THE RÔLE OF SOLOMON IN THE SONG OF SONGS

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THE rôle of Solomon in the Song has always attracted attention; but whether his part there was real, fanciful, or symbolical, how late the poem reached its Solomonic form, and just what significance is to be attached to his rôle therein, have been matters of more or less serious debate throughout the history of the interpretation of the poem. In this paper I desire to consider the Song primarily from the standpoint of this problem.

Substantial progress in the interpretation of the Song of Songs has, I believe, been made in spite of all that has been said upon the subject. This may be a bold statement and presumably it requires some interpretation. There is still the widest diversity of scholarly opinion on the poem, more of such indeed to the square inch of Scripture than is true, perhaps, of any other corresponding area of Holy Writ. Progress has been made, nevertheless, first of all in the direction of its unity.

The character of Solomon in the Song has always compelled a consideration of unity. Even more the refrain involving the "daughters of Jerusalem" has suggested some formal sense of unity. The predominant presence of a maiden in the poem, and the presumption that she could be measurably identified throughout the piece has of course made in the same direction. On the other hand the lack of historical background, especially the uncertainty as to the date of composition, has left obscure both the motivation of the poem and its own particular aim.

The attempt to find the genetic development of the Song in allegory, erotic poetry, wedding songs, or some form of dramatization, has each in turn reacted upon the conception of its inner unity or diversity.

These attempts have for the most part proved abortive, as might have been expected, since the method of procedure was essentially that of trial and error in the dark, and certain alluring points of similarity were apt to be overestimated. Numerous proposals have therefore commended themselves to various minds, only to be discarded upon further reflection. I believe it not unduly venturesome to say that progress has more recently been made in a growing feeling of the inadequacy of the wedding songs theory really to account for the poem. But more especially the proposal of Meek[1] to find the basic material of the piece in the poetry of the fertility cult of Babylonia and Syria has gone far beyond any previous attempts of this sort not only by adducing an array of very attractive analogies and explanations, but more particularly by being able to show convincing philological evidence of Babylonian origin. This hypothesis calls for a certain unity of conception based upon a very definite cycle of motives and aims.

How far such a basis can be used directly to explain the existing poem in detail has not, to my knowledge, been seriously undertaken. The need for such an undertaking, before much further assured progress in the interpretation of the poem can be expected, should require no justification. It is admitted that not much of the original character of the poem as a Tammuz liturgy has persisted, and this raises the question as to how far the original motives of the liturgy have survived the admittedly great changes in form and setting.

It is clear, first of all, that the original seat of the Tammuz cult as associated with the Song has been changed at least once and perhaps twice, with the consequent likelihood of modifications due to the process of migrations and changed

[1] *Canticles and the Tammuz Cult*, A. J. S. L. XXXIX, pp. 1—14; *Babylonian Parallels to the Song of Songs*, J. B. L. XLIII, pp. 245—252; *The Song of Songs and the Fertility Cult: Symposium of the Oriental Club of Philadelphia*, 1924, pp. 48—79.

environment. It is evident from the poem itself that at one time it centered in the Lebanon and that region of the extreme north of Israel.[2] Was it still earlier located in Babylonia?[3] Its center was, at any rate, later transferred from the Lebanon to Jerusalem and this still remains its focal point, whatever other accretions may have been added later. This change of center involves (1) all the passages dealing with the "daughters of Jerusalem"[4] who may well have replaced an older women's chorus, and (2) the references to King Solomon which can only be applied appropriately and certainly to him.[5] The removal of these passages would entirely disrupt the poem, so completely has it been reconstructed from the Jerusalem and Solomonic viewpoint.

We may make our approach to our problem at this point. What were the motives that could have led to this extensive rewriting and change of setting of the piece and its predominant associations with Solomon? The answer to that question requires first of all an analysis and an evaluation of what remains after the above passages have been removed.

There is, then, first the words of a maiden who speaks 71 verses out of a total of 117 in the entire poem. The main content of these verses up to 8 5 is occupied with an absent shepherd lover, either in expressing ardent longing for him[6] or glad reminiscences of his earlier presence[7] or in recounting troubled dreams wherein she sought him and even found him only to have him elude her finally;[8] or in glowing idealization of the absent lover.[9] But always he is absent till 8 5 when for the first time he appears on the scene, and always his character as a shepherd is evident. But when he does appear, the scene

[2] cf. 4 8, 15; Wilfred H. Schoff, *The Offering Lists in the Song of Songs*, *Oriental Club Symposium*, pp. 80—120.

[3] cf. Meek, J. B. L., XLIII, pp. 245 ff.

[4] 1 5, (6-7), 8; 2 7; 3 5; 5 8, (9); 6 1; 8 4.

[5] 3 7-11; 1 2-4 (when taken with the "daughters of Jerusalem"); 6 4-9; 8 11-12.

[6] 1 7; 7 9a-13; 8 1-3.

[7] 2 3-5, 8-17; 4 7-16; 5 1.

[8] 3 1-4; 5 2-7.

[9] 5 10-16.

is no longer in Jerusalem but in the maiden's village home far from the Court of Solomon. There remains in 1 9–11, 15; 4 1–6; 7 1–9 the words of one who is referred to as king.[10] The words of this character are always addressed to the maiden either in an endeavor to flatter her vanity as in 1 10–11, 16; 2 2, or to so catalogue her physical characteristics as to reveal sensual lust on his part. Whom does this character represent in the original cult? If the prototype of the maiden is some form of the Goddess Ishtar, her longed for and lost lover logically goes back to an earlier form of Tammuz, fittingly expressed throughout the poem in the form *Dod(a)i*. The figure of the king from the recognized West Semitic name of Tammuz viz. תמוז[11] adds no new features nor situations not applicable to Solomon, and the entire rôle is quite as appropriate for Solomon as anything specifically ascribed to him. If, however, this figure is older than Solomon, as it may well be in the fertility cult, it may have had one of two sources. First, it might have come from a variant form of the fertility cult in which Tammuz was represented as king. This is somewhat improbable in itself because of the peculiar use of this term as a title of Tammuz. Among 28 titles of Tammuz cited by Zimmern[12] only two contain the word "king," viz., "*lugal amash*" and "*lugal ki-bad-du*" i. e. "king of the cattle stall" and "king of evanescence" respectively; and here manifestly *lugal* has nothing to do with a king as such, and should more properly be translated "lord." The instances cited by Langdon (*Tammuz and Ishtar*) fall into three categories: (1) Instances referring to Babylonian kings, whose deaths are interpreted as having had an effect on nature similar to the death of Tammuz. This, as will be appreciated, is at most only a partial identification and it ceases to have any further application to the representations of the fertility cult beyond the point of comparison. (2) Instances where certain Babylonian kings claimed to be the husbands of the mother goddess Innini. These cases

[10] cf. 1 12 and 7 5.

[11] cf. Meek, A. J. S. L., XXXIX, p. 5.

[12] *Der Babylonische Gott Tammuz: Bericht der Königl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig*, 63. Band XIII. 4.

would seem to lack considerably from being identifications with Tammuz, first because the goddess had other Divine consorts than Tammuz, and hence the instances of kings cited do not clearly equate them with a particular god. In the second place we can probably discern how this relation of the kings to the goddess arose and was conceived. Idin-Dagan (Thureau-Dangin, *Königsɛuschriften*, p. 10, v. 24) claims that Innini summoned him to rule, which shows that he regarded the goddess as his patron divinity, and he calls her his beloved spouse, not probably in the rôle of Tammuz, which would have pointed to his speedy death; but in his own right, as a relation which gave an added assurance of his right to rule through his alliance with the Divine Matriarchate. On the other hand when such a king died it would be very natural if he were spoken of as Tammuz, as under (1) above. (3) Consists of a long Babylonian poem published by Radau,[13] which, although still not too well understood, seems to contain the celebration of the marriage of Idin-Dagan, third king of Isin with the goddess Innini. At one extreme this may mean only an extension of examples under (2), at the other, it signifies a king taking the place of Tammuz in union with the mother goddess. In Langdon's view this goes back to the more barbaric west Semitic rites in which the king was actually slain, even as Tammuz perished. This I believe is the only obvious kind of case where a king could find a direct entrance into the dramatization of the fertility cult; but it is not at all certain that the above poem had either that intention or effect, since to be the consort of the mother goddes was one thing, but to personate Tammuz in the fertility cult was quite another, as it involved the death either really or symbolically of the personator, and there seems to be no indication in Babylonia of that form of the rite in which kings were involved (Langdon, *Tammuz and Ishtar*, p. 64). In spite, therefore, of the fact that Tammuz was known as an ancient king, and other kings were identified with him, the free dramatization of Tammuz as king in the

[13] "Miscellaneous Sumerian Texts" no. 2 (*Hilprecht Anniversary Volume*).

fertility cult has definite limitations. That is, a king might personate the god at the beginning of the cult cycle where Tammuz dies, and this might be the natural death of the king interpreted as Tammuz, but if so, since there was no means of bringing the dead back to life, the death of the king would have no further relation to the cult. Secondly, the king might die by the proxy of a human victim slain in his stead, or thirdly, he might die symbolically; and in both of these last instances he might also participate in the third stage of the Tammuz rites when the dead god was restored to life and the quest of the goddess was rewarded. But if the second stage of the rites represented by Ishtar's descent to Hades were celebrated, neither the dead god nor his representation as king, or what not, could be expected to appear as a speaking character, that is as alive, and if any dialogue were to take place at this point it would have to be confined, as in Ishtar's descent, to the goddess and the ruler of Hades as the characters.

The application of this to the Song will depend upon the stages in the Tammuz cycle which are represented in the piece, and their proper identification. This ought not to be difficult, even without a formal label. If and when the maiden is represented as separated from her lover and distressed because of that fact, and if at the same time she is addressed by a character designated as king, the prototype of the cult ought to be the underworld stage and the king should represent the ruler of the underworld. Whether this stage is represented in the Song should be determinable by an examination of the rôle of the king in its context.

The king is always represented as present with the maiden and addressing her in person, and his presence seems to serve no other purpose. The maiden's response to the king culminates either in longing for an absent shepherd, cf. 1 7; 8 1, or in glad reminiscence of her earlier association with him, cf. 2 3–4; 4 7 ff., or in expressions of loyalty and devotion to him, though absent, cf. 6 10. The maiden never acknowledges any relationship to the king. Once only does she use the word "king", 1 12, and then only in the most indifferent and conventional manner, while she warmly mentions the name of the absent

shepherd 21 times. Furthermore, throughout the first seven chapters of the piece the maiden is always either in the presence of the king or of "the daughters of Jerusalem", which amounts virtually to the same thing, certainly in the present form of the poem. Yet the one constant note in her speeches both to the king and to the women is the emphasis she puts upon the fact of the lover's absence and her distress because of that fact. This idea is, too, not only the thought of the maiden. The women's chorus also acknowledges it to be a fact, 1 8, and later make it a matter of their sympathetic concern as well, 6 1. This situation should not be possible if the king and the shepherd are identical and there was not the slightest ground for confusion if the poem wished to convey that meaning. This incongruity becomes very much more pronounced when the king is freely interpreted in terms of Solomon.

Franz Delitzsch gave the classic orthodox interpretation of the two character theory of the Song, but it is not, I think, too much to say that that interpretation was shattered by requiring king Solomon to become a rustic shepherd in the end, for which history made no room. The case, actually, for the two character theory is much more difficult than that, for it requires a well nigh incredible psychology of the maiden: (1) She is obliged to recognize her lover to be King Solomon and at the same time a rustic shepherd. This, for obvious reasons, gives one pause; but we venture to say that had it ever been actually attempted, the result would have been that the figure of the shepherd would have entirely disappeared in the brighter glory of Solomon. This is, however, so far from being the case that the shepherd is still in some respects even more prominent than Solomon. (2) Her consistent attitude to the daughters of Jerusalem from start to finish is that the lover is always absent (1 7; 2 3-4, 16; 5 6; 6 2), and that she is unable to join him. This is most difficult if Solomon be the real lover. (3) Her dream psychology if Solomon be the lover is not only pointless but lacks any foundation whatever. With the king repeatedly offering attention to her alone, how should any thought arise that she could lose him or that

he of all persons could not be found in the city? The dreams seem to be about any one but a king.

None of the above factors make it easy to refer the king to Tammuz, and all together they make it exceedingly difficult to do so, if the poem is to be granted any sort of unity. And indeed only the compulsion of there being no other alternative would lend it any encouragement. But as a matter of fact the other alternative cannot be denied the right to be considered. No one would pretend to say that we have a complete Tammuz liturgy, but the clearest insight we get of the course of the cult dramatization is perhaps to be found in Ishtar's Descent to Hades.[14] The goddess there plays the predominant rôle as does the maiden in the Song. We find, too, that there was a ruler of the underworld, and although it was a queen in the Babylonian poem, we also know there was a god of the Babylonian Hades who was called a king, viz., Nergal, who was also the consort of the queen of Arallu. And we also know that it was the purpose of the ruler of the underworld to keep the goddess there, and not without serious difficulty was she released.

Taking the Tammuz cycle at the point where the god is clearly represented as a shepherd and at the same time separated from his consort, and she, while in troubled quest of him in the walled city of night and darkness, is stripped of her clothing even as Ishtar by the keepers of the gates, cf. 5 7,—if a king appears at all at that point it would logically seem to be the king of Arallu. Now all of these conditions seem to be verified in the poem at this point in the cycle, but if Tammuz were to appear at this point as king, we should be virtually forced to the conclusion that we were at a different point of the dramatic cycle, probably near its close after Tammuz had been released from Hades. Is this possible?

It has been stated that the Song emphasizes the brighter and more joyous aspects of the Tammuz cult, while Babylonia has preserved its more gloomy and sombre features. This is

[14] cf. Zimmern, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

true if we take the Song as a whole, but it gains that character almost entirely from the last chapter. In the first seven chapters and as far as 8 4 the maiden is separated from the lover and in deep distress at her inability to join him.[15] This at first glance seems to be offset by the joyous spring songs in 2 8-17 and the words of the lover in 4 7-5 1; but the fact that these are clearly reminiscent in their setting and so refer to past felicity only intensifies the sense of present separation and the consequent feeling of bereavement and longing. This is as we should expect as long as the maiden cannot join the shepherd, and there seems to be no ground to suppose that the underlying cult motive has progressed at this point beyond the unrequited quest of the goddess in the underworld at the court of the Babylonian Pluto; and therefore no reason exists to apply to the lover the epithet 'king' but every reason apparently to apply it to the god of the underworld. This is confirmed in a striking manner by 8 5 ff. For the first time in the poem the shepherd appears on the scene and himself speaks, the maiden is with him and expresses fervently the triumph and the invincible character of love. Solomon is referred to as at a distance and as an eliminated factor, and the poem closes in a burst of song.

How does this interpretation fit the rôle of Solomon? We know that, in the fertility cult, it was the purpose of the rulers of the underworld to keep the goddess in their realm by any means whatever, but none of them was love. It has been many times assumed that Solomon was the lover, and also occasionally denied. His case as lover rests upon the fact that: (1) He attempts to bribe the maiden's favor by the promise of jewelry (1 11). (2) He compliments her general appearance (1 15, 16; 2 1; 4 1; 6 4) in oft repeated formulae which insist that she is good looking, as good looking, for example, as a city or a horse. (3) He compares separate items of her features and form to various objects in a manner that is often either decidedly ugly or manifestly grotesque, e. g., her hair is likened to the dingy, shaggy and

[15] cf. 1 7; 2 2, 3; 5 2-7; 6 2-3; 8 1-2.

multicolored effect of a flock of goats, with the figure drawn in such a fashion as to give the impression that she was also partially bald (4 1 b). She is complimented for having all of her teeth, but by a figure that shows them to be horribly uneven (2 2), while in the very next breath he uses a figure which pictures her mouth as that of an old woman who has lost all her teeth. He likens her eyes to doves but admits that he can't see them because her hair hangs down so as to cover them (4 1). In the same manner he likens her temple to a cross section of a pomegranate but also admits that he can't really see them because her locks obscure them (4 3 b). Her neck is described in a manner to suggest the earliest recorded case of goitre. It is like the tower of David built for an armory capable of storing a thousand suits of arms (4 4). (4) His approaches culminate in obscene suggestion (4 5-6; 7 7-8 a) that is without parallel in the poem. Aside from these more than doubtful qualifications, he never professes affection. He never offers love nor asks for it in return. He is distinctly not the lover. He offers her trinkets, doubtful compliments, an attitude of lust, and a place among the innumerable denizens of his court. These may all be summed up as an effort on his part to retain the maiden, to prevent her escape. Love no more comes in question than between Ishtar and the rulers of the underworld. The purpose with both is the same. Moreover, Solomon as pictured with his vast and innumerable harem (6 8) is entirely unfitted to play the Tammuz rôle of lover according to the fertility cult. On the other hand he, with his countless harem, is eminently suited to play the part of Nergal the god of the nether world.

There are several things which tend to support this conception. The setting of the poem at Solomon's Court gave the most striking opportunity in Hebrew literature to enlarge upon the magnificence and splendor of that establishment, but not once is it referred to, while, in striking contrast, the poem revels with evident delight in bird songs, tinkling waters, flowers, gardens, vineyards, distant mountains and the pastoral life of the countryside. One would never even learn from the

poem that Solomon had a palace. It is therefore difficult to think that any redaction of the poem was ever written to glorify Solomon, but if he follows the symbolism of Nergal this silence about his glory is quite understandable. The king's description of the maiden as "terrible" in aspect and with unkempt head, with graying falling hair and toothless mouth may have served some other purpose originally than the mere gargoyle effect that now appears. It reminds us of the plagues of death with which Ishtar was smitten upon her arrival before the ruler of the underworld. Coupled with this may be mentioned the fact that twice the maiden complains of illness (2 5; 5 8), both times either in the presence, or the near presence of the king. Nergal was, we know, the god of plagues and sickness. Still further, her second dream experience of seeking her lover in the city of gloom and darkness and being stripped of her robe and smitten and wounded by the keepers of the wall is strikingly like the experience of Ishtar who was deprived of her clothing by the various gate keepers of the lower world as she went down in quest of Tammuz.

The statement that many waters cannot quench love neither can floods drown it (8 6) reminds us of a form of the myth where Tammuz is drowned in a flood, which seems to arise from the perishing of vegetation due to floods. One of the weapons of Nergal was the Abûbu flood. Solomon's bodyguard of expert swordsmen is the most outstanding feature in his first and only public appearance in the Song. We know of his cohorts of chariots and horsemen in the Book of Kings but only here of the swordsmen. Nergal was a god of war and of armies and the ideogram for sword was his most common symbol.

None of the above indications taken alone could, of course, permit a decision. Some of them may turn out to be less significant than they seem, but there are too many pointing in the direction of Nergal as the prototype of the king to be easily gainsaid; and there are, I believe, no *a priori* reasons why it should not be correct. On the other hand, there are serious difficulties in the way of the identification of the king

with Tammuz, in the situation which the king presents even if there were nothing to be said on the other side.

From the standpoint of this conclusion we may now attempt an answer to the query why the piece was rewritten and thereby put in its Jerusalem setting. We require for this either a religious or a political motive. The tentative results already stated leave no room for a religious motive and allow only a particular form of political motive. Accordingly this could hardly have been done in pre-Israelitish times since there is no evidence in that period of a sway of Jerusalem extending far enough north to connect with the seat of the North Palestine Tammuz cult. This is first realized in the days of David and Solomon. But the present rewriting calls for a condition of hostility such as existed between Israel and Judah in the early days of the divided kingdom, and indicates that it was done with the deliberate intent to vilify Solomon and show him up in his worst light.

Putting the situation in another way, granted the existence of the fertility cult liturgy in the north, and in the early days of the divided monarchy suppose it to have been so far secularized as to give us the maiden, a women's chorus, her absent shepherd lover and a king following the prototype of Nergal. There would have been a strong political incentive to identify the king with Solomon and to see in the reconstructed poem a vivid symbolism of the struggle between the North and South and a clear hope of tho North's final triumph to the unmistakable glory of the former and the complete discomfiture of the latter. This calls for an earlier date than has usually been accepted for the introduction of Solomon. But with a much earlier form of the poem well assured, why should this be denied if it meets what seem to be the natural requirements of the poem, especially as this interpretation does not claim to dispose of any other later accretions to the piece?

A summary and comparison of the motives of the Song as it stands may now be made with the older Tammuz Cult. Whatever the characters once were, they are now all genuinely human and move entirely within the sphere of the present

life. All older religious elements in the poem have thus been, at least outwardly, secularized. A parallel case may be found in the Jacob stories.

The character of the maiden, separated from her lover and in search of him, but who cannot be ultimately kept from her quest by anything in heaven or hell, runs true to the cult form. The lover is never spoken of as deceased or overtaken by any calamity. On the contrary, he is represented as about his usual pursuits as a shepherd with his flocks (1 7; 2 16), and wherever he is conceived to be is idealized as a lovely and enchanted place (6 2). This *motif* is the result of a deflection here owing to the transfer of all the actions to the human sphere and the present life, but the change has not been accomplished without leaving clear traces of the older form. The reference to the 'going down' of the lover (6 2) points to an original reference to the underworld, as does also the use of "garden" in the same reference.[18]

The king, using every wile to thwart the quest of the maiden and bring her completely into his power by causing her to forget the lover, is himself checked at every turn by love itself, until love triumphs. The introduction of Solomon has again deflected the original *motif*. There were no blandishments in the case of the ruler of the nether world, but with Solomon these were his chief assets and his outward splendor was bound to eclipse many darker qualities of his prototype. The alignment of his endeavor was, however, all to the same end, with the same result. Furthermore his 'innumerable' harem was literally applicable only to the god of the underworld, and we cannot forget that it was a love strong as death (8 6) that gave the maiden her song of triumph.

Thus the older cult motives are found to persist and to be modified only as the setting and characters are also changed. Other new motives are also introduced which it is not necessary to discuss here, such as the bringing in of the maiden's mother (3 4; 8 2, 5) and her brothers (8 8-9).

[18] Cf. Meek, *S. of S. and the Fertility Cult*, p. 60, and the wider references there.

It would remain a simple matter to sum up at this point the relation of Solomon to the Song, but the history of the interpretation of the piece gives one pause. It shows an uncanny elusiveness about the poem. It may not therefore be out of place, before attempting any summary to inquire wherein this elusiveness consists, particularly now in relation to Solomon. His position is definite and his character often even offensively clear, nevertheless the opening verses of the Song are obscure. They can now only naturally refer to Solomon and be spoken by women of his court, but neither he nor they have been introduced except by the later heading (1 1). This causes a sense of groping and uncertainty to extend throughout the section and permits all kinds of assumptions with impunity. On the other hand the formal introduction of Solomon and his first speech (3 6-4 6) are perfectly clear, but his introduction comes too late to serve its natural purpose, and what is more, it is strikingly detached from its context. So far as any progress of thought or organic connection are concerned, the section might as well have been placed at any other natural break in the piece. It follows the refrain and so comes at a point where anything might follow. It closes by all natural indications with 4 6. The king has been announced. The women have been summoned, and with 4 1 the natural inference is that he is addressing the Shulammite, but there is no expression of affection. With 4 7 there is a new setting, a new attitude, and a new terminology. The speaker asks the maiden to come with him from Lebanon, new terms "sister" and "bride" appear and there is the sudden and striking evidence of a deep and fervent devotion in every line. This change in attitude and terms of endearment are strikingly left unexplained, but more incongruous is the sudden and unannounced change of place. With the scene formally set in Jerusalem, suddenly the maiden is asked to accompany the speaker from the Lebanon mountains. The English Revised Version significantly indicates a break at this point. This break is equally required by what follows. The description of the wedding feast (5 1 f.) is bound up with what precedes and permits no natural separation until 4 6 is reached.

3 6–4 6 is not only a proper introduction of Solomon but, placed at the beginning, it provides a definite scene and setting for all that follows. If this section be inserted after 1 1 everything in chapter 1 becomes clear. The characters in 1 2–4 at once have proper identification. They are those daughters of Zion who have been summoned in 3 11 to greet the king. Most naturally they are the women of his household. Their words are a clear attempt to answer from their standpoint the king's advances to the Shulammite, and express a frank bidding for his caresses. The first speech of the maiden now has a definite perspective and bearing. The women have intervened immediately after the king's address, and she makes capital of this fact to direct her reply to the king's compliments as though to the court ladies. Solomon had insisted that she was fair and beautiful. She says that she is black. He had followed with comparisons, that to say the least were grotesque compliments. She adds that at least she is comely. Her reference to her tanned skin brings out the fact of her country life and this leads her directly to apostrophize her absent lover, who is somewhere tending his flocks. The women in their half-hearted response clearly understand her language.

In 1 9–10, 15 and 2 1 the king continues his advances in language that is closely akin to 4 1–6. The court women are the audience. Each comparison of the king is answered by the maiden with a finer, more intimate reference to her absent lover, mentioned now each time by name[17]. The dialogue closes with her adjuration to the women (2 7).

The entire section is now well knit. The setting, characters and motives are clearly drawn and defined. The king and the shepherd are sharply juxtaposed, even before she calls him by name. This arrangement would also make it perfectly plain why the Song was later ascribed to Solomon. He is the first character to be introduced, and his first speech sets the alignment of all the forces to be brought into play.

In the second place we may note the effect of the transposition of the section 3 6–4 6 upon its present context. It

[17] Cf. Syriac, which only transliterates the word.

will be noted that it results in bringing together, in one uninterrupted block, the maiden's reminiscence and dreams of her absent lover, with the court women as her auditors; and the picture is drawn with such power and pathos that the women who began with profuse adulation of the king are in the end ready to follow the maiden in order to find the lover. The section leaves no doubt whatever as to the character or whereabouts of the lover.

The transposition of the section 3 6-4 6 adds nothing to the poem, and changes no single factor in it, but it greatly clarifies the setting as well as the identification and alignment of the characters involved, and gives a definite formal unity to the piece.

It should be an argument in favor of this arrangement if the transposition can measurably be accounted for. It will be admitted that if the heading 1 1 be accepted as genuine, we have measurable guidance for the identification of the king, and indirectly some implied direction for the remaining characters in ch. 1. But without this there is no help but the later implications of the poem. It is probable, therefore, that the transposition did not take place till after this heading had been adopted. The ascription to Solomon was, however, added by those who looked upon him with favor. If, then, the poem is of northern origin, and early, as there seem to be good grounds for believing, the heading was not added until the poem migrated, probably with northern exiles, to Judah. But after the heading had been added, thoughtful readers must have observed that Solomon did not altogether do himself credit as a lover, in fact he expressed no affection at all, but only the most external and gross of physical appraisals; but, what was more serious, there was no evidence at all that he had made any progress with his suit, either in the acknowledgment of the maiden or in the sequel of the poem.

If only Solomon had expressed some warmth of feeling that the maiden had unequivocally reciprocated, or if he had said something which would define his personal relation to her, at least the king could be saved from humiliation. In a word, if only 5 7 ff. with its warm terms of endearment could be

thought of as the words of Solomon, the problem might be solved. But could not this be legitimately and neatly done by having Solomon's first speech continued by these very words? With the heading firmly in place, the poem would not be disrupted by this procedure. What if it did make Solomon's formal introduction come somewhat late? Was not 1 1 a sufficient notice? Solomon needed no formal introduction. And what were all such considerations in comparison with the gains on the king's behalf, in the wonderful outburst of the finest loving enthusiasm for the maiden in 5 7 ff. and her glad response to the terms "sister" and "bride"? He really did win his case then! No matter what happened in the poem before that point or after it that seemed to point in another direction! It could not occur to such an one that the price could make the victory prohibitive.

Solomon's rôle can now be briefly summarized. The poem was not his we know, and his interest in it was not of his choice nor to his credit. He was not the lover but rather the would-be destroyer of love, but he failed even in that. Such a conclusion does him no historical violence. We have only to recall that while he stood as Israel's most magnificent king, he was also to the great contemporary body of Israelites the most hated ruler of their history. It was true that he had held the spirit of the North in restraint for a time at Jerusalem, but it was not because of any affection on his part, but only for the purpose of gratifying his insatiable appetites and lusts. Yet the spirit of the North had never been broken, and their first love and loyalty had finally won them a reprieve that was like a release from the powers of the grave. A fertility cult liturgy reduced to folk poetry and reinterpreted by a political *motif*, that was later partly obscured by a divergent national ideal, would seem to satisfy and explain Solomon's connection with the poem.