THE ROYAL TRAVESTY (QOH 1:12-2:26) AND SOME OF ITS READER-ORIENTING FUNCTIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE BOOK OF QOHELET

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This paper intends to introduce some first attempts at explaining the text-pragmatic functions of the so called "royal travesty" in Qohelet 1:12-2:26. As part of the third chapter of my doctoral thesis, which deals with the thematic and argumentative adjustments at the beginning of the book of Qohelet, this section outlines some findings and requests about the key role of Qoh 1:12-2:26 within the first three chapters of Ecclesiastes and on the book as a whole. The main focus of this investigation is on analyzing and describing the context, the structure and the thematic progression of Qohelets (royal) "I-voice" and merge these with reader-oriented questions. By questioning the communicational part of Qohelet's "I-voice", this approach mainly focuses on questions of (fictional) authorship, the expansion of "perceptional space" and the specific *modus operandi* of Qohelet's reflections, thus describing them as a part of the book's pragmatic orientation.

With this in mind, this paper also addresses common problems with the book's composition, key message and literary unity, which are important in the light of research history and against the background of contemporary interpretations of Ecclesiastes. This study assumes that the reflecting proverbs and wisdom-based reflections of Qohelet are imbedded in a larger *fabric of voices* that constitutes a multilayered communicational and reflection structure within the words of Qohelet. Besides a basic text-oriented interpretation, this approach will use text-pragmatic methods to analyze the specific functions of Qoh 1:12-2:26 during the establishment of a figurative voice of Qohelet, the identifying characteristics of the "I" and its importance for thematic progression and didactic composition within the royal travesty and the book of Qohelet.

Keywords: #Qohelet #I-voice #communication #narrative #royal travesty