

# Archetypes of “The Babylonian Text” in the Russian Literary Discourse: Interdisciplinary Research Practice

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## ABSTRACT

Digitalization of humanitarian knowledge pays particular attention to the development of electronic databases with search engines. The paper represents interdisciplinary research practice using free digital libraries and the Russian National Corpus. The object of the analysis is archetypes of “the Babylonian text”. The aim of the research: having chosen Psalm 136 where “the Babylonian text” reaches its climax as a starting point, to determine the correlation of biblical text archetypes (initial meanings) (sacral, historic, ethical and legal) and their interpretation in the Russian literary discourse and reveal the peculiarities of the initial system deconstruction.

The methods of the research: 1) quantitative analysis, that allows to estimate the distribution of archetypes according to “sacral”, “historic”, “ethical” and “legal” principle; 2) statistical processing of data to determine the type of connection; 3) religious and philosophical, historical and literary and legal analysis of the results that provides an opportunity to get objective material in order to reveal the peculiarities of the basic archetypes deconstruction with the help of 4) the comparative method.

The following online databases are used in the paper: the Russian National Corpus; Fundamental Electronic Library “Russian Literature and Folklore”; Russian Virtual Library; non-profit Electronic Library “ImWerden”. When necessary collections of “Direct Media” publishing house displayed in electronic library service “University Library online” were used.

For primary collecting and grouping of data Google and Yandex search engines, the Russian National Corpus search engine, Fundamental Electronic Library and “Direct Media” were used. Particular attention was paid to the initial archetypes prompted by the verse “Na reka Vavilonskih / Pri reka Vavilona. The obtained results allowed to do the following: 1) to make up a hierarchy of semantic fields {“ Babylonian captivity” + “lamentation for Zion” + “If I forget you, Jerusalem”}, {“daughter of Babylon” + “shall he be, that rewardeth”} 2) to carry out a statistical processing of connections between semantic fields (with the help of MS Excel) that are formed by archetypes “Babylon”, “retribution”, “vengeance”, “revenge”.

Upon the results of interpretation and comparative analysis it was determined that in the Russian literary discourse (since the beginning of the 19th century) “the Babylonian text”, as a rule, has been losing ethical and legal, sacral and legal archetypes (the reduction of the law of retaliation idea) that are replaced with their own historic senses and emotional elements.

The results of the paper and its methodology can be applied in interdisciplinary research which analyzes national world view evolution.

**Keywords:** *Babylonian text, discourse, Psalm, justice, talion /retribution*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Digitalization of humanitarian knowledge, undoubtedly, is one of the most promising directions in the development of contemporary science and education. However, it is also clear that immanent ambiguity that is manifested in

literary criticism, linguistics, philosophy etc. at the level of categorical-conceptual framework logically generates a contradiction between digital technology and traditional methodology of text-oriented work. When reaching an interdisciplinary level, contradictions, as a rule, are intensified because the conflict of interests increases. Thus, the topicality of our research is determined by the

objective necessity to determine effective methods of research interaction of digital and humanitarian segments and also the limits of usage of non-specific methods of text-oriented work.

During the last half of the century philology has been repeatedly trying to formalize the analytical level of interpretation. However, in most cases these attempts haven't been successful. Formal school couldn't find material relationship between form and content, structuralism together with semiotics, in fact, also failed. As time has proved, ascertaining of iamb dominance over choree and the reduction of the text to a sum of cultural signs add practically nothing to the understanding of fiction texts meanings. At the same time it can't be denied that rational assessment of formal parameters still allows getting objective information about the structure of the text, thus giving enough ground for its correct interpretation.

To check the last statement an analysis of "the Babylonian text" archetypes in the Russian literary discourse was carried out. The choice of the object of the research was determined by two reasons:

1. Messianic-apocalyptic ideas of Russian literature are inseparably linked with the biblical tradition;
2. "Babylon" is the structural element of The Old and also the New Testament.

Thus, it would be logical to guess that along with "St. Petersburg" [20] and "Muscovite" [8] texts in the Russian Literary discourse there is also "Babylonian" text (S. Slobodnyuk).

According to S. Slobodnyuk, "the Babylonian text" differs greatly from "Saint Petersburg" and "Muscovite":

1. "Babylon" being a universal and self-sufficient cultural sign, keeps live connection with the primary source; first of all, with the Book of Jeremiah and the Book of Psalms (Psalm 136).
2. Archetypal potencies of "Babylon" were formed during the interaction of historic, religious, legal and ethical experiences of ancient authors.
3. In its functioning "the Babylonian text" can be reduced to a limited number of semantic fields which limits are marked as "enemy, captivity, anguish, retribution, sin, secret wisdom, etc". In other words "the Babylonian text" can be rather easily formalized; consequently, its quantitative parameters can be viewed as appropriate or inappropriate to the law of sufficient reason and used during the interdisciplinary research.

Taking into account the mentioned points, we defined the goal of the paper – to determine the correlation of archetypes (initial meanings) of "the Babylonian text" (sacral, historic, ethical and legal) and their interpretation in the Russian literary discourse and reveal the peculiarities of the initial system deconstruction.

To achieve the goal it was necessary:

1. to carry out the selection of the material in full-text databases and the Russian National Corpus to prove the relevant character of the hypothesis about the existence of "the Babylonian text" and determine the main directions of its verification. In case the task is solved successfully the following should be done;
2. estimate quantitative indices of the Babylonian text and in case there are statistically important figures;
3. determine the type of correlation between sacral, legal, historic and ethical components of Babylon archetypes;
4. carry out the analysis of the obtained results using corresponding methods;
5. determine how the deconstruction of basic archetypes develops.

## 2. METHODS

The methodology of the research is determined by the peculiarities of the chosen material and also by the goal of the research, so we are planning to use successively the following:

1. quantitative analysis, that allows to estimate the distribution of archetypes according to "sacral", "historic", "ethical" and "legal" principle;
2. statistical processing of data to determine strong (or weak) connections;
3. religious and philosophical, historical and literary and legal analysis of the results that provides an opportunity to get objective material in order to reveal the peculiarities of the basic archetypes deconstruction with the help of
4. the comparative method.

Church Slavonic and Synodal translations of the first verse of Psalm 136 were chosen as the basic indicator of "the Babylonian text"; "Na rekah Vavilonskih / Pri rekah Vavilona" (Psalm 136:1) [На реках Вавилонских / При реках Вавилона]. In order to provide correctness of selection, only direct matches found in the original fiction or journalistic texts were taken into account.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1. *Semantic Dominants of the Babylonian Text*

Psalm 136 that goes back to the Book of Jeremiah can be rightfully considered the quintessence of the initial text. The ancient author managed to concentrate the main moods of the Jews connected with years of Babylonian captivity; sorrow and longing for home, an obligation to remember Jerusalem that has turned into law, hope for a just divine retribution in just 9 verses.

The first verse sets the main theme: “Na rekah Vavilonskih, tamo sedohom i plakahom, vnegda pomyanuti nam Siona / Pri rekah Vavilona, tam sideli my i plakali, kogda vspominali o Sione” (Psalm 136: 1) [На реках Вавилонских, тамо седохом и плакахом, вегда помянути нам Сиона / При реках Вавилона, там сидели мы и плакали, когда вспоминали о Сионе]. Thus, the triad “Babylon – weeping – memory” becomes the starting point for the development of the theme of coming back which is necessarily linked with punishing retribution.

At the same time two objects of retribution are defined paradoxically. The first one, strangely enough, is the captives themselves “Ashche zabudu tebe, Ierusalime, zabvena budi desnica moya. Pril'pni yazyk moj gortani moemu, ashche ne pomyanu tebe, ashche ne predlozhu Ierusalima, yako v nachale veseliya moego / Esli ya zabudu tebya, Ierusalim, — zabud' menya desnica moya; prilipni yazyk moj k gortani moej, esli ne budu pomnit' tebya, esli ne postavlyu Ierusalima vo glave veseliya moego (Psalm 136:5-6). [“Аще забуду тебе, Иерусалиме, забвена буди десница моя. Прильпни язык мой гортани моему, аще не помяну тебе, аще не предложу Иерусалима, яко в начале веселия моего / Если я забуду тебя, Иерусалим, — забудь меня десница моя; прильпни язык мой к гортани моей, если не буду помнить тебя, если не поставлю Иерусалима во главе веселия моего”]. The second one is “daughter of Babylon” = Babylon: “Dshchi Vavilonya okayannaya, blazhen izhe vzdast tebe vzdayaniye tvoe, ezhe vzdala esi nam. / Doch' Vavilona, opustoshitel'nica! blazhen, kto vzdast tebe za to, chto ty sdelala nam!” (Psalm 136: 8). [Дщи Вавилоня окаянная, блажен иже воздаст тебе воздаяние твое, еже воздала еси нам. / Дочь Вавилона, опустошительница! блажен, кто воздаст тебе за то, что ты сделала нам!]

Thus, the ancient writer connects semantic fields linked with the law of retaliation and completes semantic circles: Babylon – captivity – Babylon retribution; Babylon – captives – retribution for loyalty.

#### 3.2. *“Na rekah Vavilonskih” and the Russian Literary Discourse*

Taking into account peculiarities of Psalm 136 composition, we carried out the selection of the material using free digital resources:

- “the Russian National Corpus” [10];
- Fundamental Electronic Library “Russian Literature and Folklore” [2];
- “Russian Virtual Library” [15];
- “Non-profit electronic library “ImWerden” [11];
- “University Library online” (collection of “DirectMedia” publishing house) [21].

For primary collecting and grouping of data Google and Yandex search engines, the Russian National Corpus search engine, Fundamental Electronic Library and the collection of “DirectMedia” were used.

As, in our case, the first verse is a kind of the inner pre-text, the search started with word combinations “Na rekah Vavilonskih” and “Pri rekah Vavilona”. The results (based on 4 data bases in total) are the following: “Na rekah Vavilonskih” – 205 matches, “Pri rekah Vavilona” – 6 matches.

Taking into consideration these results the further selection was carried out with the help of the following search expressions:

1. “Na rekah Vavilonskih”;
2. “Na rekah Vavilonskih” and “zabudu tebe, Ierusalime”;
3. “Na rekah Vavilonskih” and “Dshchi Vavilonya”.

Limiting the search sector by Church Slavonic texts showed the lack of direct matches of 2 and 3 expressions within a text that are proportioned to Psalm 136. The only exception is “Ocherki Bursy” by N. Pomyalovskij”

“ - Gospoda, koncert! — predlozhitl kto-to.

-“Na rekah vavilonskih“. <...>

Vysokimi, tihimi i strastnymi notami voskhodit plach i nakonec pe-rekhodit v sil'nye, groznye golosa: “Dshchi vavilonya, okayannaya! blazhen, kto voz'met tvoih mladencev i rasshibet ih golovy o kamen'!” [14; 21] [«— Господа, концерт! — предложил кто-то.

— „На реках вавилонских“. <...>

Высокими, тихими и страстными нотами восходит плач и наконец переходит в сильные, грозные голоса: „Дщи вавилоня, окаянная! блажен, кто возьмет твоих младенцев и расшибет их головы о камень!“»] Unfortunately, full accordance of the fragment to formal requirements also contradicts content requirements:

1. the author just describes the reading of Psalm 136;

2. Church Slavonic and Russian texts are combined in the quotation.

### **3.3. Oblivion of Jerusalem, Daughter of Babylon and Law of Retaliation**

Search based on expressions “ashche zabudu tebe, Ierusalime”, “Esli ya zabudu tebya, Ierusalim”, “dshchi vavilonya, okayannaya”, “doch' Vavilona, opustoshitel'nica” gave no results as well. Thus, “zlaya doch' Vavilona (L. Mey) [10; 11] is expressively and semantically weaker than “okayannaya” and “opustoshitel'nica”. Double quotation “ashche zabudu tebe” in “Brothers Karamazovs” is used in a figurative sense.

“V etu minutu vdrug slovno vyskочil iz komnaty shtabskapitan i totchas zatvoril za soboyu dver'. Lico ego bylo isstuplennoe, guby drozhali. On stal pred oboimi molodymi lyud'mi i vskinul vverh obe ruki.

— Ne hochu horoshego mal'chika! Ne hochu drugogo mal'chika! — prosheptal on dikim shepotom, skrezheshcha zubami.— Ashche zabudu tebe, Ierusalime, da pril'pnet...

On ne dogovoril, kak by zahlebnuvshis', i opustilsya v bessilii pred derevyannoyu lavkoj na koleni. <...> Kolya vyskочil na ulicu.

— Proshchajte, Karamazov! Sami-to pridete? — rezko i serdito kriknul on Aleshe.

— Veчерom nepremenno budu.

— Chto on eto takoe pro Ierusalim... Eto chto eshche takoe?

— Eto iz Biblii: „Ashche zabudu tebe, Ierusalime“, — to est' esli zabudu vsyo, chto est' samogo u menya dragocennogo, esli promenyayu na chto, to da porazit...” (F, Dostoevskiy) [10; 15].

[«В эту минуту вдруг словно выскочил из комнаты штабс-капитан и тотчас затворил за собою дверь. Лицо его было испуганное, губы дрожали. Он стал перед обоими молодыми людьми и вскинул вверх обе руки.

— Не хочу хорошего мальчика! Не хочу другого мальчика! — прошептал он диким шепотом, скрежеща зубами.— Аще забуду тебе, Иерусалиме, да прильпнет...

Он не договорил, как бы захлебнувшись, и опустился в бессилии пред деревянную лавкой на колени. <...> Коля выскочил на улицу.

— Прощайте, Карамазов! Сами-то придете? — резко и сердито крикнул он Алеше.

— Вечером непременно буду.

— Что он это такое про Иерусалим... Это что еще такое?

— Это из Библии: „Аще забуду тебе, Иерусалиме“, — то есть если забуду всё, что есть самого у меня драгоценного, если променяю на что, то да поразит...»].

Thus, a question arises, how correct the initial hypothesis is and whether our “Babylonian text” can be found in Scripture. It is unlikely to answer this question unambiguously. If one proceeds from formal parameters

that are based on direct matches than it is rather unlikely. If, as a starting point, one chooses semantic fields that appear around key words, than the situation changes.

Thus, in fact, “Babylon” itself and its derivatives (search expression “vavilon\*”) appears in the Old Testament 171 times. At the same time 168 matches are found in Book of Jeremiah, 3 are in the Book of Psalms, 1 is in the third book of Maccabees. The search with the help of expressions “vavilon\*” & “\*mshchen\*”, “vavilon\*” & “\*msti\*”, “vavilon\*” & “vozda\*”, “vavilon\*” & “vozmez\*” displays the following results: Book of Jeremiah — 6 – 1 – 8 – 1; 2) the Book of Psalms — 0 – 0 – 1 – 0; 3) the third book of Maccabees — 0 – 1 – 0 – 0 [21].

Revenge (“mest’”) being the means of talion (“\*mshchen\*”, “\*msti’”) and retribution (“vozdayaniye”) of talion (“vozda\*”, “vozmez\*”), functioning without any connection with “Babylon” (“Vavilon”) have different results:

1. Book of Jeremiah — 8 – 5 – 5 – 0;
2. the Book of Psalms — 5 – 0 – 16 – 2;
3. the third book of Maccabees — 0 – 0 – 2 – 0 [21].

To determine the character of connection between the above mentioned fields Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was counted. It makes up:

1. Book of Jeremiah — 0,59;
2. the Book of Psalms — 0,96;
3. the third book of Maccabees — 1.

Based on the obtained results we can claim that talion element of “the Babylonian text” in the legal segment plays a structural role. As for the ethnical segment, it performs a criterial function. “Vostali na menya svideteli nepravednye: chego ya ne znayu, o tom doprashivayut menya; vozdayut mne zlom za dobro” (Psalm 34:11-12). [“Восстали на меня свидетели неправедные: чего я не знаю, о том допрашивают меня; воздают мне злом за добро”]. “Za lyubov' moyu oni vrazhduyut na menya, a ya molyus'; vozdayut mne za dobro zlom, za lyubov' moyu — nenavist'yu” (Psalm 108:4-5). [“За любовь мою они враждуют на меня, а я молюсь; воздают мне за добро злом, за любовь мою — ненавистью”].

## **4. DISCUSSION**

Issues of interdisciplinary research have been in the center of attention of scientific society both on methodological [1; 3; 5; 23] and practical levels [7; 9; 12; 19; 22]. However, we can't say that the issue is exhausted, especially when it comes to Humanities [4; 6; 13; 17; 18]. The first attempts of interdisciplinary research were made in the 19th century, having found a relatively proper expression in encyclopedia (philosophy) of law and having failed in philosophy of literature [16]. The experience of

combining science about sign systems and formal literary study, as it has been already mentioned, didn't result in a scientific breakthrough a well.

At the same time the work made shows that an efficient synthesis is, in fact, possible. The correct usage of methods of quantitative analysis gives an objective basis for a further text interpretation. Moreover, in our case, at the initial stage of the research, it gave an opportunity to get the proof that “the Babylonian text” of the Russian literary discourse differs greatly from “the Babylonian text” of Scripture. However, a mere statement of existence / absence of talion and other elements doesn't explain anything. More than that, even the initial search expression “na rekah Vavilonskih”, reduced to only quantitative parameters loses its archetypal potencies. Let's pay attention that in the pre-text “Na rekah Vavilonskih, tamo sedohom i plakahom, vnegda pomyanuti nam Siona / Pri rekah Vavilona, tam sideli my i plakali, kogda vspominali o Sione” (Psalm 136: 1) three elements can be easily distinguished: captivity – weeping – reminiscences about Zion. In other words, historic, ethical and sacral meanings are obvious. The legal meaning is not so apparent but it can be easily distinguished as the Psalm that is included in the jeremiad, initially, is based on the idea of equal retaliation: the chosen people gets a reward for loyalty, Babylon gets a punishment for oppression.

In the Russian literary discourse, as a rule, some kind of form is preserved; however, its filling turns out to be quite different. In most cases the first verse has a symbolic role marking longing for native land (especially in migrant literature [11]) and not more [2; 10; 15]. At the same time, which is rather curious, the expression “na rekah vavilonskih” often has ironical colouring; what is more, irony is equally represented in texts of the 19th and 29th centuries;

“— Sejchas budu varit' pel'meni, — govorit medved' i vytaskivaet iz sanej dva tyurichka. — A ya kak na rekah Vavilonskih, znaete. Tamo sedohom i plakahom. Дым, zhar...” (V. Shishkov) [10] [«— Сейчас буду варить пельмени, — говорит медведь и вытаскивает из саней два тюрочка. — А я как на реках Вавилонских, знаете. Тамо седохом и плакахом. Дым, жар...»].

“Giblymi basnyami pust' po-prezhnemu probavlyayutsya nashi plakuny na rekah vavilonskih, nashi obyvateli ot politiki” (N. Ustryalov) [10] [«Гиблыми баснями пусть по-прежнему пробавляются наши плакуны на реках вавилонских, наши обыватели от политики»].

“V okruzhnom sude vy uvidite akcionera, sidyashchego i plachushchego na rekah vavilonskih” (V. Nemirovitch-Danchenko) [10] [«В окружном суде вы увидите акционера, сидящего и плачущего на реках вавилонских»].

“— I chert nas zanes v takuyu dyru, vot vam i vse udovol'stvie, sidi da glyadi, kak ruchej бурлит, — skazal kapitan, obrashchayas' ko vsem srazu. — Как еврей на rekah Vavilonskih: sidi i plach', tut sam chert s gorya sop'etsya, a ne tol'ko my, greshnye...” (M. Novikov) [2] [«— И черт нас занес в такую дыру, вот вам и все удовольствие, сиди да гляди, как ручей бурлит, — сказал капитан, обращаясь ко всем сразу. — Как еврей

на реках Вавилонских: сиди и плачь, тут сам черт с горя сопьется, а не только мы, грешные...»].

“Za aprel' ya poluchil ot Lejkina 70 rub., i teper' tol'ko 13-e, a u menya i na izvozca net. Zhivi ya v ot-del'nosti, ya zhil by bogachom, nu, a teper'... na rekah Vavilonskih sedohom i plakahom...” (A. Chekhov) [2] [«За апрель я получил от Лейкина 70 руб., и теперь только 13-е, а у меня и на извозца нет. Живи я в отдельности, я жил бы богачом, ну, а теперь... на реках Вавилонских седохом и плакахом...»].

“V Sekretariate, ne huzhe nas, novomircev, sidyat na rekah vavilonskih” (A. Tvardovskij) [10] [«В Секретариате, не хуже нас, новомирцев, сидят на реках вавилонских»].

“V kazhdyj priezd oni sovershali torzhestvennyj vyhod na kladbishche: Klare do zarezu neobhodimy byli eti plachi na rekah Vavilonskih, na derevyannoj skameechke, kotoruyu soorudil kogda-to na dyadi Mishinoj mogile pokojnyj Vladimir Kirillovich” (D. Rubina) [10] [«В каждый приезд они совершали торжественный выход на кладбище: Кларе до зарезу необходимы были эти плачи на реках Вавилонских, на деревянной скамеечке, которую соорудил когда-то на дяди Мишиной могиле покойный Владимир Кириллович»].

“No ved' eto hlam, Yakov Moiseevich, — proniknovenno skazala ya, — hlam, ne interesnyj dazhe etnografam, poskol'ku vy ne kitajcy, a ocherednye evrei s ocherednym plachem na rekah vavilonskih” (D. Rubina) [10] [«Но ведь это хлам, Яков Моисеевич, — проникновенно сказала я, — хлам, не интересный даже этнографам, поскольку вы не китайцы, а очередные евреи с очередным плачем на реках вавилонских»].

## 5. CONCLUSION

It is clear that the Russian literary discourse has transformed the initial text and, which is significant; this transformation began long before the events of 1917. The main reason for deconstruction, in our opinion, is high emotionalism of the pre-text that increases in verses 2-4. In the Russian literary discourse emotional inertia turns out to be so strong that it tears off weeping on the rivers of Babylon from its historic roots, sacral aspirations and moral and legal expectations. Simultaneously, connections prompted by the book of Jeremiah are ruined and the talion of “the Babylonian text” partially losing its archetypal potencies moves to the New Testament segment of the Russian literary discourse. At the same time replacement of archetypes of “the Babylonian texts” by Russian historic meanings (from the moment of abolition of serfdom up to the third wave of migration) and corresponding moods.

The veracity of the results is proved by objective data obtained with the help of digital technologies. The last fact holds out a hope that the results of the work can be used in interdisciplinary research, which object is the evolution of national world outlook.

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