

I love to sit in his shadow, greatly enjoying it,
 and taste his delicious fruit.
 4 He brought me to the festive hall ¹
 and his intention toward me was love! ²
 5 He refreshed ³ me with raisin cakes,
 and revived me ⁴ me with apples (*or, apricots*). ⁵
 I long for more love (*or, I am faint with love*). ⁶
 6 If only his left hand were under ⁷ my head,
 and his right hand caressing (*or, embracing*) me.

Lover 7 I urgently beg you, O young women of Jerusalem,
 in the name of the gazelles ⁸ [*and the hinds*] ⁹ of the field,
 that you not disturb (*or, waken*) my love until she is ready.

<*The Second Poem 2:8 - 3:5*>

Maiden 8 Listen! I hear my lover!
 There he comes,
 leaping on the mountains,
 bounding ¹⁰ over the hills.
 9 My lover is like a gazelle,
 like a young stag.
 There he stands
 beside our wall, ¹¹
 peering through the windows,
 looking through the lattice

Lover 10 My lover then spoke to me, saying:
 (Arise, ¹² my love, my beauty,
 and come away!
 11 Look! The winter is past,
 the hard rains have stopped, ¹³ (*and the light rains are gone*).

1 Literally: "house of wine." This is an imperative in Hebrew and would perhaps more correctly be: "Bring me."
 2 Literally: "and raised the banner of love over me."
 3 This Hebrew root word is unclear. Some scholars feel the Hebrew word means "to put to bed."
 4 Literally: "to spread out" as in spreading bed clothes.
 5 Considered to be an aphrodisiac.
 6 Some scholars interpret this as the intense longing of one who is separated from her beloved.
 7 MT: **בּוֹיָג** An emendation reading **בּוֹיָג ׀** (= "encircles my head" would provide for better parallelism and suit the poetry much better.
 8 The word used for "gazelles" in Hebrew is **סַבְאוֹת** = Sabaoth, a common title for Yahweh. This oath formulates a play on words. "Gazelle" in Hebrew sounds like "Lord of Hosts" and wild deer sounds like "El Shaddai."
 9 Omitted by Codex Alexandrinus in the LXX.
 10 Used only here in the O. T.
 11 I. e. the wall of the house, not that of the garden. There are four hapax legomena in this verse.
 12 The Hebrew word gives the thought of "to get up from a prone or seated position." A so-called 'dative commodi' (for your sake) after each imperative.
 13 The Hebrew word for "rains" implies "heavy rains." Heavy rains normally ended in April. The addition of "and are gone" appears to be an awkward Hebrew gloss.

12 The blossoms of the wild flowers have appeared everywhere,
and the time of singing (*or, pruning the vines*)¹⁴ has arrived,
the cooing of the turtledoves¹⁵
is heard in the countryside;
13 the figs on the fig tree are beginning to ripen,¹⁶
and the vines are blossoming,¹⁷
emitting their fragrance.¹⁸
Come, my love, my beauty,
come away!)¹⁹

Maiden 14 O my dove,²⁰ hiding in the crannies²¹ of the rock,
in the recesses of the cliff.²²
Let me admire your physique,
let me hear your voice,
for your voice is sweet,
and your body is lovely.

Speaker uncertain 15 Catch the jackals (*or, foxes*),²³
the young jackals (*or, foxes*),
before they ruin the vineyards;
for our vineyards are in bloom.

Maiden 16 My lover is mine and I am his,²⁴
he pastures his flock among the lilies.²⁵
17 Until the cool of the day (*or, until evening*)
when the shadows lengthen,²⁶
turn,²⁷ my darling, be like a gazelle,
or a young stag on the rugged²⁸ mountains.

14 The Hebrew root word is the root word for both "singing" and "pruning."

15 Genus "Streptopelia turtur."

16 Hebrew: **י/ר** = "is ripening."

17 Some scholars feel this Hebrew word is the name of a place where grapes are grown and where the pasture is lush. **רדמס** = Semadar.

18 Hebrew unclear.

19 Verses 10b - 13 seem to be an 'inclusio' according to a number of scholars.

20 Here the Hebrew word is for a "rock dove" genus "Columba livia." The dove in ancient times was considered to be symbolic as a "love bird."

21 I. e. a secure hiding place.

22 **סוד** can be translated as the stair step ledges in the rock.

23 Some scholars feel that the word "jackals" is a reference to other men who are competing for the maiden's affection.

24 Literally: "my lover is to me and I to him." This line is very rhythmic in Hebrew.

25 Who is pasturing? Some scholars think of the maiden finding pleasure with her lips. For some scholars the 'inclusio' comes to an end at this point instead of at the end of verse 13.

26 So: LXX.

27 LXX: "gambol."

28 The Hebrew word is unknown. LXX translates it as **μαλαβαθρον**. A possible translation can either be "craggy" or "spice." Aquila, Symmachus, Jerome, Codex Alexandrinus and some more recent scholars translate "the hill of Bethar" with the assumption that this was a hill of sacrifice.

<CHAPTER 5>

Maiden 1 Night after night²⁹ I lay on my bed,³⁰
and I dreamed of the one I adore.
I looked³¹ for him but did not find him.
[*I called for him but he did not answer.*]³²
2 I will rise now and wander the streets of the city³³
I will look for the one whom I adore.
I searched for him but I did not find him.
[*I called for him but he did not answer.*]³⁴
3 The sentinels found me
as they patrolled the city.
'Have you seen the one I adore?'
4 I had scarcely left them,
when I found my true love.
I clutched him closely and did not easy my embrace
until I took him to my mother's house,
and into the room of the one who conceived me
(*or, and to the room where I was born.*)³⁵

Lover 5 Promise me, O young women of Jerusalem,
in the name of the gazelles and the wild does of the field,³⁶
that you will not disturb or awaken my love
until she is ready (*or, do not interrupt our love.*)³⁷

<*The Third Poem 3:6 - 5:1*>

Maiden 6 Who is that traveling from the wilderness,
looking like a column of smoke ---
in the clouds perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,³⁸
with all the fragrance that would be transported by the traders?
7 Look! It is Solomon, being carried in his litter:³⁹
encircled by sixty warriors (*or, bodyguards*)
from among the champion warriors (*or, swordsmen*) of Israel.
8 All are skilled swordsmen
and are battle hardened,

29 The Hebrew word simply is "nights" (plural), thus giving the thought of "night after night."

30 The Hebrew word is not the one usually used for a bed.

31 The word implies continuous action.

32 So: LXX and Old Latin. It is not in the Hebrew manuscripts.

33 The Hebrew word is one for a "walled city."

34 See footnote 32 above.

35 Is this a euphemism of a woman's womb? Literally: "until I take him to my mother's house, to the room of my conceiving."
"my conceiving" could mean where my mother conceived me, or where I will (*or, can*) conceive.

36 NEB: "by the spirits of the goddesses of the field" since some ancient religions felt that deer and gazelles were sacred.

37 Hebrew unclear.

38 Literally: "white stuff."

39 Literally: "the litter which belongs to Solomon."

each with his sword at his thigh,
because of possible attacks at night.
9 King Solomon had a palanquin⁴⁰ made for himself
out of wood from Lebanon.
10 He had its post covered with silver;
its back covered with gold, its cushion of purple.⁴¹
Its interior was lovingly covered,⁴²
[*by the young women of Jerusalem*].⁴³
11 Come out, O daughters of Zion.
Welcome (*or, gaze upon*) King Solomon
wearing the crown his mother placed on him,
on his wedding day,
on the day of his bliss.⁴⁴

<CHAPTER 4>

Lover 1 Oh, you are beautiful my darling,
yes, you are beautiful!
Your loving glances are messengers of love⁴⁵
behind your veil.⁴⁶
Your hair ripples like a herd of goats,
moving⁴⁷ down the slopes⁴⁸ of Gilead.⁴⁹
2 Your teeth are white as a flock of newly shorn⁵⁰ ewes
that have just come up from the washing,
all of which are bearing twins,
and not one among them loses her young.⁵¹
(*or, Your teeth are as white
as newly washed sheep,
perfectly matched
with none missing.*)
3 Your lips are like crimson ribbon,⁵²

40 LXX: φορειον This word is only used here. Presumably a "sedan chair" though in Ugaritic and Sumerian writings a two wheeled cart is used for a king.

41 Some scholars emend to read: "seat of ebony" or "seat of leather."

42 Hebrew uncertain.

43 Omitted by LXX and Old Latin.

44 Literally: "on the day of his gladness of heart."

45 Literally: "your eyes are doves."

46 Hebrew: **ל** LXX uses σιωπαω (σιωπητοις) = silence, taciturnity. Some scholars interpret the Hebrew root word to mean "hair."

47 Hebrew: "which trail down." TAN & LXX: "streaming."

48 Many Hebrew and Greek manuscripts omit the word "slopes."

49 Gilead is a high plateau east of the Jordan rift.

50 Literally: "about to be shorn," not a completed action.

51 The imagery is fine but the survival rate of the lambs is an obvious exaggeration. The reference is no doubt that each upper tooth has a matching lower tooth. He admires the unbroken rows of his beloved's teeth.

52 The Hebrew word can also mean a strip of cloth, thus the lips are not a thin line of thread as some translators would suggest.