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An Investigation of the Various Interpretations of the Song of Songs

Gilbert L. Weidman

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF THE
BOOK OF SONGS OF SONGS
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The study of the higher criticism of the Bible has always held great interest to the author of this thesis. This critical approach to an understanding of each book of the Bible has caused many facts, outside of the book itself, to be found. Armed with these facts the book itself becomes clearer and clearer as the purpose and the background of the author becomes more and more apparent. This results in a deeper appreciation of the attempt of each author to give us the truth.

The Protestant Bible proper, not the Jewish or Catholic Bible, is divided into two parts. The second part is commonly known as the New Testament which deals with the life of Christ and the subsequent developments. The first part is the Old Testament which consists of selected books dealing with the religion, history, and literature of the Hebrews. These thirty-nine books, constituting the Old Testament, are divided into three groups. The first five books of the Old Testament are called the Torah (תורה). The books of Joshua, Judges,

I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings and the Major and Minor Prophets are called the Nebiim (נְבִיאִים). The remaining books of miscellaneous writings are called the Kethubim (כְּתוּבִים). Among the books of the latter group are five megilloth, or rolls, each of which is read at certain stated seasons in the synagogues. The book of Ruth is read at Pentecost. The book of Lamentations is read on the ninth of Ab. The book of Ecclesiastes is read at the feast of Tabernacle. The book of Esther is read at the feast of Purim. The book of the Song of Songs is read during the Passover week which begins, according to the Bible calender, on the fifteenth of Nisan, Exodus 12: 1-20. It is usually read in the homes and in the synagogues during the week and especially on the intervening Sabbath of the Passover week. In 1938, for example, the Passover week began on the evening of April 15, and ended on the evening of April 22. Because the week began on a Sabbath, there was no intervening Sabbath; however, during this week, the Song of Songs was read informally in the homes at whatever time the family chose, and at daily services in the synagogue.

The Song of Songs has other names as well which will be discussed later. Its place varies considerably in the different texts. In the Hebrew Bible it is preceded by the book of Job, and it is followed by the book of Ruth. In the Septuagint and the Vulgate it is preceded by the book of Ecclesiastes, and it is followed by the book of Job. In the Peshitto or Syriac version of the Bible, it is preceded by the book of

I. S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 409

Ruth and it is followed by the book of Esther. In the American Revised Version of 1901 it is preceded by the book of Ecclesiastes and it is followed by the book of Isaiah.

The purpose of the Song of Songs seems to be one point upon which there is comparatively general agreement. Jastrow fittingly summarised the purpose of the poem when he said that "there is room only for one thought—the joy of life—and one emotion—love as the supreme manifestation of that joy."¹ The culmination of this purpose is given in the Song of Songs 8: 6 7. Love, then, seems to be the dominant note. However, the nature of that love is the subject of some debate. Budde, together with another German critic, J. D. Michaelis,² held that the work is concerned with conjugal love, and Budde thus insisted that it is not bridal but wedded love.³ Kirkpatrick insisted that the purpose of the author may be represented by the love described in 8:6 7; but he did not make clear the type of love described. The environment of the Song of Songs is that of polygamy. Solomon is referred to repeatedly in the Song of Songs and he is known as a king who had a large harem. The opposite character is the Shulammitte whose dialogues dwell on the idea of monogamy. Because of this fact, Waterman and Kirkpatrick held that it was a satire on polygamy.⁴

What inspires the writer is the power, the everlastingness, the freedom of love between the sexes, and its exclusiveness

1. Jastrow, Morris Jr., The Song of Songs, P.27.
2. Andover Review, No. 18, Vol. III, June 1885, p. 573.
3. New World, March, 1894, 3:56, Karl Budde, P. 291.
4. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, p. XXXI.

when it is real. He thinks of it as dominating the whole nature irresistibly, as enduring through all the chances and changes of life, as looking down with contempt upon all worldly advantage, and as permitting no dissipation among a number. Whatever action there is in the poem will necessarily be meant to illustrate this; and though there is perhaps no directly didactic purpose to denounce polygamy, still the exhibition of such a love must necessarily do that. The praise of such love cannot but become a satire upon what usually passes for love in a world in which polygamy is practiced. 1

This purpose was also in accordance with the practice of observing this poem as an allegory. This method of interpretation was used by such ascetics as Origen and Augustine, even though they spurned human love and preferred celibacy to the married state. The love expressed in the Song of Songs was explained in several relations by various persons who advocated the allegorical method of interpretation. This love expressed in the Song of Songs is that of the sensual love between the sexes. The author makes no attempt "to wind himself too high for sinful men beneath the sky."² The tone of the Song of Songs is more in keeping with the words which Browning put in the mouth of Rabbi Ben Ezra: "All good things are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now, than flesh helps soul."³ The pure frankness of the idea of love is inescapable. No other interpretation could be easily placed upon it. The type of love depends largely on a fuller explanation of each theory advanced.

1. Harper, op. cit. p. xxxi

2. Ibid. p. xxxii

3. Ibid. p. xxxii

Summary

-The Bible-

- I. New Testament--Life of Christ.
- II. Old Testament--thirty-nine books.
 - A. Torah--Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
 - B. Nebiim--Joshua, Judges, I & II. Samuel, I & II. Kings, and the Major and Minor Prophets.
 - C. Kethubim--Miscellaneous writings, and Megilloth or rolls.
 - a. Ruth, read at Pentecost.
 - b. Lamentations read on the ninth of Ab.
 - c. Ecclesiastes read on feast of Tabernacle.
 - d. Esther read on feast of Purim.
 - e. Song of Songs read at Passover.

- (1) Position in different versions.
 - (a) Masoretic (Hebrew) Job-----Ruth.
 - (b) Septuagint (Greek) Ecclesiastes-----Job.
 - (c) Vulgate (Latin) Ecclesiastes-----Job.
 - (d) Peshitto (Syriac): Ruth-----Esther.
 - (e) English (American Revised Version, 1901): Ecclesiastes-----Isaiah.

(2) Theme--Love.

This book does not seem to have any allusion to it, and though there have been attempts to prove that it does, the slight hints that it is a dialogue in which the speaker is rather fragmentary, because he often finds a verse in which the successive lines seem to be far removed from each other as far as continuation of thought is concerned. Words written are not attributed to any certain speaker.

What is the origin of this book? It might have grown up among the people, and might have become an accepted literature by the time it received its present note. Its entrance into the Hebrew text was not similar to that of the writings of the

CHAPTER II

VARIOUS THEORIES OF THE SONG OF SONGS

It is important that we make a serious study of the content of the Song of Songs before we attempt any evaluation of the various theories of interpretation. We find in it a series of expressions of love between one or more men and one or more women. To some minds, these expressions are sensual. Jastrow says:

There may be some of my readers who may feel offended by the undisguised outbursts of passionate love in the songs, by the pointed allusions to sexual delights, and by the many metaphors that are unmistakably erotic.¹

This poem does not seem to have any climax to it, even though there have been attempts to prove that it does. One might think that it is a dialogue in which the speeches are rather fragmentary, because he often finds a case in which two successive lines seem to be far removed from each other as far as continuation of thought is concerned. Words written are not attributed to any certain speaker.

What is the origin of this book? It might have grown up among the people, and might have become an accepted literature at the time it received historical note. Its entrance into the Hebrew text was not similar to that of the writings of the

1. Jastrow, op. cit., p. 13.

prophets whose prophecies were revelations from God to disobedient people. Probably the Song of Songs first came to be accepted by the Hebrews in their daily lives, and then was transferred into their prominent literature without so much as a protest from anyone.

The Song of Songs strikes a normal note in man. It deals with love of the opposite sex, an experience that is universal. The mystery surrounding the Song of Songs and its freedom of expression are striking facts which cause one to desire a knowledge of its meaning and purpose.

We also find when we study the Song of Songs that there seems to be no religious connection at all between it and the religion of the Yahwehists. The name of Yahweh is not mentioned. Religious customs and terms distinctive of the Yahwehist cult are entirely absent. The connection of the Song of Songs with the Hebrews cannot be traced from internal evidence with the exceptions of certain places in Palestine and certain personal names in Hebrew history.

From these observations one can understand that a study of the Song of Songs is very difficult. Any interpretation will always be subject to rejection whenever new materials appear and new theories superior to its predecessors are advanced. Meek noted that:

Many theories have been advanced for its solution; but each has received its following not because it solved all the problems, but rather because it was less objectionable than the others. None has been fully satisfying.¹

1. American Journal of Semitic Languages & Literatures, Vol. 39, Oct. 1922, Canticles & the Tammuz Cult, T. J. Meek, p. 1.

Before this statement had been published, Waterman had observed the difficulty.

This inability throughout the ages to take the poem, as it stands, as essentially neither more nor less, and yet account for its phenomena, has scarcely received the attention it deserves. 1

In the following pages a discussion of the different theories of interpretation will be presented with the intent of arriving at a plausible and true interpretation of the Song of Songs. It is possible the Song of Songs might not have been preserved for us today. At least we can say that it was this interpretation that caused it to be accepted in the canon of the Old Testament. Allegory may be defined as "A figurative representation conveying a meaning other than, and in addition to the literal meaning."

This interpretation was generally held at the time it was accepted into the canon. Later, the Christian interpretation changed the original meaning of the allegory slightly, and this type of interpretation became accepted by Christians in general. It is still held by many persons today as the only orthodox way of understanding the Song of Songs. To the Jewish scholar it portrayed the love of Yahweh for Israel, and to the Christian scholar it portrayed the love of Christ for the Church. Both schools had scholars who used characters other

1. The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, Vol. XXII, July 1906, 777 in the Song of Songs, p. 101, Leroy Waterman,

2. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 10th ed., Vol. 1, p. 245.

CHAPTER III

ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SONG OF SONGS

The first interpretation of the Song of Songs is known as the Allegorical interpretation. If it had not been for this interpretation, possibly the Song of Songs might not have been preserved for us today. At least we can say that it was this interpretation that caused it to be accepted in the canon of the Old Testament. Allegory may be defined as "A figurative representation conveying a meaning other than, and in addition to the literal meaning."¹

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1. Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th ed., Vol. I, p. 645.

beliefs in certain great leaders. The nature of the allegorical interpretation lends itself to varied meanings since no one has any way of testing the validity of the different shades of allegorical interpretation, no one is able to ascertain which is the best one.

When the Song of Songs was accepted into the canon, its theme was treated metaphorically as the love existing between Yahweh and ideal "Israel".¹ The Targum, or "the Chaldee Paraphrase," gave a very elaborate explanation of the allegorical interpretation applied to the Song of Songs,² which held that it embraced the history of the Hebrews from the exodus to the Messiah.³ Thus Saadia, who said that the Song of Songs was like a lock, the key of which had been lost,⁴ declared that Solomon foresaw the complete future events and wrote that the Song of Songs was a complete prophetic history of the Hebrews from the exodus to the coming of the Messiah in the twelfth century.⁵ Ibn Ezra adopted the same theory⁶ and referred to the philosophers who explained the Song of Songs as teaching "the mysterious harmony of the universe and the union of the Divine soul with the earthly body."⁷ Zug contended that it

1. Oesterley, G.E., & Robinson, Theodore H., An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: New York, 1894, p. 217.
2. op. cit. Jastrow, S.S., p. 73.
3. op. cit. Driver, p. 422.
4. op. cit. Jastrow, S.S., p. 84.
5. Ibid. p. 73.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid. p. 84.

was the longing of the tribes, after the dispersion of their main body, to come under the sway of the good king Hezekiah. Hohan held that the Song of Songs showed the relation of the "Israelitish" king to the heathen world about him, and his desire and that of his people for their conversion. Joseph Ibn Caspe, who reflected the prevailing Aristotelianism of his day as it had been modified by Mohammedan and scholastic theology, declared that the Song of Songs "represents the union between active intellect and receptive material intellect." Thomas de Verceil held that it was the "longing of the bride at the beginning of the first song for the kisses of her lover as the desire of the pure soul to be absorbed into the bosom of the Divinity." Richard of St. Victor held that it was spiritual love seeking for God. Medieval Rabbis held that it was the relation between active and reflective intellect.

The allegorical interpretation by Christian Scholars is also interesting. The interpretation arose because of a desire to prove from the Old Testament that Jesus was the Messiah, and many quotations were cited from it to defend their contention. The Song of Songs soon captivated the interest of Christian

1. op. cit., Clarke, p. 574.

2. op. cit., Clarke, p. 574.

3. op. cit., Jastrow, S.S., P. 84.

4. Ibid., p. 85.

5. Ibid.

6. op. cit., Clarke, p. 574.

scholars. The allegorical interpretation had been the orthodox method of the Jews to unravel the "mystery" of this book; however, the Christians found no disturbing marks in making the allegory in such a way as to mean the love of Christ for the Church. Hippolytus, the first Christian commentator on the Song of Songs (ca. A.D. 225) believed that the Song of Songs was an allegory about Christ and the Church.¹ Origen was probably the first exegete to apply the allegorical method in detail to the Song of Songs. He wrote ten books on this type of interpretation, a third of which have come down to us in the Latin translation. In them he rejected the literal sense as inadmissible, and interpreted the Song of Songs as the love of the soul for the heavenly kingdom, according to the mystic sense of the union of Christ and the Church,² or the union of the soul with the Logos of God.³ "When the soul tears from vanity and transitoriness of earthly things and longs after the Son of God whose glory it has recognized, then the Logos in Divine piety takes up His dwelling in it, as he has promised in John xiv: 23, and unites himself with it."⁴ Bernard, who wrote eighty-six sermons on the first two chapters of the Song of Songs, held that it contains words to express the fulness of the passion of pure love

1. *op. cit.*, Harper, p. xii.

2. Schmidt, Nathaniel, The messages of the Poets: Job, Canticles Minor Poets. New York, 1911, p. 217.

3. *op. cit.*, Harper, p. xii.

4. *Ibid.*

for God. His zealous spirit of sermon building was passed on to his disciple, Gilbert Porretanus; but the latter survived to complete the elucidation of only the first nine verses of the fifth chapter, by which time the total number of sermons had grown to one hundred thirty-four.¹ Gill preached one hundred twenty-two sermons on the Song of Songs to refute Whiston's rejection of the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs.² Aquinas (1225-1274), during his last illness, had visions of God which made all his past work valueless and he turned in his last hours to the dictation of a commentary on the Song of Songs.³ Kingsley held that the theme of the Song of Songs is an allegory foreshadowing the love of Christ for the Church.⁴ Lowth declared that the Song of Songs is referring to Christ espousing a Church from among the Gentiles.⁵ Brightman, in his commentary published in 1600, held that it was an historical epitome, beginning with David and extending to the history of legal and evangelical churches with specific references to Peter Waldo and others of the medieval worthies.⁶ Ghislerius held that it is the love between the Divine Being and the Virgin Mary.⁷ The deification of the Virgin Mary, and the mysticism of the medieval church produced

1. op. cit., Jastrow, S.S., p. 82.

2. Ibid

3. op. cit., Harper, p. xliv.

4. op. cit., Jastrow, S.S., p. 82.

5. Andover Review: No. 18, Vol. III, June 1885, p. 574, "The Song of Solomon", W. B. Clarke, Andover College.

6. Jastrow, Morris Jr., The Song of Songs, 1921: J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, p. 84.

7. Andover Review, No. 18, Vol III, June 1885, p. 574.

this last mentioned interpretation.¹ One of the finest types of mystical interpretation is that found in Teresa de Cepeda's commentary on the first chapter of the Song of Songs.² Modern scholars have regarded "the love depicted in the poem as typical of a higher love, supposing it either to represent the love of Jehovah to his people (Keil),³ or that of the soul to God (Stuart) or to foreshadow the love of Christ to the church (Delitzsch, Kingsbury).⁴ Luther maintained that the Song of Songs is the contemporaneous history of Israel under Solomon.⁵ Moody contended that the Song of Songs was the story of Christ's life as contained especially in the Gospels and Acts.⁶ Puffendorf held that it was a communion with Christ and the angels.⁷ "He continually sets up 'apathy' as the moral ideal, because by 'apathy' man becomes like God who is exalted above all that is material. ...the soul which finds its highest enjoyment in the true knowledge of God, must be withdrawn from disturbance by that which does not truly exist, into a passionless state, which removes it from all contact with the material."⁸ Athanasius held that

1. Schmidt, Nathaniel, The Message of the Poets, Job, Canticles, Minor Poets. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, page 218.
2. Martin, G Currie, The New Century Bible, The Song of Solomon", Oxford University Press: New York, 1908, p. 291.
3. W. B. Clarke, loc. cit., p. 574
4. Schmidt, Nathaniel, loc. cit., p. 218.
5. Clarke, W. B., loc. cit., p. 574.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Martin, G. Currie, loc. cit., p.291.

the Song of Songs was an epithalamium in celebration of the marriage of him who is beloved of God to human flesh.¹ Cyril of Alexandria explained the palanquin in the Song of Songs to mean the Cross, the purple cushion as the purple garment in which the Savior was mocked, the nuptial crown as the crown of thorns, etc.² Jerome believed that the bride and the bridegroom in the Song of Songs were Christ and the Church, or Christ and soul.³ Augustine restricted his allegorical meaning to Christ and the church.⁴ As has been observed above, the ideas held by some of the outstanding theologians, who contended for the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs, are quite interesting. In Origen's commentary on the Gospel of John it is stated:

For neither is the ruling principle in our soul free from agitation, nor are our eyes such as those of the fair bride of Christ, who should be of which the bridegroom says "Thy eyes are doves", signifying perhaps in a riddle the observant power which dwells in the spiritual, because the Holy Spirit came like a dove to our Lord and to the Lord in everyone.⁵

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, and one of the greatest contributors to both Catholic and Protestant theology, was very profuse in his use of the Songs of Songs; i.e., the application of its allegorical interpretation to answer arguments, to criticize opponents and to crown every doctrine with the mark of truth

1. Harper, op. cit., p. xlii
2. Ibid p. xlii
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Post Nicene Fathers, Book 10, Ch. 18, Origen's commentary on the Gospel of John.

Augustine seemed to gain considerable satisfaction and many defenses for his doctrines from the orthodox interpretation of the Song of Songs. He pointed out that the figurative language of the allegory is just as clear in meaning as the language used in ordinary conversation. Ointment (1:3) is the fragrance of Christ of which the prophecy sang. The spouse is the Church, a well of living water (4:15), one dove (6:8-9), which is modest chaste, and sealed in an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits. "A flock of sheep after shearing" (4:2) signifies the releasing of painful burdens from the sheep. When the Church is spoken of as "a fountain sealed to ourselves" (4:2) it is to let all the enemies of the Church understand that it cannot belong to others. "I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" (5-3) means that people on the earth need to be washing their feet. Teeth signify those who speak for the Church and are cut off from the errors of the Gentiles and divers opinions and are translated into that fellowship which is the body of Christ. Thorns (2:2) signify wickedness of manners; and daughters (2:2) means participation in the sacraments. The wounded spouse (2:4-5) means that the bow used in wounding her is the Holy Scriptures and the arrows¹ used are the apostles or Divine preachings.

Augustine used these allegorical figures quite freely. Often these figures became the climax of a serious argument with the enemies of the Church. To Augustine the Song of Songs constituted

1. Appendix contains additional Augustinian Allegory.

final proof in these arguments, and many other ancient worthies might be cited who adopted the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs, Among them, Jerome, Hippolytus, and the venerable Bede are worthy of note. At the second Trullan Council in 692 A. D., the exegesis of the orthodox fathers was made binding for the future, and as that council was acknowledged in the East, all independent comment on the Song of Songs ceased in the Eastern Churches. ¹

The allegorical interpretation furnished both the Greeks and the Jews a convenient way to escape from being forced to accept seemingly improbable tales. The use of the allegorical interpretation furnished a way by which the words of the text could be interpreted into a meaning which would be agreeable to their preconceptions. Philo, who was probably the originator of allegorical interpretation in general, laid down a fundamental law for the application of the allegorical method of interpretation. According to this law, when anything in the Bible seems to be objectionable, unbelievable, trivial, or contradictory to some other statement in the Bible, it must have a deeper meaning than the apparent meaning. ² To Philo, there was not an actual creation in six days, but since six is the most perfect number, the mention of six days only means that there was an orderly manner of divine creation. The mention of

1. Harper, op. cit. p. xlv

2. Jastrow, op. cit. p. 68

the trees in Paradise signifies the virtues implanted in the human soul. The cherubim at the entrance of Paradise mean goodness and authority. The flaming sword signifies the Logos, or reason. Adam's deep sleep means rest to human intelligence. Abraham's promise of an heir signifies that the soul is freed from the shackles of the body, and was thus able to penetrate Divine truth. Isaac's sacrifice was the desire of man to burn his mortal part in order that with naked soul, he may soar aloft to God.¹

Philo never quoted the Song of Songs, but that may have been due to the fact that the book may not have been translated from the Hebrew language into the Greek language in his day.² However, the apocryphal book, the fourth book of Esdras, furnishes evidence that at about the first century A.D., the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs³ was taken for granted.³

The Jewish estimation of the Song of Songs seemed to run very high at the Synod of Jamnia about the year 90 A.D. Aquiba, who understood the Song of Songs in the light of the allegorical interpretation is quoted as saying: "No Israelite has ever doubted that the Song of Songs defiles the hands," i.e., is inspired and canonical, "for the whole world does not outweigh the day in which the Song of Songs was given to Israel. All the Kethubim are holy, but the Song of Songs is the holiest of all."⁴

1. Jastrow, S.S., op. cit., p. 69.

2. Ibid., p. 73.

3. Ibid., p. 70.

4. Harper, op. cit. p. xli.

The allegorical interpretation has been favored by more theologians of the past than any other interpretation. Age has made it venerable, and its age must be respected, even though its weakened limbs make it a laughing matter. The allegorical interpretation did have its use in that it preserved the Song of Songs in Jewish literature. Furthermore, the allegorical interpretation is still today the only interpretation which gives it a useful religious coloring.

A deeper meaning than that of the literal interpretations has some substantiation, which we find in a study of the literature of the East.

It cannot be doubted that there are in the East tales of love between man and woman, dealing with real persons, or at least with persons believed to be real, which nevertheless are intended to teach how the soul ought to love God. 1

Take, for instance, the Persian poet Jami's "Yusuf and Zuleikha" which is a story of persistent human affection in which Zuleikha (wife of Potiphar) endures all things for her love, and comes to full enjoyment in the end after her dross has been purged away by affliction. That spiritual love was meant, cannot be doubted. 2

That the same type of allegory is seen in "Salman and Absal" with a more miraculous story and consequently a more triumphant result. 3 Likewise, the Persian poet, Nizami, said in his "Laila Magnum"

1. Harper op. cit. p. xxxv

2. Ibid. p. op. cit. p. xxxv

3. Ibid.

in his praise of the love of wine that more is meant than meets the ear.¹ Sir Edward Arnold's translation of Jayadaeva's "Gita Govinda" states that "no reader...can fail to see that spiritual as contrasted with earthly love is there the real subject."² De Sacy, Kosegarten and others of the great Orientalists of the beginning of the century frankly recognize this, but it has since then become the fashion to minimize the mystic element, to recognize it as present only when it cannot possibly be ignored.³

There can, therefore, be no question that however repulsive it may be to Western minds in our modern day, poems like the 45th Psalm and the Song of Songs may be adumbrating earthly love even in their most sensuous utterances.⁴ That these have this meaning is not thus proved, but certainly there is the possibility that such an interpretation can be made. A radical difference between the Eastern mind and the Western mind must be noted:

If Hofix had been a Western man it would simply be absurd to suppose that "wine and love mean always to him the visionary's ecstasy, and the yearning for union with the divine essence." But since he was an Oriental that supposition has to be simply faced. Mr Walter Leaf in his Introduction to his charming "Versions from Hofix", London, 1898, feels that; and his reply to the question whether love and wine have always a religious meaning is worth pondering.⁵

Orientalists have more of the carnal-spiritual element in them than the Occidentals. It has always been possible for the Easterners to enjoy a religious figure or metaphor which to the

1. Harper, op. cit. p. xxxv.

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*, p. xxxvi

4. *ibid.*, p. xxxvii

5. *ibid.*

Western mind is totally abhorrent. The leaning toward the carnal Canaanitish religion by the Hebrews showed that they were likewise possessors of this carnal-spiritual mind; however, in spite of the arguments in favor of the allegorical interpretations, there are those other arguments which are too significant to allow its acceptance. Budde could see in this interpretation nothing but a mistake which has had a degrading and sensualizing effect upon religion.¹ Jastrow said about some of the interpretations arising from the allegory that "The blasphemous absurdities of some of these allegorical interpretations today need no refutation."² Dean Farrar said that the monkish commentaries on this book were unpleasantly numerous, and that the mystic interpretation degenerated in meaner hands into a style of language of which it would be charitable to say nothing more than that it is too poetically sensuous for any commentary on holy writ.³ Siegfried said that the reception of the Song of Songs into the canon led to the most monstrous result in the history of interpretation.⁴

The main objection to the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs is that there is no similar allegory in the Old Testament literature. The Book of Ezekiel and the Book of Hosea, for instance, contain allegorical expressions; but there are

1. Harper, op. cit., p. xxxix.

2. Jastrow, S.S., op. cit., p. 226

3. Harper, op. cit., p. xlv.

4. McFayden, John Edgar. An Introduction to the Old Testament. New York: 1909, p. 283.

some definite clues to their meaning. The poem in the Song of Songs was probably sung as a profane song, for Tasef.Sanhed "pronounced an anathema upon anyone who would sing it at banquets in the manner of a profane song."¹ The allegorical interpretation applied to the Song of Songs is not necessarily needed to find texts on the theme of love in the Bible. The allegory becomes wearisome when one uses that method of interpretation. The very human character of the main actor is not applicable to God as we think of Him, or as He is depicted by any of the other books of the Bible. The sensual praises and the existence of a harem do not seem to be fitting for the Old Testament Literatures. If we were laboring under some other religious systems, such as the Babylonian system, we might be able to accept this type of theme.

The idea of bringing the Creator and the creature together, and supposing that they can be amorous of each other, and a thousand refinements of a like nature in Hindoo and Christian mysticism, are the very antipodes to the sense conceptions of the Semitic God. Such ideas would have passed for blasphemies in Israel.²

Jastrow felt that the allegory was a necessary method of interpretation in order that the Song of Songs might be given a place in the canon.

The Song of Songs viewed as an allegory was a theory of despair that suggested itself, one might say forced itself, upon the pious Rabbis of the early centuries of our era in order to satisfy their consciences in having a series of love

1. Martin, G. Currie, The Song of Solomon, New Century Bible Series, New York, 1909, p. xli
2. Westover Review p. 350

Ibbetson, Joseph. "The Song of Songs a Secular Poem." In the Bible, Vol. 11, (New York 1913) p. 314

songs in a collection of books that had by its association with the religion of the people acquired a sacred and inviolate character. 1

A speculative attempt has been made to picture the one who first attempted to apply the allegorical interpretation to the Song of Songs.

I have tried to picture to myself the man who first devised this reading of the Song of Songs. He must have been something of a recluse, narrowly ecclesiastical in his mental habits, unused to secular ways of thinking, convinced that the Jews are God's favorites, habituated to the thought of God as Israel's wedded Lord and Lover, familiar with the subterfuge of allegorical interpretation, hopeless of accounting for the supposed Solomonic authorship of the book in any other way, and quite destitute of a sense of humor.2

The allegorical interpretation has broken down under its own weight. The different meanings which have been devised on the basis of the allegorical interpretation are hopelessly contradictory, and no one is able to point out decisive marks which would tend to establish his viewpoint to the extent that all other explanations would be discarded. No single method of interpretation has ever been able to command a following for a sufficiently long time to be confirmed as the most favored interpretation.

All mystical interpretations must have at least some historical basis to explain the Song of Songs as it stands in the Bible. Those who adhere to the allegorical interpretation have great difficulty in defending their explanations. Many facts which have been found result in simpler explanations than those which have been advanced by the contenders for an allegorical

1. Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 31.

2. Ibbetson, Joseph. "The Song of Songs a Secular Poem." In the *Biblical World*, vol. XLI (May 1913) p. 314

interpretation.

If Philo was the originator of the idea of allegorical interpretation, one certainly cannot help but admire the ingenuity of this method of interpretation. The nature of allegory, as mentioned above, was to evade the literal meaning of passages in the Bible which are offensive; however, one feels that the shocking of one's perverted sense of the realities of life is not sufficient justification for devising the monstrous allegorical interpretation. Yet this reason is at the heart of the allegorical theory. Those who unquestionably accepted this interpretation are not to be condemned as much as they are to be pitied. The most generous statement we can make about the allegorical interpretation is that it was a regrettable mistake.

With a few notable exceptions, the allegorical interpretation was generally favored until relatively recent times. There were, however, some interpreters of the Song of Songs who insisted that the use of the allegorical interpretation depends upon the way it is applied, and they further insisted that all other methods of interpretation are fundamentally wrong.

One of the earliest defenders of a literal interpretation of the Song of Songs was Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia. He held that Solomon wrote the Song of Songs to amuse and instruct his subjects. He objected to his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, and he placed her under her restraint when his objection had failed. This

CHAPTER IV

BEGINNINGS OF LITERAL INTERPRETATIONS

The allegorical interpretation held the respected place so long in the history of the exposition of the Song of Songs, that any change in the method was quite difficult to make. The literal interpretation of the Song of Songs is completely antagonistic to the allegorical theory. Their approaches are from opposite directions. The allegorical interpretation uses the mystical approach, while the literal attempts the historical-grammatical approach.

With a few notable exceptions, the allegorical interpretation was generally favored until relatively recent times. Even today there are some interpreters of the Song of Songs who contend that the age of the allegorical interpretation demands that it be respected and applied, and they further contend that all other methods of interpretation are fundamentally wrong.

One of the earliest defenders of a literal interpretation of the Song of Songs was Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia. He held that Solomon wrote the Song of Songs to annoy and defy those who objected to his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, and to please her after her estrangement which this objection had caused.¹ This

1. Harper, Op. cit., p. xliii.

quotation is drawn from literature containing the charge made by the fifth Council of Constantinople ~~against him~~ (553 A.D). That council¹ declared him heretical, and his commentary was condemned. This interpretation is certainly not the best one which could have been advanced, but it is noteworthy that Theodore was sufficiently brave to break with the traditional interpretation even as early as the end of the fourth century.

The next notable person who seemed to have looked with disdain on the allegorical interpretation was Ibn Ezra. In the twelfth century, he referred to those who had explained the Song of Songs literally; however, since he realized that he was in danger of being charged with holding heretical views, he said, "Far be it! Far be it! to think that the Song of Songs is an amatory composition."²

In 1544, Castellio rejected Luther's interpretation of the Song of Songs and held rather that it is a colloquy of Solomon with a maiden ~~Shulamite~~, who is mentioned twice at the beginning³ of chapter seven, of whom he is enamored.

Joseph Kamchi referred to an exegete who took the Song of Songs literally as an erotic poem, but who added apologetically⁴ that it was an effusion of Solomon's youthful spirit. This exegete to whom he referred is the one who wrote in the Midrash (homiletical expansion) to the Song of Songs (known as the Midrash Hazith

1. Jastrow, S. S., op. cit., p. 81.

2. Jastrow, S. S., op. cit., p. 87.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

I, 10), in which it is stated that Solomon wrote the Song of Songs in his youth, Proverbs in his manhood, and Lamentations in his old age.¹

Bossuet, a French theologian and preacher, wrote his work in 1693. In his preface to the explanation of the Song of Songs, he discussed Origen's view, and stated that the Song of Songs was composed by Solomon in celebration of his marriage with a daughter of² Pharaoh. Hugo Grotius, who wrote earlier, held the same view.

From these references, one can see that there was only comparatively insignificant attacks on the traditional view of the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs. From the early church fathers, through the scholasticism of the Middle Ages and through the Protestant Reformation, the traditional view was generally accepted.³

The appearance of Bishop Lowth's famous "Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews" in 1753 in England, and Herder's "Salomon's Lieder der Liebe" in 1778 in Germany created a definite reaction in favor of a sober and literal interpretation of the Song of Songs.⁴ Other types of interpretation have also appeared which will be discussed later.

The literal interpretations have had many difficulties. In fact, these difficulties have been more numerous than those with the allegorical interpretation. The literal interpretations have had difficulty in determining whether the Song of Songs was

1. Jastrow, S. S., op. cit., p. 87.

2. Ibid., p. 88.

3. Ibid., p. 77.

4. Ibid.

originally a unity, or composed of several loosely jointed parts. The number of characters has caused rise to a real problem. Naturally, some parts have been regarded as fragmentary, and these have given considerable difficulty. For instance, some phrases are repeated, and the reason for this has been under serious scrutiny, but the real trouble in the literal interpretation has been that of discovering the source of the Song of Songs, if, indeed, there can be found one. On this point, tradition has nothing to offer. The attempt to find the source has taken many different forms. The study of parallel materials, Hebrew, and non-Hebrew, grammatical constructions of the Hebrew text, foreign words in it, and historical backgrounds of the age, have been fruitful, but none has been as helpful as has been desired; however, it has produced much more clarity than the traditional interpretation has done.

The literal interpretation has many advantages in its favor. By this method, it is possible for error to be detected by any person who takes the trouble to study the text carefully. This was not the case as long as the allegorical method of interpretation was applied. The literal interpretation demands that the real beginning of the Song of Songs be ascertained. The discovery of this beginning would naturally throw considerable light on the problem of unraveling the meaning of the Song of Songs. An accurate knowledge of the language peculiar to the Song of Songs can clarify its otherwise obscure meaning. The vocabulary is a rich field in the study of this book, as it has an abundance of

words rare in the remainder of the Old Testament. A comparative study of the materials which parallel the literature of the Song of Songs and those of non-Hebraic origin is probably most significant in gaining a fuller understanding of the Song of Songs.

Because of these reasons a reliable comprehension of the Song of Songs lies in a literal interpretation. This is the method that can safely be applied to most of the Books of the Old Testament, and therefore it should be used in this case also, if it is at all possible. In short, the discussion above may be said to warrant this type of reexamination of the text in question.

The traditional theory is that of the two-character theory. These characters are the Shulamite and Solomon. This theory was the one held by the schools of allegorical interpretation. The Song of Songs is then, under this theory, the account of the love-making between the Shulamite, and those the king's spouse is Solomon. The thread of the story is therefore the love-making between the Song of Songs, according to this theory the wife has this woman, who is ensnared with surpassing grace and loveliness, is taken away from her rustic home by the king and raised to the summit of honor and felicity by being made his bride at Jerusalem. The dialogue, upon this view, consists substantially of mutual expressions of love and affection on the part of the two principal characters." This view has been supported chiefly by Knobel, Harg, Delitzsch, Keil, and others. Delitzsch, for instance, believed that the Song of Songs is a portrayal of Solomon's love

CHAPTER V

THE TWO OR THREE CHARACTER THEORIES

The number of characters in the Song of Songs has been a perplexing problem. The absence of any very definite marks of the number of characters in the Song of Songs makes any decision a matter of personal choice.

One traditional theory is that of the two-character theory. These characters are the Shulamite and Solomon. This theory was the one held by the schools of allegorical interpretation. The Song of Songs is then, under this theory, the amorous speeches Solomon makes to the Shulamite, and those the Shulamite makes to Solomon. The thread of the story is therefore rather monotonous. The Song of Songs, according to this theory "describes how this maiden, who is enamoured with surpassing grace and loveliness, is taken away from her rustic home by the king and raised to the summit of honor and felicity by being made his bride at Jerusalem. The dialogue, upon this view, consists substantially of mutual expressions of love and admiration on the part of the two principal characters." ¹ This view has been supported chiefly by Hengstenburg, Delitzsch, Keil, and King sbury. Delitzsch, for instance, believed that the Song of Songs is a portrayal of Solomon's love

1. Driver, op. cit., p. 410.

to a peasant maiden whom he made his wife. From her, he learned the sweetness of pure conjugal affection of monogamy as contrasted with the evils necessarily attending polygamy.¹

There are several reasons, however, why this theory is impractical. For instance, such acts on the part of Solomon, as portrayed in the Song of Songs, are not at all in accord with his character as we know him. It is hard to believe that a common shepherdess could convince a man that polygamy is wrong, when apparently he had a harem of "threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number" (6:8). If the maiden or the shepherdess reasoned with him, her high ideals regarding monogamy failed to remain a part of his beliefs, for he loved his foreign wives in his old age (I Kings 11:4) and built temples for their gods. In fact, Solomon would not have listened to a simple peasant maiden, and it would be rather preposterous to think that he did so, for he "ruled over all the kingdoms from the River unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought tribute, and served Solomon all the days of his life" (I Kings 4:21). The text of the Song of Songs does not bear out the contention of Solomon's teaching that polygamy is wrong. Rather, the Shulammitte seems to be completely disinterested in Solomon as a man, and as a husband as well; therefore, one is unable to believe "that a voluptuary like Solomon could be raised to the height of a pure love by the beauty of the Shulammitte."² Also, there is an

1. Ibid.

2. Waterman, p. 104 (Harper), "The Song of Songs", *American Literature*, XIII (July 1906).

1. Clarke, op. cit., p. 573.

2. Harper, op. cit., p. xxxiii.

hypothesis that holds the view that in chapter IV the king plays a shepherd lover for the sake of the Shulamite. This sort of an idea is likewise improbable.¹ One is convinced that "The two-character theory hangs together with the allegory and the poem fell into allegory to save its own raison d'etre."² The two-character theory must either be rejected, or new materials must be brought forward to defend it in a more convincing manner. More will be said ~~later~~ on about the two-character theory.

The faults of the two-character theory caused the appearance of the three-character theory. This theory was first propounded in modern times by J. S. Jacobi, though it had been advanced in the twelfth century by Ibn Ezra.³ Ewald developed the theory in a masterly way, and it was later accepted by the majority of critics. According to this theory, there are three characters: Solomon, the Shulamite maiden, and her shepherd lover.

A beautiful Shulamite maiden, surprised by the king and his train on a royal progress in the north (6:11, 12), has been brought to the palace at Jerusalem where the king hopes to win her affections, and to induce her to exchange her rustic home for the honour and enjoyments which a court life could afford. She has, however, already plighted her heart to a young shepherd; and the admiration and blandishments which the king lavishes upon her are powerless to make her forget the shepherd. In the end she is permitted to return to her mountain home, where, at the close of the poem, the lovers appear hand in hand (8:5), and express, in warm and glowing words, the superiority of genuine, spontaneous affection over that which may be purchased by wealth or rank. (8:6,7).⁵

1. Ibid.
2. Waterman, p. 106. (Bibliography), "The Song Of Songs", American Journal of Semitic Languages & Literatures, XXII (July 1906).
3. Driver, S. R., op. cit., p. 410.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

According to this theory, the Shulammitte repulses the advances of the king. Most of her words are generous praises of her shepherd lover. She seems quite disinterested in what is going on around her. Her triumph comes when she returns with her shepherd lover to her brothers. This theory emphasizes two kinds of love: the sensual love of Solomon, the polygamist, and the higher love of the shepherd, the monogamist, as referred to above. The Shulammitte does not seem conscious of Solomon's glory; rather, her emotions are upset because of the fact that she is separated from her lover. The terms she uses in praise of her shepherd lover may be somewhat shocking to the western mind, but her love for him is far superior to that of Solomon, whose harem eventually numbered seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (I Kings 11:3) and who made love to her in a very sensual manner.

The higher kind of love is exhibited in the utterances of the Shulammitte and her country lover; the lower, entirely sensual kind, the love of the polygamist, is expressed in those of Solomon, and that of the women of the harem in chapter VII. It is of course possible to say that the difference of level between these two sorts of utterances is not so marked as a modern Western poet would have made it, and that even the better view is unpleasantly sensuous to us.¹

The Shulammitte is all the while exhibiting the higher qualities of love, superiority to sense, fidelity in temptation, and that tender brooding of the imagination on the loved one, which lift even common natures to heights they would never otherwise attain. Then, too, such a verse as (8:1), "Oh, that thou wert my brother," coming as it does almost at the end, should be allowed to throw the reflection of its innocence over all that precedes; and any hints the language gives that in this passionate affection other things

1. Harper, Andrew, op. cit., p. xxxii.

too are regarded as well as mere physical beauty, should be allowed full weight. When this is done we venture to think that nothing will be found, in the verses referred to, incompatible with love of a high kind. As far as the other speeches are concerned, they are unmitigatedly coarse. They are too cold in passion, and are entirely incompatible with anything higher than mere sensual voluptuousness.¹

The three-character theory is the more probable view, as we observe it at this stage of development of this thesis. There are passages which can be accepted in either view, but there are others which are deficient in clarity under the two-character theory.² For instance, 8:7b becomes much more clear when the hatred of wealth in relation to the joy of affection are compared. The dreams also become more significant. In the first dream the Shulammitte is unsuccessful in finding her lover, but in the second one she finds him. Thus a dramatic content is introduced. The two-character theory made the dialogue only declarations of love, but under the three-character theory there begins the painful situation produced by the Shulammitte's being in the court of Solomon, and the gradual working out of the problem, until the victory is won, and the lovers are reunited. The three-character theory emphasizes also, as has been pointed out, the character of Solomon as we know him. The fine description of love (8:6f) is the climax of the Song of Songs, and it could hardly have been said by Solomon. This theory is also more in keeping with the character of the Shulammitte, which gives her

1: Ibid.

2: Driver, S. R., op. cit. pp. 418, 419.

more womanly dignity. This theory places her and her shepherd lover on the same social level. The statements of love in the Song of Songs take the form of the contemplation of physical beauty, and do not especially emphasize graces of character. If we have here the contrast of two types of love, an ethical content becomes apparent; but, if this is not the case, the statements become most disgustingly vulgar to the western mind.

But this theory is also deficient. The third character, that of the shepherd lover, is the product of those who were at desperate ends to explain the Song of Songs. The Song of Songs, as it now stands, does mention the Shulamite and Solomon, and there is some justification for assuming that they are characters in a dialogue, but there was no definite name which might be identified with the third character until Waterman's article on the mistranslation of one word out of the Hebrew.¹ So those who preceded him in the history of the interpretation of the Song of Songs may be said to have built the third character more or less on an assumption. "The three character theory followed the logic of the poem to its true conclusion, but could not show how it must be so and not otherwise."²

Many persons have tried to restore the "dramatis personae" of the Song of Songs, but most of them present the products of fertile imaginations rather than results based on the facts. One of the best worked out set of characters which the writer has

1. Waterman, Leroy, op. cit., pp. 101-110
2. *ibid.*, p. 106.

found is that of William Dearness, which consists of six characters and the chorus.¹ All such attempts are interesting, but they do not carry conviction to any great extent. We must go elsewhere for a solution.

THE DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION

The dissatisfaction with the Alceste version of the play caused the work even in the process to be taken up again and seen quite naturally from the more extended theory of the theory recognized a dramatic content in the story of Heracles.

To call it a drama is hardly to classify it as such by its popular thought, yet it partakes of every part of the nature of a drama, and is more of a drama than any other. It certainly belongs to the drama family. It is a play which is built a good deal of irregularities, but which would still fit a drama.

One of the earliest persons to recognize the dramatic nature of a drama was Origen. In his commentary he suggested that the story of Heracles was an epiphany, and that the play was a drama composed by Euripides. He was in agreement with the suggestion of Pharsan, referred to in the story of wings (311), but he dismissed this suggestion as of no consequence by the side of the hidden meaning. In the middle of the middle of the fourth century, and the middle of the middle of the fifth century, the editors of these versions actually distributed the chapters under various titles.

1. Dearness, William, A Restoration of the Drama of Canticles. P. 11.

2. Goodwin, J. A., Lower than a Thousand Years Ago. Chicago: 1895.
3. Estrow, op. cit. p. 100.

CHAPTER VI

THE DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION

The dissatisfaction with the three-character theory naturally caused the next step in the process to be taken. This step came quite naturally from the three character theory, as that theory recognized a dramatic content in the Song of Songs.

To call it a drama is hardly to classify it intelligently to popular thought, yet it partakes of most of the elements of a drama, and is more of a drama than anything else. It certainly belongs to the drama family. If it were allowable to build a word out of recognized material at hand, I would call it a drama-et.¹

One of the earliest persons to recognize the Song of Songs as a drama was Origen. In his commentary he propounded the view that the Song of Songs was an epithalamium, i.e., a nuptial song, "after the manner of a drama" composed by Solomon to mark his marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh, referred to in the Book of Kings (3:1), but he dismissed this suggestion as of no consequence by the side of the hidden meaning.² In two codices, one dating from the middle of the fourth century, and the other from the middle of the fifth century, the editors of these Greek translations actually distributed the chapters among various individual They added illustrative notes to the translation to indicate

1. Goodwin, T. A., Lovers Three Thousand Years Ago. p. 11. Chicago: 1895.

2. Jastrow, op. cit. p. 96.

who the speakers are. With this distribution carried through eight chapters, we have the nucleus of a dramatic story. An Ethiopic translation which was based on the Greek version actually divided the Song of Songs into five separate pieces.¹

It was not until after the Protestant Reformation that the thought reappeared that the Song of Songs is a dramatic composition.² Casper Sanctius, in 1616, maintained that the Song of Songs is a sacred drama.³ Cornelius A. Lapidus, who died in 1637, followed the classic model and divided the Song of Songs into five acts.⁴ Hult, in 1676, declared that it was a dramatic piece in which the passionate sentiments of husband and wife are expressed.⁵ Hermann Von Hardt who wrote before 1706, "in a manuscript in the Wolfenbuttel library, mentioned by Lessing, maintained that it was a drama, set forth in acts and scenes, and interpreted it as referring to the conditions and hopes of the kingdom of John Hyracanus."⁶ An anonymous Breslau pastor in 1720 arranged the Song of Songs dramatically, and introduced, besides Solomon and Shulammitte, two other characters.⁷ Bossuet, at the close of the seventeenth century, held to the view that the book consists of seven parts, and agreed with Origen as to its purpose. George Wachter, in 1722 went a step further in

1. Jastrow S. S., op. cit., p. 92.
2. Ibid., p. 95.
3. Schmidt, Nathaniel, op. cit. p. 221.
4. Ibid., Jastrow, p. 95.
5. Ibid., Schmidt, p. 221.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

designating the Song of Songs as "a play to be sung", that which one would call an opera, and divided it up into a series of scenes. He also maintained the old theory that the Song of Songs is a religious play and not a secular drama.¹ Nicholas Nonnes, in 1725,² maintained that it was a pure drama.

Both Bishop Lowth (1753) and Perry (1764) favored the view that the incident was the marriage with the Egyptian princess, but this theory was carried ad absurdum by an English scholar, Harmer, in (The Outlines of a New Commentary on the Song of Songs, London 1768) who saw in the songs the successive incident of a triangular situation created by Solomon when he decided to add to his Jewish wives a "gentile" partner. According to Harmer, the name of the Jewish wife is Sulamith, who is mentioned by name in chapter seven. The opening chapters describe Solomon going out to meet his Egyptian bride, who professes her love for him. He responds by praising her beauty and her charms in rapturous terms. The king brings the princess to Jerusalem in a triumphal wedding procession. All goes well up to this point. In chapter five the trouble begins. The jealous Sulamith discovers the newly-wedded pair seated in a garden and exchanging tender sentiments. A domestic quarrel ensues. Sulamith upbraids Solomon, who tries to reconcile his first wife to having a rival. The Egyptian princess intervenes and adds fresh fuel to the conflagration. Solomon makes a final appeal to Sulamith which she rejects, but strangely enough she does not leave the king. It is still stranger that Harmer should not have asked himself the question why Solomon thus chose to reveal his domestic entanglements to the rude gaze of posterity.³

An anonymous Jewish writer in the twelfth century may be said to have anticipated the dramatic theory, and he was later quoted by Ginsburg. However, the dramatic theory had not been⁴ definitely suggested at that time.

1. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 221.
2. Ibid.
3. Jastrow, op. cit., p. 697.
4. Ibid.

The first person to recognize the Song of Songs as a secular drama was J. F. Jacobi, who in 1771 advanced the theory that he held. In 1792 the German scholar, Staeudlin, contended that the Song of Songs was purely secular in character. In 1816, Louis-hon defended Ammon, who had in 1790, held that the Song of Songs was concerning Solomon's love which was scorned by a country maiden who remained true to a humble lover. Ewald accepted the shepherd hypothesis in 1826. He evolved "out of his fancy":

Solomon on one of his excursions, accompanied by a large escort, comes to a village, Shulem, and there sees a handsome maiden dancing in a garden. The king is immediately enamoured and is encouraged by the ladies of his court to take the maiden to his palace in Jerusalem, where he tries to woo her and make her forget the rustic lover to whom her heart belongs. Taking every allusion, in the songs, as biographical, Ewald even paints for us the surroundings of Sulamith, the sad experiences that she had because of the early death of her father, and because of rough treatment by her brothers, and other misfortunes.

He divided the Song of Songs into four acts to be used to represent four days. Renan agreed, in 1860, to the dramatic theory. He maintained that the Song of Songs was written to be performed to the accompaniment of music en famille as part of the wedding festivities. He agreed with Bossuet's suggestion that the book is to be divided into subdivisions corresponding to

1. Schmidt, Nathaniel, op. cit., p. 221.
2. Jastrow, S. S., op. cit., p. 96.
3. Schmidt, Nathaniel, Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Jastrow, S. S., op. cit., p. 100.
6. Ibid., p. 106.

7. Ibid.

8. Harper, Andrew, op. cit., p. 100.

9. Jastrow, S. S., op. cit., p. 96.

10. Ibid., pp. 95, 96.

seven days of the marriage festivities.¹ Jastrow held that "Renan's eminent scholarship and exquisite literary taste... justify us in taking his interpretation of the Song of Songs as representative of the best results to be achieved in following the dramatic theory."² Stichel, in 1888, introduced two pairs of lovers.³ In 1895, Goodwin published his book "Lovers Three Thousand Years Ago" in which he contended for the dramatic theory.⁴ As late as 1902, Bruston, Koenig, Martineau, Rothstein, Adeney,⁵ and Harper⁵ worked out various dramatic schemes.

The problem of the divisions of the Song of Songs has been, and probably always will be, a serious and difficult one. Nevertheless, those who have held the dramatic theory have been compelled to make out of this short book a dramatic arrangement. This has produced many different arrangements, and many new characters.

Every chapter was broken up...as fancy or judgement dictated, and distributed among those recognized as the participants. Since, in the course of this distribution, other characters are introduced as addressed or as speaking, "daughters and queens," the list of participants becomes quite extensive, sufficient to form quite a good sized company in a play.⁶

The two Greek codices and an Ethopic translation were the first ones to attempt any sort of a division.⁷ The Ethopic

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Schmidt, Nathaniel, op. cit., p. 222.
4. Ibid.
5. Harper, Andrew, op. cit.,.
6. Jastrow, S. S., op. cit., p. 93.
7. Ibid., pp. 35, 36.

translation was divided into five acts.¹ "An old poetic version in the Middle High German, dating from the fifteenth century, divides the book into as many as 44 subdivisions, and sets down each as a little song!"² Cornelius Lapide divided the Song of Songs into five acts.³ Bossuet, in his "Preatatio in Canticum Canticorum",⁴ divided it into seven parts. Georg Wachter⁵ divided the Song of Songs into a series of scenes, and Renan, as Bossuet, divided it into seven parts, consisting of five acts, two scenes, and an epilogue.⁶ Delitzsch assumed that there are six acts instead, each act contains two scenes.⁷ Reuss divided it into sixteen parts.⁸ Rothstein divided it into four parts, and further divided these parts into twenty-four subdivisions.⁹ Herder proposed twenty subdivisions.¹⁰ Harper divided the Song of Songs into three groups, with a total of thirteen scenes. One of the most detailed arrangements of the Song of Songs, as a drama, seems to be that given by Dearness. A very free translation is used in order that the whole Song of Songs could be placed in ordinary poetic form. A detailed statement of his theory is found in the appendix of this thesis.

1. Jastrow, S. S., op. cit., p. 92

2. Ibid., p. 121.

3. Ibid., p. 95.

4. Ibid., p. 121.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 100.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p. 121.

9. Ibid., p. 100.

10. Ibid. p. 121.

George Bible, op. cit., xviii, xix.

Wachter, T. A., op. cit., p. 11.

The reasons for the growth of the dramatic theory are to some extent apparent. A detailed study of the Song of Songs gives hints of a particular historical event. Personal references are abundant in the Song of Songs. "It is in the effort to piece these together that the dramatic theory has risen, and it is as giving a fairly natural explanation of these that finds so many supporters." ¹ The contention that the Song of Songs can be shown to be a unity caused the defense of the dramatic theory to be the natural conclusion. ² The tendency in the East to ascribe books to well known individuals made the Pentateuch to be ascribed to Moses, the Psalms to David, and the Proverbs to Solomon. For the same reason, the Song of Songs was attributed to Solomon. "The Song, as a whole, is of the nature of a drama, with dialogue, and action, and character consistently sustained, constituting a rudimentary kind of plot." ³ The book introduces

Persons speaking, often in dialogues, mostly without any introduction, and where an account is given of them, and of their speeches in the third person, the narrator is, so far as can be traced, also one of the actors. ⁴

When one reads the Song of Songs, he continually has to ask himself who is speaking certain lines. Some characters are evidently implied. "It is necessary to change time and place and the dramatis personae in order to catch its (The Song of Song's) significance." ⁵ "The scene till 8: 4 appears to be laid in the

1. Cambridge Bible, p. 86.

2. Ibid., p. xii.

3. Driver, S. R., op. cit., p. 416.

4. Cambridge Bible, op. cit., pp. xviii, xix.

5. Goodwin, T. A., op. cit., p. 11.

royal palace at Jerusalem, or (2: 6-11) before one of the gates; in 8:5 it evidently changes, and is supposed to be in the heroine's native place.¹

From the observations made above, one can see that there are many reasons why the dramatic theory is plausible. The dramatic element is too pronounced, in the Song of Songs, to pass over this theory in silence. It might have been developed further by the early commentators if the allegorical theory had not held such a tremendous sway over the thinking of the scholars.

That the first indication of a distribution of the songs among various participants in the manner of a drama is thus met with notes attached to the Greek translation of the Song of Songs, may be traced to the influence of Greek culture, which found so notable an expression in the drama. For the Christian Church the Greek translation of the Old Testament rather than the Hebrew original, became the standard text; and the church fathers, so largely of Greek origin or having Greek affiliations, were therefore more responsive to the Hellenic literary methods. The allegorical theory, however, checked further growth of the dramatic interpretation of the little book. Not that there is any inherent opposition between the two, or that the one would necessarily exclude the other; but the allegorical theory forced any attempt to find any kind of setting to the book--dramatic, historical or otherwise--into the background, for the reason that the basic principal of the allegorical theory involved ignoring the surface meaning. Only the hidden meaning was supposed to furnish the key to the book.²

Harmer, who carried the the dramatic theory to such an extreme as to its meaning, could not cut loose from some kind of an allegorical interpretation. He saw in the Song of Songs the picture of the attitude of the Jewish Church toward the rival

1.Driver, S. R., op. cit., p. 417.

2.Jastrow, op. cit., pp. 94, 95.

Christian Church.¹ Harper also went to great length to show that the allegorical theory was true, plausible, and perfectly compatible with the dramatic theory, and in no way contradictory.² Thus those persons who insist that the allegorical interpretation must be accepted, can in a like manner accept the dramatic theory without debate or criticism.

Notwithstanding, the objections to the dramatic theory are many. Evidence points to the dramatic theory as a very questionable explanation of the Song of Songs. The dramatic theory in none of its forms really fits the book.³ "The advocates of the dramatic theory are forced to apply to the poetical metaphors which form one of the most impressive pictures of the Song of Songs;⁴ a literal interpretation. For instance, they interpret "my own vineyard I did not guard" (1:6) as the Shalammite's confession of her carelessness in allowing herself to be abducted into the king's harem.⁵ The presence of any sort of a plot is questionable,⁶ and "it is very hard to detect any progress on the dramatic view of the book."⁷ Furthermore, there is a "total want of a higher conception of love, other than the mere sensual one."⁸ However, Harper challenges that criticism, which he feels is true on the basis of of Budde's interpretation, but not true

1. Jastrow, op. cit., pp. 94, 95.

2. Cambridge Bible, pp. xxxv-xxxviii

3. Am. Journal of Semitic Languages, & Lit., Vol. 39, p. 1.

4. Jastrow, op. cit. p. 111

5. Ibid., p. 112.

6. Schmidt, Nathaniel, op. cit., p. 222.

7. Cambridge Bible, p. xix.

8. Ibid.

of his, "if, throughout, the bride be resisting attacks upon her fidelity, which, of course, is the theory held by all who see in the poem a unity at all." But he is further challenged:

What would be said, in ancient or in modern Palestine, if a maiden would discourse of such intimacies,--or even name them and long for them,--as remain here in this book despite all dilution? Even the slightest intimacies are permitted only on the eve of the wedding day (compare 8:1f, 8f.), and a maiden with whom it was otherwise would take care not to boast of it, or give a description of her lover like that in '5:10ff'.²

It has been contended that a completed marriage is assumed in the first two chapters, and if such is the case there can not be any drama with a gradual rising complex situation culminating in the necessary climax.

There is a considerable difficulty to be encountered in ascertaining who the speakers are and how many speakers there are in the whole Song of Songs, if it be a drama. There is "no agreement as to words spoken by the various speakers."⁴

The text has to be modified in so many particulars; and so much in the way of background, stage setting, and the like, has to be supplied by the imagination of the expositor, so as to make the interpretation a very precarious one.⁵

There is no difference between the heroine's responses to Solomon and those to the shepherd; neither is there any difference

1. Waterman, op. cit., p.102.

2. Budde, op. cit., p. 59.

3. Cambridge Bible, op. cit. p. xix.

4. Ibid

5. Am. Journal of Semitic Langs., op. cit., V. 39, p. 1.

in the attitude of Solomon and that of the shepherd.¹ There is an apparent contradiction in the fact that the Shulamite speaks to Solomon to encourage his passion, while she refuses his advances and only thinks of her absent lover,² to whom she speaks to as if he were present, even though he is absent.³ The dramatic advocates, however, defend their theory by saying that these statements are "asides"; but this created a rather humorous situation. "A fine drama, this, in which everyone talks out of the window, and no one understands another."⁴ But who are these persons who are assumed to speak? It is thought that the main speaker in the Song of Songs is one certain maiden;⁵ yet the name, Shulamite, is not mentioned until the latter part of the Song of Songs(6:13). This makes the assumption rather doubtful, and one may conclude that Solomon and the Shulamite, the most significant names in the Song of Songs, may not be the main characters of the drama.⁶ The shepherd remained anonymous until Waterman introduced the proper name, Dodai, as the more correct translation of what was commonly translated, "my beloved".⁷

Because of the fact that there is great variation in the details of the theory in the school of dramatic advocates, one is at a

1. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 222.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Budde, op. cit., p. 58.

5. Jastrow, S. S., op. cit. p. 113.

6. Cambridge Bible, op. cit., p. xix.

7. Jastrow, S. S., op. cit., p. 114.

8. Waterman, op. cit., pp. 101-110

loss as to how many characters there really are in the drama. Harper, however, defended the dramatic theory with the following words: "If an act of one of Shakespeare's plays were stripped of all outward indications of the speakers, the attempt to restore them would result in similar differences. Moreover, those who regard the book as a collection of songs are equally unable to agree."¹

The mechanics of transforming the Song of Songs into a drama are a source of much criticism. Any divisions that may be made are dubious,² and artificial.³ The absence of stage directions, even as few as are specified in the Book of Job, are absent.⁴ Harper gave an extended defense of the dramatic theory, but it is too long to be given here. A copy of his argument is to be found in the appendix of this thesis. It is sufficient to give here just his main points: First, the Song of Songs may have had external indications at one time, but they were removed when the Greek influence came to be hated. Second, it was never written to be performed on the stage. Third, it may have been a series of pictures of a woman's life. Fourth, this may be only a sketch of a well-known story. However, all of these reasons are only assumptions, and are defenses rather than proofs. These explanations may be accepted, but only

1. Cambridge Bible, op. cit., p. xix.

2. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 222.

3. Meek, op. cit., p. 1.

4. Currie, Martin G. New Century Bible, P. 295.

when nothing better is offered. The scenes are too short to be acted, nor would they impress an audience. Sometimes, one whole scene consists of only a few lines. Furthermore, at times only one person speaks during a whole scene.¹ What action there is in the play is only assumed. Such manufactured action² could just as well have happened elsewhere. "How are we to conceive of so short a play--116 lines--being divided into acts and scenes? The scenes are continually changing, and the longest would not last more than two minutes."³

The amount that has to be read between the lines by the advocates of the various dramatic theories is so great that, in the absence of any hints in the book itself, reasonable attitude can never be attained."⁴

There is difficulty in finding, in the Song of Songs, the proper setting, and reasonable material for any setting desired, for:

In speeches and songs there is no suggestion of any kind of dramatic setting. There is no continuous narrative. Instead of action we have description. Dramatists attempt to localize every allusion and that does not prove that their localization is correct.

The dramatic theory must have many scenes that are dreams, and monologues often occupy a whole scene. How the play is to

1. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 222.
2. Jastrow, S.S., op. cit., p. 110.
3. Ibid., p. 105.
4. International Standard Bible Encyclopedic, p. 2833. Chicago: 1929
5. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 222., & Jastrow, S.S., op. cit., p. 105.
6. Jastrow, S.S., op. cit., p. 113.
7. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 222.
8. Oesterley & Robinson, An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament., P. 218.

be carried out has never been agreed on.¹

Considerable criticism is made of the dramatic theory on the grounds that there is no reason to believe that there was any kind of drama in ancient Israel.² "If written to be understood as a drama, the work is without analogy in the literature of any people."³ Among the Hebrew people, there seems to have been no division of literature devoted to the drama,⁴ and it is quite probable that they knew nothing of the drama until after they made contact with Greek culture.⁵ "Somehow it did not fit in with the frame of mind which produced the books of the Old Testament, although there are plenty of scenes in the Old Testament narratives--like the folk tales about Joseph--that have strikingly dramatic qualities."⁶ If the Song of Songs was written at an early date, then "our book would be the oldest drama in the world--and that among a people who never cultivated the drama."⁷ If the book was written at a late date, one is still to be met with frustration, for we find that in the days of Herod, the construction of a theatre in Jerusalem, which was the first of the kind, aroused strong opposition.⁸ "A drama like this has no parallel in Semitic

1. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
2. Oesterley & Robinson, An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament., p. 218
3. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
4. Jastrow, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
8. *Ibid.*

literature. We have stories and dialogues with dramatic elements,¹ but no fully developed drama anywhere."

The dramatic theory was a case of every scholar doing what seemed right in his eye.² It was not intended to be performed.³ The Song of Songs lacks the scenic touches which are necessary to adapt it to the stage.⁴

On the whole, the dramatic theory seems to have been adopted only as an attempt to understand the literal meaning of the Song of Songs, The defenses are well thought out. The conclusions are remarkable. But the evidence does not carry conviction. There is no internal or external proof which is sufficiently positive to compel us to accept the dramatic theory. History does not substantiate this interpretation. We are forced, therefore, to reject the dramatic theory as the correct interpretation of the Song of Songs.

... songs have the same flavor of folk-poetry. They are simple and naive; they ring true. The women all conform to the popular taste for women with clear soft eyes and with large features--a massive nose, full cheeks, prominent nose, all of which are still regarded as marks of special beauty in the East. Read in our ears they have the appearance of the folk-spirit they reflect, vulgar. They reflect the healthy passion of the lover as he sees his beloved leaning or advancing to meet him; they voice the equally hot feelings of the artist when she thinks of the "red of her soul" as he meets her; they counter him. We see the poses of their bodies and their

1. Meek, op. cit., Vol. 39., p. 1.
2. Jastrow, S.S., op. cit., p. 100.
3. Harper, op. cit., p. xx.
4. Goodwin, T. A., Lovers Three Thousand Years ago, p. 11.

Ac. Journal of Semitic Languages, op. cit., p. 11.
Jastrow, Song of Songs, op. cit., p. 11.
Ibid., p. 133.

CHAPTER VII

THE SONG OF SONGS, A COLLECTION OF LOVE LYRICS

Another school of interpreters held the view that the Song of Songs is a collection of popular love songs. The songs are unified by the fact that there is a common setting and that throughout all of them, there is a continuous ecstasy on the common theme of sexual love.¹ The Song of Songs, according to this theory, is not a unity, but a compilation of songs from different ages, and written by different authors. Some connected them to the songs sung at weddings, although others held that they were not originally meant for that purpose,² but on this matter would not alter this interpretation.

These songs have the true flavor of folk poetry. They are simple and naive; they ring true. The descriptions conform to the popular taste for women with clear soft eyes and with large features--a massive neck, huge breasts, prominent noses, all of which are still regarded as marks of special beauty in the East. Read in any other light than as expressions of the folk-spirit they become vulgar. They reflect the healthy passion of the lover as he sees his beloved dancing or advancing to meet him; they voice the equally hot feelings of the maiden when she thinks of the 'beloved of her soul' or happily encounters him. We rob the poems of their beauty and their impressiveness by any attempt to string them together or to find traces of any 'progressive' thought or action as we pass from the first to the last.³

1. Am. Journal of Semitic Literatures, op. cit., V. 18, p. 207.
2. Jastrow, Song of Songs, op. cit., p. 11.
3. Ibid., p. 133.

According to this theory, these songs were possibly not the best of a great body of songs which circulated among the Hebrews, but they were probably the most popular. Someone collected them as they gained popularity, and this collection resulted in the anthology which is called the Song of Songs.

They afford us a picture of a phase of life which is only occasionally touched upon in the pages of the Bible--sometimes in the Book of Proverbs, and here and there in the tales of Genesis, but nowhere with the grace and poetic glow of the Song of Songs.¹

This interpretation makes the Song of Songs secular in character. The songs are erotic. Most of them are incomplete,² and still others are mere fragments. These songs are representative of the lighter side of life in ancient Palestine.³ Goethe said that the songs were "the most tender and inimitable expressions of passionate, yet graceful love that has come down to us."⁴

This interpretation of the Song of Songs is not a new one. Theodore of Mopsuestia was condemned by a council one hundred years after his death because he had explained the book as a collection of love songs.⁵ Because of the fact that Castellio treated the Song of Songs as an erotic poem, Calvin⁶ compelled him to vacate his position at Geneva. Peter Wamnius,

1. Jastrow, op. cit., p. 15.
2. Cesterley & Robinson, op. cit., p. 217.
3. Jastrow, op. cit., p. 137.
4. Haupt, op. cit., p. 208.
5. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 220.
6. Buchanan, George, A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, P. 156.

in 1544, held the view that the Song of Songs is a collection of eclogues.¹ Luis de Leon, in 1569, said "todo este libro es una egloga pastoril."² Hugo Grotius, in 1644, held to a similar view.³ Rene Rapin, in 1659, believed that the Song of Songs was a composition including a number of eclogues.⁴ Charles Cotin, in 1662, and Richard Simon, in 1678, contended that the Song of Songs was a composition in the manner of madrigals.⁵ Charles Claude Genest, in 1707, viewed the Song of Songs as a copy of the Greek author Theocritus.⁶ Johann Theophil Lessing, in 1777, believed that the Song of Songs is a collection of eclogues. Although Goethe used the dramatic construction, he agreed with Herder that the Song of Songs is an anthology of love songs.⁷ Jean le Clerc, in 1865, declared that in the Song of Songs we have "idyls more dithyrambic than the eclogues of the Greeks and Romans."⁸ Edouard Reuss, in 1871, believed that the Song of Songs was composed as the "poet's peculiar manner of making the woman, with whom he is in love, the speaker by preference."⁹ In the same year in which Reuss wrote, Gratz contended that the Song of Songs was influenced by the idyls of Theocritus.

1. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 228.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, op. cit., Vol. 28, p. 221

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, op. cit., Vol. 28, p. 221

7. Ibid. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, op. cit., Vol. 28, p. 221

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

In this he agreed with Genest who was referred to above. Theocritus wrote his idyls in 270 B.C. under Ptolemy Philadelphus.¹ There are striking parallels between them and the Song of Songs. However, no evidence is found to justify the conclusion that the Song of Songs was influenced by Theocritus.² In relatively recent times we have Haupt, who, in 1902, published his arrangement of the love lyrics of the Song of Songs.³ In 1921, Jastrow published a book entitled, "Song of Songs," which contained his arrangement of the love lyrics in the Song of Songs.⁴ This list is not exhaustive, but it is adequate to show that this type of interpretation has a considerable following.

This interpretation has some advantages over the interpretations which have been discussed so far in this thesis.⁵ To some extent, the unity of style and vocabulary are explained. The repetition of common phrases is also explained after a fashion.⁶ This theory clarifies to some extent the persistent appearances of the same persons.⁷ The constant presence of spring, which is the time for marriage, is made clear.⁸ This theory gives one a conveniently broad margin for fragments

1. Am. Journal of Semitic Literature, op. cit., Vol. 18, p.207.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Jastrow, op. cit., pp. 157-246.
5. Harper, op. cit., p. 78.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

which cannot be accounted for in their present setting;¹ and those curious personal descriptions which are so unpalatable to us, are thus made somewhat acceptable.² The difficulty of trying to find any running story through the Song of Songs can now be dismissed. The explanation, according to this theory, is so simple, that it merits one's attention. It has parallels in that there are many poetries in the East that are quite erotic.³ All ancient literatures have suffered more or less as they have been kept and recopied from age to age. The more or less fragmentary character of the book, therefore, stands as a simple and possible evidence to support this theory.

However, we find serious objections to this interpretation as well. In order to produce completed songs, so much artificial manipulation of the text is needed that this theory is very questionable.⁴ An examination of the Song of Songs shows that the poems are fragmentary, telescoped, driven into one another, and mixed up.⁵ Cheyne spoke of the impossibility of recovering the original songs (if songs they were) and of retracing the plan (if plan he had) of the hypothetical collector.⁶

If the Song of Songs is a late collection of folk-songs,

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Martin, New Century Bible, op. cit., p. 291.

4. Am. Journal, op. cit., Vol. 39, pp. 1-2.

5. Ibid., p. 208.

6. Ibid., p. 209.

it would naturally be written in the folk language of the time, which was assuredly not Hebrew, but Aramaic. There is no evidence that the Song of Songs was ever a collection of songs. There are no marks that would go to show that this was the case. The theory that the Song of Songs is a collection of love lyrics results in, like so many theories, only a strenuous attempt to give an explanation without having the necessary material at hand. The very simplicity of the interpretation escapes any criticism, but at the same time, that simplicity makes it difficult to prove that the Song of Songs is a collection of love lyrics and nothing else. This interpretation is not adequate to explain the fundamental meaning of the Song of Songs.

1. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 100.
2. Ibid.
3. Smith, op. cit., p. 100.
4. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 100.
5. Smith, op. cit., p. 100.

CHAPTER VIII

A COLLECTION OF WEDDING SONGS

The interpretation of the Song of Songs as a group of love lyrics caused scholars to seek for some reason for it. In ancient times there had been the Epithalamic theory which was¹ held by Origen, Eusebius and Polychronius. Bossuet, in 1693, held that the Song of Songs was a group of songs intended to be sung on the seven days of the wedding week.² He knew of the seven days of nuptial festivity, and he found in the Song of Songs the actual description of the marriage feast of Solomon and the daughter of Pharaoh.³ Lowth, in 1753, accepted, together with other scholars of that time, Bossuet's theory.⁴ Harmer, in 1768, following Bossuet, identified another character, the Shulamite, whom he supposed was the chief wife of Solomon prior to his marriage with the Egyptian princess.⁵ Renan, in 1860, referred to accounts by Charles Schefer, who had often seen at Damiette and in Syria, weddings at which plays were performed. They lasted seven days, and each day the

1. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 223.

2. Ibid.

3. Snaith, op. cit., p. 130.

4. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 223.

5. Snaith, op. cit., p. 130.

in order to assist his memory wrote down at random all the songs he could remember, or those he thought the best. He does not deny that the book has a similarity of style and vocabulary which suggests that it is throughout the work of one author; but, he accounts for that by saying that the popular songs current at one time in one district have always a family likeness, and that there was originally nothing more here. Any unity which the book may now have beyond that, and any traces of dramatic action which may be found in it, he accounts for by the supposition that it was edited, perhaps more than once, before it was received into the Canon. "The songs may," he says, "quite well have been transposed and arranged according to some guiding principle or principles, and equally well trouble may have been taken to insert here and there transitions and connecting links to bring life and movement into the monotony of the same ideas."¹

In the appendix, of this thesis, the information made available by Wetzstein is given in greater detail.

As Meek pointed out, "It is not impossible that some of the songs have come from such a source,"² i.e., nuptial songs still in use in certain parts of Syria. Goodspeed pointed out in a very conclusive fashion the possibility of the two characters, Solomon, and the feminine counterpart Shulammite, being the bride and bridegroom of the wedding week, or the King's Week.³ He noted that Wittekindt said that Shulammite in 7:1 cannot possibly be a person's name, and to this fact he agrees.⁴ Harper, who does not hold the wedding theory, stated that "Budde's strongest point was that married love was what the poem celebrates."⁵ This theory also satisfactorily explains

1. Harper, op. cit., pp. xiii, xiv.

2. Meek, op. cit., No. 1, p. 8.

3. Am. Journal of Semitic Languages, Jan., 1934, p. 103.

4. Ibid.

5. Harper, op. cit., p. 91.

the strange descriptions of the bride and bridegroom found in the Song of Songs, by saying that they are related to the wasfs.¹ As has been pointed out, it shows, after a style, the marks which would indicate that the book is a unity.²

However, the wedding theory has many serious objections also, in spite of the fact that it has many advocates today. One of the most evident criticisms is the fact that customs which existed in Syria in 1861 are very difficult to trace back to the Israelitish period. The region where Wetzstein observed the Wedding Week has a civilization which "represents a mere syncretism of many cultures, customs that in their present form have not as yet been shown to exist anywhere as far back as the Christian era, much less in Israel at any time."³ "The threshing-board plays no part in the Palestinian wedding festivities; nor is there any reference to the threshing board in Canticles. The terms King and Queen are however, still applied to the bridegroom and the bride in certain districts west of the Jordan. But Wetzstein's observations must not be generalized."⁴ There is no evidence that the marriage customs, referred to by Wetzstein, are Israelitish; rather, it is probable that they are not.⁵

There is another objection, and that is in relation to

1. Waterman, op. cit., p. 101.
2. Ibid.
3. Waterman, op. cit., p. 101.
4. Haupt, op. cit., p. 211.
5. Harper, op. cit., p. xvi.

the order of the songs as they are now in the Song of Songs. "The number of deletions, transpositions, and modifications of the text, to say nothing of some very strained analogies, as given in the accredited exposition of this hypothesis"¹ results in a serious doubt as to the validity of this theory. "One must ask by what criteria the changes of the text are made."

Neither the number nor character of the songs in the Song of Songs is such as this theory would require. Since there were many songs sung on every day of the seven days, it would require a considerable number of songs to be sufficient for the needs of the wedding. But Eudde finds only twenty-three, and Seigfried finds only ten.³ In either case, the number is insufficient. In the wedding observed by Wetzstein, there were some very war-like songs,⁴ while those in the Song of Songs are peaceful. In the latter part of the Syrian festival, some of the songs were sung to celebrate the fact that the husband and wife were together, but there is none of this sort in the Song of Songs.⁵ There is no mention of the "queen" in the Song of Songs, yet any theory built on the Syrian wedding customs would be forced to give similar pomp and equal honor to the bride and bridegroom, and be referred to by their royal titles.

1. Waterman, op. cit., p. 101.
2. Ibid.
3. Harper, op. cit., p. xv.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

There have been many attempts to divide the Song of Songs into seven divisions, but no satisfactory one has yet appeared.¹ The unity in tone is not sufficiently accounted for. Budde's concessions that the book is a unity were so numerous that he surrendered to that view. He admits there were made many editions, transpositions, and there were supplied connecting links,² according to some guiding principles,² all of which admit that the Song of Songs is the work of one author, or editor.

Budde laid considerable emphasis on the fact that the Song of Songs was the celebration of wedded love.

The general grounds on which he asserts this are denied in Benzinger, Arch. p. 140, where he shews that neither in ancient nor in modern times would Eastern customs exclude pre-nuptial love. Opportunities for the meeting of young people were not and are not wanting.³

It would seem that the action in the Song of Songs is wholly out of keeping with that of wedded love, and also that the dreams told by the unblushing bride seem unnatural.⁴

Where did the bride belong? If she belonged in the city, why are the vineyards mentioned? If she belonged in the country, why was there a chorus of "daughters of Jerusalem"? In 4:8, it is stated that the bride is to come from Lebanon, yet

- Ibid. p. 90.
 Cesterly, and Robinson, op. cit., p. 219.
 Karper, op. cit., p. 219.
1. Ibid., p. xiv.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid., p. 91.
 4. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 226.

it is not stated that she ever ascended Lebanon or lived there. Budde contended that this was inserted because of a misunderstanding of the text.¹ He suggested that 6:9 be omitted.² In 8:1,2 a chaste maiden had known no greater love than brotherly love. If this is post-nuptial, how could such a thing be possible? The statement on love (8:6,7) cannot be explained by Budde.³ Because of these and many more objections, this theory is not acceptable. "Attempts have been made to reconstruct the ceremonies of the week, but they are hardly convincing."⁴ The disadvantages of this theory "are so formidable that they would seem absolutely to bar the acceptance of Budde's theory."⁵

Snaith pointed out to the advocates of the King's Week theory Ps. 45, as the Scripture which more nearly parallels the Syrian customs.⁶ Meek holds that "there is, indeed, very little similarity between the Syrian sword-dance and the dance referred to in Cant. 7:1. It is only by reference to Cant. 6:4,10 that any association can be found with matters military."⁷

1. Harper, op. cit., p. 87.

2. Ibid.

3. ibid. p. 90.

4. Oesterly, and Robinson, op. cit., p. 219.

5. Harper, op. cit., p. xiv.

6. Meek, op. cit., p.142.

7. Ibid.

CHAPTER IX

1717 IN THE SONG OF SONGS

At this point it should be noted that in the criticism of the Song of Songs, there never had been any serious attack on the accepted translations of the Book. This fact is conclusive evidence that the interpretation of the Song of Songs had been, until lately, rather elementary. Every theory advanced was largely of a speculative nature. The historical-grammatical approach had not been applied to the study of the Song of Songs in a critical fashion. Before any intelligent understanding can be attained, a serious study of the original Hebrew text of the Song of Songs must be considered.

Such a critical study of the Song of Songs, as it is in any version, results in finding many terms used which are, in many cases, rare, and in other cases, foreign to the words used in the remainder of the Old Testament. In the English version of 1901, there is an often repeated term, "my beloved" in the Song of Songs. A study of the Hebrew word so translated will produce this interesting fact: this word is used about forty times in the Song of Songs, but only about twenty-eight times in the remainder of the Old Testament.

This Hebrew word has the root form of 777.¹ Waterman wrote a very illuminating article on this problem, and his contention was that the term referred to above is the one used to designate a person in the Song of Songs.

This item is one scarcely to have been overlooked by the writer, since it deals with the primary meaning of the poem and not only represents an important personage, referred to in every speech of the leading character, but it is a personal epithet used as many times as all others in the poem combined.²

The fact that this word in question was not translated as a proper noun becomes more plausible when we note that such an example in various translations is not rare.

It would not be strange, accordingly, if such a name should later be mistaken for a common noun, as is so frequently the case in the LXX.³

Because of the theory just stated, we must make an investigation of this word. It has, when its suffix has been removed, a common Semitic form in Arabic, Aramaic, Assyrian, Hebrew, Minean, Palmyrene, Sabeian, and Syriac.⁴ In the Old Testament, exclusive of the Song of Songs, we find it used in several forms, twenty-four times.

77 : Lev. 10:4; 20:20; 25:49; II Kings. 24:17; Esther 2:7, 15.

777 : Num. 36:11; Jer. 32:8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

7777 : ISam. 10:14, 15, 16; 14:50; I Chron. 23:32; Isa. 5:1; Amos 6:10.

1. Waterman, op. cit., p. 102.

2. Ibid., p. 103.

3. Ibid., p. 102.

4. Ibid.

דָּדַי: I Chron. 27:32.

דָּדַי: Prov. 7:18; Ezek. 16:8; 23:17.

דָּדַי: Isa. 5:1, 1.

There are, in the Song of Songs the following forms of the term דָּדַי which cannot be translated Dodai:

דָּדַי : 1:2; 5:9, 9; 6:1, 1.

דָּדַי : 1:4; 4:10.

דָּדַי : 4:4.

דָּדַי : 5:9, 9.

דָּדַי : 8:5.

However, for our study, there are eighteen forms of this term found in the Old Testament outside of the Song of Songs, which parallel twenty-eight forms found in the Song of Songs. Those found in the Old Testament outside of the Song of Songs are: Lev. 10:14; 20:20; 25:49; Num. 36:11; I Sam. 10:14, 15, 16; 14:50; II Kings. 24:17; I Chron. 27:32; Esther 2:7, 15; Isa. 5:1; Jer. 32:7, 1, 9, 12; Amos 6:10. The same form of word is found in the Song of Songs in the following places: 1:13, 14, 16; 2:3, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17; 4:16 5:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 16; 6:2, 3, 3; 7: 9(10), 10(11), 11(12), 12(13), 13(14); and 8:5.

The real problem which is found in a study of this word is that of the correct translation of it.

In Hebrew, outside of the Song, the singular occurs eighteen times, always to be translated "uncle" (one apparent exception in Isa. 5:1 is corrupt and in any case cannot be used against the foregoing meaning).¹

1. Waterman, op. cit., p. 102.

The absolute of the word, which occurs four times in the Song, once in Proverbs (7:18) and twice in Ezekiel (16:8; 23:17), is always to be rendered as an intensive "love" (Gesenius, 124, e). The form points to a hollow root, ללל, from whence come the proper names Dadu, Dido, Dodo, David, and some others.¹

In the Song of Songs, the twenty-eight places which were pointed out above are translated "my beloved".

The form translated "my beloved" ought, according to Hebrew usage, elsewhere to be translated "my uncle," but this is clearly inappropriate here. Now there are twenty-two other cases in Hebrew of this particular kind of formation from other roots, where the root meaning is fairly definite, and these forms invariably signify either the exercise of the quality expressed by the verb root, and so form abstracts, or they denote the objects that exercise the verbal quality. Accordingly, our word, inasmuch as a sense of endearment always seems to adhere to it, can at most be translated "love" or "lover," but neither quite suits the context. The meaning "my beloved" appears to have no warrant in Hebrew usage, and this gains added weight from the wider Semitic field. The prevailing meaning here is "uncle" also, varying to include "cousin" in Syriac and Minean. In Arabic it signifies "foster-father," and in Assyrian alone it is used as a synonym of "son" and has derived the meanings "caress" and "darling". This is natural when applied to offspring, but this usage does not occur outside of Assyrian. The form ללל in the Song becomes the more suspicious, also, since there was a perfectly good form from a related root that does quite naturally mean "beloved" ללל.²

Because of the fact that ללל is used in the Song of Songs more times than it is used in all the remaining books of the Old Testament, it would seem that one would be justified in rendering this term in a different way. After all, many books in the Old Testament stand alone, independently, as literary productions, with the exception of some of the

1. Waterman, op. cit., p. 102.

2. Ibid. p. 103.

books which are held to be composed of different documents. Even each of these documents, however, becomes a literary unit. The vocabulary of each book can be, to some extent, ~~differs~~ ~~from~~ the others. That fact was more true in ancient times than it is today. The repeated use of this word is sufficient to merit special attention, and possibly a special translation. The word דודאי in the Song of Songs, cannot be translated as it is done in other Hebrew books of the Old Testament. In other words, the translation, "my uncle", does not fit the context of the Song of Songs. Because of this, attempts must be made to secure a more adequate meaning for this Hebrew term.

The name, Dodai, is found in the Old Testament. We find it in I Chr. 27:4: "And over the course of the second month was Dodai the Ahohite." The same name is found in II Sam. 23:9: "And after him was Eleazer the son of Dodai." In these two instances, the translation of the Hebrew into the English produced a proper name.

Usually the proper names in the Bible have a very definite meaning; however, since in the Hebrew there are no distinguishing marks between proper names and common nouns, one is at a loss as to how to translate any word without such marks. For example, we find in Gen. 29:32, Exod. 2:10 and I Sam. 1:20 the presence of proper names which have definite meanings.

If "my beloved" is translated "Dodai", the whole meaning of the Song of Songs becomes clearer. There are many advantages

which this rendering produces, but these will be discussed later.

Furthermore, this theory explains a number of difficult passages where the conventional translation could not be possible from the critical viewpoint, thus:

In the Song the singular is used outside the expression לְיָדָי four times in the pointed text (5:9; 6:1), but two of these instances refer to the same personage as "thy לְיָדָי" and "her לְיָדָי." In the other two cases the word is used alone in the absolute sense.¹

The two cases where the word occurs alone in the absolute sense are usually translated: "What is thy beloved more than another beloved" (5:9). This rendering supplies the crucial word "another" and so is inadmissible. The only translation compatible with grammar would be: "What is thy love more than love?" or "thy lover more than a lover?" but neither of these alternatives suits the question asked, as the context clearly shows. The pointed text cannot be right, therefore, and we cannot look for the meaning of our word from this context.²

In 5:9 and 8:5 the epithet of the lover appears with another suffix and at least in the latter the י of לְיָדָי was absent entirely. In 5:9 the pronominal suffix of the second person was added and the final י of לְיָדָי may or may not have been written in the copy which persisted (Gesenius, 91, k). In favor of its omission see Gesenius 8, b, 3 and 8, 1, (a). If it were written it was permissible to regard it as representing the long סֵרֵה before the suffix (Gesenius, 7, g; 8, b, 3). Here then was permission to take the consonants of לְיָדָי as composed of לְיָדָי plus the singular suffix י, and this was particularly encouraged by the comparison with the singular absolute form לְיָדָי in the same verse (and if so used here would of course be applicable to all cases of its occurrence in the poem). As we have already intimated, this verse has never been successfully translated. The word לְיָדָי can neither be translated "love", "lover," nor "beloved" in this context and give any suitable sense. It is, however, a perfectly good

1. Waterman, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

2. Ibid. p. 103.

writing of the name "David," and that too in its oldest form. The verse will then read: "What is thy Dodai in comparison with David? What is thy Dodai in comparison with David that thou dost so adjure us?" This is at once positive and definite; the reference to David being, in that case, not, to be sure, to the individual David, but to his house in the person of the reigning king; exactly as, e.g., Solomon's son Rehoboam is referred to in I Kings 12:16 (a still broader use of the name "David," approximating the term "Pharaoh" in Egypt, well attested in later times, is in line with the same usage). The verse was intended as a knockout blow for the Shulammitte by the court ladies, in the form of an ironical question, but the maiden takes it literally and is able to convince them that it has a positive answer in her favor. The primary ambiguity of the passage lay in the radicals of the name "David," which were the more readily misunderstood since the king in the poem was clearly not David but Solomon. The reason, however, for the choice of "David" in this case is obvious in the marked assonance with Dodai, which is permitted and which would tend to make the comparison more striking.

In 8:5 the singular דָּוִדָּ is followed in the pointed text by the short form of the third feminine pronominal suffix. As it stands we can only read "her דָּוִדָּ," but this has never given a satisfactory verse. It reads: "Who is coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her דָּוִדָּ?" "Her דָּוִדָּ," then, means nothing at all, or it signifies that the brothers of the Shulammitte, in uttering it, recognized that their sister has returned; but the syntax of the sentence does not suit a rhetorical question such as is then needed (Gesenius, 151, 1), and the Shulammitte had not been in the wilderness. A woman from the wilderness could only naturally mean a Bedouin, and yet the sequel shows that the Shulammitte is intended. The incongruity will be removed if the proper name be read in the place of "her דָּוִדָּ ." The verse may then read: "Who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning upon Dodā?" (or since a young woman is certainly meant, it may be preferable to read דָּוִדָּ for דָּוִדָּ, so that we should then translate "Who (or how) is this? a young woman from the wilderness, leaning upon Dodā!"). That is, the form Dodā is here pausal, and it is the only pausal form of the name recorded. Such a form naturally requires a long ā at the end. The final דָּ in place of דָּ is used to express that. This is an irregular writing in nouns, according to the stereotyped Massoretic formula, but may at one time have been quite regular in the living language (Gesenius 7, f, note 1), and it finds direct analogy in the entire class of דָּ "ב verbs. An alternative explanation may also be that the name was pronounced

Dodô in pause, and we may compare a considerable number of nouns ending in ai in the kethîb where the kerê requires a final ô. The pausal forms would make a very suitable point for that transition.¹

The result of the application of this theory, as Waterman pointed out, is that the brothers are surprised that their friend Dodai would be found associating with a strange woman, never suspecting that this woman could be their sister, for they naturally suppose that she is still at the capital.

There are many advantages to this interpretation of the Song of Songs. This translation gives such an evident meaning that all need for stage directions disappear. The problem of the three character theory is solved, for this translation identifies accurately the third character as Dodai. Solomon, the king, in his sordid life of the royal court is contrasted with Dodai, the shepherd, in his wholesome free life in the country. The statements of the Shulammitte are not statements of her love, but are only the repeated use of the name of her lover. Thus, the depth of her love gradually increases, and is finally climaxed by the great statement of her love in the latter part of the Song of Songs. This causes the story to progress, and to take the natural form of a short story.

There are still asides and reminiscences of the absent lover, but there is never the slightest doubt as to the meaning and intention of the main parts.²

This view causes the poem to be a necessary unity. Each character is sharply outlined. The Song of Songs becomes

1. Waterman, op. cit., pp. 104-106.

2. Ibid.

a satire against the age and ideals of Solomon.

The Song of Songs permitted the voicing of the spirit of Israelitish independence from the house of David, particularly, during the period when the struggle was rather closely matched and before Israel gained an assured superiority.¹

This interpretation does not demand any changes of the text. No alterations are necessary. The story becomes clear; and as a result, there is no necessity to add directions or explanations to the text, either in meaning or in directions, or in divisions.

On the whole, at the time when this theory was advanced, it was the most satisfactory one in existence. The meaning of the Song of Songs was rendered clearer than it had been under any preceding interpretation. Instead of speculation, textual criticism produced this satisfactory and reliable interpretation.

1. Waterman op. cit. p. 108

Such light has been thrown upon the life of the Hebrews by a comparative study of the religions of the Near East. It has been possible to reconstruct the religion of Israel against the background of the great religions of Mesopotamia and Egypt in whose lives the Hebrews lived and out of whose experiences it grew, absorbing and assimilating what was best as a factor in its own growth. The result of this insight is that the religious

CHAPTER X

THE TAMMUZ-ISHTAR INTERPRETATION

A closely related theory to that advanced by Waterman was the theory known as the Tammuz-Ishtar interpretation of the Song of Songs. After Snaith had discussed all the theories which had arisen prior to that advanced by Waterman, he said:

Quite distinct from these theories is that type of theory which connects the Song with the Tammuz-Adonis ritual, with the Ishtar cult, or with the myth of Osiris-Hetep. These theories have been examined by Wittekindt, who shows that many of the phrases and ideas in the Song can be paralleled, and indeed find a more or less ready explanation, in the details and ideas of these mystery cults of the East. Whether the connection is always as close as he maintains is open to question, but, on the other hand, there can be no doubt that the Song has in part its origin in the ritual of Tammuz-Adonis.¹

This theory necessitates an investigation of the cults in question, and their influence on the Hebrews and their literature. May, in discussing the presence of this fertility element in the Book of Hosea, gave the following survey of the fertility cults of the Near East:

Much light has been thrown upon the life of the Hebrews by a comparative study of the religions of the Near East. It has made possible the observation of the religion of Israel against the background of the great masses of men and women in whose lives the cult functioned and out of whose experiences it grew, correcting our limited vision of the cult as a factor in a desert panorama. The result of this insight is that the religion

1. Snaith, op. cit., p. 130.

of the Hebrews is not viewed as Old Testament theology, as concepts of deity in minds which happened to be burdened with superstitions concerning sacred trees and springs, but rather as part and parcel of the life of the everyday Israelite. The knowledge of the general pattern of near-eastern religion has placed in perspective the religion of the Hebrews.

The essence of this pattern is found in the fertility cult, which centered in the worship of the vegetation deity who died in the autumn and was resurrected in the spring. The religious services took the form of a dramatization of the death of the god, his resurrection, and his marriage to the mother-goddess. The popularity of this cult among the Hebrews has been abundantly evidenced by Old Testament scholars. It was the predominant cult among the Egyptians, Syrians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and many other peoples of the Near East.¹

Since "Hosea belongs to the fertility-cult milieu more² definitely than any other prophet," one finds that the following elements are present in that book: the death of the god, the mourning rites, the search for the departed deity, the resurrection, and the marriage of the god and goddess. These elements are also present in the Song of Songs.

That the Tammuz cult was an integral part of the Hebrew religion there can be no reasonable doubt. It was very common in the early period, and despite the polemic of the prophets against it, continued right down to late times. Excavations at Tanaach and elsewhere show that the most common images in the houses of Palestine from the earliest times to the sixth century were Astarte figurines. Isaiah explicitly records the practices of Adonis rites (17:10f). Jeremiah could draw from the liturgy of the cult (22:18 cf. 34:5). Ezekiel definitely refers to it by name (Ezek. 8:14) and even as late as Deutero-Zechariah it was still practiced (Zech. 12:11). These are references to the more somber features of the cult which bewailed the death of the god, but there was

1. May, op. cit., p. 73.
2. Ibid. p. 74.
3. Meek, op. cit., p. 3.

likewise the brighter side which celebrated the resurrection of the god and his reunion with the mother-goddess in the spring, and it is chiefly this brighter side which survives in Canticles.¹

There are, in the Old Testament, other mentions of the different religions of the Near East. Many of these religions embodied fertility-cult type of worship. For instance, Baal is mentioned in Num. 22:41; Judg. 2:13; 6:25, 31; I Kgs. 16:31; 18:21, 26, 40; 19:18; II Kgs. 10:19, 20, 28; 11:18; 17:16; 21:3; 23:4, 5; Jer. 2:8; 7:9; 12:16; 19:5; 23:13, 27; Hosea 2:8; 13:1 and Zeph. 1:4; and Ashtaroth is mentioned in Judg. 6:25. Tammuz is mentioned in Ezekiel 8:14.

As was pointed out in the first chapter of this thesis, the Song of Songs is read in the synagogues and homes in connection with the yearly Passover celebration of the Jews. Meek said that this festival is unquestionably of Tammuz origin.

It harks back to a rite that celebrated the same natural phenomenon as the Tammuz cult. It is possible, too, that the reading of the book on the eighth day of the festival (Soferim XIV, 18) is not without significance. The wailing for Adonis in Cyprus, at Biblos and other places in Syria, lasted for a period of seven days, after which followed rejoicing over his resurrection and marriage with his bride.²

Similarly, the rites celebrating the marriage of Ningirsu and Bau, respectively sun-god and mother-goddess, continued through a period of seven days (Gudea, Cy. 1. B, XVII, 19), and other parallels like the Roman Saturnalia might be quoted.³ Further evidence of the existence of the fertility cult

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 3.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., m. n., p. 4.

in the Hebrew literature and customs may be seen in the following observation:

More significant still is the statement in the Mishna (Taanith IV, 8) that it was customary at the Wood Festival on the fifteenth of Ab and at the close of the Day of Atonement for "the maidens of Jerusalem" (cf. Cant. 1:5, et passim) to go out and dance in the vineyards.

"These dances," said Meek, "were the survival of the Succoth-New Year festival, originally performed in honor of the mother-goddess.²

There was alternate singing between them and the youths, and the latter were wont to use the words of Cant. 3:11. The Gemara on this passage most aptly reports R. Nahman as identifying this yearly festival with that recorded in Judg. 21:19ff., which, like that of Judg. 9:27, was originally a vintage feast in honor of the goddess of the vine.³

But these outside indications that the Song of Songs came from the Tammuz-Ishtar worship are not all the indications that can be found. Harper already noticed that the Song of Songs evidently was "a series of lyrics in varying form and rhythm, each representing a scene in a woman's life and containing the history of love's triumph in it."⁴ The fact that "the poem begins abruptly"⁵ was noticed also. Does not an abrupt beginning point to the fact that the materials in the Song of Songs were well-known to those who used the Book? Of

1. Ibid.
2. Meek m. n., op. cit., p. 4.
3. Ibid.
4. Harper, op. cit., p. xxi.
5. Goodwin, op. cit., p. 21.

the Song of Songs itself, one finds that the number of characters are reduced, by this theory, to two.¹ There are present, then, the bride, bridegroom, and the chorus.

Just so, the Tammuz liturgies and all similar liturgies consist largely of dialogues and monologues uttered by god and goddess, interrupted here and there by the utterances of a woman's chorus.²

A more striking proof in support of this theory lies in the names used for the different characters.

The bridegroom is represented as a shepherd and this we know was the usual designation of the vegetation god the world over.³

Meek gave further light on the name of the character by saying that Waterman would seem to have missed the point in not recognizing in this the god name, variously rendered Dod, Dad, Dodo, Dadu, and the like, which is none other than Addu or Adad, the Palestinian counterpart of Tammuz.

As far back as 1887 Sayce suggested that דָּדָד in Isa. 5:1 reflects the God name Dod or Dodo, and Sayce, Frazier, Cheyne, Winckler, and others long ago recognized in Dod the Palestinian counterpart of Tammuz, but none apparently thought to apply this to Canticles. דָּדָד here, whether we point it דָּדָד with the Massorettes or דָּדָד with Waterman, can be taken as a gentilic from the from the god name דָּדָד, or the final yodh may be taken as the pronominal suffix of the first person. The latter would seem to be the interpretation demanded by the expression דָּדָדָד (Cant. 8:5), דָּדָדָד (Cant. 5:9; 6:1), and by דָּדָדָד (Amos 8:14, "As liveth thy god, O Dan; and as liveth thy Dod, O Beersheba"). דָּדָד, then,

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 6.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 7

must have originally meant "My Dod," and so was a form of address quite like "My Damu" and "My Tammuz" in the Tammuz liturgies. Later generations, however, gradually lost sight of the original significance of the expression as the Song became a conventionalized form for the celebration of the coming of spring; the phrase lost its earlier significance and connection, and came to be traditionally interpreted "my beloved." But even though we thus render it, there is one passage which definitely attaches the god Dod to the book and that is Cant. 5:9: "Who but Dod is thy beloved?" Dod must have stood here as a proper name long after its significance had been forgotten.¹

Further evidence is produced by a study of the second character in the Song of Songs:

The regular term applied to the bride is קַיִן and it would seem to be no mere accident that this is found outside of Canticles only in Judg. 11:37 (kethibh), where the term is applied to the priestesses who yearly bewail the death of vegetation typified by the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter.²

But there is one place in the Song of Songs where we have a further hint about the character of the bride. Meek suggested that "The Shulammite" in 7:1 came out of the name of the mother goddess, Sala, the consort of Adad. The reason for the change, he suggested, was because of Solomon's introduction into the text, and the subsequent confusion with the Shulamite in IKgs. 1:3. He further suggested that since in 4:8 the home of the bride is placed in the Lebanon mountains, and in view of the fact that Sala was frequently called "lady of the mountain," this theory is strengthened.³ This statement

1. Ibid. pp., 4-6.

2. Meek, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

3. Ibid. pp. 6-7.

of Meek is given in the appendix as a comment on 7:1.

The confusion of terms designating the bride and the bridegroom was pointed out by Meek. This is a common¹ occurrence in the fertility cults:

Finally, overwhelming proof of the relation of the Song of Songs to the Tammaz-Ishtar cult specifically, and to the fertility cults generally, is a verse by verse commentary on the whole of the Song of Songs found in the appendix of this thesis. There are many terms, phrases, conditions, and hints to indicate the validity of this interpretation.

Meek cites many parallel expressions and suggestions, but, although the list is impressive and suggestive, it hardly amounts to proof, and the improbability of such songs being preserved in Israel militates against the theory.²

This recent negative criticism is noteworthy. In the first place, there is no reason given why these terms and phrases do not amount to a proof. The author of the criticism given above contended for the love lyrics theory, which does not amount to a defense at all. One may take issue with the criticism given above, then, and contend that the list is good proof, if not conclusive proof, of the influence of the cult on the Song of Songs. In the second place, the possibility of the Song of Songs' being preserved in Israel is plausible in view of the fact that the Song of Songs was preserved,

1. Ibid., p. 8.

2. Oesterley & Robinson, op. cit., p. 219.

and is now in our possession. Waterman makes a comment on that problem:

It is evident that no piece of literature that mentioned his (Solomon's) name could persist in the south, much less gain a place of distinction that did not honor and dignify his character; still less could a satire upon his reign ever gain a place in the sun. Clearly to a Jew of the South, Solomon's attention to a peasant girl in the Song could only be regarded in the light of honor which he conferred on her by such magnanimous condescension, for otherwise why should it be written?¹

There are many reasons why the Song of Songs was preserved. First, there was the matter of corruptions which crept into the text. Then the mistranslation of Dodai and Sala removed the Song of Songs further from its origin. Later, it was looked on as a poem on love. With its acceptance and preservation in the south, there arose considerable speculation as to its nature, and when finally the allegorical interpretation was applied to the Song of Songs, the way was paved for its acceptance as a book of the canon.

Many modern interpreters, however, understand these to be hymns of the fertility cult, in which Solomon has somehow displaced Tammuz, and Shulamith Istar. Such hymns may indeed lie behind parts of the text, but all mention of Istar and Tammuz has completely disappeared, and the songs have turned into something else, if they ever had any fertility interest at all.²

Great erudition and the utmost ingenuity have been applied to the defense of this explanation of the origin of the Song, and, indeed such influences may very reasonably be traced in parts of it. But it must not be forgotten that after all these are very human passions and cravings that are expressed, and these expressions

1. Waterman, op. cit., p. 104.

2. Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 102.

go back ultimately to mere men and women of Syria and their very elemental desires and yearnings. They did not originate with Istar and Tammuz; Istar and Tammuz originated with them, and that with the decline of their worship the songs that worship had colored should swing back in their original function is nothing strange.¹

The first criticism, that all mention of Tammuz and Ish-tar has completely disappeared, has already been discussed thoroughly enough to show that the counterparts of these two are present in the names Adad and Sala. The hint that the Song of Songs never had any fertility interest, is answered by a question: Where, then, did all the terms of fertility cults originate? Their presence in the Song of Songs is in too great a number to be accidental, and certainly those opposing these cults would have had no interest in preserving a book of that nature had they known that it contained hints of a cult which they opposed. If all these terms are additions, who placed them in the Book, and when was it done?

The criticism that the ultimate origin of fertility cults and those fertility hints in the Song of Songs all originate with the elemental passions and desires of men and women is true, unless one considers the possibility of someone who still believes in the fertility myths. Goodspeed contended for the Syrian Wedding Week theory, and he believed that the Song of Songs resulted from that custom. Certainly the Tammuz-Ishtar theory carries us back further toward the

1. Oesterley and Robinson op. cit. p. 219

earlier periods than does the Wedding Week, which takes us back only to a time relatively modern.

One would rather be motivated to think that both the Song of Songs as well as the Syrian Wedding customs came out of the influence of the fertility cults which are ancient historically, though the latter could not be regarded as retaining ancient forms and contents. The allegorical interpretation did have some truth in it, as Meek pointed out, in that it interpreted the love expressed to be primarily divine¹ love.

As a final argument in favor of this theory, Meek mentioned a text published by Ebeling.

A closer parallel to Canticles it would be difficult to find. It is much closer than the Syrian wedding songs. The structure of the poem is the same (two lovers alternating in praises of each other's charms); the general theme is the same (love); many of the phrases are quite identical; the figures of the garden, the cedar, the dove, and the like are introduced in similar fashion; its lines breathe the same delight in love; and, most striking of all, it is a Tammuz hymn and was part of the liturgy used in the worship of Tammuz and Istar.²

How did the present form of the Song of Songs which is "an anthology of songs, coming from different ages but having to do with the common theme, love,"³ evolve? Meek offered the following conjecture:

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 2.
2. Ibid., p. 13.
3. Ibid.

There was first the original liturgy, which must have taken a long time to develop and itself went through many changes. In the course of time this gradually came to be reinterpreted and adapted to meet changing conditions, beliefs, and practices; and doubtless parts of it were lost along the way. About the residuum gathered other songs of like nature, drawn from various sources. Much, if not all, of the original character of the poem was forgotten and it came to be thought of as a song of love, with its two chief characters standing as types of the ideal lover. Its use, however, as a religious song in connection with the coming of spring continued in certain circles; although others, more acute than most, looked askance upon the book. Then the name of Solomon as king par excellence got attached to it. Finally came the day of the allegorical method of interpretation and this together with the prestige of Solomon's name did much to smooth its path to general acceptance. To make it still more acceptable the panegyric on love (8:6ff) crept into the text, and lo, in a generation or two the book became canonical," The Song of Songs."¹

One is now in a position to establish his stand in relation to Waterman's interpretation. Waterman made it quite clear that the proper name, Dodai, should be used in every place where "my beloved" stands in the English version. In that he was correct, but he did not go far enough. With this interpretation, one can make still clearer whether or not such a person as Dodai existed at all. There is no real reason why a certain person of no importance called Dodai should have a poem written about him, which would have been changed and preserved for us today. But Meek makes clear what Waterman started to do.

These facts are overwhelming in proving that the Song of Songs is a corruption of the Tammuz-Ishaar liturgy of

1. Meek, op. cit. p. 13

some distant day. A common human experience is embodied in the rituals of the fertility cults which were present in the different forms throughout the whole ancient Near East.¹

Our study here is not to attempt to find the origin of the fertility cults themselves, as Goodspeed tried to explain,² but to attempt to find the origin of the Song of Songs, and we feel that it is to be found in the Tammuz-Ishtar religion.

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 2.
2. Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 102.

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 2.
2. Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 102.
3. Ibid. p. 102.

CHAPTER XI

THE TWO ELEMENTS IN THE SONG OF SONGS

Meek pointed out in his discussion of the Song of the Song of Songs, which was surveyed above, that there were two parts to the complete story behind the fertility cult religions. He pointed out references made to the death of the god as if is referred to in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah, and then continued:

These are references to the more somber features of the cult which bewailed the death of the god, but there was likewise the brighter side which celebrated the resurrection of the god and his reunion with the mother-goddess in the spring, and it is chiefly this brighter side which survives in Canticles.¹

However, Meek made no attempt to segregate the two parts as they are found in the Song of Songs. The whole story of the fertility cult is found in the Book of Hosea. In Ps. 45, one has a theme of marriage, and this psalm is called "a song of loves."² The theory has been advanced that in this psalm the youth becomes Ahab, and the maid probably becomes Jezebel.³ Since Ahab was a great builder, (Kgs. 22:39; Ps. 45:9), this theory would seem to carry considerable weight. Snaith suggested that those who are seeking for a parallel

1. Meek, op. cit., pp. 3-4.
2. Snaith, op. cit., p. 140.
3. Ibid. p. 141.

to the King's Week, in the Song of Songs, will find a closer parallel in Ps. 45, but that examination does not have an essential part in this thesis. It is sufficient to say that he inferred that Ps. 45 is the northern variant of the same ceremony as that which is found in the Song of Songs.

A close study of the Song of Songs has been made to identify these two elements present in it. "It will be seen that this same alternation between spring and autumn recurs throughout the Song. "The Song as we have it now is necessarily the southern variant, as compared with Ps. 45. This destroys the complete unity of the Song, a fact which, up until now in the history of interpretation, has been generally held. One of the reasons the Song of Songs had been held as a unity by most interpreters is because there are many repetitions of phrases. At any rate, a closer examination will show that they fall into two separate groups remarkably well. Snaith pointed out that Waterman, in another article had

1. Ibid., p. 142.
2. Ibid., pp. 140-142.
3. Snaith, op. cit., p. 141.
4. Ibid., p. 132.
5. Ibid., p. 141.
6. Ibid., p. 132.
7. Ibid.

distinguished very clearly between the role of Solomon and that of the shepherd lover. He regards Solomon as the destroyer of love, and the character as having associations not with Tammuz, but with Nergal, god of plagues and sickness. Political influences have given the name Solomon to the villain of the piece. Waterman places the two characters as opposites. Our theory goes still further, and cuts them off entirely the one from the other.¹

One is now ready to divide the Song of Songs into its separate parts.

We claim, therefore, that in the Song of Songs there are two distinct elements: One group of passages is connected with the autumn, and its setting is immediately after the vintage. The other group of passages has associations with the spring, but its setting is in the time of the fruits of the gardens in the height of summer.²

It will be noted, also, that "the autumn passages naturally precede the spring passages, since in pre-Exilic times the year began in the autumn and not in the spring."³

We divide the Song, therefore, into two groups of passages, as follows:

| Autumn | Spring |
|---|----------|
| 1:2-2:5 | 2:8-3:4 |
| 2:6(?), 7 being a refrain equivalent to 3:5 | 3:5 |
| 3:6-5:1 | 5:2-6:12 |
| 7:1-9 | 7:10-8:2 |
| 8:3,4 (refrain) | 8:3,4 |
| 8:5ab | 8:5cd |
| 8:6,7 | 8:8-10 |
| 8:11,12 | 8:13-14 |

To make clear the distinctions of both groups, one may discuss the autumn group first. "The whole scene (reference to first autumn passage) is set in the late autumn after

1. Ibid., p. 135.

2. Snaith, op. cit. p. 136.

3. Ibid., 132.

4. Ibid.

the scorching heat of summer."¹ "In the autumn the youth-
king seeks the maiden-princess, and carries her away to his
palace,"² and this "group is connected more closely with
marriage."³ "The youth appears early (1:9-10) and is appar-
ently present throughout."⁴ He "plays the part of King Sol-
omon,"⁵ and the maid becomes a 'prince's daughter' (7:2)."
The five references to King Solomon are all in this group
(1:5; 3:9, 11; 8:11, 12).⁶ "There is no reference to the mother's
home."⁷

Because of these distinctive traits of this group, there
are certain terms which are peculiar to it, i.e., they are not
found in the spring group:

1. My vineyard which is mine.
(1:6; 8:12)
2. Keeping a vineyard.
(1:6; 8:11, 12)
3. Henna-flower.
(1:14; 4:13)
4. Nard.
(1:12; 4:13, 14)
5. Thine eyes are doves.
(1:15; 4:1)
6. Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness?
(3:6; 8:5a)
7. Thy breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle.
(5:5; 7:4)
8. Caresses sweeter than wine. Followed in each case
by "the scent of thine ointments".
(1:2; 4:10; in addition 1:4))⁷

1. Ibid. p. 131.
2. Ibid. p. 136.
3. Ibid. p. 134.
4. Snaith, op. cit., p. 142.
5. Ibid. p. 135.
6. Ibid. p. 135.
7. Ibid. p. 138.

There are certain interesting parallels to the theme of the autumn group in the history of the Hebrews. Snaithe held that there was an "association between the autumn group of the Song, the rape at Shiloh, and the ritual dance on the Day of Atonement."¹ The first instance is found in Judg. 21:19-21:

Behold there is a feast of Jehovah from year to year in Shiloh Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; and see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh.

"Thus, it is clear that the rite at Shiloh was a vegetation-vintage rite."²

Presumably there was a long history to this Shiloh rite before 1000 B.C. There are traces of a similar custom, though not necessarily in the vineyards, in the time of the Judges.³

It was a dance of virgins, but it became a Sabine rape. It is possible that the Benjamites merely forestalled the youths of Shiloh, who may have been expected at the proper time to appear and claim their brides, but this is without any real justification, and is very unlikely, since the whole plan was put forward as offering no difficulty whatever in its execution. This could scarcely have been the case if at any time during the proceedings there was the slightest chance of the untimely appearance of the youths of Shiloh.⁴

In the second instance, we find that "the Day of Atonement was at the time of vintage."⁵ This custom of dancing "can be traced back to days before the Kingdom,"⁶ and is mentioned in the original source quoted below, together

1. Snaithe, op. cit., p. 134.

2. Ibid., p. 138.

3. Snaithe, op. cit., p. 140.

4. Ibid., p. 138.

5. Ibid., p. 137.

6. Ibid., p. 138.

with the information concerning the fifteenth of Ab.

In the Mishnah, Taanith 4:8, there is the description, as had been noticed in connection with the Song by previous writers, of a double custom observed at Jerusalem in the last days before the destruction of Herod's Temple.

Rabbi Simon ben Gamaliel said, Israel had no festivals like the fifteenth of Ab and the Day of Atonement. On these days the children of Jerusalem used to go out dressed in white. . . . The maidens of Jerusalem used to go out and dance in the vineyards, and say thus, "Young man, raise your eyes, and behold the maid you are going to choose. Look not on beauty, but on birth! And he replies thus, "Go, daughters of Zion, and look on Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals", and in the day of the joy of his heart." ¹

One may now turn to the spring group of the Song of Songs. "In the spring group the maiden in great distress seeks the youth, and at last leads him to her mother's house." ² This "section has associations with spring, although it belongs to a period later in the year, for the singer is recalling to her companions the events of the springtime." ³ "Although the youth first calls the maid (2:10c, 13d), ⁴ yet ⁵ "there is no necessity for his appearance at any point." There is no reference that the youth is "a king, and the maid a princess, though the maid becomes the idol of queens and concubines (6:9)." ⁶

1. Ibid., p. 137.
2. Snaith, op. cit. p. 136.
3. Ibid., p. 131.
4. Ibid., p. 135.
5. Ibid., p. 142.
6. Ibid., p. 136.

The two references to the city watchman are both in the spring group (3:5:7) (sic.). Here also the youth is connected with gardens (6:2; 7:13; 8:13), and that is where he is to be found. The women, also, in the spring group, offer to help the maid in her search, and throughout the group generally, the sexual element receives considerably less emphasis than in the autumn group.¹

There are also terms which are peculiar to this group.

They are:

1. Gazelle or a young hart.
(2:9,17; 8:14)
2. Grape-bloom.
(2:13, 15; 7:13)
3. Let me hear thy voice.
(2:14; 8:13)
4. Feed flocks among the lilies.
(2:16; 6:3)
5. My beloved is mine.
(2:16; 6:3; 7:11)
6. The house of my mother.
(3:4; 8:2)
7. Beds of balsam.
(5:13; 6:2).
8. The vine sprouting and the pomegranate flowering.
(6:11; 7:13)
9. Terrible as an army with banners.
(6:4c and 10c).²

There are also parallels to the theme of this group in the history of the Hebrews. Snaith held that "the spring group of the Song, the celebration of Jephthah's daughter, and the ritual dance on the fifteenth of Ab are associated."³ In Judg. 11:37-40, we have the request of Jephthah's daughter to her father:

1. Ibid., p. 136.
2. Snaith, op. cit., p. 134.
3. Ibid. p. 138.

Ibid. p. 137.

Snaith, op. cit. p. 134.

Ibid., p. 136.

Ibid., p. 140.

Ibid., p. 138.

Let this thing be done for me; let me alone two months, that I may depart and go down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my companions. And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months; and she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed; and she knew not man. And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to celebrate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

Snaith commented on this incident:

The whole ritual is an annual rite celebrated by a virgin and her companions. There are no youths present--in fact, their presence is implicitly excluded. The word "companions," חַבֵּרֹת , is found elsewhere only in the Song, and in Ps. 43:15 which . . . is closely connected with the autumn group of the Song. Again, does "go and go down" refer to a dance in which those participating first advanced and then retreated? The alternative is to read וַיֵּרָד , but in any case the suggestion is of movement backward and forward.¹

Possibly in this two-months interval between the close of the corn harvest and the summer festival of Adonis, we have the explanation of the two months which Jephthah's daughter and her companions spent "in the mountains." ²

"The date of Jephthah can scarcely be later than about 1100 B.C., and it may be as much as two hundred years earlier."³

"It is generally agreed that a vegetation cult lies behind the story of Jephthah's daughter."⁴

The second illustration of parallel material to the spring group of the Song of Songs is the ritual dance on the fifteenth of Ab. "The fifteenth of Ab is in the summer, in the time of the fruits of the gardens, with the spring no long time past."⁵ The mention of this festival has been

1. Ibid. p. 137.

2. Snaith, op. cit. m. n. p. 140.

3. Ibid., p. 138.

4. Ibid., p. 140.

5. Ibid., p. 138.

made above in connection with the Day of Atonement.

These parallels are noteworthy and may show that there are actually two elements in the Song of Songs. However, as Snaith pointed out, there are terms and phrases which are common to both elements.

The first group of exceptions is terms which are "terms of endearment, since both groups are connected with courtship, betrothal or marriage."¹

1. Fair one: (4:1 autumn)--My fair one: (2:10,13 spring).
2. Fairest among women: (1:8 autumn; 5:9; 6:1 spring).
3. Whom my soul loveth: (1:7 autumn; 3:1, 2, 3, 4 spring).²

The second group of exceptions is the two cases where the repetition of a phrase is in a passage, belonging to the other group.³

1. 4:1-3 (autumn) and 6:5-7 (spring), "It seems most probable that these two passages performed parallel functions."
2. 2:17 (spring) and 4:6 (autumn), "The occurrence in 4:6 is probably not original, but has crept in because of the similarity of the previous phrase."⁴

The third group of exceptions is that "each section ends with the embrace of the lovers (2:6; 3:4c)."⁵

The fourth exception group is the close meaning between "precious fruit" in 4:13, 16 (spring) and "precious things" in 7:14 (autumn).

1. Ibid. p. 132.
2. Ibid. pp. 132, 133.
3. Snaith, op. cit., p. 134.
4. Ibid., pp. 134, 135.
5. Ibid. p. 132

These exceptions, however, do not carry enough weight to be destructive to the theory. This theory of Snaith added considerably to the understanding of the fertility cults in the Song of Songs.

The number of characters have been mentioned in these cases which, however, was able to find six characters and a number in the Song of Songs. It is possible that the name of David is mentioned for the first time in the Song of Songs. However, this discovery has no evidence pointing to the fact that David was a character who was mentioned in the statements which he said could not have been made by someone else in the Song of Songs. It was forced to reject his idea as there is no evidence supporting it.

The reality of the probability is that the name of David is the name of the man who was mentioned in the Song of Songs. It is possible that the name of David is mentioned in the Song of Songs. However, this discovery has no evidence pointing to the fact that David was a character who was mentioned in the statements which he said could not have been made by someone else in the Song of Songs. It was forced to reject his idea as there is no evidence supporting it.

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In Snaith, op. cit. p. 11.
 In Ibid. p. 11.

CHAPTER XII

RE-EVALUATION OF THE TAMMUZ-ISHTAR THEORY

One finds it necessary, at this place, to see how the Tammuz-Ishtar theory will apply to the Song of Songs in relation to the characters, unity, title, authorship, date of writing, place where it was written, and finally its canonicity.

The number of characters have been mentioned in some cases above. Dearness was able to find six characters and a chorus in the Song of Songs.¹ He claimed the honor of having discovered for the first time, the eunuch in the story.² However, his discovery has no definite evidence in its favor, except that this character was used to fit some of the statements which he felt could not well have been made by someone else in the Song of Songs. We are forced to reject his idea as there is no evidence supporting it.

The mention of the Shulammitte in 7:1 has given rise to the belief that this is the name of the main "actress" in the Song of Songs.

1. Dearness, op. cit., p. 11.

2. Ibid. p. 6.

Bossuet....found in the Song the actual description of the marriage feast of Solomon and the daughter of Pharaoh. Harmer, following Bossuet, identified in 1768 another character, the Shulemite (sic), whom he supposed to be the chief wife of Solomon prior to his marriage with Egyptian princess. 1

This fact resulted in a study of similar proper names, and this led to the finding of a town, which is mentioned in two places in the Bible.

That is, a maiden of Shunem, the present Sulem, southwest of the Sea of Galilee, south of Nazareth, north of Zerin (Jezreel) in the ancient tribal district of Issachar, mentioned in the geographical list in Josh. 19,18 and in the story of Elisha who raised the dead man of the good Shulamite woman who had befriended the prophet (2 K. 4,8). The term Shulamite denotes the bride as a maiden of the highest beauty. 2

Another instance is found in I Kgs. 1:3:

So they sought for a fair damsel, throughout all the boarders of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

So Shulamite became, according to this theory, the synonym for a most beautiful woman.

"This explanation of the term Shulamite was undoubtedly the interpretation of the LXX and of the Massorites." 3

However, this interpretation will not stand in the light of history.

In order that the Shulamite should stand here as an equivalent for "the fairest among women," we need to suppose that Abishag became widely famous in Israel as the most beautiful woman who had ever been known....There are many historical books, many songs and prophecies in the

1. Snaith, op. cit., p. 130.

2. Spoer, op. cit., p. 216.

3 Ibid.

Old Testament written long after her time, and we come upon no further trace of her. If she ever attained to such idealism as to stand for the most beautiful woman in the world we know nothing of it, and without some indication of it we have no right to assume it.¹

In commenting on the two scriptures relating to this problem, II Kgs. 4:12 and I Kgs. 1:3, Goodspeed said:

The former makes no sense in the passage. But the latter is even worse, for to suggest a union between Solomon and David's Shunammith would be monstrous from any point of view. Nothing could be more incongruous or repugnant. That learning should have been driven to a resort so desperate shows how difficult it has found the problem. Of course it may be replied that it is not necessary to suppose that it was actually Abishag that was meant, but some other girl of Shunem. But it was Abishag and Abishag alone that had made Shunem famous for beauty, if it was so, and we cannot give up Abishag without giving up the essential thing about the supposed Shunammite. In short, the Shunammite was a synonym for beauty suggests Abishag and nobody else. But any suggestion of Abishag is hopelessly unavailing for association with Solomon, David's son. The Shunammite strikes a false note, and cannot be made to do otherwise.²

Following this reflection of the old theory as to the identity of the Shulammitte, he continued:

And what could be more natural than to designate the bride as Shulammithe-Solomon's lady? Sulammith is simply the feminine form of Shelomo. Wittekindt is quite right in saying that Shulammithe in 7:1 cannot be a person's name! But when he goes on "Welche Gestalt in Israel sollte so ausgezeichnet worden sein?" the answer is ready: any bride whose husband was the Shelomo of the hour might very naturally be called the Shulammithe.³

This identification of the Shulammitte with the name Solomon may have come about because of the attempt of the scribes to identify the maid with Abishag.⁴ Meek contended that the name Shulammitte is the corruption of the mother goddess Sala,

1. Harper, op. cit., p. 81.
2. Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 102.
3. Ibid, p. 103.
4. Snaith, op. cit., m. n. p. 135.

1

the consort of Adad.

First it became a gentilic, then partly on account of Solomon's introduction into the text it was confused with שְׁלָמִי of I Kings 1:3; and so what was originally the goddess Sala came to be understood as a simple maiden.²

Snaith agreed with Meek on this general contention:

The maid becomes a "prince's daughter" (7:2).

It is best to interpret שְׁלָמִי as a feminine form of the youth's name, making them opposite numbers.³

From these data we draw that the "Shulammite" is really reference made to the mother-goddess. Thus, in the Song of Songs, we have maiden playing the part of the mother-goddess.

The character, Solomon, was the first to be identified, but he is discussed here secondly because he is secondary, in significance, in the Song of Songs. This character, King Solomon, is referred to in the Song of Songs in five different places (1:5; 3:9, 11; 8:11, 12). Budde held that he did not even appear as a dumb figure in the Song of Songs, and Martineau reduced Solomon to only a passive character.⁴ The name Solomon seemed to Haupt to be a subsequent insertion.⁵ Snaith held that "the youth plays the part of King Solomon."⁶

1. Meek, op. cit., p. 7.

2. Ibid.

3. Snaith, op. cit., p. 135.

4. Harper, op. cit., p. 82.

5. Spoer, op. cit., p. 213.

6. Snaith, op. cit. p. 135.

The presence of the "Maidens of Jerusalem" in several instances was thought by Haupt to be an insertion.¹ Meek contended, however, that "the maidens of Jerusalem" were a part of the original.²

Just so the Tammuz liturgies and all similar liturgies consist largely of dialogues and monologues uttered by god and goddess, interrupted here and there by the utterances of a women's chorus.³

There is no reason to eliminate "the maidens of Jerusalem". It is true that this chorus has been difficult to explain with some interpretations, but with the Tammuz-Ishtar theory it finds a natural explanation.

Waterman, as is shown above, conclusively proved that the word, ⁴דודאי which is translated "my beloved" cannot be so translated, but should be translated as a proper name,⁵ Dodai. Meek further showed that Dodai is a god name. Snaith brought to light the fact that the shepherd lover and the king are separated entirely into the two groups in the Song of Songs.⁶

From these observations, one can conclude that there is a chorus, the maid and the lover in the Song of Songs. No other characters are important.

1. Spoer, op. cit., p. 220.
2. Meek, op. cit., p. 6.
3. Ibid.
4. Waterman, op. cit.
5. Meek, op. cit., p. 5.
6. Snaith, op. cit., p. 130.

The next matter to be considered is the question as to whether or not the Song of Songs is a unity. The traditional assumption was that the Song of Songs is a unity.¹ This assumption has been produced largely because of the fact that the same characters exist throughout, and because certain phrases are repeated. Jastrow attacked this assumption. He felt that what unity there was in the book was that of the same theme, that of love.² However, Snaith frankly declared that his theory destroyed the complete unity of the Song of Songs.³ The two groups keep well within the boundaries of their respective parts, though they differ considerably. Therefore, the book is not a unity, in its true sense, but one consisting of "two distinct elements: One group of passages is connected with the autumn, and its setting is immediately after the vintage. The other group of passages has associations with spring."⁴

The name of this book in the Old Testament has been consistently referred to as "The Song of Songs." This is the translation of the first two words of the Hebrew text. This book is sometimes referred to as "The Song of Solomon," resulting from the first few words of the phrase which are translated as "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's."

1. Jastrow, op. cit., p. 96.

2. Ibid., p. 131.

3. Snaith, op. cit., p. 132.

4. Ibid.

However, many hold that the part "which is Solomon's" is an insertion and not part of the original. Waterman held that "The Song of Songs" as a title of this book is "more of a particular classification than it is a title."¹ The title, "Canticles" is sometimes applied to this book. This word comes from a Latin root, and it may be translated "a little song".² This title was first mentioned in 1526. The title, "A Collection of Songs," was favored by Abr ibn Ezra and D. Kimchi,³ but the Hebrew text will not allow that translation. Jastrow pointed out that some Greek codices use the title, "Song of Songs," which he favored.⁴

The title is similar to the designation "Book of Songs" (Kitab al-Aghani) given by the compiler or compilers to a great collection of Arabic poetry. I cannot, therefore, agree with Ehrlich....who follows Ewald, Ginsburg, Zepletal, and many others, --including earlier Jewish exegetes--in taking the title as conveying the force of "the choice songs".⁵

Waterman held that it was a song about Dodai, but he did not specify this as the title. He was, of course, aware of the fact that such a title was never known to have been given to the book.⁶

The title of this book is, therefore, "The Song of Songs." The question as to whether "which is Solomon's"

1. Waterman, op. cit., p. 107.
2. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 215.
3. Harper, op. cit., p. ix.
4. Jastrow, op. cit., p. 258.
5. Ibid.
6. Waterman, op. cit., p. 107.

was a later insertion, may be disregarded in this thesis. Other titles have no evidence in their favor, and most of them cannot come from the Hebrew text.

The superscription "which is Solomon's" naturally let to the conclusion that the Song of Songs was written by Solomon. This theory was further substantiated by the fact that Solomon was held to be the chief actor. It is probable that those who allowed the Song of Songs a place in the canon held to the Solomonic authorship. Origen¹ believed in the Solomonic authorship. This same opinion was held by Franz Delitzsch.² William Whiston held that Solomon wrote the Song of Songs at a time when he was "wicked and foolish".³ The author's familiarity with nature, his references to geography and artistry, and his mention of so many exotic plants and foreign articles are given as defenses of the Solomonic authorship, because Solomon was supposed to have had an overabundance of knowledge.⁴ The opinion has been that the book has a historical connection with the age of Solomon, i.e., 4:4 points to a time previous to the separation of the two kingdoms; 4:1 has Jerusalem appearing as the metropolis of Gilead as well as of other districts; the style and character of the book show comparisons which are drawn promiscuously and indifferently from all parts of the monarchy of David and Solomon.⁵

1. Jastrow, op. cit., p. 95.
2. Ibid., p. 104.
3. cf. Jastrow p. 88
4. cf. Harper, op. cit., p. xxiv.
5. Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 276.

However, the list of scholars who held the view is long.
 1 Schmidt, 2 Driver, 3 Jastrow, 4 Ewald, 5 Renan, 6 Dearness, and
 7 Goodwin held that the Song of Songs was not written
 by Solomon. Renan believed that the Song of Songs was
 written within a half century after Solomon's death.
 8 "Bleek and others held to plural authorship. 9 However,
 Harper held that the Song of Songs "inevitably suggests it
 is the work of one person". 10 At any rate, there seems
 to be no definite evidence that Solomon was the author of
 the Song of Songs. Just who the writer was is not known.
 Any theory that might be advanced would be little more than
 a guess for there are no indications as to who the writer
 was. In fact, we have no evidence that any one person
 wrote it.

There was first the original liturgy, which must
 have taken a long time to develop and itself went
 through many changes. In the course of time this
 gradually came to be reinterpreted and adapted to meet
 changing conditions, beliefs, and practices; and doubt-
 less parts of it were lost along the way. About the
 residuum gathered other songs of like nature, drawn from
 various sources.¹¹

1. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 276.
2. Driver, op. cit., p. 44.
3. Jastrow, op. cit. p., 61
4. Ibid., p. 99.
5. Ibid., p. 102.
6. Dearness, op. cit., p. 19.
7. Goodwin, op. cit., p.5.
8. Fastrow, op. cit., pp. 102, 103.
9. Harper, op. cit., p. xii.
10. Ibid., p. xiv.
11. Meek, op. cit., p. 13.

With this great transformation, even from the time the liturgy was first developed, one can see how very far the Song of Songs is from that original composition. Many authors in many ages, until it was canonized, must have had their parts in composing and editing it.

The problem of the date of the Song of Songs has hinged around two viewpoints. The first is that Solomon must have had a considerable part in the writing of it. Since the Solomonic authorship has been rejected, we do not need to discuss that viewpoint further. The second is that which has been built around certain words which seem to give some indication of the time of the writing of the Song of Songs. There are two words in the Song of Songs which are foreign in nature and probably post-exilic.¹ These two words are *pardes* and *appiryon*. There is also the consistent use of Ψ for $\gamma\omega\kappa$. An extended discussion of these words was given by Driver.² If this argument carries any weight, it would indicate that the Song of Songs was written after the return of Nehemiah. Naturally, this discussion deals with the influence of Aramaic on the Hebrew language. Peters held that "it belongs, presumably, to the beginning of the Greek period, the close of the fourth or the first part of the third century B.C., although containing older material."³

1. Harper, op. cit., p. xxvi.
2. Ibid., pp. xxv-xxxii.
3. Peters, op. cit., p. 29.

But Hengstenberg stated "that ψ was used for $\gamma\psi\chi$ even before
¹
 the days of Solomon, though only scatteredly".

The dictum of the poem exhibits several peculiarities, especially in the uniform use of the relative (except in the title 1:1) for $\gamma\psi\chi$, and the recurrence of many words found never, or rarely besides in Biblical Hebrew, but common in Aramaic, which show that either it must be a late work (post-exilic), or, if early, that it belongs to North Israel, where there is reason to suppose that the language spoken differed dialectically from that of Judah. The general purity and brightness of the style favor the latter alternative, which agrees well with the acquaintance shown by the author with localities of North Palestine, and is adopted by most modern critics.²

One of the oldest pieces of Hebrew literature is the Song of Deborah. One is struck by the fact that the use of the relative in it is the same as that used in the Song of
³
 Songs. Any argument on that basis, therefore, does not carry sufficient proof to be conclusive.

The origin of the Song of Songs, we believe, is to be found in the Tammuz-Adonis ritual of North Syria, for the topographical background of the Song is also the area to which the Syrian Adonis ritual primarily belongs, and the references which Meek, Wittekindt, and others have found, show that, overlaid during the centuries, and reinterpreted and interpolated through the generations, these earliest traces of its origin still remain.⁴

The linguistic peculiarities of Canticles are numerous and striking. There is a remarkably large number of hapaxlegomena, many peculiar words and forms, a striking deviation from the ordinary rules of grammar and syntax, and other peculiarities like the uniform use of the particle ψ for $\gamma\psi\chi$. These, together with the

1. Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 283.
2. Driver, op. cit., pp. 421-422.
3. Harper, op. cit., p. xxvi.
4. Snaith op. cit., p. 139.

references to northern localities rather than southern (e.g., Lebanon, Hermon, Damascus, Tirzah, Sharon, Gilead, Mahanaim, Hesbon, Bathrabbim, Baal-hamon), have led scholars to make the book a northern production. This would fall in well with our interpretation, and afford added evidence for it. As all scholars agree, the fertility cult was alien to the Hebrews and was taken over by them from the agricultural Canaanites when they gave up their early nomadic life and settled on the land, and it was in the agricultural north rather than in the semi-nomadic south that the cult flourished. It is not that these linguistic peculiarities in Canticles are provincialisms, as many commentators have maintained, but rather that many of them are alien in origin, and that origin would seem to be found in the Tammuz cult.¹

From these references we can establish the locality of the composition of the Song of Songs. It was composed largely in the north, and it was there that one found the fertility cults so flourishing.

The problem of the canonicity of the Song of Songs is interesting. Just why the books in the Old Testament were ever gathered together is not certain. However, when Ezra and Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem after the captivity, the following occurred:

When they and those who followed them looked around they found that most of the literature of their nation had been "lost by reason of war." To recover as much as possible seems to have been the chief aim of Nehemiah, hence he set about "founding" a library, gathering together the acts of the kings and the writings of the prophets, and of David, and the epistles of the kings.²

1. Meek, op. cit., pp. 12, 13.

2. Goodwin, op. cit., p. 2, Macc. 2:13.

The nature of canonicity as one finds it historically is not similar to the popular conception.

It is nowhere claimed by those compilers or for them by others until long after the coming of Christ that all these books were inspired in the sense inspiration is used in modern theological discourse.¹

To the founders of that library, mentioned above, and to those who added to it, as time went on, the books contained therein did not have the authority of a "thus saith the Lord."

In the time of the Maccabees this library was to be "read with favor and attention" (Prologue to Ecclesiasticius), and we have no record that as a whole at any time to and including the times of Christ, it had any other sacredness than that veneration which is due to any collection of ancient writings.²

"During the Middle Ages the dogma of plenary inspiration was promulgated."³ This idea of the inspiration of the scriptures is evident from a statement of Harper:

From this it would result, of course, that the book never had any sacred character nor any deeper meaning and that it should never, properly speaking, have been in the canon of Holy Scripture at all.⁴

The Song of Songs, as far as we have any record, was never quoted by Jesus Christ or the apostles. This does not mean, however, as is inferred above, that such a condition would have to be the criterion to make the Song of Songs canonical. Budde gave the conditions upon which

1. Goodwin, op. cit., p. 8.
2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 2.
4. Harper, op. cit., p. xiii.

the books were admitted into the canon by the Jewish councils:

1. they must have a religious meaning;
2. they must have been written, (or held to have been written) not later than Ezra's time, for it was only up to that time that the Holy Spirit of prophecy was active, and that alone could inspire canonical books.¹

The final decision as to the Hebrew canon was only arrived at about A.D. 100, and this book was one of those whose place was most uncertain.²

The reason for this uncertainty was the secular nature of the Song of Songs. The canonicity of this book was stoutly defended by a Rabbi of the first century. Later, Origen defended the right of the Song of Songs to a place in the canon: "Blessed is he who sings holy songs, but more blessed is he who sings the Song of Songs."³

The tradition which ascribed it to Solomon and its undoubted beauty made men anxious to include it, if possible, and the problem was ultimately solved by treating it metaphorically as a picture of the love existing between Yahweh and ideal Israel.⁴

The discussion at Jabneh in 90 A. D. was not as to whether the Song of Songs "ought to be admitted to the canon, but as to whether they (Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs) ought to have been admitted."⁵ Jastrow pointed

1. Harper, op. cit., p. xi.
2. Martin, op. cit., p. 289.
3. Ibid. p. 291.
4. Ibid.
5. Oesterley and Robinson, op. cit., p. 217.
6. Harper, op. cit., p. x.

out that the Song of Songs became canonical, not by accidental admission, nor by the majority vote of a solemn assembly, but because of its¹ irresistible popular appeal.

To this Goodwin² and Harper³ agree.

Since that time, there have been persons who held that the Song of Songs was canonical, and still others who have held that it was uncannical and should be eliminated from the canon. The theory of the inspiration of the scriptures, as noted above, has had much to do with this type of discussion. The Jewish injunction that no boy was to read the Song of Songs until he was at least thirty years of age has indicated that its canonicity has been questioned. The sensual nature of the Song of Songs was noticed by a popular writer of today,⁴ and it is interesting to note in passing that he connected the Song of Songs to the fertility cults. Until recent times, an understanding of what the Song of Songs really is could not be obtained; and as a result, the book was greatly misunderstood.

The Song of Songs has a distinctive and essential place in the canon. It is one of those books which give us a greater knowledge of Hebraism. It should be preserved because it is a piece of literature unique in the Old Testament, and therefore it should be prized.

1. Jastrow, op. cit., p. 16.

2. Goodwin, op. cit., p. 6.

3. Harper, op. cit., p. xi.

4. Lewis, Sinclair, Elmer Gantry, New York: 1929.

Far from being willing to lose anything preserved to us in the Hebrew scriptures, we rejoice in the possession of every piece of writing, whatever the character, that reveals to us the life of ancient Israel.¹

Another statement has been made in appreciation of the Song of Songs in the canon:

As for me, I should feel that something were missing in the Bible, if there were not in it some expression of the profoundest and strongest of human sentiments.²

1. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 217.

2. Ibid.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION

From this investigation of the Song of Songs, one can conclude that the allegorical interpretation was too strained, and was therefore rejected. The two and three character theories gave no information sufficient to produce a satisfactory interpretation. The dramatic theory was merely an artificial explanation, and was unparalleled in Hebrew literature. The Song of Songs is not a compilation of love lyrics, for no satisfactory arrangement of such lyrics has ever been made. There was no evidence to support the comparison of the wedding customs with the contents of the Song of Songs either in a historical sense or in a literary sense. The Hebrew word translated "my beloved" should be translated as the proper name, "Dodai". The investigation of the fertility cults yielded a clearer picture of the meaning of the Song of the Song of Songs, and the internal investigation of the two parts in it finally established it as the surviving corrupted form of the Tammuz-Ishtar liturgy.

There are two main characters in the Song of Songs, the maiden and the lover. These two, together with the chorus parallel the characters in the arrangement of the Tammuz-Ishtar liturgy.

The Song of Songs was found, therefore, not to be a

single piece of literature written in a short time, but the result of a gradual development of the fertility cult liturgy.

Because of this gradual growth of the material which finally resulted in the book known as the Song of Songs, no single authorship could be ascertained, and there could not be the identification of those who had part in its original writing, and subsequent editing.

Although the date of the original composition of the Song of Songs must have been early, no certain date can be established because of the many editions through which it evidently went.

The place of the writing of the Song of Songs was probably somewhere in the north, for it was there that the fertility cult flourished more than in the south.

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The word "fallacy" is derived from the Latin fallere, to deceive. It is a term used to designate a false or misleading statement or argument. It is a term used in logic and philosophy to designate a false or misleading statement or argument. It is a term used in logic and philosophy to designate a false or misleading statement or argument.

- 1. Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, vol. 1, pp. 645, New York.
- 2. Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, James Hastings, vol. I, pp. 327.
- 3. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Chicago, 1929.
- 4. Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, Unabridged, Springfield, 1934.

The following

positions of James Hastings are those in which the word of James Hastings is interpreted allegorically:

—James Hastings, I say, that it is not very likely, he does not possess any amount of sense as much as does the man speaking from the pulpit in Geneva, where it is said of the church, with it being called

APPENDIX

Various definitions of "Allegory" are given below:

The veiled presentation, especially in a figurative story or narrative of a meaning metaphorically implied, but not expressly stated. An allegory is a prolonged metaphor, in which typically a series of actions are symbolic of other actions, while the characters often are types or personifications.¹

A figurative representation conveying a meaning other than and in addition to the literal. It is generally treated as a figure of rhetoric, but the medium of representation is not necessarily logical.²

The word 'allegory' is derived from the terminology of Greek rhetoric and means primarily a series of metaphors... Allegory is a form of representation which a reader believes himself to find in a piece of writing which is more or less in need of interpretation... Allegory is almost always a relative, not an absolute, conception, which has nothing to do with the actual truth of the matter, and for the most part springs from the natural desire to conserve some idea which, owing to its age, has come to be regarded as sacred.³

1. Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language. Second Edition, Unabridged. Springfield, Mass., 1934.
2. Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. 1, p. 645, New York.
3. Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, James Hastings, Vol. 1, p. 327.

The Following:

Quotations of Augustine are those in which the Song of Songs is interpreted allegorically:

--how is it, I say, that if a man says this, he does not please his hearers so much as when he draws the same meaning from that passage in Canticles, where it is said of the Church, when it is being praised

under the figure of a beautiful woman, "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are shorn, which come up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and none is barren among them?" (4-2) Does the hearer learn anything more than when he listens to the same thought expressed in the plainest language, without the help of this figure? /

What is of greater name than than Christ, the fragrance of whose name is now everywhere percieved, so that even prophecy sings of it beforehand, comparing it in the Songs of Songs to ointment poured forth? (I-3) 2

For it is of the Church that it is said, "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters;" (2:2) which could be called on the one hand "thorns" only by reason of the wickedness of their manners, and on the other hand "daughters" by reason of their participation in the same sacraments.3

The Lord came to shear His sheep, in releasing them from painful burdens, as it is said in praise of the church in the Songs of Songs, that her teeth are like a flock of sheep after shearing. (4:2)4

So, in the Song of Songs, the spouse, who is the church, is called well of living water. (4:15)5

I. Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church Philip Schaff, editor, Volume II, "St. Augustine's City of God and Christian Doctrine" Christian Doctrine, Chapter 66 Christian Literature Company, Buffalo 1884 Subject: Use of the obscurities in Scripture which arise from its figurative language.

2. Ibid Chapt.2 page 309

3. Ibid Vol. I Chapt. IX page 392

4. Ibid Vol. Paragraph 85 page 307

5. Ibid page 307 page 87

6. Ibid Volume VII Lectures and Treatises on John Translated by John Hill and John Jones 1887 Tractate LVI page 308

7. Ibid Vol. III Chapt. I page 100 Philip Schaff, editor
 8. Ibid Vol. I Chapt. I page 100

For if, according to the warning of Christ, our fountain is sealed to ourselves, (4:12) let all the enemies of our church understand that it cannot belong to others. 1

--bad men, while by no means converted to a better mind, can save, and confer, and receive baptism, of whom it is most clear that they do not belong to the holy Church of God, though they seem to be within it, inasmuch as they are covetous, robbers, usurpers, envious, evil thinkers, and the like; while she is one dove, (6:8,9) modest and chaste, a bride without spot or wrinkle, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed, an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits. (4:12,13)2

Although the Church be also clean in respect of those who tarry on earth, because they live righteously: yet have they need to be washing their feet, because they assuredly are not without sin. For this cause it is said in the Songs of Songs "I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" (5:3) 3

The teeth of sinners can also be taken as the chiefs of sinners; by whose authority each one is cut off from the fellowship of goodly livers, as it was incorporated with evil livers. To these teeth are apposed the Church's teeth by whose authority believers are cut off from the error of the Gentiles and livers opinions, and are translated into that fellowship which is the body of Christ, With these teeth Peter was told to eat the animals when they had been killed, that is, by killing in the Gentiles what they were, and changing them into what he was himself. Of these teeth too of the Church it is said, "Thy teeth are as a flock of shorn sheep, coming up from the bath, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them." (4:2; 6:6) These are they who prescribe rightly, and as they prescribe, live.

4

- 1 . Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Philip Schaff, editor. Vol. 4, Christian Lit. Co., Buffalo, 1887 Chapt. 40 page 496.
- 2 . Ibid page 480 Chapt. 3
3. Ibid Volume VII Lectures and Tractates on John Translated by John Gibb and James Innes 1888 Tractate LVI page 302
- 4 Ibid, Vol VIII Copyright 1888 Philip Schaff, editor Psalm III Paragraph 7., page 6

That bow then I would readily take to be the Holy Scripture, in which by the strength of the New Testament, as by a sort of string, the hardness of the Old has been bent and subdued. From thence the apostles are sent forth like arrows, or divine preachings are shot. Which arrows "He has wrought for the burning, "arrows, that is, whereby being stricken they might be inflamed with heavenly love. For by what other arrows was she stricken who saith, "Bring me into the house of wine, place me among perfumes, crowd me among honey, for I have been wounded with love? (2;4,5) 1

He praiseth these sheep also in the Song of Solomon, speaking of some perfect ones as the teeth of His Spouse the Holy Church: "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which come up from the washing; whereof every one beareth twins, and there is none barren". (4:2; 6:5) What meaneth, "Thy teeth"? These by whom thou speakest: for the teeth of the Church are those through whom thou speakest: for the teeth of the Church are those through whom ~~he~~ speakest. Of what sort are thy teeth? "Like a flock of sheep that are shorn." Why, "that are shorn"? Because they have laid aside the burdens of the world: 2

- I. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Philip Schaff, editor
Christian Literature Co., New York, 1888
Vol. VIII, comment on Psalm 14 page 25
- I Ibid page 469, comment on Psalm 95

Andrew Harper, who held to the dramatic theory as the explanation of the nature of the Song of Songs, divided the Song of Songs into the following groups and scenes:

Group I (1:2-3:5)

1. In the King's household 1:2-8
2. A King's Love Despised 1:9-2:7
3. The Beloved Comes 2:8-17
4. A Dream 3:1-5

Group II (3:16-6:3)

1. The Return of the King 3:6-11
2. The Royal Suitor 4:1-7
3. The True Lover's Pleading 4:8-5:11
4. A Dream 5:2-6:3

Group III (6:4-8:14)

1. The King Fascinated 6:4-13
2. The Praises of the Harem 7:1-6
3. The King and the Shepherdess 7:7-8:4
4. Return in the Mighty Love 8:5-7 1.
5. Reminiscences and Triumphs 8:8-14

Harper gives the following prose summary of the drama:

A beautiful maiden of Shulem, born of well-off country folk, and her mother's only daughter, had harsh brothers. In their anger they had sent her to watch the vineyards. This necessarily exposed her to the sun and in a degree impaired her beauty. Having gone down one day into a garden to admire the growth of the plants and to enjoy the beauty of spring, she suddenly came upon a party of people belonging to the court, and by force or persuasion was conducted to a royal residence of Solomon, at first perhaps in Jerusalem, later to one somewhere near or in Lebanon. There the ladies of the

1. Harper op. cit. pp. xlvi-xlix

harem (the daughters of Jerusalem") try to win her for the king. Solomon himself also pays his court, but she continues steadfast to a country lover. He comes and calls her to flee with him from Lebanon. Wearied by her continual resistance Solomon lets the faithful maiden go, and leaning on her beloved's arm she returns to her home. As they draw near he points to an appletree within sight of her home where he once awakened her, and he adds, "yonder was thy mother in travail with thee." Then she breaks forth into that fine praise of love which alone would make the poem immortal, and glances at the folly of the king in thinking to win true love by wealth and splendor. Then she proudly claims that she has shewn her brothers' fears for her chastity to be without foundation, and claims that it was because of this that she found peace in Solomon's eyes."¹

The
11

Amusing to tell the story of Jerusalem that early this morning's dawn had seen the king's horse, after having
 1. Harper op. cit. xp. xviii
 affluence being subject of a cardinal perception, he said
 and replied to rally himself with a better time. Although
 agreed. The British 4. point to the good nature of the sympathy
 of Jerusalem. 3

1. Harper op. cit. xp. xviii
 2. Ibid. pp. 15, 26
 3. Ibid. pp. 27.

William Dearness, in his rather far-fetched restoration of the Song of Songs, gave the following:

Dramatis Personae:

Solomon-King of all Israel.
 Dodah- A shepherd betrothed to Abishag.
 Ashishar- Chamberlain to Solomon
 Abimael- Father of Abishag, a man of Issachar.
 Deborah- Mother of Abishag.
 Abishag- The Most beautiful woman in Israel.
 Daughters of Jerusalem- members of Solomon's harem.

Date- Early in the reign of Solomon.

Place- Tirzah, a town in Issachar, at one time capital of the Northern kingdom.

Time- Six days. I.

FIRST DAY

The royal residence temporarily at Tirzah is where the heroine is brought, probably willingly, where the king and his retinue were sojourning. The heroine was welcomed by the chorists, and she in turn responded and apologized for being sunburned. In an aside she mentioned her estrangement from Dodah and her hope for a reconciliation. Ashishar hears this aside and he told her, and was served by her as he bid, then he tells her how she could see Dodah. Solomon then appears, praises her, and was served by her as he ate, then he fell asleep. Abishag then recalls past joys shared with Dodah. Solomon then awakened, praised her, but she complained that she was forced into his presence. Solomon fruitlessly complimented her, withdraws, and sent in his harem to induce Abishag to acquiesce. Abishag responded with a eulogy of Dodah and asked their forbearance. 2

Second Day

Abishag is told the daughters of Jerusalem that early that morning Dodah had come to her mother's house. After having made a hurried trip, his movements were bashful but affectionate. Being assured of a cordial reception, he sang, begged her to flee with him, realized such a plan was impractical and decided to return to work until a better time. Abishag replied by asking him to return that evening, to which he agreed. Then Abishag appeals to the good nature of the daughters of Jerusalem. 3

1. Dearness, op. cit. page II.

2. Ibid page 13,14.

3. Ibid page 29.

THIRD DAY

Abishag told the daughters of Jerusalem that she had been worried the night before because Dodah had not returned. So she had left the house and searched for him but failed to find him. She asked the Daughters of Jerusalem for forbearance, but she was interrupted by their discovery that Solomon and a cavalcade were approaching. Again Abishag waited on Solomon. He praised her unsuccessfully, and he hinted a returning to a country place. Abishag then returned to her mother's dwelling and again met Dodah who pleads his case and again begged her to flee, but she did not. 1.

FOURTH DAY

Abishag told the Daughters of Jerusalem of a dream which has been broken by Dodah's return. He begged for admittance, but she explained that such a request was unreasonable, but relented and opened the door, but he had left. She sought for him and was mistreated by the watchmen. She then asked the Daughters of Jerusalem for assistance, but they wanted to know why she was so in love with Dodah, and she answered with an eulogy of praise, which caused them to offer to aid her. The king then entered and pressed his suit. She did not reply. 2

FIFTH DAY

Solomon told Ashishar that while he was studying botany in the field he suddenly came upon Abishag, and though he did not at first know her, he was overcome by her charms. When Abishag returned she was told to wait upon the king, but she threatened to run away. She is then told to perform a sensuous dance in his presence, which she did, and then is placed in the custody of Ashishar who complimented her. Dodah broke in and Abishag plead to be aided in escape but Ashishar would not allow it, and Dodah retired. 3

SIXTH DAY

The Daughters of Jerusalem accompanied by Abishag see her parents approach. Abimael told of Abishag's birth. Solomon entered and Abimael rebuked him and offered to pay a ransom, which Solomon accepted. Dodah is called and the pair took their departure in the spirit of a triumphant chorus. 4

1

1. op. cit. p. 32

2. Ibid. p. 39

3. Ibid p 46

4. Ibid p. 52

Dearness took the quotation 1:2: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine," and made from it the following stanza:

Oh! let his mouth my lips salute
 With kisses which his love impute,
 That love to which my soul aspires
 Is more than wine my tongue inspires. 1

From 1:8 "If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents", he formed:

Fairest of womankind,
 Why so oppressed with care?
 Go! and thy love thou'lt find,
 Surely thou'lt find him there.
 Follow the flocks' footprints
 On to the camping ground,
 There by the shepherd's tents
 Feeding thy kids be found.

From 2:7: "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, or by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please", he formed:

Then Daughters of Jerusalem,
 Ye know the timid, fleet gazelles;
 True love is near akin to them,
 Its kept for him I'll ne'er forsake. 3

From 6:1 "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither hath thy beloved turned him that we may seek him with thee?" he formed:

O, fairest thou of womankind,
 Where's thy beloved gone?
 With thee we'll seek, perchance may find
 Thy loved, thy absent one. 4

1. Dearness- op-cit page 14
2. Ibid page 15, 16
3. Ibid page 33
4. Ibid page 42

Paul Haupt, who held that the Song of Songs was a group of love lyrics, made special arrangement of the Song of Songs. He took considerable liberties in rearranging verses according to what he felt was a better system than he found in the original.

1. Procession of the Bride 3:6-11
2. Charms of the Bride during her Sword dance
6:10; 7:1,2,8,6,5,10,7,3b,3a
3. Brothers of the Bride 6:3; 7:11; 2:1; 1:5,6; 8:8-10,1,2
4. One Sole Love 8:11,12; 6:8,9
5. Protection from all Dangers 4:8
6. Beauty of the Lover 5:2-6,18; 6:1; 5:9-16
7. The Bride to the Bridegroom on the Morrow after the
Marriage 1:16,17; 2:3-6; 1:12-14,2-4; 2:16,17,7
8. The Maiden's Beauty 4:1-4; 1:9,10; 4:5,7; 6:4,5;
4:9-12,15,13,14,16.
9. The Bride's Fair Garden: The Bride 4:16b;7:12-14
Bridegroom 6:11;5:1
The Bride 6:2
10. Springtide of Love 2:8-14
11. Pasture thy Kids 1:7,8
12. Omnia Vincet Amor 3:1-4; 8:6,7. 1

1. Haupt op. cit. pp. 193-206

Ibid, 197, 198

Jastrow formed twenty three lyrics out of the Song of Songs.

| Title | Reference: | Speakers: |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Love's Ecstasy | 1:1-4 | Beloved |
| 2. The Saucy Maiden | 1:5,6 | Maiden |
| 3. Love's Longing | 1:7,8 | Beloved; Lover |
| 4. The Delights of Love | 1:9-17 | Lover:Beloved; |
| 5. Love's Consummation | 2:1-7 | Beloved: Lover |
| 6. Springtide of Love | 2:8-14 | Beloved; Lover |
| 7. The Foxes in the Vineyards | 2:15 | Maidens: |
| 8. Love's Dream | 3:1-4 | Beloved |
| 9. The Bridal Procession | 3:6-11 | |
| 10. The Beauty of the Beloved | 4:1-7 | |
| 11. Come Be My Bride | 4:8 | Lover |
| 12. The Sweetness of the Bride | 4:9-11 | Lover |
| 13. Love's Sweet Fruitage | 4:12-5:1 | Lover: Beloved |
| 14. Another Sweet Dream | 5:2-8 | Beloved |
| 15. The Beauty of the Lover | 5:9-16 | Beloved |
| 16. Love's Garden | 6:1-3,11 | Maidens:Beloved;Lover |
| 17. Beautiful Beyond Compare | 6:10,4-9 | Lover |
| 18. Dance of the Bride | 7:1-10 | Lover or Chorus |
| 19. Love in the Fields | 7:12-14 | Beloved |
| 20. Be My Brother | 8:1-4 | Beloved |
| 21. The Power of Love | 8:5-7 | Beloved |
| 22. The Chaste Maiden | 8:8-10 | Brothers; Maiden |
| 23. My Vineyard is Mine | 8:11-12 | Lover |

These lyrics are summarized as follows:

| Number: | Classification of Poem: | Numbers of poems |
|---------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 5 | Wasf Poems | 4, 10,15, 17, 18 |
| 2 | Dream Poems | 8, 14 |
| 3 | Vineyard poems | 2, 7, 23 |
| 2 | Garden poems | 13, 16 |
| 1 | Spring poem | 6 |
| 1 | Bridal procession | 9 |
| 1 | Power of Love | 21 |
| 1 | Chastity of the maiden | 22 |
| 7 | Miscellaneous | 1, 3, 5, 11, 12, 19, 20, 2 |

1. Jastrow op. cit. pp; 57-237
2. Ibid, 137, 138

Further parts are given as below:

Fragments: 5:1c
 7:13
 8:5a
 8:5b 1.
 8:13
 Refrains: 2:6; 8:4
 2:7 3:5L cf. 5:8 (2:17 cf., also 2:9 for
 Partial insertion

(Variant) 4:6
 (Variant) 8:14
 2:16; 6:3
 (Addition) 7:11
 1:15 4:1a.

Note also the direct transfer with some changes of:

4:1c to 5:12a
 4:1c to 6:5b-7
 4:5 to 7: 4
 and compare
 4:4a
 7:5a 2.
 7:5c

1. Jastrow - op. cit. page 241

2. Ibid page 243, 244.

Harper's defense of the dramatic theory of the Song of Songs, in relation to the absence of stage directions:

If the book really belonged to the Greek or even to the Persian period, it might have been written with a knowledge of the Greek drama, and in that case it may originally have had all these external indications. But in the Maccabean time, when all things Greek were regarded with hatred and anything connected with the theatre was looked on with horror, the names of persons, the changes of scene, etc. may have been removed, in order that this true product of the Hebrew heart and mind might not come under the condemnation which then fell on everything Greek. But, of course, if the date was earlier, the difficulty would be to conceive how a drama technically correct in form could have been written at all: and if it were written, it is difficult to see why the dramatic directions should have been omitted. The dramatic form would not in that case have been regarded as foreign, and the directions, etc. could hardly have been dropped by chance. The monologues, too, are undeniably undramatic, and in this uncertainty the fact that no other drama is known in the literature of the Semitic peoples has weight in the opposite scale.

On the whole then it does not appear probable that our poem was ever intended to be performed on the stage, or that it had a fully developed dramatic form. It has, and probably from the beginning had, dramatic elements in it. It contains lyrical monologues, and the poet himself nowhere appears. Is there any kind of poems which would have at once these characteristics? At once the mind reverts to the dramatic lyrics of Robert Browning, whose manner of writing in some of his blank verse poems is the nearest modern analogy we have to the prophetic style.

There are two poems of this especially which suggest themselves as possible parallels: "James Lee's Wife" and "In a Gondola." If one person speaks throughout the Song, as Gratz and Reuss maintain, then "James Lee's Wife" is a perfect analogy. It gives us a series of pictures from a life, revealing the gradual decay of love and the reflections thereon of the speaker who is

also an actor. If on the other hand there are various speakers, then "In a Gondola" would be the best parallel, for there we have dialogue, monologue, musings, almost dreams, and a historic background which suddenly becomes visible in the tragic end of the poem. The only indications Browning gives of the change of the speakers in this latter poem are "He sings", "She speaks", "He sings", "She sings", "He muses", "Still he muses", "She replies musing", but without these a careful reader would be able to distinguish the parts. There would doubtless be dispute as to two or three sections, but it would not be a serious detriment to the whole if different views were taken of these ambiguous portions. The main outline of the story would stand out in any case and seeing that in some of Browning's poems such headings as we find here were an after thought, put in to meet the accusation of obscurity, it may well be that originally, as in "James Lee," the pauses and changes were indicated only by a line in this poem also.

As to which of these alternatives is to be taken most readers will have little doubt. There are no indications in the Song that one person speaks throughout. Had this been the case we should have had words such as "I said", "he said", at the beginning of some of the sections. It is no doubt true, as Gratz says (p.25); that very often such words are omitted in Hebrew where they must be understood, e. g. in the second Psalm, where there is a continuous dramatic dialogue, and only once are the words indicating it expressed. But that is something different from what we should need to suppose here. We should have to suppose that throughout eight chapters, almost entirely dialogue, these necessary words are consistently omitted save in one or two places. That is very unlikely, and the parallel passages quoted by Gratz all fail to justify this view, because they are in every case very short.

But if that cannot be accepted, then "In a Gondola" is the analogy we must follow. In that case the Song would be a series of lyrics, in varying form and rhythm, each representing a scene in a woman's life and containing the history of love's triumph in it. There is not necessarily action in every scene. There are musings, dreams, recollections, and the action does not round itself off as it would do in a drama. The dénouement is rather implied than expressed, for the inner experiences of the heart are the main thing, and external persons and things are only subordinate. They would not be mentioned at all were it not that

they are the environment which conditions and stimulates the inward development. But, it may be asked, how can the various persons engaged in the Song be disentangled without such indications as Browning gives, and if they were originally there, what has become of them? Perhaps they have been lost. Every class of interpreters has to make some such hypothesis about something. But could the speeches be disentangled without the aid of such announcements? Most assuredly. Just as a careful reader of "In the Gondola" would find indications of the change of persons without the external helps, and would on consideration be able to insert them for himself, so here the main divisions and all the persons concerned could be discovered, especially by those who read this poem or heard it recited when Hebrew was a living tongue. The fact that Hebrew has in many cases different forms for its masculine and feminine pronouns removes a considerable amount of the uncertainty which perplexes us in reading the Song in English. Such pronouns with us apply largely to both sexes. In Hebrew, the forms are largely different. Moreover ancient Hebrew readers were naturally much more on the alert for a change of persons than we are, who expect to be warned by external signs when new persons are addressed, or are otherwise introduced. And then, as we have seen, Solomon and the Shulammitte are characters in the piece and all the indications point to the likelihood that the story of these two was a popular tale well known to everybody. It is hardly possible that such a story as has been drawn from the local and personal references could have been drawn from them if they were insertions casually and unintelligently made, or were due to misunderstandings of the text, as Budde suggests. If they were insertions of an editor, he must have had in his mind the tale which all those who take the dramatic view find there, in some shape, or it would be marvelous that they should all find it. But if he had it in his mind, and was intent upon binding unconnected songs into a whole to make them part of this story, he would have taken care to make the whole thing more explicit. Such unobtrusive alterations as are attributed to him would be inexplicable in the case supposed. It might be said that reverence for Canonical Scripture would restrain his hand.

But Budde expressly says that the editing took place before the book found its way into the Canon. Only on the supposition that a well-known story was in the mind of the original author, and that the poem was founded on it, can the incidental character of these references be explained. But if that were so, then there would remain no difficulty at all for even today, if we knew that the tale of Solomon and the Shulammite ran as we have sketched it, we should have no difficulty in following the course of the thought. Fundamental differences as to the character of the poem would then be impossible, and the divergence of opinion as to the divisions would almost, if not entirely, disappear. The existence of such a tale would consequently give the easiest and best explanation as to how such a poem as we have in the Song of Songs could have come into being, and would make clear, as nothing else does, how the external indications as to the parts taken by various speakers, which we so greatly miss now, may have been superfluous when the poem was written. 1

1. Harper -op.cit -pp. xix-xxiii

Harper gave a very detailed report of Wetzstein's discoveries of certain Syrian wedding customs which are used to defend the Wedding Week theory.

In order that the matter may be dealt with satisfactorily, it will be necessary to give an outline of that portion of Wetzstein's essay upon which the theory is founded. In it he claims that the country population of the trans-Jordanic and trans-Lebanon regions retain a distinctly antique impress in speech and manners, in domestic life and in their practice of agriculture, and he holds that in all these respects they retain immemorial customs. Now among these people he found very peculiar marriage customs, in which the threshing board, as the only easily procurable platform where wood is so scarce plays a great part. Passing by the marriage day itself with its processions, the sword dance of the bride, and the great festal meal, he goes on to say, "The best time in the life of the Syrian peasant is the first seven days after his marriage, during which he and his young wife play the part of king (malik) and queen (malika) and are served as such, both by their own village and by the neighboring communities which have been invited. On the morning after the marriage, the bridegroom and bride awake as king and queen, and adorned as on the former day, received before sunrise the Shebin, the 'bestman,' called from this time onwards the Vizier, who brings them a slight morning meal. Soon afterwards, the bridesmen, or as they are also and more correctly called, the youths of the bridegroom, also come into the bridal house. If they learn that the Vizier has been graciously received, they betake themselves to the metben, the barn for straw, to bring forth the threshing-board. So soon as the bearers have this upon their shoulders, the whole band, forming a chorus, strike up a sounding triumphal song, and march, surrounded of course by the shouting village children and by the stranger guests, to the threshing-floor. These songs are just the same as those which the peasants sing to the accompaniment of musket firing, when they beat off an attack of the nomads and are returning from the pursuit. They sing especially in the neighborhood of the villages, in order that they may be invited and entertained as guests. The subjects of the songs at a marriage are a marriage are war or love, mostly both. They have their origin for the most part among the southern nomadic tribes, especially the Shararat and the Shemmar; for dignified language, artistic

verse and fine thoughts are to be found, according to the traditional belief of the Syrian inhabitants of towns and villages, only among the tent Arabs. Arrived at the threshing-floor, they erect from the most varied materials a platform fully two yards high. On the top of this the threshingboard is laid, and over it a large variegated carpet is spread. A couple of gold-embroidered cushions complete the whole. This is the Mertaba, the seat of honour for the king and queen, who are now solemnly brought out and enthroned. As soon as this is done, the festal court called the Diwan is formed. It consists of the Judge, an Interpreter, and several bailiffs or myrmidons. The Interpreter is usually a well-known wit. The Judge then receives a staff in his hand, as he is also the executant of his judgments. There upon the accuser steps forward, and narrates in a long discourse that the king with his host had, as all knew, undertaken a campaign against a fortress which had hitherto been impregnable and defiant of all the world, with the object of conquering it; and since he was now back again and in their presence, he ought to let his people know whether the **assault** succeeded or not. Called upon by the Judge to speak according to the custom of the country, the king announces that he is a victor." Hereupon there follows the ceremony referred to in Deut. xxii. 13-21. If the king does not make this declaration, the Judge gives the order, and "he is dragged from his throne, stretched on the ground, held down, and beaten by the Judge, till the queen intercedes for him. After this scene a grand dance is begun in honor of the young pair. The song which is sung to accompany it deals only with them, and the inevitable wasf, i. e. a description of the bodily perfections of both, and of their ornaments, forms its main content. That in praising the queen the singers are more reticent, and praise rather her visible than her veiled charms, arises from the fact that she is today a wife, and that the wasf which was sung to her on the previous day during her sword dance had left nothing further to say. The wasf is to our taste the weakest part of the Syrian wedding songs. We feel its comparisons to be clumsy and we see everywhere marks of a stereotyped form. With this dance begin entertainments which last for seven days, beginning on the first day in the morning, on the other days shortly before mid-day; and they are continued, by the light of fires kindled for the purpose, far into the night. On the last day only, everything ends before sunset. During this whole week, their majesties, the bride and the bridegroom, wear their marriage garments and ornaments,

are not permitted to work at all or to care for anything, and have only to look on from the Mertaba at the scenes enacted before them, in which they themselves take only a moderate part. The bride, however, performs a dance now and then to give them opportunity for admiration of her ornaments. At meals they occupy the place of honour... From time to time the games are varied by dances. Of these there are various kinds, which however may be brought under the two general heads of sahqa and debqa. The first might be called the graceful or single dance, since in it the dancers do not touch each other. To it belongs also the sword dance of which the ZDMG. of 1868, p. 106, given an account. The debqa is as the name shews a loop dance, so called because the dancers hook themselves together by their little fingers. To hold one another by the hand would give occasion to hand pressings, which must be avoided, because no Arab woman would quietly submit to them from a strange man. For the most part the debqa appears as a circular dance. If it is danced by persons of both sexes, it is called the mixed debqa. While the sahqa is said to be of Bedouin origin, the debqa lays claim to be the true national dance of the Syrian Hadari or settled village dwellers. That may probably be so, for the nomad has not the debqa, and moreover the songs to which it is danced are composed, not in the nomad idiom, as is the case with the sahqa, but exclusively in the language of the Hadari. Further, the kinds of poetry are different. The song for the sahqa is always a qaside, for the debqa an ode in four-lined strophes. All the debqa texts which I possess have the metre of the so-called Andalusian ode. It is also a peculiarity of the debqa that the strophes hang one on the other like the links of a chain, or like the fingers of the dancers, in so far as the second strophe begins with the words with which the preceding one ends. In this way, the mixing up of the strophes, or the leaving of them out is prevented. For the sahqa and debqa a solo singer is employed. As soon as he has sung a verse or strophe, as the case may be, the chorus, made up of the dancers and spectators, chimes in with the refrain, which in the debqa always consists of the two last lines of the junction; consequently, every fourth line of the strophe must have the rhyme of the refrain. 1

1. Harper op. cit., pp. 74-76.

The following references from the Song of Songs have, following them, words and phrases which have relations to the fertility cults. Where available, Old Testament references are given also:

- 1:6 "drying up of vegetation under the scorching rays of the sun.
 Look not upon me, that I am blackened,
 That Šemeš (the sun-god) has scorched me,
 my mother's son has burned me.
 He made me keeper of the vineyards,
 but my own vineyard have I not kept." 1
- 1:6 "If there is any one thing that is distinctive of the fertility cult in all its forms, it is just this confusion as to the relationship between god and goddess." 2
- 1:6 "Vineyards are everywhere distinctive of the cult." 3
- 1:7 "More often among the Hebrews, as also sometimes among the Babylonians and Assyrians, the god was represented as being at a distance or asleep." 4
 "The lord Idin-Dagen sleeps, and the gardens of themselves restrain (their growth)." 5
 See: I Kgs. 18:27.
- 1:7 "The bride is represented as veiled, even as the mother-goddess is sometimes so depicted." 6
- 1:9 "The comparison to a steed calls to mind the fact that the horse was one of the animal forms assumed by the corn spirit, and the October horse was a fertility rite in Rome." 7
 "The horse was beloved by Istar and was a form assumed by one of her lovers. Horses were dedicated to the sun in II Kgs. 23:11." 8
- 1:10 "The result of the zonah's bedecking herself for religious exercises. See Ezekiel 16:9-15 and Hosea 2:15." 9
- 1:13 "Both the bride and the bridegroom are identified with or compared to myrrh and myrrh we know was the incense used at the festival of Adonis, and he himself was said to have been born from a myrrh tree." 10

1. Meek op. cit. p. 10
2. Ibid. p. 8
3. Ibid. p. 9
4. May op. cit. p. 77
5. Ibid. m. n. ; Langdon, Tammuz and Ishtar p. 20, 26
6. Meek op. cit. p. 10
7. Ibid. p. 11
8. Ibid. m.n.
9. May op. cit. p. 95
10. Meek op. cit. p. 9

- 1:14 "The bride's lament and search for her lover are quite after the order of the lament for Adonis and similar laments." 1
- 1:14 Vineyards (see 1:6).
- 1:15 "Doves were sacred both to her (Astarte) and to Adonis." 2
- 1:16 "The leafy couch of 1:16 reminds one of the bed of 'fresh new grass, dewey lotus, crocus, and Hyacinth, thick and soft,' which 'the divine earth' prepared for the nuptial couch of Zeus and Hera (Iliad xiv. 347ff.). This *ἱερός γάμος* was the subject of mystic drama at festivals all over Greece." 3
- 1:17 "Trees like the ...cedar...are everywhere connected with the vegetation cult." 4
- 1:17 "Trees like the ...cyprus...are everywhere connected with the vegetation cult." 5
- 1:17 "The beautiful shrines are distinctive of the fertility cults. See Ezek. 16:16." 6
- 2:1 "The lily (i.e., sword-lily or hyacinth, dark red in color), to which the bride is compared...have their counterpart in the anemone of Adonis and the violet of Attis." 7
- 2:3 "Trees like the apple...are everywhere distinctive of the cult." 8
- 2:4 "...and house of wine are everywhere distinctive of the cult." 9
- 2:5 "She (the zonah) was especially fond of eshisoth, which were apparently sacrificial cakes consumed in the common meal at the cult festivals." 10
- "Raisin cakes are explicitly connected with the Istar cult by Jeremiah (Jer. 7:18; 40:19), and are frequently mentioned in the cuneiform literature." 11
- See Hosea 3:1 and II Sam. 6:19.
- 2:7 "Gazelles and hinds were symbols of Astarte." 12
- 2:8 A departing god (see 1:7).
- 2:10 "The abjuration to the maidens of Jerusalem not to rouse love prematurely would seem to suggest that this passage in its original setting indicated that the women were engaged in some rite of sympathetic magic like that connected with the Tammuz cult which was intended to rouse

1. Meek op. cit p. 11
2. Ibid. p. 9
3. Ibid. p. 11
4. Ibid. p. 10
5. Ibid.
6. May op. cit p. 95
7. Meek op. cit p. 10
8. Ibid. p. 9
9. Ibid.
10. May op. cit. p. 9
11. Meek op. cit. p. 9

- love between god and goddess at the proper season, viz., at the time when the growing season should begin. This would seem to be confirmed by the references to the passing of winter and the coming of spring." 3
- 2:11 "In a passage which exudes an agricultural aroma, there is another reference to the search for the absent deity." (Hosea 10:12) "The search took place in the spring-time. There is the sowing of the seed in high hopes for the harvest, the breaking up of the fallow ground, and the coming of the spring rains." See I Kings 18:41. 2
- 2:13 The vine is "everywhere distinctive of the cult." 3
- 2:14 Doves (see 1:15).
- 2:15 "The reference to foxes in 2:15, is like the fox story in Judg. 15:4ff, would seem to be reminiscent of an ancient fertility rite like the Roman Cerealia or Robigalia." 4
- 3:1 "The couches in the shrines are well known to us from Hebrew, Babylonian and Sumerian sources."
Isaiah 57:7,8; Ezek. 23:17.
"That the couch was prominent also in the Hebrew shrines is the evidence of the close similarity between the Hebrew and Non-Hebrew cults of the Near East. These couches were primarily associated with the ritual of the marriage of the god and goddess." 5
- 3:1 "The fertility cult was a religion of the senses, an aesthetic cult. It was literally a religion of wine, women and song." 6
- 3:2 "The search of the maiden of Canticles for her lover is paralleled in the metaphor of the zonah and her lovers in the second chapter of Hosea. The woman shall pursue after her lovers who...are the male prostitutes and personify the vegetation deity." 7
- 3:1-4 The lament (see 1:14).
- 3:3 In Ishtar's descent into the lower world, the watchman plays an important part. The mention of the watchman here certainly carries a relation to Ishtar.
- 3:4 Confusion of terms (see 1:6).
- 3:6 "Myrrh we know was the incense used at the festival of Adonis, and he himself was said to have been born from a myrrh tree." 8
- 3:7 "The bridegroom's litter is quite like the litters or couch that played a prominent role in all these nature plays." 9

1. Meek op. cit. p. 12

2. May op. cit p. 83

3. Meek op. cit p. 9

4. *ibid.* p. 11,12

5. May op. cit., 79,80

6. May op. cit p. 93

7. May op. cit. p. 82

8. Meek op. cit. p. 9

- 4:1 Doves (see 1:15).
- 4:1 Veiled bride (see 1:7).
- 4:3 "The pomegranate was sacred to Aphrodite." 2
- 4:3 "The attire of the zonah (see 1:10)
- 4:6 Bride and bridegroom as myrrh (see 1:13).
- 4:8 Compare with Judg. 11:37f. The same word used in the Song of Songs at this place is used only in the other place cited. 2
- 4:9 Confusion of terms (see 1:6).
- 4:12 "The frequent reference to garden and the comparison of the bride to a garden and a park remind one of the gardens of Adonis, referred to by Isa. 17:10, and the gardens so frequently condemned by the Hebrew prophets." See Hosea 4:13; Isa. 1:29; 65:3; 66:17. 3
- 4:13 Pomegranates (see 4:3).
- 4:14 Bride and bridegroom compared to myrrh (see 1:13)
- 5:1 Gardens (see 4:12).
- 5:1 Myrrh (see 3:6).
- 5:1 Confusion of terms (see 1:6).
- 5:5 Myrrh (see 3:6).
- 5:6,7 Lament (see 1:14).
- 5:6,7 "Obstruction of the path of the searcher in Cant. 5:6,7 is similar to Ishtar's mantle stripped from her by the watchman."
 "Beltis had to pass the watchman at the gate of Bel's (Marduk's) sepulcher."
 "The author of Hosea 2:8,9 presents Yahweh as the one who obstructs the search of the zonah for her lovers, preventing her from finding her paths."
 "'Paths of the sacred prostitute may include the city streets."
 "The resemblance to the usual search motif becomes doubly certain when we learn that Yahweh is to strip the woman naked, even as in the Babylonian and Canticles versions the searcher was stripped by the watchman."
 "The reference to the wall of the zonah is made intelligible by a comparison with Isa. 5:5 and we may assume that it is the wall of the vineyard which is signified." 4
- 5:7 The Watchman (see 3:3).
- 5:7 "The city through which the maiden of Canticles wandered was doubtless the city of the dead." 5
 See Ezekiel 8:14.
- 5:7 "Ishtar searched in the land of no return for her consort, Tammuz."
 "Demeter, the mother, sought everywhere for Eurydice."

1. Meek op. cit. p. 9

2. Meek op. cit. pp. 7,8

3. Ibid. p. 10

4. May op. cit. p. 82

5. Ibid. p. 77

- "Isis crossed the waters from Egypt to Sebal in order to find Osiris."
- "Aphrodite hastened to her wounded lover, tearing her divine flesh on the thorns of the white rose which she dyed with her sacred blood."
- "The maiden of Canticles sought her lover in the city."
- "It is highly probable that many of the Old Testament references to seeking and finding Yahweh had their origin in this fertility cult conception." 1
- 5:9 "Who but Doḏ is thy beloved?" 2
- 5:12 Doves(see 1:15).
- 5:14 "The tattooing on the hands and body of the bridegroom call to mind the fact that the priests of Adonis similarly tattooed themselves on the hands." 3
See I Kings 18:28.
- 6:1 God at a distance(see 1:7).
- 6:2 Lilies(see 2:1).
- 6:2 Gardens of Adonis(see 4:12).
- 6:3 Lilies(see 2:1).
- 6:7 The veiled bride(see 2:1).
- 6:7 Pomegranates(see 4:3).
- 6:9 Doves(see 1:15).
- 6:11 Sympathetic magic(see 2:10).
- 6:11 Vine(see 2:13).
- 6:11 Gardens of Adonis(see 4:12).
- 6:11 Pomegranates(see 4:3).
- 6:12 "It is significant that when the interloper of Hos. 2:1 desired to express the antithesis of 'yy x5, he wrote '77 ~ 5x ~ 'j□, □y has a dual significance, meaning not only 'people' but also 'lover', with a definite cult connotation, being employed by the maiden of Canticles as a designation of the youth." 4
- 6:13 "The dance of Mahanaim may well have been the ritual dance that is always a feature of the fertility cult." 5
- 7:1 "In only one place, Cant. 7:1, is the bride given a name and here she is called 'The Shullammite.' it is a little strange that the term has survived in only this one place, and commentators have been at loss to understand why such a title should have been applied to the bride. May it not be that it harks back to the name of the mother goddess Sala, the consort of Adad? As in the course of time '717 came to be misinterpreted, so it was with the name of the goddess. First it became genitive; then partly on account of Solomon's introduction

1. May op. cit. pp. 81,82

2. Meek op. cit. p. 6

3. Ibid. p. 10

4. May op. cit. p. 88

5. Meek op. cit. p. 6

into the text it was confused with שׁוֹלַם of I Kings 1:3, and so what was originally the goddess Sala came to be understood as a simple maiden. The interpretation would seem to be confirmed by Cant. 4:8, where the home of the bride is located in the Lebanon mountains:..... (Cf. also Cant. 2:14) Sala is frequently called *bêlît šadi*, and *ilat Šala ša šadi*, as Adad was called *bêl šadi* and *kur-gal*, 'mighty mountain,' and the mountain referred to in these titles all scholars agree is Lebanon. Who else but Sala, the Palestinian goddess of vegetation and life-giving rains, can be referred to in Cant. 4:15:
 A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters,
 A flowing stream from Lebanon *and thou.*" 1
 (Cf. also 4:12ff.).

- 6:13 "The dance(see 6:13).
 7:2 The *zonah's* jewelry(see 1:10).
 7:2 Lilies(see 2:1).
 7:8 "...and the palm tree are everywhere connected with the vegetation cult." 2
 7:8 Vine(see 2:13).
 7:8 Lily(see 2:1).
 7:8 Apple(see 2:3).
 7:12 Vineyards(see 1:6).
 7:12 Gardens of Adonis(see 4:12).
 7:12 Pomegranates(see 4:3).
 7:13 "Mandrakes, Hebrew מַדְרָאקִים , is unquestionably connected with the god name מַדְרָאק ." 3
 7:13 Sympathetic magic(see 2:10).
 8:1 God at a distance(see 1:7).
 8:1 Confusion of terms(see 1:6).
 8:1 "In Canticles there seems to be a trinity of mother, daughter and lover." 4
 8:1,2 Lament for Adonis(see 1:14).
 8:2 Cult trinity(see 8:1).
 8:2 Pomegranates(see 4:3).
 8:2 Sympathetic magic(see 2:10).
 8:5 Apple tree(see 2:3).
 8:5 Confusion of terms(see 1:6).
 8:5 "Most fertility deities were born from trees or in their birth were intimately connected with trees." 5
 8:11f "The vineyard of the bridegroom is located at Baal-hamon, which with Haupt is probably to be read Baal-hammon, designating an especially fruitful hill (cf. Isa. 5:1) sacred to the sun god Baal-hammon." 6
 See Isa. 5:1.
 8:12 Vineyard(see 1:6).
 8:13 Search for god(see 1:14).
 8:13 Lament for Adonis(see 1:14).

1. Meek op. cit. p. 6

2. Ibid. p. 9

3. Ibid.

4. Meek op. cit. m. n. p. 86

5. Meek op. cit. p. 9

6. Ibid. p. 10