locust/locust tree became loaded" (12:5b|3) can be interpreted as an indication of the mature, productive/fruitful years of human life activity; the allegory of the caper, falling to winter ("and the caper bush fell"; 12^by), correlates with the metaphorical description of old age and the approach of death in Eccl. 12:1b-2. So, one can assume that the passage Eccl. i2:5ba-y includes the allegories of man's earthly birth, making up of his personality, maturity and old age in the form of natural phenomena that take place in Judea throughout the year — approximately from the second half of January to December. The allegory of the breaking "silver cord" (Eccl. 12:6aa), symbolizing the earthly demise, can be understood as a break in the connection between the spirit and the flesh of man (cf.: Eccl. 12:7). In 12:6a|3-b, Ecclesiastes adduces the allegories of death, expressed through the broken vessels ("golden bowl", "jar", a certain "vessel"), symbolizing the human body. The context also suggests that an allusion to the human spirit implicitly present in these allegories as well, which is symbolized by olive oil (in the "golden bowl") and water (in the "jar" and in the "vessel"), — not directly called, but contextually implied — returning to their eternal Fountain (cf.: Jer. 2:13, 17:13, also: Ps. 36:10) when their temporary receptacles are broken. The "spring" and the "well" (Eccl. 12:6b) are veritable symbols of life, and in the light of Eccl. 12:7b — perhaps symbols of eternal life in the Book of Ecclesiastes. As for the allegory of "the golden bowl", it clearly goes back to Zech. 4:2-3. In the light of the allegorical picture attested in Zech., chap. 4, and the text of Eccl. 12:7b, the allegory of Eccl. i2:6a|3 — "the golden bowl will crack" — can presuppose implicitly not only the death of the body/"the golden bowl", but also that its contents — "oil", symbolizing the spirit abided in the body — will merge with the "oil" of the Divine Luminary, scil., with the Spirit of God.

Keywords: Ecclesiastes, Zechariah, chap. 3-4, allegory, symbol, life, death, immortality, youth, maturity, old age.

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I

The author of the Book of Ecclesiastes<sup>1</sup>, contrasting in its final part the joy of young years with the sad years of old age and portraying the bitterness of the latter in a series of depressing metaphors (Eccl. 11:7-12:58), completes his work with some allegories (Eccl. 12:5b-7), revealing of the meaning and logic of which causes great difficulties, as well as the textual interpretation of this passage itself.<sup>2</sup> In our translation the text of Eccl. 12:5b-7 runs as follows:

5b. The almond tree blossomed<sup>3</sup>;

the locust (tree?<sup>4</sup> — I. T.) became loaded;

and the caper bush fell (scil., lost its foliage. — I. T.)<sup>5</sup> —

then man<sup>6</sup> goes to his eternal home.

And (hired) mourners will go about the street-bazaar

6. until the silver cord breaks; and the golden bowl will crack,

the jar will be broken at/over the spring, and the vessel will split at/over<sup>7</sup> the well.

7. And dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

It seems expedient to begin our analysis of the text with consideration of the allegories of "the almond tree", "the locust", and "the caper". In Judea, the almond tree (saqed, lat. *Prunus amygdalus*)<sup>8</sup> begins to bloom from the second half of Jan-

1 The dating of the book creation varies in the interval from the last quarter of the 6th to the 3rd cent. BCE. See, e. g.: Seow 1997, 21-38; Tantlevskij 2014, 139-141; Idem 2017, 133, 140-143; Idem 2018, 77f., n. 15; Duncan 2017, XXf. The oldest extant fragments of the Book of Ecclesiastes manuscript originating from the 4th Qumran cave, 4Q Goha, are paleo-graphically dated to ca. 175-150 BCE (see, e. g.: Seow Op. cit., 6; Abegg, Flint, Ulrich (eds.) 1999, 619). Among the numerous contemporary works devoted to the Book of Ecclesiastes, let us note, e. g.: Seow Op. cit.; Bartholomew 2009; Brown 2011; Enns 2011; Eswine 2014; Atkinson 2015; Duncan Op. cit.

2 Variants of ancient and modern interpretations of this passage in the main languages of the world can be found in: BW 2015.

3 Masoretic vocalization weyane's in accordance with Qere: weyanes, assuming nss, "to blossom"; this reading is supported by the Septuagint, Syro-Hexaplar version, Peshitta, and Vulgate.

4 On this interpretation see below.

5 On this interpretation of the root prr in Hiph 'il cf., e. g.: Seow, 363. See further: n. 23.

6 The term ha-'adam can be interpreted in this passage as "the human", "humanity", as well. Cf.: Eccl. 1:4a.

7 On this interpretation see: n. 26.

8 See, e. g.: Moldenke 1952, 35; Zohary 1982, 66.

uary (often before the appearance of leaflets on the tree), the first of the fruit trees of the country — as a harbinger of the revival, "awakening" of spring (NB: the verb sāqad having the same consonant composition, as the word saqed, means "to stay awake", "keep watch/vigil"<sup>9</sup>). This circumstance a priori makes unlikely a popular opinion that the image of blooming almonds in Eccl. 12:5b« could be used as a "vegetable" allegory of old age. In the light of this, as well as because almond blossoms are not only white, but also white and pink, and light pink, they could hardly be considered as a universal image of gray hair, as some researchers believe.<sup>10</sup>

Almond blossoms only until the middle of March. Its fruits (used in antiquity for food, for making oils, in the production of cosmetics, perfumes, in medicine, in embalming, etc.)<sup>11</sup> mature for a long time, until September. (Cf., e. g., The Proverbs of Ahikar 2:7 (Syr. A): "My son, be not in a hurry, like the almond-tree whose blossom is the first to appear, but whose fruit is the last to be eaten..."<sup>12</sup>) Therefore, even if one admits the unlikely interpretation "the almond tree blossoms (will) fall"<sup>13</sup>, etc., this can't at all be an allegory of the proximity of a person's demise — rather, as an indication of an important stage in the process of his maturation on the way to manhood.

Blossoms of the almond tree have the shape of a cup (gäbta ' ; Ex. 25:33-34, 37:19-20). In view of the fact that in the next verse of the Book of Ecclesiastes (i2:6aß-b) a person (more precisely, his flesh<sup>14</sup>) three times correlates with different vessels, and also taking into account the above mentioned botanical features of the almond tree, it can be assumed that the phrase "the almond tree blossomed" contains the allegory of man's birth<sup>15</sup> — "awakening" to life — and his young, joyous, bright years.

As for the locust (hägäb), it is a migratory phase of the grasshopper (*Schistocerca gregaria*), which is regularly found throughout the Near East.<sup>16</sup> Reproduction of locusts (most individuals have a length of 2-4 cm) usually occurs in May-June. When

9 Cf. the play of words saqed and soqed, "vigilant", in Jer. 1:11—12.

10 See, e. g.: Seow 1997, 379.

11 See, e. g.: Gen. 43:11.

12 Cf. Num. 17:23[8]: "...Moses entered into the Tabernacle of Testimony, and behold, Aaron's rod waxed bloomed <...>: buds came out, flowers blossomed, and the fruits of almond (seqedîm) ripened".

13 See, e. g.: Diakonoff 1973, 652. Cf., on the other hand: Seow 1997, 347, 36f.

14 See further below.

15 On the origination of man cf.: Eccl. 11:5a.

16 Uvarov 1966-1977.

mating, the male suspends the spermatophore (consisting of a main part, a "vial" containing spermatozoa, and an additional — designated as spermatophilax, which is in fact an adhesive nutrient) to the end of the female abdomen. The spermatophore suspended to the abdomen of a female — with the spermatophilax weighting it — makes it difficult for the female to move and prevents repeated mating. Egg laying usually occurs in the second half of the summer.

The verbyistabbil used in Eccl. i2:5bp (the Hithpa'el form occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible) is derived from the root sbl, "to carry (a load, burden)", "to be laden", attested elsewhere in the Bible in Qal and Pu'al and in the latter form meaning most probably "to be pregnant" (Ps. 144:14). Thus, the interpretation "the locust became loaded" quite agrees with the locust propagation peculiarities described above.

In general, this phrase can be interpreted as an indication of the mature, productive years of human life.

On the other hand, however, as C. L. Seow reasonably points out<sup>17</sup>, "mentioned between almond and caper, it seems most likely that hagab 'locust', properly 'grasshopper', refers not to the insect but to some kind of plant. The word 'locust' in English refers to a wide variety of plants throughout the world, most of which have pods that apparently remind one of the insect (in its form; cf. below. — I. T. ).<sup>18</sup> In the Levant, too, this association between the insect and certain types of trees seems to have been made. Indeed, the Greek word akris 'locust', used normally of the insect, may have referred to pods of the carob tree, as well. It has long been argued that the 'locusts' eaten by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:4; cf. also: Lk. 15:16. — I. T. ) may, in fact, have been such 'locust' pods. There is ample evidence, however, that the insect was consumed by people in the Levant in ancient times, as many bedouin do even today. So, the locusts consumed by John the Baptist may have been the insect, after all. Nevertheless, it is significant that many interpreters in antiquity assumed the "locusts" to be legumes. This is an interpretation of akris 'locust' found in the apocryphal Gospel to the Ebionites and followed by Athanasius, Chrysostom, and others<sup>19</sup>. It appears that even in Levantine antiquity, 'locust' was recognized as a term used for a kind of plant. It makes sense to think that hagab refers to a plant, perhaps the carob tree (harub), whose pods remind one of locusts".

Let us also mention that hagab, "locust", in the passage under consideration has traditionally been taken figuratively, in particular as referring to penis. In

<sup>17</sup> Seow 1997, 362.

<sup>18</sup> OEL 1989, VIII, 1093f.

<sup>19</sup> See the citations in: Lampe 1961, 65.

b. Sabb. 152a it is said that hagab refers to one's 'gbwt, a reference to the male sexual organ (cf.: sir 'agabim, "love-song", in Ezek. 33:32; 'agabatah, "her lust", in Ezek. 23:11; the verb 'gb meaning "to have (sexual) desire"). And this is an interpretation at the allegorical level accepted by Rashi and Ibn Ezra.<sup>20</sup> It seems that this allegory could have arisen because of the smell of the carob tree blossoms (for specific pungent odor comes from them, reminiscent of the smell of human sperm) and especially of the shape of its fruits: the legums of the evergreen tree *Ceratonia siliqua*<sup>21</sup>, commonly known as the carob tree or simply locust tree — having a length of about 10-20 cm and a width up to 3-4 cm — in size, shape and even texture often resemble the male genital organ in a state of erection.

The carob tree fruits begin to ripen since May, and they are harvested until the rainy season (in Israel, more intense precipitation begins to fall from the end of October). Fresh fruits have a sharp astringent taste and are therefore not suitable for eating; they are collected immature and laid out on the ground where they ripen. The pulp contains up to 48-56% of sugar. Various mammals (goats, sheep, cows, etc.) are feeding on the legumes of the carob tree.<sup>22</sup> Parasites do not live on this tree, as a result of which many peoples considered it sacred. The carob tree is likened to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in Gan Eden in 1 Enoch 32:4.

Thus, the phrase "the locust (tree) became loaded" could also be interpreted as an indication of a mature, fruitful period of human life activity.

The last "vegetable" allegory — "and the caper bush fell" (12<sup>by</sup>) — probably implies that it lost its foliage.<sup>23</sup> The caper bush (*Capparis spinosa*)<sup>24</sup> blooms con-

<sup>20</sup> Levy 1912, 135; Seow 1997, 362, 379.

<sup>21</sup> See, e. g.: Battle, Tous 1997. The designation *Ceratonia siliqua* derives from the Greek *keration*, "fruit of the carob" (from *keras*, "horn"), and Latin *siliqua*, "pod". The unit "carat", used for weighing precious metal and stones, also comes from *keration*, as alluding to an ancient practice of weighing gold and gemstones against the seeds of the carob tree, having approximately the same weight of about 0.2 grams.

In late Roman times, the pure gold coin known as the *solidus* weighed 24 carat seeds, and, as a result, the carat also designates a measure of purity for gold: 24-carat gold means pure gold, etc.

<sup>22</sup> Cf., e. g.: Lk. 15:16.

<sup>23</sup> The verb form *taper*, as pointed in *CodexLeningradensis*, appears to be the Hiph'il of *pr* "to break, frustrate, make ineffectual, bring to naught", or the like. The Septuagint, Symmachus, Syro-Hexaplar and Coptic versions take the verb to indicate that the fruit is scattered or dispersed, i. e. the caper bush fruits have split open and their seeds are scattered.

On the other hand, C. L. Seow suggests that "perhaps we should take the root *pr* to mean 'to fall off, drop off. One may compare Ugaritic *pr* 'to break, break from' (KTU 1.15.III.30; 1.19.III.14, 28), which is related to Arabic *farra*, a verb that in the causative stem

tinuously from April-May to October, the fruit ripening is stretched from June to October. Throughout this period, it is possible to collect blossom buds (shaped like berries and used as appetite stimulants, also considered as aphrodisiacs) or fruits, as they mature. Roots are collected in late autumn. The leaves of the caper bush fall in December, when the season of intense rains begins. So, the allegory of the caper, falling to winter, clearly correlates with the metaphorical description of old age and the approach of death in Eccl. 12:1b-2:

<...> the bad days come

and the years approach when you will say,

"I find no pleasure in them";

the sun darkens (for you), (even) the light,

and the moon and the stars,

and the clouds return after the rain <...>.

So, one can assume that the passage Eccl. 12:5ba-y includes the allegories of man's earthly birth, making up of his personality, maturity and old age in the form of natural phenomena that take place throughout the year — approximately from the second half of January to December.

II

. Then man goes to his eternal home.

And (hired) mourners will go about the street-bazaar

until the silver cord breaks (12:5c-6aa).

In the light of the aforesaid, the allegory of the breaking "silver cord" (Eccl. 12:6aa), symbolizing the earthly demise, can be understood as a break in the connection between the spirit and the flesh of man (cf.: Eccl. 12:7). Further, Ecclesiastes adduces the allegories of death, expressed through the broken vessels, symbolizing the human body:

And the golden bowl will crack,

the jar will be broken at/over the spring,

and the vessel<sup>25</sup> will split at/over<sup>26</sup> the well (12:6a|3-b).

may mean 'to fall off, to shed'. If this interpretation is correct, the Hiph'il of the root in Hebrew may also mean 'to shed, to cause to fall off. The point, then, is that the caper bush is defoliated.' (Seow 1997, 363).

<sup>24</sup> See, e. g.: Danin 2010, 179-185.

<sup>25</sup> The noun *glgl* here seems to refer not to a waterwheel (a pulley), but to a vessel of some sort. This is suggested already by the parallelism of *glgl* in Eccl. 12:6ba with *kad*,

But the context suggests that an allusion to the human spirit implicitly present in these allegories as well, which is symbolized by olive oil and water — not directly called, but contextually implied — returning to their source when their temporary receptacles are broken. Thus, in the second and third allegorical images, there are references to the spring and the well, scil., veritable symbols of life, and in the light of Eccl. 12:7b — "and the spirit will return to God who gave it" — perhaps symbols of eternal life in the Book of Ecclesiastes.<sup>27</sup> In Jer. 2:13 and 17:13, the Lord Himself is referred to as the "Fountain (meqor) of living water"<sup>28</sup> (cf. also the image of a "well of living water" in Gen. 26:19). Thus, the ceramic vessel, which symbolizes the body, "returns to the earth as it was" (Eccl. 12:7a), and its contents — the "living water", implying the spirit of man — to its Fountain. As for the allegory of "the golden bowl", it clearly goes back to Zech. 4:2-3:

There is a lampstand (menorah) entirely of gold with its bowl at the top of it; it holds seven lamps <...>. By it are two olive trees, one to the right of the bowl and the other to the left.

The term *gullah*, "bowl", refers here to the receptacle of olive oil for the lamps. (NB: this noun is attested in the Hebrew Bible only in Zech. 4:2-3 and in Eccl. 12:6a@.) In Zech. 4:10b, these seven lamps are designated as "the eyes of the LORD". Since, according to Zech. 4:14, "these (two olive trees. — I. T.) are the two anointed ones in attendance on the LORD of the whole world", one may conclude that in Zech., chap. 4, the menorah symbolizes God.<sup>29</sup> Olive oil giving light, judging by

"jar" (see, e. g.: Dahood 1952, 213f.; Seow 1997, 367). The noun *glgl* should probably be vocalized as \**golgol* (from earlier \**gulgul*), a noun related to *gulla* "basin", "bowl", and *gulgolet*, "skull". As was pointed out by Seow (ibid.), "it refers, perhaps, to a globular vessel. In Akkadian, *gulgullu* and *gulgullatu*, usually meaning 'skull', are also names of cooking pots, and *gullu* and *gullatu* also refer to various vessels (see CAD V, 128-129). Dahood calls attention to the word *glgl* inscribed in Punic on a vase (RES 907). Cf. also Ugaritic *gl*, which refers to a drinking vessel (KTU 1.14.II.18-19, IV.1-2; cf. Akkadian *gullu*)".

<sup>26</sup> In parallelism with 'al-hammabbua', "at/over the spring", here one would expect the spelling 'al-habbor, "at/over the well" (cf.: 'al-habbor in Isa. 24:22; but, on the other hand, cf.: 'el-habbor, lit. "into the pit" in Gen. 37:22); see further, e. g.: Seow 1997, 367. NB: the spelling 'al is attested in the next verse (Eccl. 12:7a) in Codex Leningradensis instead of the preposition 'el which is natural here; the latter spelling is confirmed by many Jewish manuscripts and the Peshitta.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. also Eccl. 3:17^: ".and (judgment) over every act - there", i. e., in the other world.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. also Ps. 36:10: "For with You is the fountain of life, in Your light we shall see light".

<sup>29</sup> Cf., e. g.: Seow 1997, 10.

Zech. 4:4-6 and 10b, may symbolize here the Spirit (*ruah*) of God (cf.: Zech. 4:6c), so that the priestly and lay Judean leaders turn out to be the anointed (Zech. 4:14) of the Spirit<sup>30</sup>, present, according to Zech., chap. 3-4, in the heavenly court.

In the light of the allegorical picture attested in Zech., chap. 4, and the text of Eccl. 12:7b ("and the spirit will return to God who gave it"), the allegory of Eccl. 12:6a@ — "the golden bowl will crack" — can presuppose implicitly not only the death of the body/"the golden bowl", but also that its contents — "oil", symbolizing the spirit abided in the body — will merge with the "oil" of the Divine Luminary, scil., with the Spirit of God.

So, it turns out that in all three allegories the solid irrevocably broken walls of the vessels symbolize the human body, and the supposed moving contents of them — the fountains of life (water) and light (oil) — the human immortal spirit, returning to its Creator.

It can be assumed that in Eccl. 12:50<sup>«-^</sup> and i2:7a-b a chiasmic parallelism is present: the phrase "then man goes to his eternal home<sup>31</sup>" correlates with the statement "and the spirit will return to God who gave it", and the words "(hired) mourners will go about the street-bazaar" — with the statement "and dust will return to the earth as it was".

The assumption that the phrase "and the spirit will return to God who gave it" is not simply an euphemistic, circumlocutional expression equivalent to "breathe one's last", meaning the transition, in fact, to nonexistence, — as some scholars believe<sup>32</sup> — is confirmed by the text of Eccl. 3:21:

Who knows if the human spirit (ruah) ascends upward  
or if the animal spirit goes downward to the earth?<sup>33</sup>

This passage shows that the idea of the ascent of the spirit "upwards", i. e., "to God," is fundamentally different from the widely spread view of the descent of the spirits of dead people<sup>34</sup> and (NB!) animals into the underground realm of

shadows.<sup>35</sup>

In conclusion, let us note one nuance. In the text Eccl. n:8b@ the author writes:

Everything that appears ("arises". — I. T.)<sup>36</sup> is transient<sup>37,38</sup>

30 Cf., e. g.: Isa. 61:1-2.


31 In everyday speech the phrase "eternal home" usually means a tomb or a grave, but in the context of Eccl. 12: 5b-7 this notion takes on special transcendent connotations.

32 Cf., e. g.: Seow 1997, 367<sup>^</sup> 382.

33 Cf.: Eccl. 8:7.

34 See, e. g.: Эклл. 3:19-20, 21b, 6:4-6, 9:10b.

35 See further: Tantlevskij 2018, 76-83; cf.: Idem 2017, 133f.

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36 Scil. "under the sun"; lit: "all that comes". Cf.: Eccl. 8:8; Job 7:7, 16.

That is, everything that has a beginning, that was created by God, sooner or later dies, disappears. But, according to the Biblical tradition, God puts His Spirit in man<sup>39</sup>, and therefore the spirit of man is a particle of the eternal Spirit of God — beginningless and infinite; thereby the human spirit itself is eternal. Returning to its Source, the spirit of man arrives at its "Eternal Home".

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37 Lit. "vapor".

38 Cf. the statement of Xenophanes of Colophon as it is conveyed by Diogenes Laerti-us (Lives, Teachings, and Sayings of Famous Philosophers, IX, 19):

Everything that arises is subject to destruction.

39 See, e. g.: Gen. 2:7, 6:3; Job 27:3, 32:8, 33:4. Cf. also, e. g.: Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6.

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encouragement to make decision and the need to act speedily. Ecclesiastes 12. Song of Solomon. Isaiah. Jeremiah. 3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, 4 And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low; 5 Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long aho Ecclesiastes 12:5 Ecclesiastes 12:6 12:7 Ecclesiastes 12:8 Ecclesiastes 12:9 Ecclesiastes 12:10 Ecclesiastes 12:11 Ecclesiastes 12:12 Ecclesiastes 12:13 Ecclesiastes 12:14 - . Version Bible Hub Parallel Reader's Bible Quick Links New International Version New Living Translation English Standard Version New King James Version Strong's BSB Strong's YLT Strong's NASB Strong's KJV Strong's HCSB Alphabetical Listings A Faithful Version American King James American Standard Version Berean Reader's Bible Berean Study Bible Brenton's Septuagint Christian Standard... Good News Translation Our bodies will return to the dust of the earth, and the breath of life will go back to God, who gave it to us.