**“Τhe Song of Song in the Jewish and Christian Literature”**

**Symposium in Greece,  19. 10. 2016**

**Τετάρτη 19.10.2016: Συμπόσιο για το Άσμα των Ασμάτων**

18.15: Εισαγωγική Ομιλία Prof. Dr. Sotirios Despotis – Dr. P. Stamatopoulos, Intertextuality between two “forbidden” holy books: Canticum and Revelation

18.30 – 19.15: Prof. Dr. Hermann Lichtenberger, Universität Tübingen, The Song of Songs in Qumran

19.15 – 19.30: Anastasios Akridas, The “Body – Description“-Motif in the Song of Songs (Sol 4:1-6; 5:10-16; 7:2-10)

**PAUSE**

19.40 – 20. 00: Prof. Dr. Konstantinos Zarras,  שֶׁ֤אָהֲבָה֙ נַפְשִׁ֔י \*(( Sol 1:7): Its Growth and  Elaboration in Later Jewish Texts.

20.00-20.15 Dr. Nikolaos Kouremenos, Some Remarks on the Coptic Version of the Canticum Canticorum.

20.15-20.30:  Prof. Dr. Kirki Kefalaia, The Song of Songs in Modern Greek Literature.

Hermann Lichtenberger

The Song of Songs in the Dead Sea Scrolls[[1]](#footnote-1)\*

1. The Song of Songs in the Texts from the Dead Sea
2. „Biblical“ Status and Canonicity
3. The Hebrew Text

In respect to form and content it may come as a surprise that in the “library” from the Dead Sea four manuscripts of the Song of Songs are preserved. Traditionally the community from the Dead Sea (“Qumran Community”, “Qumrangemeinde”, “Qumran-Essener”, “Essener”) is looked at as a pious Jewish sect living in purity and celibacy. Therefore nobody would expect them to read and copy erotic love songs. But this traditional view has changed, both concerning the so called “library” and the community as owner and/or user of it. Only few of the about thousand manuscripts are authored by the pious community we bring in connection with the texts. This is of course self-evident in case of the “Biblical” texts which are earlier than the community of the Dead Sea, it is also true for most of the so-called Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha and most of the hitherto unknown texts. Here a distinction is necessary: few texts are authored by the community, much more were copied. The last group of texts is characterized by certain traits among which an extensive plene-writing is prominent. None of the four Song of Songs manuscripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls share these characteristics.

Talking about “Biblical” texts we have to take in consideration that all manuscripts from the Dead Sea are older than a “Canon” of “Biblical” books.

“Bible” seems to be an integrative aspect of the Jewish-Christian tradition. But if we take a closer look at the religions and denominations we realize that the Bible of Jews is different from the Bible of Christians. And in Christianity Catholics and Orthodox use a Bible different from that of Protestants. “What is Bible” is at the centre of religious identity.

We must go first of all a step back: Already in antiquity “Bible” in Judaism is not as clearly defined as we should expect. The “Bible” of the Jewish Septuagint – what was it like? We do not exactly know. What was the “Bible” of the community of the Dead Sea Scrolls? We have some important indirect information on this question (number of manuscripts of a certain book, like Isaiah or Psalms or the frequency of quotations with introductory formula), but there is no list of “Biblical” books. Even if there was such a list including the Psalter we would not know, which sort of Psalter was deemed as “canonical” by the community of the Dead Sea (the Psalter of the Masoretic Text, or that of 11QPsa or of any other edition represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls).[[2]](#footnote-2) As we will see concerning the Song of Songs manuscripts it is anachronistic to call them “Biblical” manuscripts, because there is no “Bible”, but texts which later on became “Bible”, and among them the Song of Songs. But it was not the Qumran version(s) which became canonical. 4QCant a and b not only differ in many details of single words from the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint, but most conspiciously in extend. 4QCanta is about 30% shorter than MT, 4QCantb about 20%.[[3]](#footnote-3) In other words: The “Biblical” Song of Songs is not the same as in the versions preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Let us first have a look at the “Biblical” manuscripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In the “Biblical” manuscripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls[[4]](#footnote-4) there are three groups in term of numbers:

1. Prominent group: Pentateuch 72; Psalms 39; Isaiah 22 + 5 Pesharim;

2. Middle group: Dodekapropheton 9; Daniel 8; Ezechiel 7; Jeremia 6; Job 4hebr. + 2aram.;

3. Slight evidence group: 1/2Sam 4; Ruth 4; Threni 4; **Cant 4**; Prov 3 bzw. 4; Josua 3; 1/2Kings 3;QKoh 2; Esra-Neh 1; 1/2 Chr 1; Esther no certain evidence.

Among the books which later became “Bible” Cant belongs to the group of slight evidence. But that’s not the whole story: We do not know how many manuscripts were lost by natural or deliberate destruction. We only know: a lot.

Also the number of manuscripts of texts which later were not part of the Biblical canon cautions us to draw consequences for canonicity: Jubilees 16; Enoch 11; Tobit 4aram.+1hebr.; Ben Sira 2+1Masada; Serech hay-yahad 11; Sabbath Songs 10+1Masada; Damascus Document 8; War Scroll 7; Hodayot 6.

At least Ben Sira was in a similar way controversial like Cant concerning its “canonical” status. As we know Enoch had in certain circles authority (see Jud 14 with quotation from 1En 1:9; 1Pet 3:19 – 1En 9:10?).

Is the number of quotations and allusions an indicator for canonical range?

According to Nestle Aland28 in the New Testament there are five quotations and allusions to Cant. Cant 2:7: Lk 23:28; Cant 3:5-10: Lk 23:28; Cant 3:6: Mt 2:11; Cant 4:15: John 7:38; Cant 5:2: Rev 3:20), in the 27th edition there were only two (Cant 4:15: John 7:38; Cant 5:2: Rev 3:20). This is an astonishing fact not only in relation to the other “Biblical” books, but also to “extra-Biblical” texts. Among the “Biblical” books according to Nestle-Aland28 only Esther (4) und Obadja (1) have less quotations and allusions in the New Testament.

1. The Translations

There is a sort of common sense that Cant has gained its authoritative or “canonical” range by means of allegorical interpretation. In my opinion this is not valid because the allegorical interpretations of Jewish and Christian interpreters attest to the authoritative, even canonical range of Cant. More important is the fact that neither the Hebrew text nor the Greek and Latin versions propagate an allegorical interpretation. In some instances they are even more literal as in the case of Cant 1:2 and 7:13 (LXX and Vulgate; see below), and are close to the Hebrew text. This is also true for the Vulgate which by Jerome was prepared *ex hebraica veritate* (Vulgate).[[5]](#footnote-5) The Greek translation (LXX) may have come into existence about 100 BC[[6]](#footnote-6), the work of Jerome of Cant dates to 398 AD. The text of the Vetus Latina is first quoted by Tertullian.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Septuagint translates a “Vorlage”, which is close to the Masoretic Text. 6QCant testifies to this: Cant 1:2 “your דדיך is better than *wine*” is not the only possible lecture. The Hebrew consonants דדיך MT *dodäkha* “your love” could also be read as *dadaykh* “*your breasts*”, read also by LXX (and Vulgate) in Cant 1:2.4; 4:10 and similarly in Cant 7:13 (LXX reads *daday* דדי“*my breasts*” against the Masoretic Text *doday* “*my love*”).

According to the Biblia Patristica[[8]](#footnote-8) Philo never cites from the 5 Megillot Cant, only Qohelet (2) and Esther (1).

In Josephus in all probability the four texts, containing „Hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of human life“, include Psalms, Proverbs, Qohelet and Cant (cAp I,40). The Targum “could hardly be called a translation”[[9]](#footnote-9), it is Haggadah, “spanning the history of Israel from the Exodus to the messianic age to come”.[[10]](#footnote-10) This is a witness for the Jewish tradition of allegorical interpretation. Since Origene the Christian allegorical method had been established. Perhaps the “adorned bride” in Rev 21:2 is a reference to Cant.

1. The Manuscripts from the Dead Sea[[11]](#footnote-11)

Four manuscripts were found at the Dead Sea with a text of Cant. Three manuscripts from cave 4[[12]](#footnote-12), one from cave 6[[13]](#footnote-13). All the manuscripts are of small size similar to the other manuscripts of the Megillot.[[14]](#footnote-14)

4Q106 4QCanta: six fragments, five identified: 3:4-5.7-4:7; 6:11-7:7; three columns; early Herodian book script. The most striking character of the manuscript is the omission of 4:9 through 6:10.

4Q107 4QCantb: three fragments: 2:9-17; 3:1-2.5.9-11; 4:1-3.8-11.14-16; 5:1; four columns; early Herodian book script; overlap with 4QCanta: 3:5.10-11; 4:1-3. Omission of 3:6-8[[15]](#footnote-15) and 4:4-7[[16]](#footnote-16). Manuscript ended presumably in 5:1. The last letter (final mem) in IV,3,14 is much larger in size than the final mem in line 9 and all the other letters.

4Q108 4QCantc: one tiny fragment: 3:7-8; Herodian book-script.

6Q6 6QCant: one fragment: 1:1-7; two columns; late Herodian (middle first century CE).

The four manuscripts range from about 50 BC to 50 AD. They are quite different in character. 4QCanta: Beside the large omission the text (108 extant words) reads 12 times against MT, 11 times against LXX. The manuscript represents a specific type of text.[[17]](#footnote-17)

4QCantb: Beside the two omissions the text (166 extant words) reads 21 times against MT and 24 times against LXX. A careless scribe has produced scribal errors; an influence of Aramaic is evident. Scribal marks; the manuscript represents a specific type of text.[[18]](#footnote-18)

6QCant: The text (40 extant words) reads 5 times against MT, once with Vulgate, once with LXX. Most likely the manuscript represents a specific type of text.[[19]](#footnote-19)

4QCantc: 3 words only; no typology discernable.[[20]](#footnote-20)

1. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the History of the Text of Cant

Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls our knowledge of the text of Cant had been based on the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, Vetus Latina/Vulgate and Peshitta. In spite of all differences of the translations, the extent (scil the number of *stichoi*) of the text seemed to be the same. Yet now, in 4QCant a and b we find two shorter versions, which differ also among themselves: 4QCanta with the omission of 4:9-6:10, 4QCantb with two short omissions of 3:6-8 and 4:4-7 and the presumable end in 5:1. In the two manuscripts there is no coincidence in the omissions except for 5:2 following, if 5:1 is the end of the manuscriptb. That is to say that still in early Herodian times manuscripts were copied with a different number of *stichoi* in relation to the pre-Masoretic text underlying the Greek and other translations which gained dominance as the “canonic” version.

Remarkable is the small size of all the Cant-manuscripts (4QCanta 9,3cm; 4QCantb 9,9cm; 4QCantc ?; 6QCant 8,2cm) which is in correspondence to all Megillot-manuscripts from the Dead Sea.[[21]](#footnote-21) The reasons are not clear, perhaps already a liturgical use can be assumed.

The omissions are in spite of the careless writer of 4QCantb not due to scribal negligence, but they represent different text types.

Cant is not a coherent composition but rather a collection of love songs and fragments those. As it is repetitive verses or larger literary units could be removed without disturbing the composition. The reasons for the omissions are not yet evident. For 4QCantb Tov supposes that it had been prepared for personal use.[[22]](#footnote-22) The many scribal errors and Aramaisms may indicate the private character of the manuscript. Relevant is the omission of units with martial language.

In both manuscripts 4QCanta and b the “Beschreibungslied” of the male lover (Cant 5:11-16) is lacking; in manuscripta because of the gap between 4:9 and 6:10, in manuscriptb because of the presumed end of the manuscript in Cant 5:1.[[23]](#footnote-23) Are there reasons for the omission of the “Beschreibungslied” of the male lover? Of course there may be various reasons for the omission of chapter 5, and the “Beschreibungslied” of the male may only be one of many. We simply must take into account that there could also have been technical reasons for the shortening of the composition such as space problems.

1. The male “Beschreibungslied” in Cant 5:10-16

I quote 5:10-16 according to the translation of the Revised Standard Version:

(10) “My beloved is all radiant and ruddy,

distinguished among ten thousand.

(11) His head is finest gold;

his locks are wavy,

black as a raven.

(12) His eyes are like doves

beside springs of water,

bathed in milk,

fitly set.

(13) His cheeks are like beds of spices,

yielding fragrance.

His lips are lilies,

distilling liquid myrrh.

(14) His arms are rounded gold,

set with jewels.

His body is ivory work,

encrusted with sapphires.

(15) His legs are alabaster columns,

set upon bases of gold.

His appearance is like Lebanon,

choice as the cedars.

(16) His speech is most sweet,

and he is altogether desirable.

This is my beloved and this is my friend,

O daughters of Jerusalem.”

“Das Beschreibungslied (*waṣf*) für den Mann verrät die Herkunft der Gattung aus der kultischen Beschreibungshymne durch seine statuarische Darstellungsweise: der Jüngling erscheint wie eine Götterstatue.”[[24]](#footnote-24) Akkadian and Egyptian examples are well known – Anastasios Akridas has collected them in the first chapters of his dissertation.[[25]](#footnote-25) The reference to gold and precious stones is dominant in the description of the mythic king of Tyrus in Ez 28:13:

“You were in Eden, the garden of God;

Every precious stone was your covering,

Carnelian, chrysolit, and moonstone,

Beryl, onyx, and jasper,

Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald;

And worked in gold were your settings

And engravings” (RSV).[[26]](#footnote-26)

With some hesitation I offer the suggestion that the “theomorphic” character of the “Beschreibungslied” of the male was one of the reasons to skip chapter 5 of Cant in the 4QCanta and b manuscripts. The male “Beschreibungslied” of Jacob in JA 22:7 has close parallels to the male in Cant 5:10-16. Jacob is described there with attributes of angels and giants. The earlier examples illustrate that there is also in Jewish texts a vivid tradition describing supernatural, godly beings. Texts from Dan and Revelation which I will quote in the end of my presentation will support this suggestion.

Similarity of content in 4:1-3 and 6:5-7 in 4QCanta may have been the reason for exclusion of 6:5-7. On the other hand the juxtaposition of 3:7-4:7 and 6:11-7:7 in4QCanta can be explained by the correspondence of identical motifs: “pomegranate (4:3; 6:11), breasts, twins (4:5=7:4), neck (4:4;7:5), eyes (4:1; 7:5), and tower (4:4; 7:5).[[27]](#footnote-27)

1. Cant in in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Literature
2. Quotations and allusions

Quotations and allusions of Cant in Second Temple Literature are very rare. The list of Lange/Weigold[[28]](#footnote-28) only notes six references[[29]](#footnote-29), none in the Dead Sea Scrolls. As the Book of Jubilees is represented in 16 copies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and as it shares striking traits e.g. in purity and calendar, with texts of the community from the Dead Sea we may incorporate these allusions to the “Wirkungsgeschichte” of Cant in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Cant 4:8 – Jub 8:21 Libanon; mountain/top Amana; Cant 4:9.10.12 – Jub 27,14 “my sister”; these are at best allusions, some sort of “Wirkungsgeschichte” is not recognizable.

In search for allusions in poetic texts 1QHa should be examined at first hand. Gert Jeremias[[30]](#footnote-30) gives to 1QHa XVI,15 (8:14 Suk) the allusion to Cant 8:7, but it is only in vocabulary, not in content. Cant 8:7: “neither can floods drown it” (scil. love) – 1QHa XVI,15 (8:14 Suk) Jeremias: “sich ergießende(.) Flüsse(.).” M. Delcor[[31]](#footnote-31) in his commentary to the Hodayot refers 1QHa XVI,7 (8:6 Suk) to Cant 4:12, and 1QHa XVI,5 (8:4 Suk) to Cant 4:15[[32]](#footnote-32) again only in vocabulary. M. Mansoor[[33]](#footnote-33) quotes 1QHa XI,12 (3:11 Suk) in relation to Cant 2:4 (p. 114); 1QHa XVII,30 (9:30 Suk) to Cant 3:4 (p. 161); 1QHa XVI,18 (8:17 Suk) to Cant 5:12 (p. 155); 1QHa XV,24 (7:21 Suk) to Cant 8:1 (p. 151); 1QHa XI,10 (3:9 Suk) to Cant 8:6 (p. 113f). The allusions are in vocabulary, not in content.

As in the War Scroll (1QM and 4QM manuscripts) we find on the one hand poetic texts, on the other “technical” descriptions of luxurious weapons with precious decorations the expectation is reasonable that there might be some reference. In the commentary by Y. Yadin[[34]](#footnote-34) reference is made in 1QM 10:10 חוק מלומדי to Cant 3:8 (p. 306) מלחמה מלמדי the references to Cant 3:8; 4:4; 5:14.15; 8:6; 8:10 which are in 1QM are only in terminology, not in content. In the commentary by B. Jongeling[[35]](#footnote-35) reference is made in 1QM 10:12 to Cant 2:14 (p. 252); in 1QM 6:2 to Cant 4:4 (p. 173); in 1QM 9 to Cant 5:14 (p. 234); in 1QM 13:12 to Cant 7:11 (p. 300). The overall impression is that Cant played a role only in vocabulary, not in content in the texts of the Dead Sea. Apparently a rather late date for authoritative recognition of Cant was the reason for a seldom use of Cant in religious contexts.

This is fundamentally different from the influence of the “Beschreibungslieder” for which two remarkable examples are extant: in a text from the Dead Sea (1QGenApc 20:2-8) and in JA 20:7, a text from Jewish-Hellenistic origin. To be sure not only Cant may have influenced these “Beschreibungslieder”, because they are well known already in Ancient Near East and in Greece.

1. The “Beschreibungslieder” in 1QGenApoc 20:2-8 and JA 22:7

The closest parallel to the “Beschreibungs”- or “Bewunderungslieder” in Cant is the Beschreibungslied of Sara in 1QGenApoc 20:2-8:

a. “Beschreibungslied” of a woman in 1QGenApoc 20:2-8

(2) [“… …] how splen[did] and beautiful the form of her face, and how

(3) [… …] and how soft the hair of her head; how lovely are her eyes and how pleasant is her nose and all the radiance

(4) of her face [ ]; how lovely is her breast and how beautiful is all her whiteness! Her arms, how beautiful! And her hands, how

(5) perfect! And (how) [attract]tive all the appearance of her hands! How lovely (are) her palms, and how long and dainty all the fingers of her hands. Her feet,

(6) how beautiful! How perfect are her legs! There are no virgins or brides who enter a bridal chamber more beautiful than she. Indeed, her beauty

(7) surpasses that of all women; her beauty is high above all of them. Yet with all this beauty there is much wisdom in her; and whatever she has

(8) is lovely!”[[36]](#footnote-36)

The description starts with the head and goes down to the feet like in Cant 4:1-5 (to the breasts); 6:5-7 (head); reverse order beginning with the feet in 7:1-10 (the dancer). The addition “yet with all this beauty there is much wisdom in her” has no close correspondence in Cant (5:16?).

1. “Beschreibungslied” of a male in JA 22:7

“And Aseneth saw him and was amazed at his beauty, because Jacob was exceedingly beautiful to look at, and his old age (was) like the youth of a handsome (young) man,

and his head was all white as snow,

and the hairs of his head were all exceedingly close and thick like (those) of an Ethiopian,

and his beard (was) white reaching down to his breast,

and his eyes (were) flashing and darting (flashes of) lightning,

and his sinews and his shoulders and his arms were like (those) of an angel,

and his thighs and his calves and his feet like (those) of a giant.”[[37]](#footnote-37)

Here traits of epiphany (“his eyes [were] flashing and darting [flashes of] lightning, angels and giants”) are united to represent a “godly”, supernatural being. The same type is found in the vision Daniel describes King Nebukadnezar in Dan 2:31-33:

(31) “You were looking, O king, and lo! There was a great statue. This statue was huge, its brilliance extraordinary; it was standing before you, and its appearance was frightening.

(32) The head of that statue was of fine gold,

its chest and arms of silver,

its middle and thighs of bronze,

its legs of iron,

its feet partly of iron and partly of clay” (RSV).

III. The Description of Supernatural Beings in Revelation follows the same Tradition:

1. The vision of Christ in Rev 1:12-16:

(12) “Then I turned to see the voice that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,

(13) and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like a Son of Man,

clothed with a long robe

and with a golden sash across his chest.

(14) His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow;

his eyes were like a flame of fire,

(15) his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace,

and his voice was like the sound of many waters.

(16) In his right hand he held seven stars,

And from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword,

and his face was like the sun shining with full force” (RSV with corrections).

1. The vision of God in Rev 4:2-6

(2) “At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne,

with one seated on the throne!

(3) And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian,

and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald.

(4) Around the throne are twenty-four thrones,

and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders,

dressed in white robes,

with golden crowns on their heads.

(5) Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning,

and rumblings and peals of thunder,

and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches,

which are the seven spirits of God;

(6) and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne,

are four living creatures,

full of eyes in front and behind” (RSV).

1. The vision of the angel in Rev 10:1-3a

(1) “And I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven,

wrapped in a cloud,

with a rainbow over his head;

his face was like the sun,

and his legs like pillars of fire.

(2) He held a little scroll in his hand.

Setting his right foot on the sea

and his left foot on the land,

(3) he gave a great shout (…)” (RSV).

The vision of the Woman and the Dragon in Rev 12:1-4

(1) “A great portent appeared in heaven:

a woman clothed with the sun,

with the moon under her feet,

and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

(2) She was pregnant

and was crying out in birth pangs,

in the agony of giving birth” (RSV).

(3) Then another portent appeared in heaven:

a great red dragon,

with seven heads

and ten horns,

and seven diadems on his heads.

(4) His tail swept down a third if the stars of heaven

and threw them on earth” (RSV).

1. The vision of Christ as warrior in Rev 19:11-16

(11) “Then I saw the heaven opened,

and there was a white horse!

Its rider is called Faithful and True,

and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

(12) His eyes are like a flame of fire,

and on his head are many diadems;

and he has a name inscribed

that no one knows but himself.

(13) He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood,

And his name is called The Word of God.

(14) And the armies of heaven,

wearing fine linen, white and pure,

were following him on white horses.

(15) From his mouth comes a sharp sword

with which to strike down the nations,

and he will rule them with a rod of iron;

he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

(16) On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed,

‘King of kings and Lord of lords’” (RSV).

It is obvious that the “Beschreibungslieder” which describe a male not only have their origin in the cultic language of Near Eastern religions – as those for women have –, but they also transport theomorphic elements into the religious world of Early Jewish and Early Christian literature. This fact may have been the reason for omitting 5:2ff in the 4QCant manuscriptsa und b. The situation is different for the female “Beschreibungslieder”. Their religious origin is the same as that of the male “Beschreibungslieder”, but in the female ones an erotic orientation was established which was less dangerous than the theomorphic one.

IV. Summary

The four manuscripts of the Song of Songs in the Dead Sea Scrolls give evidence for the transmission of Cant in the time from about 50 BC to 50 AD. Two of the manuscripts (4QCant a and b) are considerably shortened versions of the longer (Pre-)Masoretic Text and the translations in Greek (LXX) and Latin (Vetus Latina and Vulgate). In manuscriptb we encounter two short omissions and presumably an end in 5:1. In manuscripta a long omission runs from 4:8 to 6:10. The two other manuscripts are either too fragmentary (4QCantc) or end in 1:7 (6QCant). The scribes of the manuscripts 4QCanta and b have shortened their “Vorlage” independently from each other. That these manuscripts do not represent more original shorter versions of Cant is obvious from the fact that they contain no additional or different text or even single *stichoi* in relation to the Masoretic Text. The reasons for the production of shorter texts by means of omission are not clear. They may have been of technical, poetical or theological nature: technically in respect to the small format of the manuscripts; poetically in regard to the loose poetic structure and the repetitions; theologically in view of offensive formulations in the “Beschreibungslied” of the male lover in 5:10-16 with the theomorphic allusions. The text of Cant had no major influence on the other literature of the Second Temple Period, but Cant shares with Early Jewish and Christian literature the “Beschreibungslied”, which is deeply rooted in the religious world of Ancient Near East. The fact that in the time between 50 BC and 50 AD shorter versions of Cant were copied and used which later became canonic in a longer version makes evident that the text of the Song of Songs was not yet a “holy” text, which couldn’t be changed any more. But this is not a singular phenomenon with Cant. 11QPsa and b demonstrate the multiple versions of Psalters about 50 AD, and the phenomenon of diversity is characteristic of other “Biblical” books in this time, too.

The Dead Sea manuscripts of the Song of Songs contribute in an unexpected way to our understanding of its text (textual criticism) and poetic structure (literary criticism). But we are happy that not the Dead Sea Scrolls’ version(s) but the pre-Masoretic one found its way into the canon. If the versions of 4QCanta or b would have become canonical we would not read in our Bible: “for love is strong as death” (Cant 8,6): אהבה כמות עזה כי.

**The *Song of Songs* in the Jewish and Christian Literature**

**International Symposium in Athens, Greece, 19.10.2016**

**Anastasios Akridas**

**The “Body – Description” motif in the *Song of Songs* (4:1-7; 5:10-16; 7:2-10)**

The *Song of Songs* is a genuine child of the Love Poetry of the Ancient Near East. This child though, grew up, shaped its own biblical character and unique manifold identity and found its way to the Canon of the Old Testament, being the most beautiful but also the most controversial of all its texts, but also the greatest love poem of all times. In its lines we read passionate moments from the story of two enigmatic lovers, the Shulamite and her Beloved bridegroom. Uppermost points of this erotic story are the descriptions of the body of the couple. These passages express the admiration and the lust of each lover to the other, and they constitute the outcome of an independent motif in the literature of the Ancient Near East, regarding the body and the description of its parts. In the next paragraphs the extra biblical context will be examined, out of which the “Body – Description” motif emerges, and its usage by the editor of the Song of Songs, defining it meaning and function within the Biblical text.

1. The description of the Shulamite in the Song of Songs (*Sol* 4:1-7; 7:2-10)

1.1. The female body description in the literature of the Ancient Near East

***P. Chester Beatty I, Group A* (Egypt, 1200 – ca. 1150 BCE)**

Bibliography

Fox, *Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 52

No. 31

(Boy)

(A) One alone is my sister, having no peer:

more gracious than all other women.

(B) Behold her, like Sothis rising

at the beginning of a good year:

shining, precious, white of skin,

lovely of eyes when gazing.

1. Sweet her lips when speaking:

She has no excess of words.

Long of neck, white breast,

her hair true lapis lazuli.

(D) Her arms surpass gold,

her fingers are like lotuses.

Full her derriere, narrow her waist,

her thighs carry on her beauties.

Lovely of walk when she strides on the the ground,

she has captured my heart in her embrace

(E) She makes the heads of all the men

turn about when seeing her

Fortunate is whoever embraces her-

he is like the foremost of lovers.

(F) Her coming forth appears

like that of her yonder- the *Unique One*.

Descriptions of the female body are really common in the Love Poetry of the Ancient Near East and especially in the love songs of Ancient Egypt. This particular genre dates from the New Kingdom's period (1550-1069 BCE). These poems are ordinary love songs written only for entertainment, the protagonists are humans of royal origin and no religious aspect is noticeable in them. They are simply a delightful ode to sexual love between a boy and a girl[[38]](#footnote-38).

1.2. The female body description in the Song of Songs (*Sol* 4:1-7; 7:2-10)

**Α** 4,1a ἰδοὺ εἶ καλή ἡ πλησίον μου ἰδοὺ εἶ καλή

**Β** 4,1c **τρίχωμά** σου ὡς ἀγέλαι τῶν αἰγῶν αἳ ἀπεκαλύφθησαν ἀπὸ τοῦ Γαλααδ

**Γ** 4,1b **ὀφθαλμοί** σου περιστεραὶ ἐκτὸς τῆς σιωπήσεώς σου

**Δ** 4,2 **ὀδόντες** σου ὡς ἀγέλαι τῶν κεκαρμένων αἳ ἀνέβησαν ἀπὸ τοῦ λουτροῦ αἱ πᾶσαι

διδυμεύουσαι καὶ ἀτεκνοῦσα οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐταῖς

4,3 ὡς σπαρτίον τὸ κόκκινον **χείλη** σου καὶ ἡ λαλιά σου ὡραία ὡς λέπυρον τῆς ῥόας

μῆλόν σου ἐκτὸς τῆς σιωπήσεώς σου

**Ε**. 4,4 ὡς πύργος Δαυιδ **τράχηλός** σου ὁ ῷκοδομημένος εἰς θαλπιωθ χίλιοι θυρεοὶ

κρέμανται ἐπ᾽αὐτόν πᾶσαι βολίδες τῶν δυνατῶν

**ΣΤ'**. 4,5 δύο **μαστοί** σου ὡς δύο νεβροὶ δίδυμοι δορκάδος οἱ νεμόμενοι ἐν κρίνοις

4,6 ἕως οὗ διαπνεύσῃ ἡ ἡμέρα καὶ κινηθῶσιν αἱ σκιαί πορεύσομαι ἐμαυτῷ πρὸς τὸ ὄρος τῆς

σμύρνης καὶ πρὸς τὸν βουνὸν τοῦ Λιβάνου

4,7 ὅλη καλὴ εἶ ἡ πλησίον μου καὶ μῶμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν σοί

**Ζ**. 7,2 a. τί ὡραιώθησαν διαβήματά σου ἐν ὑποδήμασιν θύγατερ Ναδαβ

b. ῥυθμοὶ **μηρῶν** σου ὅμοιοι ὁρμίσκοις

c. ἔργῳ χειρῶν τεχνίτου

**Η**. 7,3 a **ὀμφαλός** σου κρατὴρ τορευτὸς μὴ ὑστερούμενος

Ζ**'.** 7,3b κρᾶμα **κοιλία** σου θιμωνιὰ σίτου πεφραγμένη ἐν κρίνοις

**ΣΤ'’**. 7,4 δύο **μαστοί** σου ὡς δύο νεβροὶ δίδυμοι δορκάδος

**Ε**. 7,5a **τράχηλός** σου ὡς πύργος ἐλεφάντινος

**Δ'.** 7,5c **μυκτήρ** σου ὡς πύργος τοῦ Λιβάνου σκοπεύων πρόσωπον Δαμασκοῦ

**Γ'.** 7,5b **ὀφθαλμοί** σου ὡς λίμναι ἐν Εσεβων ἐν πύλαις θυγατρὸς πολλῶν

**Β’**. 7,6a **κεφαλή** σου ἐπὶ σὲ ὡς Κάρμηλος

b καὶ **πλόκιον κεφαλῆς** σου ὡς πορφύρα

c βασιλεὺς δεδεμένος ἐν παραδρομαῖς

**Α’**. 7,7 τί ὡραιώθης καὶ τί ἡδύνθης ἀγάπη ἐν τρυφαῖς σου

**Coda**

7,8 τοῦτο μέγεθός σου ὡμοιώθη τῷ φοίνικι καὶ οἱ μαστοί σου τοῖς βότρυσιν

7,9 εἶπα ἀναβήσομαι ἐν τῷ φοίνικι κρατήσω τῶν ὕψεων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσονται δὴ μαστοί σου ὡς βότρυες τῆς

ἀμπέλου καὶ ὀσμὴ ῥινός σου ὡς μῆλα

7,10 καὶ λάρυγξ σου ὡς οἶνος ὁ ἀγαθὸς πορευόμενος τῷ ἀδελφιδῷ μου εἰς εὐθύτητα ἱκανούμενος

χείλεσίν μου καὶ ὀδοῦσιν

The description of the Shulamite is found actually in three passages in the *Song of Songs*, in *Sol* 4:1-7; 6:4-7 and 7:2-10. Though the editor copies the first half of the first passage in 6:4-7, while the two other passages seem to form a unified entire body description, from head to the navel, and then from feet to the head again. In those two descriptions, unparalleled in the Old Testament[[39]](#footnote-39), the Shulamite is addressed by the Beloved in direct second person singular, which, with the feminine suffix, is applied outside the Pentateuch to countries or to cities and most often to Jerusalem[[40]](#footnote-40). Right from the beginning of the text thus, we have hints of what we are going to read.

The description in the chapter 4 is ruled by metaphors from the animal and vegetable kingdom: doves, flock of sheep and goats and young roes, color the text with vivid movement and life, whereas pomegranates, lilies, myrrh and frankincense, are used for the Shulamite as an extension of the very strong garden symbolism. And exactly right after some verses (4: 12- 5:1), she is directly likened to a fenced garden and a sealed fountain.

The description in the chapter 7 is much more explicit than in chapter 4 and a lot of attention is focused on the shape of the body: the woman's hips are round (v. 2b), her belly protrudes, if softly (as suggested by its comparison to a heap of wheat, v. 3b), and her navel is large and deep (v.3a). The curve shapes of the body are given place to vertical lines in the second half of the passage, considering the shape of her neck and her nose (v.5-6), and in that way, not only her true femininity is extolled, but also her aristocratic appearance[[41]](#footnote-41).

Both passages share a large geographical scope, covering the entire land of Canaan, and while the chapter 4 understands the physical world as analogous to the human body, the description in the chapter 7 indicates a specific area, traveling south to north, of which Jerusalem is the center and of which in return, the center is the Temple[[42]](#footnote-42).

2. The description of the Beloved in the Song of Songs (*Sol* 5:10-15)

2.1. The male body description motif in the literature of the Ancient Near East

**a. *The God Description Texts*: A Mystical Representation of a deity**

**Babylonian Cult Symbols (*CBS 6060 rev. 1-5, dupl. BM 47463 obv. Ii 31-5/ Late Babylonian Times, 979-539 BCE*)**

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**reverse I[[43]](#footnote-43)**

1. Raisin are his eye-balls
2. A dried fig are his breasts.
3. A pomegranate are his knees.
4. An apple is his ankle bones.
5. A scone is his flesh.

**b. The *Göttertypentext*[[44]](#footnote-44) (New Assyrian period, ca. 972-609 BCE)**

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M. H. Pope, *Probative Pontificating in Ugaritic and Biblical Literature: Collected Essays,* (ed. Mark S. Smith; Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur Münster: Ugarit Verlag 1994), 66-67, (translation of Obs. I 51 - Obs. II 10)

**C[[45]](#footnote-45).**

1. The head is the head of a serpent;
2. From his nostrils mucus trickles,
3. His mouth is beslavered with water drops;
4. He wears horns like those of a see-snake;
5. His horns are twisted into
6. three curls,
7. Wild hair there is upon his cheeks.
8. The body is that of a *purādu*-fish full of stars,

**Rev. IV**

1. The base of his feet are claws,
2. The sole of his foot has no heel;
3. His name is *Sassu-urinnu*, He is a sea-monster, a form of Ea.

Whereas the description of the female body is a common theme in the Love Songs of the Ancient Near East, a male body description is totally absent from this genre. It seems that it emerges from another stream of traditions.

The “male body description” motif, occurs, among many other texts[[46]](#footnote-46), within a separate corpus of ideas in the literature of the Ancient Near East, that of the *God Description Texts,* who date to the Late Babylonian (979 – 539 BCE) and New – Assyrian times (972 – 609 BCE). These texts are the expression of an independent tradition, concerning the mystical representation of a deity, or with other words, the description of its divine body[[47]](#footnote-47). This particular literary corpus is used by editors as a subsequent addition into other texts[[48]](#footnote-48). Critical is the fact, that all those texts share a strong ritualistic content and intend to express a vivid representation and the true presence of the deity as a participant in the very moment that the ritual took place.

Another example of the “male body description” motif here, is the so called *Göttertypentext*,a unique text among the literature of Akkad, which date in the New- Assyrian period (ca. 972- 609 BCE)[[49]](#footnote-49). The text is an Assyrian table of six columns, where upon them are descriptions and depictions of 26 divine statues of gods and mixed beings. But what we have in front of us are descriptions of star – gods, or even better, statues and images of those star – gods[[50]](#footnote-50). All texts share the characteristic of a downward body description, addressed to the deity in the third person singular.

Thus, the context in which the “male body description” motif occurs within the literature of the Ancient Near East, is clearly ritualistic, even magical and astrological in character, and it turns to be that, it is mainly used as a way of describing divine bodies or/ and statues. But, if this particular literary motif occurs within all of the above contexts, how did the editor of the *Song of Songs* came to use this motif and what kind of function does it serve in the Biblical book? These questions we will try to answer in the next paragraph.

2.2. The male body description motif in the *Sol*. 5:10-16

5,10 ἀδελφιδός μου (**דּוֹדִ֥י**) λευκὸς καὶ πυρρός ἐκλελοχισμένος ἀπὸ μυριάδων

5,11 κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ χρυσίον καὶ φαζ βόστρυχοι αὐτοῦ ἐλάται μέλανες ὡς κόραξ

5,12 ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς περιστεραὶ ἐπὶ πληρώματα ὑδάτων λελουσμέναι ἐν γάλακτι καθήμεναι

ἐπὶ πληρώματα ὑδάτων

5,13 σιαγόνες αὐτοῦ ὡς φιάλαι τοῦ ἀρώματος φύουσαι μυρεψικά χείλη αὐτοῦ κρίνα στάζοντα

σμύρναν πλήρη

5,14 χεῖρες αὐτοῦ τορευταὶ χρυσαῖ πεπληρωμέναι θαρσις κοιλία αὐτοῦ πυξίον ἐλεφάντινον ἐπὶ

λίθου σαπφείρου

5,15 κνῆμαι αὐτοῦ στῦλοι μαρμάρινοι τεθεμελιωμένοι ἐπὶ βάσεις χρυσᾶς εἶδος αὐτοῦ ὡς Λίβανος

ἐκλεκτὸς ὡς κέδροι

5,16 φάρυγξ αὐτοῦ γλυκασμοὶ καὶ ὅλος ἐπιθυμία οὗτος ἀδελφιδός μου καὶ οὗτος πλησίον μου

θυγατέρες Ιερουσαλημ

The description at *Sol*. 5:10-16 is given in response to the question of the *Daughters of Jerusalem*, one verse before (*Sol*. 5:9): “What is your beloved (דּוֹד) more than another beloved, O most beautiful among women?”. While bearing in mind that the term דּוֹד differently vocalized, is the root of the name David (דָּוִד), the question here suggests that it is understood, as at *Isa*. 5:1ff, where it only occurs outside the *Song of Songs*. In this prophetic text, well-known as the *Song of the vineyard*, the term דּוֹד denotes God and it is used as an epithet of YHWH. The editor of the *Song of Songs* thus, intends the reader to understand the term in that particular way[[51]](#footnote-51) and he prepares him for the inner meaning of the bride's reply, which is no other than the description song of *Sol*. 5:10-16.

Morphologically, it is a vertical head-to-toes description, which is expressed by the Shoulamite in the third-person singular. This indirect way of referring though, signifies that the Shoulamite does not really see her Beloved, like he is absent and away from her. On the other hand the Beloved describes his Bride directly, in the second person singular, like she is in front of him.

Right from the beginning of this passage (“My Beloved is radiant and ruddy”, *Sol*. 5:10), its lines lead us from one theophanic or apocalyptic text to another[[52]](#footnote-52), while the colors and the many references to the precious stones that attested to the body of the Beloved, make the majority of the commentatorsto approach this description as of a statue[[53]](#footnote-53). Special reference is given to *Dan*. 2:31-45 and the Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great statue where the head of pure gold parallels the gold head of the Beloved at *Sol* 5:11. Whereas the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream symbolizes the kingdoms of this world, which begin by being majestic, symbolized by the fine gold of the head, but degenerate until the feet are no more than an unstable mixture of clay and iron, so that the image when struck is instantly and utterly destroyed, the image in the Song, understood as an aspect of God, remains splendid throughout[[54]](#footnote-54). The bride herself points to this contrast at the conclusion of her praise when she declares “All of him is precious” (*Sol*. 10:16a).

2.3. The function of the male body description in the *Sol*. 5:10-16

Considering now the use and the function of the male body description in the *Song of Songs* one could say the following: When we love someone with all our heart[[55]](#footnote-55), (see also Dt 6:5) we turn to adore him and glorify him; he becomes like a God to us. It is exactly these deep feelings that impress the description of the Beloved by the Shulamite: her Beloved is (like) a god to her.

Furthermore, in another level of interpretationand taking into consideration the extra biblical context out which the “male body description” motif emerges, it could be argued that the editor of the *Songs of Songs* uses it in order to add a clearly ritualistic tone into the whole biblical text. It is exactly this ritualistic character of the book that seems to be acknowledged already from the first century CE. It is Rabbi Akiba who declares that “All the Scriptures are holy, but the *Song of Songs* is the holy of holies”[[56]](#footnote-56).

Now, especially on the passage of *Sol*. 5:10-16, it seems to be a stage in the development of a whole stream of esoteric tradition, which indicates the anthropomorphical representation of the deity, by giving the ecstatic description of its astral body and later on the measurement of its enormous cosmic dimensions. This specific literary motif penetrates a bulk of magic and ritual texts from the Ancient Near East to apocalyptic[[57]](#footnote-57), gnostic[[58]](#footnote-58) and mandaic[[59]](#footnote-59), rabbinic[[60]](#footnote-60) and christian[[61]](#footnote-61) texts, referring to the body as temple and image of the Cosmos[[62]](#footnote-62), and reaching to its peak by ruling the *Shiur Komah* (= *The Measurement of the Divine Body*)tradition[[63]](#footnote-63), where the body of Yahweh, or better the “body of his Presence” (*guf haSchekinah*)[[64]](#footnote-64) is described. The great Gershom Scholem[[65]](#footnote-65) determines the Song to be “the most esoteric aspect of the *Merkavah* mysticism” and he maintains that it actually expresses a kind of idiomorphic “apophatic theology”, where the ***Erhabene*** - in its Kantian sense - of the Godhead is defined and attested with explicit and detailed descriptions. Yet, this exaggeration of finite esthetic tools, such as epithets, names, letters, measurements and numbers, actually reveals the ontological weakness of the human language before an infinite reality, that totaly surpasses it.[[66]](#footnote-66).

3. Summary

In the Song of Songs the two lovers express their admiration and love to each other by describing the beauty of the body of one another. There are in total three descriptions within the book, two for the female body (*Song* 4:1-7; 7: 2-10) and one for the male body (Song 5:10-16).

The two female body descriptions, having parallels in the Love Poetry of the Ancient Near East but not in the Bible, approaching the body of the Shulamite as the physical world, or better the body as the Cosmos. The description though indicates a very specific area, in which Jerusalem is the center and of which in return, the center is the Temple.

On the other hand, the “male body description” motif, emerges not from the Love Poetry genre, but out of extra biblical traditions, which are ritualistic, even magical and astrological in character. There the “male body description” motif is used as a way of describing divine bodies or/ and statues. The editor of the *Song of Songs* is a bearer of these particular traditions and he uses them in order to attest to the דּוֹד, a statuesque shape, which, in the first place, impresses the deep love and glorification, expressed by the Shulamite. The whole book receives also a clearly ritualistic tone and atmosphere, while it seems that the *Sol* 5,10-16 is an elaboration stage of esoteric traditions regarding the anthropomorphic representation of the deity.

**שֶׁ֤אָהֲבָה֙ נַפְשִׁ֔י**" **(Song 1:7):**

**Its Growth and Elaboration in Later Jewish Texts"**

Konstantinos Th. Zarras

Since the times of the ancient Greeks with their numerous hymns and praises to Art and the Muses, it was solemnly believed that true poetry came from the gods. Thus, poetry was a “divine revelation.”[[67]](#footnote-67) It was through the interaction of two distinct entities, Eros and the Soul, which inspiration came forth and inflated the sails of poets and lovers throughout History; for a lover is always a poet and a poet cannot be but only in love.[[68]](#footnote-68) Perhaps there is no greater hymn or song on love than the Song of Songs, a composition that is read today with the same fervor like the day it was written, thousands of years ago. This brief presentation aims not in conquering the vast empire of the poet, but only to pay some attention to some of its aspects; namely, only in the treatment of a single expression in the Song of Songs that came to mean so much to so many through the ages. The expression “you whom my soul loves” played a prominent role in the development of certain trends in mystical Christianity[[69]](#footnote-69) and Judaism (not my cup of tea right now) and is still under study and scrutiny. Both, Judaism and Christianity found in the Song a vast treasure house full of mystical symbols. For Song of Songs has turned out to be a most polyvalent and polysemous text, susceptible to various readings and interpretations. Yet, more importantly, “In the Jewish exegetical context, interpretation of the Song of Songs is one of the chief ways through which individuals and generations expressed their relationship with the loving God.”[[70]](#footnote-70) Here the Song of Songs becomes a metaphor concerning the sacred bond and marriage between God and His holy community, Israel. In such a way, it constitutes the attempt of the faithful –here, the Rabbis-[[71]](#footnote-71) to describe his relationship with his Creator in the form of a dialogue, a love story between a human being and the supernal, indescribable reality that encompasses everything.[[72]](#footnote-72) For often in the midrashic context “erotic language is religious” and “religious language is erotic.”[[73]](#footnote-73)

Now, diving into the text, in Song 1:7 there is a woman speaking to a man[[74]](#footnote-74) and it is here that appears for the first time the expression, **שֶׁ֤אָהֲבָה֙ נַפְשִׁ֔י** “you whom my soul loves.” The very same expression is used in 3:1–4 (4 times) again under the passionate circumstances of a quest. For in the Song of Songs we read about a quest,[[75]](#footnote-75) a yearning for union and love, for to find the “beloved one of my soul.” This expression evinces a heavy load of absence, of inner pain and loss. It expresses the inmost longing for oneness and completion. Its actual meaning is: “He whom I desire with all my being”[[76]](#footnote-76) or “him in whom my whole being exults.” This phrase occurs five times in the Song of Songs (1:7; 3:1, 2, 3, 4), while the Hebrew term nefesh (“soul”) occurs six times (the sixth in 5:6). There we see the verb *ʾāhēv* (= ‘to love’) for a third time (1:3, 4, 7),[[77]](#footnote-77) while the term for ‘love’ (= *ahava*) is met with three times in the Prologue (2:4, 5, 7) and another three times in the Epilogue (8:6–7).[[78]](#footnote-78) The same expression can be found in 1 Sam 20:17 about the friendly love between David and Jonathan, where the two resemble a lot to the famous friendship of Damon and Phidias or to the one between Achilles and Patroclus. Then, this beloved man is described either as a king (Solomon, 1:4, 12) or as a shepherd (1:7), while the woman in love is shown as a “keeper of the vineyards” (1:5–6), as a shepherdess (1:8) or as a princess (3:6–11; 7:2).

Although in many translations the Hebrew nefesh is rendered as ‘soul,’[[79]](#footnote-79) we have to note that this is not the most suitable. To the Western mind, soul is an immaterial part of the human entity that many a time is taken to be even contrary to the physical body. Therefore, in light of its many uses in the OT, a better translation would be someone’s “whole being” or his/her “inner being.”[[80]](#footnote-80) A clear indication of this may be found in the commandment for the *Shema*, “You shall lovethe Lord your God with all your heart and with all your *whole-being* and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5; all emphasis is mine).[[81]](#footnote-81) The expression *nafshi* (“my whole being” or “my soul” in 1:7; 3:1–4; 5:6; 6:12) is replaced now and then in the Song of Songs with others, like *libbi*, ‘my heart’, (5:2) and *karmi*, ‘my vineyard’ (1:6).

Like we mentioned before, the whole enterprise in the Song of Songs is woven around a most meaningful quest; it is clear that somehow there came to be an initial separation and then the need for some kind of journey that would bring about the longed for union. The pains of Ulysses came to mind many a time. The term used for ‘to seek’ is *biqesh*, found in Deut. 4:29, where we read, “From [a foreign land] you will seek (*biqesh*) the LORD your God, and you will find him if you search after him with all your heart and *whole being*”[[82]](#footnote-82) (see also Jer. 29:13). The same term is used for the oracular inquiry, too (Exod. 33:7).

As is evinced in later Rabbinic texts, the quest for the “beloved one” rises now to the dimensions of the Godhead Himself. But in the Song of Songs the name of God appears only once and in the way of a circumlocution or an abbreviation. In 8:6 we read about the “flame of Yah” **(**שַׁלְהֶ֥בֶתְיָֽה).[[83]](#footnote-83) Yet, though the MT is clear, some of the other versions were confused about this expression. Of course, this is a composite word made by *šalhebet* (‘flame’) and *yah*, a well-known abbreviation for the holy Name of God in the OT, the Tetragrammaton, also found in the well known “halleluyah.”[[84]](#footnote-84) Needless to say, this ‘flame of YH’ brings in mind the revelation at the feet of the mount Sinai, when Moses saw a bush aflame, yet not burned (Ex 3:2).[[85]](#footnote-85) It has been maintained that here lies the key for understanding the whole poem and perhaps –I would add- of the transference of the whole *dromenon* to the sphere divine. It is precisely because here love is a “flame of Yah” that the Song is invested with “numinous characteristics” while “the two lovers assume a theomorphic character. To experience love is to experience God.”[[86]](#footnote-86)

But personifications are not unknown in the OT. In a similar way, *hokhmah* (= ‘sophia’) in Proverbs (8:1, 12, 22, also without an article) is personified in a high and glorious female figure and sometimes the two personifications have been connected and even juxtaposed.[[87]](#footnote-87) In Song of Songs the woman is identified with the land of Israel and the numerous references to the beauty of this land (flowers, fruits) and at the same time the metaphors that connect her to Jerusalem and Tirzah, Carmel and Gilead, bring the Song close to Sirach (24), where Wisdom is making her tabernacle in the land of Israel.[[88]](#footnote-88) Even the ‘body’[[89]](#footnote-89) of the ‘lover’ has been linked to the mystical traditions concerning the *Shiur Qomah*.[[90]](#footnote-90) Among other things, the powerful metaphor of the garden (Song 4:12-5:1), a clear image of the garden of Eden,[[91]](#footnote-91) wherefrom the water of life flows, gave birth to another story, the “story of the four” that entered ‘pardes’ in the Tosefta and the Talmud.[[92]](#footnote-92) The mashal that is interpreted there with Song 1:4 (“the king has brought me into his chambers”)[[93]](#footnote-93) has been connected to the early Jewish mystics (like R. Akiva, a leading figure in this “story” and α great scholar) and to the heavenly heikhalot.[[94]](#footnote-94) Although a metaphor for the four rabbinic exegetic methods, *pardes* (PaRDeS)[[95]](#footnote-95) poses as a destination and a place at the same time, while the “king” here is none other than God who invites the worthy mystic into his “chambers.” From this point of view, it is no coincidence that in the Mishnah[[96]](#footnote-96) and in the halakhic debate whether the Song of Songs “renders the hands unclean”[[97]](#footnote-97) (actually, whether it is holy or not), R. Akiva insisted that the Song of Songs should make it into the list of holy books.[[98]](#footnote-98) His temple comparisons, where the Torah is likened to the temple of Jerusalem and the Song of Songs to its Holy of Holies, are quite tale-telling. A couple of elements should not evade our attention in his locution. First, the Song of Songs is “given” to Israel, and the very same language is utilized by the Rabbis concerning the revelation of the Torah on Sinai; and second, the phrase “song of songs” in his evaluation is rendered in an analogous way to the “Holy of Holies” –Song of Songs, Holy of Holies.[[99]](#footnote-99)

Given the most interesting presentation of the Qumranic Song of Songs (ms 4Q106) by Professor Lichtenberger I would like add here only a few intriguing thoughts.[[100]](#footnote-100) The Qumranites had no temple or sanctuary and they send no offerings to the temple of Jerusalem. In several scrolls the mystics that resided at the north-western shore of the Dead Sea referred to their community as the *Yaḥad* (union, ένωσις, κοινωνία, όμιλος). Last, but not least, in the *Songs for the Sabbath Sacrifice* and especially in the so-called *Angelic Liturgy* there is implied a heavily internalized ritual where men and angels were elevated high in the heavenly temple, praising God in unison, as one; in my mind, the idea of the *Yaḥad* might well have been born out of this image of mystical communion between devoted men and angels –yet, not with God. The Christian doctrine of the Church as a *koinwnia* not made by hands might be an evolution of the same idea.[[101]](#footnote-101) After all, Jesus Christ is the *nymphios*, the “bridegroom” in the NT and the supernal “beloved One” of later Christian mystics. As is very well documented, the mystical union with him was their utmost goal. Thus, according to Origen in his commentary to the Song of Songs,[[102]](#footnote-102) Christ and *ecclesia* were the lover and beloved of the Song, a bridegroom and his bride, his theonymphe, eternally one and eternally longing for each other.[[103]](#footnote-103)

It is in the *Mekilta to Exodus*[[104]](#footnote-104) that R. Akiba speaks of the beauty of God and answers a hypothetical question of the nations addressed to Israel, “'What is your beloved more than another beloved … (Song 5:9), [what is he] ‘that you die for Him, and that you are slain for Him?’” Here the theme of love and death in the Song (1:3) is related to the Psalm (44:23), where it is stated, “For your sake we are slain all the day.” To this the Israelites reply with another verse from the Song (2:16), where it is stated, “My beloved is mine, and I am His.” Therefore, God belongs only to Israel and to nobody else. Undoubtedly, this is nuptial language, where the community of Israel stands like a bride or like a wife to God who is her heavenly companion and bridegroom.

In an interesting turn, *Midrash Rabbah*, in its commentary to the Song of Songs 1:7, ﻿ R. Judah applied this verse to Moses and involved the people of Israel, “the ﻿nation that my soul loves, nation for which I have offered my life.”[[105]](#footnote-105) More interestingly, after only a few lines “the one whom my soul loves” is linked closely to the death of Moses and the appointment of “shepherds” in order to guide them.[[106]](#footnote-106) Here the prophets are “compared to women” and this is interpreted as though the prophet is a woman who has to ask from her “husband” –that is, God, “the Father in Heaven”- all that her “household” –the nation of Israel- needs for her wellbeing. The expression “by night on my bed” (Song 3:1) is explained as both the neglecting of the Torah and as the slavery in Egypt.[[107]](#footnote-107) This period here is called “the night.” Again, Moses is “him whom my soul loves”[[108]](#footnote-108) and the Hebrews in the land of the Pharaoh are the community that is depicted as a woman who desperately needs a deliverer. Another explanation is offered later on, this time applying the expression “him whom my soul loves” to the prophet Daniel, while the “watchmen” now are the “Chaldaeans” that mistreated the Jews.[[109]](#footnote-109) Of course, the “night” here applies to the Babylonian exile.

Now, the Zohar teems with references to the Shir haShirim and some of them relate to the “beloved one” in 1:7 and 3:1-4. For this very enigmatic text, the Song of Songs is an all-inclusive song (325), given as a blessing from above, it is where the secret of the “holy complete Merkavah” is hidden (328), it was inspired by the “Patriarchs” (323)[[110]](#footnote-110) and sung by Solomon (324). Of course, here everything and everyone is connected or attributed to the various sefirot on the kabbalistic Tree of Life. It should be noted that the sefirot are attributes or aspects of the Godhead that near to be separate entities, although indispensable members of the living organism called ‘Tree of Life’ (Etz haHayyim). The “Holy One” is connected to the middle sefirah Tiferet and He is fed by the “Supernal Mother” (that is, sefirah Binah), while the “Assembly of Israel” is called the Shekinah[[111]](#footnote-111) –actually, the lower Shekinah.[[112]](#footnote-112) The union between the “Holy One” and the “Shekinah’’ presents all the characteristics of a *hieros gamos* (holy marriage). The Zohar uses this particular verse from the Song when it refers to the exile of the Shekinah/Israel and applies the expression “you whom my soul loves” to the “Holy One” that acts through sefirah Tiferet. Exile, then, brought a break to the union of the two and as a result the constant flow of blessings and nourishment that came from above ceased. Now the Bride, Israel, Shekinah, is counseled to follow in the steps of the “patriarchs,” for they are the true “holy Chariot on high,” that is, the Merkavah of the mystics, and the ways of the tzaddikim, the righteous, in order to return to the previous state of sacred union.[[113]](#footnote-113) In another instance, again in the Zohar, another Rabbi, Eleazar, is said to expound on the same expression from the Song of Songs, now in 3:1, presenting once more “him whom my soul loves” as the sefirah Tiferet and the “Assembly of Israel” as the poor ‘damsel in distress.’ Yet, here one more very intriguing element shows up; the quest for her “beloved one” is fruitless so far because she lies in a foreign and “unclean land,” while their union can only take place in “His palace.”[[114]](#footnote-114) Of course, this last comment points directly to the “story of the four”[[115]](#footnote-115) that entered *pardes* and the mashal there, linking to Song of Songs 1:4, “The king has brought me to his chambers (חֲדָרָ֗יו)” (TNK). Now, as is known, R. Akiva was a famous Torah scholar and a highly revered mystic, while among his pupils was R. Shimon bar Yohai, the presumed author of the Zohar, the main medieval kabbalistic work. According to the same paragraph in the Zohar, the union of the “beloved one” (“Him”) with the “Assembly of Israel” (the young woman) brought forth “large numbers of tzaddikim” and “blessings” for the whole world. Thus, here the union of the two has a cosmic or universal significance, betraying again elements of *hieros gamos* (sacred marriage)[[116]](#footnote-116) and of *devekut*, the highest form of clinging to the Godhead in mystical Judaism. This is shown more lucidly in yet another instance in the Zohar, where the speaker in Song 1:7 is the moon addressing her request to the sun. Elsewhere in the Zohar the feminine principle is called a “garden,” again on the grounds of the Song of Songs (4:12).

In the *Zohar Hadash* and in the *Midrash Shir haShirim*, after enumerating the duties of the faithful in order to reach wisdom and “to understand the mystery of his Master” and the “mysteries of the world above,” a warning is addressed to all those who “go to that world” (the celestial world of the sefirot) “without knowledge” (i.e., of the mystical kind). The verse from Song 1:7 is used here as to mean the dialogue of the soul where she asks for the revelation of “the secrets of supernal wisdom, how you shepherd and guide the celestial world. Teach me the secrets of wisdom that I have not yet learned or acquired …, so that I may not be ashamed at those supernal levels which I am to enter, for I have not yet understood them.”[[117]](#footnote-117) Here the link with the “story of the four” that entered *pardes* lies clearly in the background. More clearly, the “beloved one of my soul” is here a revealer of mystical wisdom that may elevate one to the ladder of the sefiroth on the Tree of Life and to the eternal bliss of the Godhead. Similarly, Maimonides in his *Mishneh Torah*, explicitly states that the Song is but a parable for the “all-consuming love of the soul for God.”[[118]](#footnote-118)

Finally, in his *Megillat Amraphel*, R. Abraham Eliezer ben Halevi (ca. 1538-1600), a Spanish kabbalist that lived in Constantinople and ended up in Safed after the expulsion from Spain in 1492, delves with the death of martyrs and their ways to face an agonizing fate at stake. Among its many interesting points, one of which is the visualization of the Name of God during the torment for eliminating physical pain and facilitating his heavenly ascent, a technique used before by Issac of Accre (c. 1270-1350) in his *Me’irat ‘Einayim*, is again the identification of the “beloved one” with God.[[119]](#footnote-119) R. Abraham interprets the Song of Songs as the dialogue between the soul of the righteous martyr and the Father, the “Beloved One,” who is about to receive him. Of course, *Megillat Amraphel* draws heavily from the mystical *Midrash haNe’elam* (*Zohar* I:125b), where the divine Throne -as the “Mother of Souls”- has a dialogue with the ascending soul, and from R. Yitzḥaq ibn Sahula’s (13th cent.) commentary on the Song of Songs.[[120]](#footnote-120) Unfortunately, the time is not enough to expand. Suffice it to say that all these views on the Song of Songs, one way or another, rest upon the Talmudic teaching concerning the deaths of Moses, Aaron and the righteous. According to bBaba Bathra 17a,[[121]](#footnote-121) they passed away when God took their souls with a kiss. It is no wonder then that Jewish mystics, in their striving to sanctify the Name and to make their lives an offering to their Celestial “Beloved One,” all their actions a living poem, saw in the verse of Song 1:2, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,”[[122]](#footnote-122) the ideal exodus from a life of persecution and strife. Then, perhaps, when Thomas S. Eliot wrote that “Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood,” some of its verses might have played a truly mystical tone in him.

**Intertextual relationships between the Song of Songs and Revelation: the convergence of two “forbidden” texts**

**S. Despotis-P. Stamatopoulos**

Revelation is often interpreted as a rereading of the book of Ezekiel due to their many similarities[[123]](#footnote-123). In this study, we shall focus on rereading Revelation on the basis of Song of Songs, noting the intertextual connections between two seemingly different biblical texts in terms of their subject: the former is known for its violent images, while the latter celebrates love. Specifically, we shall be examining the chapters framing the eschatological core of Revelation (4-21), which are predominantly connected to the Community that the book is addressed to[[124]](#footnote-124).

Firstly, we should make some remarks regarding the two texts with an emphasis on similarities and differentiations. The Song is a Wedding Song while Revelation belongs to the prophetic genre, revealing the present and the future. Moreover, the structure of this prophetic work is reminiscent of Aristotle’s definition of tragedy: “[an] action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself”[[125]](#footnote-125). It is a narrative with a distinct beginning, middle and end, a structure in which the listeners are progressively led to the conclusion, after having experienced the battle of the Beast and the Lamb and after having decided whether to side with the ones bearing the Mark or the ones bearing the Seal. The aforementioned conflict –an important part of myths, a chance to test the heroic qualities and greatness of the protagonist– is crucial to the structure of Revelation (especially in the sets of seven) because it emphasizes the Bridegroom’s majesty. Of course, such a conflict of cosmic dimensions is not found in the Song. Although the protagonists of both texts are “kings”, Solomon (Song) seduces[[126]](#footnote-126), while Jesus (Revelation) is a faithful witness, *the prince of the kings of the earth*[[127]](#footnote-127). We should also note that women, as symbols, are more elaborately presented in Revelation: the archetypical fertile mother in Heaven (Rev. ch. 12), the great whore in the desert and the bride, the New Jerusalem. Another important differentiation is space and spatial movement: Revelation focuses on Patmus / the desert, instead of the earthly Jerusalem – the main stage of the Song’s action. Moreover, the presentation of space in the prophetic text suggests a vertical movement from beneath to above (Lower/Upper = Temple/Palace and New Jerusalem).

Apart from these differentiations, the two books have served as inspiration and central motif in countless literary works through the centuries and, at the same time, have remained absent in the official rituals and worship of the Eastern Orthodox Church, despite their popularity among early Christians[[128]](#footnote-128). Justin the Martyr attests to Revelation’s widespread use and the treatises on the Song by Ecclesiastical writers and Fathers of the Church (Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, allusions in *Philokalia*) indicate a profound interest[[129]](#footnote-129). Unofficially, the two books remain intrinsically connected to official rituals. The Song, a “sung drama” according to Origen (*Prologus - Homiliae in Canticum Canticorum,* 1.1), is still heard in the Synagogue during Pesach[[130]](#footnote-130). Revelation, with its dramatic structural narrative and its hymns –especially in the scenes of heavenly worship– was inspired on a Sunday[[131]](#footnote-131) or was even narrated that specific day; in the aforementioned context, it could have been used as a reminder of the Resurrection, the Exodus from Hades. It should also be noted that even in Synagogue, the Song, along with (a) the primeval history (Gen. 1-3) and (b) the introduction (ch. 1, Cherubs) and ending of Ezekiel (ch. 39-50, new Temple), was called *deuterosis* and was read only when the Jew (who would begin reading the Torah with Leviticus) would reach the prime age of 25 years[[132]](#footnote-132). Is it actually unrelated that in Revelation, the *deuterosis* has exerted its influence on its author’s thoughts?

Having noted the similarities between these two works, we focus on the topic set forth by this study: intertextual connections. In two structurally important positions, the author of Revelation most probably alludes to the Song. We emphasise the word “probably”, as John does not quote (except in one instance: Rev. 2: 27 = Ps. 2:9) directly books of the Holy Scripture[[133]](#footnote-133), despite the fact that he is well-versed in the biblical symbolic language[[134]](#footnote-134). The prophet of the Apocalypse uses several biblical pre-texts and creatively transforms them (*Saettigung* – *Einschmelzung* - *Transformation*[[135]](#footnote-135)) in order to convey the significance of resistance –under pain of death– from bowing to the Beast.

The two allusions to the Song, can be traced to following parts: (a) In the conclusion of the 1st septet of the Epistles, the listener is intrigued and stimulated with the depiction of Jesus, who, out of respect to the freedom of the subject (as opposed to the advocates of *Pax Romana*), knocks on the door (Rev. 3:20), not to disappear as he does in the Wedding Song, but to dine personally with each faithful servant, thus elevating him or her to the same level as Himself and the Father. This is followed by John’s journey to (the one) heaven, the depiction of the heavenly Temple-Palace and the portrayal of Him who sits on the throne[[136]](#footnote-136). With the reception of the sealed book by Jesus Christ, who is also described as the Lamb, commences the eschatological drama. The scene of the knocking on the door is also found at a very characteristic part of the Song: it is at its core (5:2) [[137]](#footnote-137). The bride’s search in Jerusalem and the descriptions of the beauty of the protagonists, as precious materials and physical locations of beauty (Song 5:8-16 and 7:1-13 respectively), can also be parallelised to Rev. 4-5.

(b) The conclusion of the Song is possibly echoed at the end of Revelation, when the Wedding has already been announced and the New Jerusalem –which has elements of paradise– is descending upon the mountain. Only then do we see the return of the listener through dialogue to the reality of the earthly gathering. In conjunction with the reference to water and to other heavenly elements, we hear the Bride and the Spirit cry out “come, [Jesus]” (Rev. 22:17). Simultaneously, the Nicolaites are damned / ostracised as they have given in to fornication and lust –both mental and spiritual (the unholy lust of Aphrodite Pandemus[[138]](#footnote-138)). This call/invitation (which alludes to the Lord’s prayer – Matt. 6:10, Lu. 11:2) may be in opposition to the “Make haste” (“Φύγε”) of the Bride - Shulamite with which the Song is concluded (8:14). Therefore, at the end of Revelation, after *listening* to the Book (even perhaps of the entire Bible)[[139]](#footnote-139), the Church is prepared to welcome the Lord, as opposed to what happened at the end of the 1st septet of the Epistles. We no longer observe the pattern of “approach – departure” which is seen throughout the Song.

One initial conclusion: the intertextual connections are discerned in (a) the end of the introduction and (b) the epilogue of Revelation, as 3:20 basically concludes the first septet of the Epistles. This septet is introduced by the majestic revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of Man (1:9 and *passim*). The eschatological drama *per se* begins with chapter 4 and, in order for the listener to participate, he must know his true self, to be purified from the established political ideology and be ushered into a congregation with true Wisdom. If the listener experiences the text, especially the clash of the Lamb with the Beast, then he will finally empirically understand the longing of the Song; it is a text which remains incomplete at its finale (“*φύγε*, ἀδελφιδέ μου”, Song 8:14), as it seeks the communion with the Bridegroom. This is the longing of the listener, as well. We believe that through his text, John does not try to simply inform about what is about to happen; instead he leads his listeners through the revelation into a transformation of their very existence, just as Plato and subsequent authors did[[140]](#footnote-140). An extremely useful tool in his arsenal for this transformation is the Song.

We would argue that the Song may have been popular in gatherings of not only affluent Jews but also of members of the Churches specifically mentioned in Revelation. These members had been swayed by the Nicolaites (who were opposed by John), a group where female prophets, such Jezebel of Thyatira (2:20), had a prominent position. The appealing parts of the Song to the aforementioned group were: (a) the affluence of the Bride in the present; this affluence in Revelation, however, is an element of the Whore, the Eternal City / Rome[[141]](#footnote-141), whose ending is indeed reminiscent to that of Jezebel in 2 Kings / 4 Kingdoms. (b) The autonomy of the Bride, who is projected as the Throne (Yahwe’s Merkabah)[[142]](#footnote-142) and as the anti-Shulamite, since she won’t obey to the age-old tradition that wants brides to be bought and sold, and used as a means of fertilization – always within the constraints of marriage. This classic “sin” is no longer categorised as such[[143]](#footnote-143). (c) The “de-moralisation, de-sanctification” which is found in the Song[[144]](#footnote-144). The Shulamite, herself, does not hesitate to create a parody using stereotypical biblical expressions[[145]](#footnote-145). (d) In general, the Song is a perfect fit to feasts and may have been heard in gatherings of the Nicolaites as an alternate reading to the popular platonic works *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. Let it be noted that the decorations of wealthy Roman manors in Asia Minor had intense heavenly and bucolic decorations. Besides, “Mystery” (17:7), is a name of the Whore / Rome; ROMA may be an anagram of the word AMOR (“love”), as the Romans were thought to be descendants of Aphrodite through Aeneas. (e) In some of the recipient Churches, the faithful –who according to 1 John 3:9, have the seed of God– believed that through baptism or some ritual they were christened as “brides” (this connection being underlined by Song 8:6). Let it be noted that in Revelation the taking of manna (which is a reference to the Eucharist) is the penultimate eschatological gift[[146]](#footnote-146). (f) It is deliberate that in Revelation, the senses of sight and hearing are prevalent, unlike those of smell, taste and touch; these were perhaps connected to the gatherings of the Protognostic cycles and the feasts of charity (“ἀγάπαι”), which according to the Letter of Jude, had been twisted into spots, flaws (“σπιλάδες”, Jude 12). (g) If the Song is read in conjunction with Ecclesiastes, which was also traditionally attributed to Solomon, it could answer the questions set forth by the erotic text about the importance of the moment and not the unknown and unspecified future. This intense study and quest for knowledge is for Ecclesiastes a cause of pain (Eccl. 1:18).

On the other hand, the Song, as we can see from Chart A (the points where the texts correspond), was also particularly popular in the cycle of John, a group which regarded as its leader the Student of love. In John’s Gospel, chapters 1-4, Jesus Christ, Wisdom incarnate, is presented as the Bridegroom, who provides abundant wine, life-giving water and cures. Moreover, near the end of the Gospel, Jesus’ sepulchre is located in a garden (John 19:41), a place which can be viewed as an intertextual allusion to the gardens of Eden and of the Song. In that garden is where we hear from the resurrected Jesus, as the archetypical Human and King-High Priest, the address “Mariam” to Mary Magdalene –who has been searching for her Lord since the break of dawn– as well as the instruction, “Touch me not” (John 20:17).

Since the Song was popular among Nicolaites and in the Johannine cycle, the author of the Revelation uses / rereads it to perform *transformations*: (a) He connects this specific wedding song not to Ecclesiastes but to the Prophets (and specifically Ezekiel, where there are predominantly “indecent” scenes of the whore-wife in chapter 16) and, only towards the end, to Gen 2-3. (b) If the Song is interpreted as a motivation for a new exodus, a return from “exile” and a revival of the “honeymoon” motif, then it is quite reminiscent of the thematic thread which is permeated through all of the eschatological drama of the Revelation. We cannot assume that this it is accidental; this intertextual connection to the thematic core of the Song is found at the end of the Epistles in Revelation and begins with the incitement of re-establishing the lost “first love” already seen in the Epistle to Ephesus (Rev. 2:4, cp. Mat. 24:12, Jer. 2:2). Of course, the fact that a core theme of the Song is found at the end of the first septet and not at the conclusion of the book of Revelation, is related to the theological intentions of the author. It should be noted that in the time period that the Revelation is written, the Song is referred to by Rabbi Akiva as the “holiest of holies”, in the rabbinical discussion on whether it should be included in the Jewish canon[[147]](#footnote-147). Origen (who is probably influenced by rabbinical mysticism), considers it to be the end of the mystical journey of the soul, following the previous 6 hymns of the Old Testament (Origen, *Prologus - Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum*, 4.5-14) and especially after the study of the first two books of the trilogy “Proverbs – Ecclesiastes – Song”[[148]](#footnote-148). It should be noted that, from the time of Cyril of Jerusalem, the wedding Song in his *Catechisms* (III.8.16) is related to baptism (the end of a long period of catechism), echoes / remnants of which can be seen in Revelation. For John, the Song is the means by which someone has to experience the eschatological drama in all its fullness so as to overturn the effects of the “make haste” of the Song; the listener progresses slowly, experiencing a long narrative of tribulation and hope.

There are more subversions of the Song’s motifs in Revelation, which cause surprise to the listener, similar to the Aristotelian definition of “περιπέτεια” as a course of unexpected plot twists*[[149]](#footnote-149)*. They astound and stimulate the audience into repentance. (a) Firstly, the woman is not the protagonist; it is Jesus Christ, who speaks through the prophet John and the rest of the prophets who belong in his circle. (b) The woman, even though she is not described in a derogatory manner (cp. the Song’s “μέλαινα”, 1:5) at first –since she has a constant relationship of love and friendship with the Lord– at the end of the 1st septet (in the face of the angel of the Church of Laodicea) she appears to no longer have the fire and warmth. Instead she is lukewarm, about to be rejected (3:16). It has already been noted that in the first Epistle, the seemingly charitable Church of Ephesus has already lost its initial love. It is deliberate that in the pinnacle of the septet of the Epistles, the Church and the Angel possess all the negative qualities for a Shulamite, be it poverty, nakedness or blindness[[150]](#footnote-150). It must also be noted that in the final Epistle, the sender, Jesus, presents and refers to himself as the one and true authoritative Wisdom (“ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ”, Rev. 3:14 / Prov. 3:19 and 8:22), which has been identified by early interpreters as the female protagonist of the Song[[151]](#footnote-151). (c) The heavenly choir has the opposing characteristics (be they clothing or sight) from those of the Church of Laodicea[[152]](#footnote-152); the choir has undergone sorrow and martyrdom. On the other hand, the woman’s clothing with bright purple (19:8 ”τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων”), it is described only at the end and only when she has left heaven (12:1) and only when she has sought refuge in the desert (12:6). (d) Christ is represented from the beginning of the Epistles with contrasting characteristics to Solomon. He is the *Old of Days* of Daniel, the Judge and not a Bridegroom. He shocks John, who lays down for dead, and expels the writer’s fear with the touch of His right hand (1, 17). In the Song, there is a sort of vagueness in its succinct and short series of scenes, and the motif of “sleep–arousal” prevails (such as the “distance-approach-distance” motif without completion[[153]](#footnote-153)), while in Revelation, the motif of “life-death” is prevalent, along with a constant call to arms. Bucolic scenes are only set in Heaven (the four animals), where the Son of Man is presented triumphantly as a sacrificial Lamb and not like a gazelle, a dear or a rod of gold (Song 5:10-16, 7:1-9). The awakening and the struggle are necessitated by the archetypical beasts which appear in Revelation’s structural and narrative core.

If the above is true, i.e. the allusions / echoes[[154]](#footnote-154) of the Song in Revelation, then the former is used by John with many subversions so as to stimulate, especially in the Nicolaites, an awakening and a struggle of martyrdom, as the wedding with the Bridegroom will be complete *only once* the Lord has appeared. Before John, Peter stresses in 2 Cor. that in the present time, where the “already-not yet” is experienced, we have engagement gifts, *μνήστρα* (which in Judaism are *kiddushim,* “sanctifications”)[[155]](#footnote-155) and not a marriage, while the Bride is under the influence of satanic forces. The love of the Song must go all the way until death, for the sake of the Bridegroom and his martyrdom, in order to save the entire world. Obviously, this is how John interprets the true end of the Song: “6θές με ὡς σφραγῖδα ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν σου ὡς **σφραγῖδα** ἐπὶ τὸν βραχίονά σου ὅτι κραταιὰ ὡς θάνατος ἀγάπη/ σκληρὸς ὡς ᾅδης ζῆλος περίπτερα αὐτῆς περίπτερα πυρός φλόγες αὐτῆς 7ὕδωρ πολὺ οὐ δυνήσεται σβέσαι τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ ποταμοὶ οὐ σ υγκλύσουσιν αὐτήν ἐὰν δῷ ἀνὴρ τὸν πάντα βίον αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐξουδενώσει ἐξουδενώσουσιν αὐτόν” (Song 8:6-7). As it is strenuously noted in the platonic Symposium, true love is proven through the sacrifice and heroic gestures of the lovers, who are in Revelation seen in the faces of the victorious 144.000, those bearing the stamp, those who follow the Lamb wherever He may lead (Rev. 14:4).

**Chart A: Possible References to the Old Testament**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ΠΑΡΑΛΛΗΛΑ ΚΑΙΝΟΔΙΑΘΗΚΙΚΩΝ ΧΩΡΙΩΝ**  ***ΑΣΜΑ ΑΣΜΑΤΩΝ*** | |
| Απ. 3, 20 | 5, 2 Nestle 25 |
| Ιω. 20, 18 | Ρικαίρ, Η γαμήλια Μεταφορά, 386. |
| **Allusions** | |
| Απ. 12, 1 | Ρικαίρ, Η γαμήλια Μεταφορά, 386. |
| Απ. 15, 6 | Ρικαίρ, Η γαμήλια Μεταφορά, 386. |
| **Echoes** | |
| Απ. 22, 17 | Ρικαίρ, Η γαμήλια Μεταφορά, 386. |
| Ιω. 3, 29 (φίλος νυμφίου)  Ιω. 13, 2  Ιω. 7, 38 (ποταμοί εκ της κοιλίας)  Μτ. 2, 11 [δώρα μάγων]  Λκ. 23, 28 (θυγατέρες Ιερουσαλήμ) | Ρικαίρ, Η γαμήλια Μεταφορά, 386.  Ρικαίρ, Η γαμήλια Μεταφορά, 386.  4, 15 Nestle 26  3, 6 Nestle 28  2, 7 Nestle 28  2, 7. 3, 5. 10 Nestle 28 |

**Chart B: intertextual thematic threads and motifs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ασμα (αμφισβητούμενο) + Λατρεία + Διάλογος + Κίνηση + άσματα + 7άδα  Πρβλ. τη Μαρία στον ανοιξιάτικο νέο Κήπο όπου **ο εσμυρνισμένος Αναστάς** Κύριος (Άνθρωπος, Βασιλεύς, Αρχιερέας) εμφανίζεται **ως κηπουρός** για να προκαλέσει τη μεταστροφή της αλλά όχι το άγγιγμά της  ζώα | αποκαλυψη Εισάγεται με την Αποκάλυψη του Ερχόμενου, την απονομή χάριτος υπό του μάρτυρα πιστού και την απάντηση του ήδη κεκαθαρμένου πιστού |
| ΧΡΟΝΟΣΆνοιξη + ΛατρείαΓάμος = Πάσχα (Σάββατο = Έξοδος) | **ΧΡΟΝΟΣ + Κυριακή (Πάσχα;)**  Ανάμνηση Ανάσταση – Κήπος-Μη μου άπτου  4\*7 |
| ΧΩΡΟΣοριζόντια(Ιερουσαλήμ, , κήπος) | Καθετα (ουρανοσ) περιγραφή Πάτμος – Μικρά Ασία- Ρώμη [ἐξοδος – Νέα Ιερουυσαλήμ) |
| **ΠΡΩΤΟΒΟΥΛΙΑ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΑΣ**  **– ΕΓΩ-**  **ΑΚΟΗ+ΟΣΦΡΗΣΗ**  Εισάγεται **με την αναζήτηση του Νυμφίου/Σολομώντα από τη «μαύρη» νύμφη** η οποία διαβεβαιώνει ότι είναι μύρο το όνομα  ᾆσμα ᾀσμάτων ὅ ἐστιν **τῷ Σαλωμων**  2  **φιλησάτω με ἀπὸ φιλημάτων στόματος αὐτοῦ**  ὅτι ἀγαθοὶ μαστοί σου **ὑπὲρ οἶνον**  3  καὶ ὀσμὴ μύρων σου ὑπὲρ πάντα τὰ ἀρώματα  «μύρον ἐκκενωθὲν» ὄνομά σου  διὰ τοῦτο νεάνιδες ἠγάπησάν σε  4  εἵλκυσάν σε ὀπίσω σου εἰς ὀσμὴν μύρων σου δραμοῦμεν  εἰσήνεγκέν με ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰς τὸ ταμίειον αὐτοῦ  ἀγαλλιασώμεθα καὶ εὐφρανθῶμεν ἐν σοί  ἀγαπήσομεν μαστούς σου ὑπὲρ οἶνον εὐθύτης ἠγάπησέν σε  (Sol 1:1-4) | ΠΡΩΤΟΒΟΥΛΙΑ ΙΗΣΟΥ [+ Εγώ Ιωάννη– ΕΜΕΙΣ (144.000)] –  ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΗ (ΘΕΑ) + ΑΚΟΗ  Ήδη Κεκαθαρμένη η Εκκλησία /Βασίλισσα από το αίμα του Ερχόμενου, με το όνομα «ο μάρτυς ο πιστός, ….»  Τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς  καὶ λ(ο)ύσαντι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν  ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ,  καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ,  αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας [τῶν αἰώνων]· ἀμήν.  7 Ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν,  καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμὸς  καὶ οἵτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν,  καὶ κόψονται ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς.  ναί,  8  ἀμήν. Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ,  λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός,  ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ. (Rev 1:5-6) |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| Νυμφιοσ (ειρηνικά, αναμενόμενος) | Κεφ. 1-3 (παρώναλλά πολεμικά χαρακτηριστικά) ***Φωνή*** που θανατώνει αντί να ελκύει  Θάνατος+Ζωή – Πρβλ. κεφ. 19  Αρνίο |
| ΕΠΙΛΟΓΟΣΤρέξε αγαπημένε και φύγε!Γίνε ζαρκάδι και μικρό ελαφόπουλο στα κορφοβούνια πάνω, κει που φυτρώνουν τ’ αρωματικά φυτά (8, 14). | ΕΠΙΛΟΓΟΣ[[156]](#footnote-156) (Οφείλουν να απομακρυνθούν οι κύνες) Λέγει ὁ μαρτυρῶν ταῦτα,Ναί, ἔρχομαι ταχύ.Ἀμήν. Ναί, ἔρχου, Κύριε Ἰησοῦ! (22, 20). |
| Φύγε | έρχου (και δείπνο) < Κάθαρση |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Νύμφη (Σουλαμίτισσα) + [Ιερουσαλήμ] | Νύμφη + [Λαοδίκεια]+Καινή Ιερουσαλήμ(χλιαρή/ΕΜΕΤΙΚΗ-γυμνή-τυφλή) – όχι έτοιμη να ανοίξει )πρβλ. Ιεζάβελ |

**The Song of the Songs in Jewish**

**and Christian Literature**

Symposium in Greece 19.10.2016

**Ορισμένες παρατηρήσεις σχετικά με την πρόσληψη του Άσματος Ασμάτων στην Κοπτική λογοτεχνία**[[157]](#footnote-157)

Δρ. Νίκος Κουρεμένος

Συγκριτικά με τα υπόλοιπα βιβλία, τα οποία απαρτίζουν το κειμενικό σύνολο που συμβατικά έχει επικρατήσει να αποκαλούμε Παλαιά Διαθήκη[[158]](#footnote-158), το Άσμα Ασμάτων καταλαμβάνει ασυνήθιστη θέση μέσα στα έργα της χριστιανικής γραμματείας που διασώζονται στην Κοπτική γλώσσα. Παρά το γεγονός ότι άμεσες ή έμμεσες αναφορές στο σύνολο σχεδόν των βιβλίων της Παλαιάς Διαθήκης είναι αρκετά συνήθεις σ΄όλα τα είδη της Κοπτικής λογοτεχνικής παραγωγής, δεν συμβαίνει το ίδιο με το Άσμα Ασμάτων, στο οποίο οι αναφορές στα Κοπτικά είναι αξιοσημείωτα σπάνιες. Στο πλαίσιο της παρούσας εργασίας θα εστιάσουμε, αρχικά, στη Κοπτική (σαχιδική) εκδοχή του Άσματος Ασμάτων για να παρουσιάσουμε, εν συντομία, τη σημαντικότερη χειρόγραφη παράδοση σχετικά μ’αυτό. Στη συνέχεια θα επικεντρωθούμε στα δυο μοναδικά, τουλάχιστον στην αντίληψή μας, έργα της Κοπτικής γλώσσας, στα οποία περιλαμβάνονται άμεσες αναφορές στο συγκεκριμένο βιβλικό κείμενο. Πρόκειται για μια ερμηνευτική ομιλία του 5ου αι. που αποδίδεται στον αρχιμανδρίτη της Λευκής Μονής Σενούτε και για ένα θρησκευτικό μακροσκελές και έμμετρο ύμνο που χρονολογείται μεταξύ του 10ου και του 11ου αι. Ο σκοπός αυτής της μελέτης είναι διττός και συνίσταται αφ’ενός μεν στη σύγκριση των χωρίων που χρησιμοποιούνται στα δυο παραπάνω Κοπτικά κείμενα με την Κοπτική και την Ελληνική εκδοχή του Άσματος Ασματών έτσι ώστε να παρουσιάσουμε μια κριτική κειμενική προσέγγιση και αφ’ετέρου στην εξέταση των ερμηνευτικών παραμέτρων, σύμφωνα με τις οποίες αξιοποιήθηκαν τα συγκεκριμένα χωρία.

**1. Η Κοπτική εκδοχή του Άσματος Ασμάτων.**

Ως απαραίτητη προϋπόθεση για την ορθότερη κατανόηση των ζητημάτων που σχετίζονται με την κειμενική παράδοση του Άσματος Ασμάτων θεωρούμε αναγκαία την επισήμανση των παρακάτω εισαγωγικών παρατηρήσεων. Σε πρώτη φάση αξίζει να σημειωθεί ότι όλες οι εκδοχές της Παλαιάς Διαθήκης που σώζονται στα Κοπτικά, ανεξαρτήτως διαλέκτου, προέρχονται από το κείμενο των Εβδομήκοντα (Ο΄). Μ’αυτή την έννοια δεν υπάρχει καμιά ένδειξη για άμεση σύνδεση μεταξύ του πρωτότυπου εβραϊκού κειμένου και της Κοπτικής εκδοχής του[[159]](#footnote-159). Επιπλέον, η απουσία κριτικής έκδοσης της Κοπτικής εκδοχής του Άσματος Ασμάτων σχετικοποιεί κάθε προσπάθεια για ολοκληρωμένη εξέταση της συγκεκριμένη κειμενικής παράδοσης[[160]](#footnote-160). Η εν λόγω σχετικοποίηση, ωστόσο, επιτείνεται ακόμα περισσότερο όταν ληφθεί υπόψιν ότι και η κριτική έκδοση της Ελληνικής εκδοχής που ετοιμάζεται από την Eva Schutz-Flügel για τη σειρά *Göttingen Septuagint* δεν έχει ακόμα δει το φως τη δημοσιότητας[[161]](#footnote-161) με αποτέλεσμα να καθίσταται πρόωρη κάθε προσπάθεια για τελικά συμπεράσματα σ’ότι αφορά και την Κοπτική εκδοχή. Λαμβάνοντας υπ’όψιν όλα τα παραπάνω, θα παρουσιάσουμε στη συνέχεια, εν συντομία, τις σημαντικότερες από τις μαρτυρίες της χειρόγραφης παράδοσης της Κοπτικής εκδοχής του Άσματος Ασμάτων στη σαχιδική διάλεκτο, με βάση, κατά κύριο λόγο, την ταξινόμηση των χειρόγραφων μαρτυριών, όπως αυτή παρουσιάστηκε από τον K. Schüssler[[162]](#footnote-162)*.* Η αρίθμηση των χωρίων του Άσματος αντιστοιχεί σ’αυτήν της έκδοσης του κειμένου των Ο΄ από τον A. Ralfs[[163]](#footnote-163).

**α)** **sa 60**[[164]](#footnote-164)

Όνομα μαρτυρίας: Papyrus Bodmer XL

Τοποθεσία: Γενεύη, Bodmer Foundation

Υλικό: περγαμηνή

Χρονολόγηση: 4ος-5ος αι.

Κείμενο: Ασμ. 1:4-3:1; 4:2-8:12

Έκδοση: Kasser R. - Luisier Ph. (2012)[[165]](#footnote-165)

**β) sa 90**[[166]](#footnote-166)

Όνομα μαρυρίας: Mich. Ms. 166

Τοποθεσία: Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Library

Χρονολόγηση: περ. 7ος αι.

Υλικό: περγαμηνή

Κείμενο: Ασμ. 1:1-8:14

Έκδοση: Shier L.A. (1942)[[167]](#footnote-167)

**γ) sa 75**[[168]](#footnote-168)

Όνομα μαρτυρίας: Or. 5984

Τοποθεσία: Λονδίνο, British Library

Υλικό: πάπυρος

Χρονολόγηση: 7ος αι.

Κείμενο: Άσμ. 1:13-17, 2:1-5.8-14.17, 3:1-4.6-11,

4:3-11.13-16, 5:1-2.5-12.14b, 6:1-12, 7:1-14, 8:1-14.

Έκδοση: Thompson H. (1908)[[169]](#footnote-169)

**δ) sa 22.8**[[170]](#footnote-170)

Όνομα μαρτυρίας: Copte 1293, foll. 140-141

Τοποθεσία: Παρίσι, Bibliothèque Nationale

Υλικό: περγαμηνή

Χρονολόγηση: 11ος αι.

Κείμενο: Ασμ. 3:8-5:7

Έκδοση: G. Maspero (1892)[[171]](#footnote-171)

**ε) P1**

Όνομα μαρτυρίας: Copte 1293, foll. 134-136

Τοποθεσίας: Παρίσι, Bibliothèque nationale

Υλικό: περγαμηνή

Χρονολόγηση: 11ος αι.

Κείμενο: Άσμ. 1:1-7, 4:16-5:15, 5:15-17,

6:1-12, 7:1.2.4-13, 8:1-7

Έκδοση: G. Maspero (1892)[[172]](#footnote-172)

**στ) P2**

Όνομα μαρτυρίας: copte 1311, foll. 76-78r.

Τοποθεσία: Παρίσι, Bibliothèque nationale

Paris, BN copte 1311, foll. 76-78r

Κείμενο: Άσμ. 4:1-6; 8:7-14.

Υλικό: περγαμηνή

Χρονολόγηση: 10ος - 11ος αι.

Έκδοση: G. Maspero (1892)[[173]](#footnote-173)

Σύμφωνα με την παράθεση των παραπάνω στοιχείων καθίσταται σαφές ότι την αρχαιότερη μαρτυρία της Κοπτικής εκδοχής του Άσματος Ασμάτων στη σαχιδική διάλεκτο αποτελεί το χειρόγραφο sa 60 της Συλλογής Bodmer που φυλάσσεται στη Γενεύη και χρονολογείται μεταξύ 4ου και 5ου αι[[174]](#footnote-174). Το χειρόγραφο sa 90 της συλλογής του Michigan University που χρονολογείται τον 7ο αι. είναι, επίσης, αξιόλογης σημασίας, δεδομένου ότι διασώζει το σύνολο του κειμένου του Άσματος Ασμάτων. Στην ίδια περίοδο χρονολογείται και το χειρόγραφο sa 75 από την British Library του Λονδίνου. Τέλος σημαντικό μέρος του βιβλικού κείμενου σώζεται στα σπαράγματα της Κοπτικής συλλογής της Βibliothèque nationale στο Παρίσι, και συγκεκριμένα στις μαρτυρίες sa 22.8, P1 και P2.

**2. Η πρόσληψη του Άσματος Ασμάτων στην Κοπτική λογοτεχνία**

Όπως επισημάνθηκε και στην εισαγωγή, τα δυο μοναδικά, τουλάχιστον στην αντίληψή μου, έργα της Κοπτικής λογοτεγχνίας, στα οποία υπάρχει άμεση αναφορά στο Άσμα Ασμάτων αποτελούν μια ομιλία που αποδίδεται στον αρχιμανδρίτη Σενούτε κατά τον 5ο αι. και ένας θρησκευτικός ύμνος του 10ου αι.

**2.1 *Καθώς έκατσα στην κορυφή ενός βουνού***

Ο Σενούτε (348-452)[[175]](#footnote-175) υπήρξε μεταρρυθμιστής του αιγυπτιακού μοναχισμού και ηγούμενος της Λευκής Μονής, πλησίον της πόλης Ατρίπη στην Άνω Αίγυπτο. H εκτεταμένη συγγραφική του παραγωγή[[176]](#footnote-176), περιλαμβάνει κυρίως επιστολές και ομιλίες, με τις οποίες βρίσκει αφορμή να εκφράσει με επιθετικό τρόπο την αντίθεσή του στη διάδοση αιρετικών διδασκαλιών και την άσκηση ειδωλολατρικών πρατικών από τους κατοίκους της Άνω Αιγύπτου, ενώ ταυτόχρονα με τους μοναστικούς του κανόνες εκφράζει την δική του οπτική σχετικά με ζητήματα που άπτονται της μοναστικής ζωής και πνευματικότητας. Η ομιλία που θα εξετασθεί στη συνέχεια είναι γνωστή με την αρχική της φράση *Καθώς έκατσα στην κορφή ενός βουνού*[[177]](#footnote-177)και αποτελεί στην ουσία κήρυγμα με κεντρικό θέμα την ουσία της Εκκλησίας, το οποίο χαρακτηρίζεται από μια πλήρως εκκλησιολογική ερμηνεία της Αγίας Γραφής, ενώ ταυτόχρονα ένα μεγάλο μέρος του αφιερώνεται στο Άσμα Ασμάτων[[178]](#footnote-178).

**2.1.1. Η Εκκλησία ως περιστέρα**

Σύμφωνα με την αλληγορική ερμηνευτική προσέγγιση του Σενούτε στο Άσμα Ασμάτων, η νεαρή κοπέλα του κειμένου θα πρέπει να ταυτιστεί με την Εκκλησία, η οποία μάλιστα παρομοιάζεται ως περιστέρα:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ⲛⲓⲙ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲧϣⲁϫⲉ ϩⲛⲥⲟⲗⲟⲙⲱⲛ ϫⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲧⲁϣⲃⲉⲉⲣⲉ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲛⲉⲥⲱⲥ ⲉⲓⲙⲏⲧⲉⲓ ⲧⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲧϫⲡⲟ ⲛⲛⲉⲥϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲛⲭⲣⲓⲥⲧⲓⲁⲛⲟⲥ ⲉⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲧⲟⲥ ⲟⲛ ⲧⲉⲧⲟⲩϫⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲧⲁϣⲃⲉⲉⲣⲉ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲉⲧϫⲏⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ ⲛⲧⲉⲥⲙⲁⲁⲩ ⲉⲥⲥⲟⲧⲡ ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲧⲁⲥϫⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲓⲧⲁ ⲟⲛ ϫⲉ ⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲙⲏ ⲧⲉⲧϩⲓⲧⲟⲩⲱⲓ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲥ ⲛⲧⲉⲉⲓ ⲛⲧⲟ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲟⲙⲡⲉ ϩⲙⲡⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲛⲧⲡⲉⲧⲣⲁ ϩⲓⲧⲟⲩⲱϥ ⲙⲡⲥⲟⲃⲧ ⲉⲧϩⲓⲃⲟⲗ | Γιατί ποιά άλλη θα μπορούσε να είναι αυτή, για την οποία ο Σολωμόντας είπε: «ἡ πλησίον μου, καλή μου, περιστερά μου» έαν όχι η Εκκλησία, που γεννά τα παιδιά της, τους Χριστιανούς, καθ’ομοίωση μ’αυτήν; Αυτή [η Εκκλησία] είναι εκείνη, για την οποία ειπώθηκε: «ἡ πλησίον μου, περιστερά μου, τελεία μου», «μία ἐστὶ τῇ μητρὶ αὐτῆς, ἐκλεκτή ἐστι τῇ τεκούσῃ αὐτήν» και επίσης «ἀνάστα, ἐλθέ, ἡ πλησίον μου, καλή μου, περιστερά μου, καὶ ἐλθέ, σὺ περιστερά μου, ἐν σκέπῃ τῆς πέτρας, ἐχόμενα τοῦ προτειχίσματος». |

Στο παραπάνω απόσπασμα[[179]](#footnote-179) ο συγγραφέας χρησιμοποιεί αυτολεξεί τα χωρία 2:10, 5:2, 6:9 και 2:13-14 από το Άσμα Ασμάτων. Στον ακόλουθο πίνακα παρατίθενται η εκδοχή των Ο΄, καθώς και η εκδοχή του Σενούτε με την εκδοχή του Κοπτικού Άσματος Ασμάτων συνοδευόμενες από μετάφραση στη νεοελληνική[[180]](#footnote-180).

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| --- | --- |
| **Ασμ. 2:10** | |
| Ο΄ | ἡ πλησίον μου, καλή μου, περιστερά μου |
| Σενούτε | ⲧⲁϣⲃⲉⲉⲣⲉ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲛⲉⲥⲱⲥ  : η φίλη μου, η όμορφη περιστέρα μου |
| Κοπτικό  Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲧⲁϣⲃⲉⲉⲣ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲛⲉⲥⲱⲥ (sa 60)  : η φίλη μου, η όμορφη περιστέρα μου |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ασμ. 5:2** | |
| Ο΄ | ἡ πλησίον μου, περιστερά μου, τέλειά μου |
| Σενούτε | ⲧⲁϣⲃⲉⲉⲣⲉ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲉⲧϫⲏⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ  : η φίλη μου, η τέλεια περιστέρα μου. |
| Κοπτικό  Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲧⲁϣⲉⲗⲉⲉⲧ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲟⲡⲉ ⲉⲧϫⲏⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ (P1)  : η νύφη μου, η τέλεια περιστέρα μου |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ασμ. 6:9** | |
| Ο΄ | μία ἐστὶ τῇ μητρὶ αὐτῆς, ἐκλεκτή ἐστι τῇ τεκούσῃ αὐτήν |
| Σενούτε | ⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ ⲛⲧⲉⲥⲙⲁⲁⲩ ⲉⲥⲥⲟⲧⲡ ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲧⲁⲥϫⲡⲟⲥ  : μονάκριβη ήταν της μάνας της, διαλεχτή εκείνης που την γέννησε |
| Κοπτικό  Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ ⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ̅ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲥⲙⲁⲁⲩ ⲉⲥⲥⲟⲧⲡ̅ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ̅ ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲧⲁⲥϫⲡⲟⲥ (sa 60)  : μονάκριβη ήταν της μάνας της, διαλεχτής εκείνης που την γέννησε |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ασμ. 2:13-14** | |
| Ο΄ | ἀνάστα, ἐλθέ, ἡ πλησίον μου, καλή μου, περιστερά μου, καὶ ἐλθέ, σὺ περιστερά μου, ἐν σκέπῃ τῆς πέτρας, ἐχόμενα τοῦ προτειχίσματος |
| Σενούτε | ⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲙⲏ ⲧⲉⲧϩⲓⲧⲟⲩⲱⲓ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲥ ⲛⲧⲉⲉⲓ ⲛⲧⲟ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲟⲙⲡⲉ ϩⲙⲡⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲛⲧⲡⲉⲧⲣⲁ ϩⲓⲧⲟⲩⲱϥ ⲙⲡⲥⲟⲃⲧ ⲉⲧϩⲓⲃⲟⲗ  : σήκω, έλα, αγαπημένη, όμορφη περιστέρα μου, έλα, εσύ περιστέρα μου στη σχισμή της πέτρας, επί της εξωτερικής πλευράς του τείχους |
| Κοπτικό  Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲙⲏ ⲧⲉⲧϩⲓⲧⲟⲩⲱⲉⲓ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲥ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲉⲓ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟ ⲧⲁϭⲣⲟⲙⲡⲉ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲛ̅ⲧⲡⲉⲧⲣⲁ ϩⲓⲧⲟⲩⲱϥ ⲙ̅ⲡⲥⲟⲃⲧ̅ ⲉⲧϩⲓⲃⲟⲗ (sa 60)  : σήκω, έλα, αγαπημένη, όμορφη περιστέρα μου, έλα εσύ περιστέρα μου στη σχισμή της πέτρας, επί της εξωτερικής πλευράς του τείχους |

Από τη σύγκριση των παραπάνω αποστασμάτων καθίσταται εμφανής η ταύτιση των χωρίων της ομιλίας του Σενούτε με την Κοπτική εκδοχή του Άσματος και μάλιστα με την αρχαιότερη και εγγύτερη στο Σενούτε χειρόγραφη μαρτυρία, δηλαδή την sa 60. Αξιοσημείωτη, ωστόσο, είναι η μικρή διαφοροποίηση, η οποία αφορά το στίχο 5:2, όπως αυτός διασώζεται στη μαρτυρία P1, όπου η λέξη ϣⲃⲉⲉⲣⲉ (φίλη) έχει αντικατασταθεί από τη λέξη ϣⲉⲗⲉⲉⲧ (νύμφη)[[181]](#footnote-181).

**2.1.2. Η ομορφιά της Εκκλησίας**

Στο δεύτερο απόσπασμα που ακολουθεί από την ομιλία του Σενούτε[[182]](#footnote-182) περιγράφεται με γλαφυρό τρόπο η ομορφία της Εκκλησίας:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ⲡⲉⲥⲥⲟⲛ ⲏ ⲡⲉⲥϣⲃⲏⲣ ⲟ ⲙⲙⲛⲧⲣⲉ ⲙⲡⲉⲥⲥⲁ ⲙⲛⲡⲉⲥⲉⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲛⲡⲉⲥⲁⲛⲁⲓ ⲙⲛⲧⲉⲥϭⲟⲙ· ϫⲉ ⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲧⲁϣⲃⲉⲉⲣⲉ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲙⲡⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲛⲉⲥⲱ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲛⲑⲓⲉⲗⲏ͞ⲙ ⲉⲣⲉϯϩⲟⲧⲉ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲛⲛϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲧⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲛ ϫⲉ ⲉⲓⲥϩⲏⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲥⲱ ⲧⲁϣⲃⲉⲉⲣⲉ ⲉⲓⲥϩⲏⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲥⲱ ⲛⲟⲩⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲉⲛⲃⲁⲗ ⲛϭⲣⲟⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲛⲉ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲡⲣⲟⲫⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲙⲛⲛⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲙⲉϩ ⲙⲡ̅ⲙ̅ⲁ̅ ⲉϥⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ | Ο αδελφός ή ο σύντροφός της [της Εκκλησίας] γεύεται τη χάρη, τη δόξα, την ομορφία και την τιμή της: «Καλὴ εἶ, ἡ πλησίον μου, ὡς εὐδοκία, ὡραία ὡς Ιερουσαλημ, θάμβος ὡς τεταγμέναι» κι επίσης: «Ιδοὺ εἶ καλή, ἡ πλησίον μου, ἰδοὺ εἶ καλή, ὀφθαλμοί σου περιστεραί», οι οποίοι [οφθαλμοί] είναι οι προφήτες και οι απόστολοι που είναι πλήρεις απ’ το Άγιο Πνεύμα […] |

Τα χωρία του Άσματος Ασμάτων που αξιοποιούνται ερμηνευτικά απ’ το Σενούτε στο παραπάνω απόσπασμα είναι τα 6:4 και 1:15.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ασμ. 6:4** | |
| Ο΄ | Καλὴ εἶ, ἡ πλησίον μου, ὡς εὐδοκία, ὡραία ὡς Ιερουσαλημ, θάμβος ὡς τεταγμέναι |
| Σενούτε | ⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲧⲁϣⲃⲉⲉⲣⲉ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲙⲡⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲛⲉⲥⲱ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲛⲑⲓⲉⲗⲏ͞ⲙ ⲉⲣⲉϯϩⲟⲧⲉ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲛⲛϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲧⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ  : ωραία είσαι φίλη μου, σαν ευδοκία, όμορφη σαν Ιερουσαλήμ, εκθαμβωτική σαν τις παρατεταγμένες στρατιές. |
| Κοπτικό  Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲉ ⲧⲁϣⲃⲉⲉⲣⲉ ⲛ̇ⲑⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣ· ⲛⲉⲥⲱ ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲛ̅ⲑⲓⲗⲏ̅ⲙ̅· ⲉ̇ⲣϯϩⲟⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲛ̅ϭⲟⲙ ⲉ̈ⲧⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ (P1)  : είσαι πολύ ωραία φίλη μου, σαν ευδοκία, όμορφη σαν Ιερουσαλήμ, εκθαμβωτική σαν τις παρατεταγμένες στρατιές |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ασμ. 1:15** | |
| Ο΄ | ιδοὺ εἶ καλή, ἡ πλησίον μου, ἰδοὺ εἶ καλή, ὀφθαλμοί σου περιστεραί |
| Σενούτε | ⲉⲓⲥϩⲏⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲥⲱ ⲧⲁϣⲃⲉⲉⲣⲉ ⲉⲓⲥϩⲏⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲥⲱ ⲛⲟⲩⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲉⲛⲃⲁⲗ ⲛϭⲣⲟⲟⲙⲡⲉ ⲛⲉ  : να, όμορφη που είσαι φίλη μου· να όμορφη που είσαι· τα μάτια σου είναι όπως τα μάτια των περιστεριών |
| Κοπτικό  Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲉⲓⲥϩⲏⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲥⲱ ⲧⲁϣⲃⲉⲉⲣⲉ ⲉⲓⲥϩⲏⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲥⲱ ⲛⲟⲩⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̅ⲃⲁⲗ ⲛⲉ ⲛ̅ϭⲣⲟⲙⲡⲉ (sa 60)  : να, όμορφη που είσαι φίλη μου· να, όμορφη που είσαι· τα μάτια σου είναι όπως τα μάτια των περιστεριών |

Και σ’αυτή την περίπτωση παρατηρείται σχετική ομοιότητα των χωρίων της ομιλίας του Σενούτε μ’αυτά της καθιερωμένης Κοπτικής εκδοχής του Άσματος. Αξιοσημείωτη, ωστόσο, φαίνεται να είναι η διαφοροποίηση αμφότερων των Κοπτικών εκδοχών απ’ το κείμενο των Ο΄ στο στίχο 1:15, αφού τα μάτια της νεαρής κοπέλας δεν παρομοίοζονται με περιστέρια αλλά με μάτια περιστεριών[[183]](#footnote-183). Η ερμηνεία του Σενούτε πάνω στο 1:15 φαίνεται να βασίζεται στην προγενέστερη αλεξανδρινή αλληγορική παράδοση, όπως αυτή εκφράστηκε τουλάχιστον απ’ τον Ωριγένη στο σχολιασμό του στο Άσμα Ασμάτων[[184]](#footnote-184).

**2.1.3 Τα δυο στήθη ως η Παλαιά και η Καινή Διαθήκη**

Τέλος, παρατίθεται το απόσμαμα της ομιλίας στο οποίο περιέχεται ο παραλληλισμός του στήθους της κοπέλας του Άσματος με την Παλαιά και την Καινή Διαθήκη[[185]](#footnote-185):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲉⲧϥϫⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ ϫⲉ ⲉⲣⲉⲧⲟⲩⲉⲕⲓⲃⲉ ⲥⲛⲧⲉ ⲟ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲙⲙⲁⲥ ⲥⲛⲁⲩ ⲛϩⲁⲧⲣⲉⲉⲩ ⲛϭⲁϩⲥⲉ· ⲛⲁⲓ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲉⲧⲥϫⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ ϩⲱⲱⲥ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲙⲁⲓⲣⲉ ⲛⲧⲉⲥⲧⲁⲕⲧⲏ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲥⲟⲛ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉϥϩⲛⲧⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲛⲁⲉⲕⲓⲃⲉ· ϥϫⲱ ϩⲱⲱϥ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲧⲉⲛⲛⲁⲙⲉⲣⲉⲛⲟⲩⲉⲕⲓⲃⲉ ⲛϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲉⲡⲏⲣⲡ ⲉⲧⲉⲧⲡⲁⲗⲁⲓⲁ ⲧⲉ ⲙⲛⲧⲕⲁⲓⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲙⲉϩ ⲛⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲛⲧⲉⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ | Ποιά είναι αυτά για τα οποία ειπώθηκε: «δύο μαστοί σου ὡς δύο νεβροὶ δίδυμοι δορκάδος1» (Ασμ. 4:5, 7:4); Επιπλέον, ειπώθηκε γι’αυτά: «ἀπόδεσμος τῆς στακτῆς ἀδελφιδός μου ἐμοί ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν μαστῶν μου αὐλισθήσεται·» (Ασμ. 1:13) και «ἀγαπήσομεν μαστούς σου ὑπὲρ οἶνον» (Ασμ. 1:4). Αυτά, λοιπόν, είναι η Παλαιά και η Καινή Διαθήκη, οι οποίες είναι γεμάτες με το Λόγο του Θεού. |

Στο παραπάνω απόσπασμα ο Σενούτε, στο πλαισιο της ερμηνευτικής του προσέγγισης, αξιοποιεί τα χωρία του Άσματος που αναφέρονται στο στήθος της κοπέλας και συγκεκριμένα τα 4:5, 1:13 και 1:4.

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| **Ασμ. 4:5** | |
| Ο΄ | δύο μαστοί σου ὡς δύο νεβροὶ δίδυμοι δορκάδος |
| Σενούτε | ⲉⲣⲉⲧⲟⲩⲉⲕⲓⲃⲉ ⲥⲛⲧⲉ ⲟ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲙⲙⲁⲥ ⲥⲛⲁⲩ ⲛϩⲁⲧⲣⲉⲉⲩ ⲛϭⲁϩⲥⲉ  τα δυο σου στήθη είναι σαν δίδυμα ελαφάκια γαζέλας |
| Κοπτικό  Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲉⲣⲉⲧⲟⲩⲕιⲃⲉ ⲥ͞ⲛⲧⲉ ⲟ̅ ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲥ ⲥⲛⲁⲩ ⲛ̅ϩⲁⲧⲣⲉⲉⲩ ⲛ̅ϭⲁϩⲥⲉ (sa 60)  : τα δυο σου στήθη είναι σαν δίδυμα ελαφάκια γαζέλας |

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| --- | --- |
| **Ασμ. 1:13** | |
| Ο΄ | ἀπόδεσμος τῆς στακτῆς ἀδελφιδός μου ἐμοί ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν μαστῶν μου αὐλισθήσεται· |
| Σενούτε | ⲟⲩⲙⲁⲓⲣⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲥⲧⲁⲕⲧⲏ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲥⲟⲛ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉϥϩⲛⲧⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲛⲁⲉⲕⲓⲃⲉ  : ο αδελφός μου είναι για μένα σαν ένα μπουκαλάκι μύρου ανάμεσα στα στήθη μου |
| Κοπτικό  Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲟⲩⲙⲁⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲥⲧⲁⲕⲧⲏ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲥⲟⲛ ⲉϥⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲧⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲛⲛⲁⲕⲓⲃⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ (sa 60)  : ο αδελφός μου είναι σαν ένα μπουκαλάκι του μύρου το οποίο θα είναι ανάμεσα στα στήθη μου για μένα |

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| --- | --- |
| **Ασμ. 1:4** | |
| Ο΄ | ἀγαπήσομεν μαστούς σου ὑπὲρ οἶνον |
| Σενούτε | ⲧⲉⲛⲛⲁⲙⲉⲣⲉⲛⲟⲩⲉⲕⲓⲃⲉ ⲛϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲉⲡⲏⲣⲡ  : θ’αγαπήσουμε τα στήθη σου πιότερο κι από κρασί |
| Κοπτικό  Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲧⲛⲛⲁⲙⲉⲣⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲓⲃⲉ ⲛ̅ϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲡⲏⲣⲡ̅ (P1)  : θα αγαπήσουμε τα στήθη σου πιότερο κι από κρασί |

Απ’ τη συγκριτική παράθεση των χωρίων γίνεται φανερο και σ’αυτή την περίπτωση τόσο η πιστότητα στο κείμενο των Ο΄ όσο και η εγγύτητα των χωρίων στην ομιλία του Σενούτε με την καθιερωμένη Κοπτική εκδοχή του Άσματος. Όπως γίνεται εύκολα αντιληπτό, η ερμηνευτική μέθοδος που ακολουθεί ο Σενούτε είναι η αλληγορική, σύμφωνα με την οποία ταυτίζει τη νύμφη του Άσματος με την Εκκλησία, η οποία παρομοιάζεται με περιστέρα και της οποίας η ομορφία περιγράφεται μέσα στο κείμενο.

**2.2. Κοπτική ποίηση 10ου-11ου αι**[[186]](#footnote-186)**.**

To δεύτερο έργο της Κοπτικής λογοτεχνίας, στο οποίο περιλαμβάνεται άμεση αναφορά στο Άσμα Ασμάτων είναι ένας θρησκευτικός ύμνος στη σαχιδική διάλεκτο που χρονολογείται μεταξύ του 10ου αι. και του 11ου αι.[[187]](#footnote-187) Το κείμενο περιέχεται στο χειρόγραφο P 9287, το οποίο θησαυρίζεται στην περίφημη συλλογή παπύρων του Ägyptisches Museum του Βερολίνου[[188]](#footnote-188). Το συγκεκριμένο έργο έχει περιγραφεί ως συλλογή κειμένων, που αποτελούν μια, κατά κύριο λόγο, μετρική επανεπεξεργασία βιβλικών χωρίων από τα βιβλία των Παρoιμιών, του Εκκλησιαστή και του Άσματος Ασμάτων[[189]](#footnote-189). Ο χαρακτήρας του κειμένου είναι απόλυτα θρησκευτικός, πλούσιος σε βιβλικές και θεολογικές έννοιες, ωστόσο δεν υπάρχει κάμια ένδειξη ότι αυτό προοριζόταν για λειτουργική χρήση. Όπως μπορεί εύκολα κανείς να συμπεράνει, αυτού του είδους οι ύμνοι υπήρξαν προϊόντα λαϊκής θρησκευτικής ευσέβιας και κατά πάσα πιθανότητα ψάλλονταν από τους πιστούς σε θρησκευτικές εκδηλώσεις παράλληλα ή μετά το πέρας της καθιερωμένης λατρευτικής πρακτικής.

Στο πλαίσιο της παρούσας εργασίας θα περιοριστούμε στην περιγραφή τριών κυρίων χαρακτηριστικών που αφορούν την πρόσληψη του βιβλικού κειμένου στο συγκεκριμένο Κοπτικό ύμνο, δηλαδή α) την παραλλαγή, β) την παράληψη και γ) την ερμηνευτική επεξεργασία.

**2.2.1. Παραλλαγή**

Στο απόσπασμα που ακολουθεί ο συντάκτης του Κοπτικού ύμνου αξιοποιεί στη σύνθεσή του το χωρίο 2:8 του Άσματος Ασμάτων, χωρίς ωστόσο να παραθέτει το βιβλικό κείμενο σύμφωνα με την καθιερωμένη Κοπτική του εκδοχή, αλλά σε μια μάλλον ιδιότυπη παραλλαγή, πιθανόν για λόγους ρυθμικής συνοχής[[190]](#footnote-190).

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| **Ασμ. 2:8** | |
| Ο΄ | φωνὴ ἀδελφιδοῦ μου· ἰδοὺ οὗτος ἥκει πηδῶν ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη, διαλλόμενος ἐπὶ τοὺς βουνούς |
| Κοπτικός ύμνος | ⲧⲉⲥⲙⲏ ⲉⲙⲡⲁⲥⲟⲛ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲁⲓ ⲛⲧⲁⲥⲓ ⲉⲥϯ ⲟⲩⲟⲓ ϩⲓⲛⲉⲛⲧⲟⲩⲓⲏ ⲉⲥⲛⲏⲩ ϩⲓϫⲛ ⲛⲃⲟⲩⲛⲟⲥ ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲧⲣⲣⲱ ⲧⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ  : «Αυτή είναι η φωνή του αδελφού μου, η οποία έρχεται και πηδά στα βουνά» είπε η βασίλισσα, η Εκκλησία. |
| Κοπτικό Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲡⲉϩⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲙ̅ⲡⲁⲥⲟⲛ ⲁϥⲧⲁϩⲟⲉⲓ ⲉⲓⲥ ϩⲏⲏⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟϥ ⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲉⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ ϩⲓϫⲛ̅ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲏ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉϥϫⲓ ϥⲟϭ͞ⲥ ϩⲓϫⲛ̅ ⲛ̅ⲃⲟⲩⲛⲟⲥ (sa 60)  : η φωνή του αδελφού μου, να αυτος έφτασε, κατέβηκε απ’ τα όρη χοροπηδόντας πάνω στα βουνά |

Όπως φαίνεται απ’ τη σύγκριση των παραπάνω παραθεμάτων, το βιβλικό απόσπασμα του Κοπτικού ύμνου διαφέρει στο περιεχόμενο από το αντίστοιχο κείμενο των Ο΄, αφού το υποκείμενο της δεύτερης φράσης είναι η φωνή (ⲥⲙⲏ) και όχι ο αδελφός (ⲥⲟⲛ). Ταυτόχρονα, το απόσμασμα διαφοροποιείται και απ’ την καθιερωμένη Κοπτική εκδοχή του Άσματος Ασμάτων, όχι μόνο στο περιεχόμενο αλλά και στην επιλογή του λεξιλογίου.

**2.2.2. Παράληψη**

Μια διαφορετική μορφή διαφοροποίησης απ’ το κείμενο των Ο΄ αλλά και απ’ την Κοπτική εκδοχή του Άσματος, αποτελεί η πρακτική της παράληψης από μέρους του συντάκτη του Κοπτικού ύμνου ένος μέρους του βιβλικού χωρίου που παρατίθεται, όπως φαίνεται χαρακτηριστικά στον ακόλουθο πίνακα.

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| **Ασμ. 2:11-12** | |
| Ο΄ | ὅτι ἰδοὺ ὁ χειμὼν παρῆλθεν, ὁ ὑετὸς ἀπῆλθεν, ἐπορεύθη ἑαυτῷ, τὰ ἄνθη ὤφθη ἐν τῇ γῇ, καιρὸς τῆς τομῆς ἔφθακε, φωνὴ τῆς τρυγόνος ἠκούσθη ἐν τῇ γῇ ἡμῶν |
| Κοπτικός ύμνος | ⲉⲓⲥ ⲧⲉⲡⲣⲱ ⲁⲥⲟⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲁⲡⲙⲟⲩ ⲛϩⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲛⲁⲭⲱⲣⲓ ⲛⲁϥ ⲡⲉϩⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲡϭⲉⲣⲡϣⲁⲛ ⲁⲛⲥⲱⲧⲙ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ϩⲓ ⲡⲉⲛⲕⲁϩ  : να, πέρασε ο χειμώνας, η βροχή πέρασε, έφυγε, την φωνή του τρυγωνιού ακούσαμε στη γη μας |
| Κοπτικό Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲉⲓⲥ ⲧⲉⲡⲣⲱ ⲁⲥⲟⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲡϩⲟⲩ ⲛⲡⲉ ⲁϥⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ⲁϥⲃⲱⲕ ⲉⲡⲉϥⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ϯⲟⲩⲱ ⲁⲩⲟⲩⲱⲛ͞ϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲕⲁϩ ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓϣ ⲙ̅ⲡϫⲱⲱⲗⲉ ⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲡⲉϩⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉϭⲣⲁⲙⲡϣⲁⲛ ⲁⲩⲥⲱⲧⲙ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ϩⲛ̅ ⲡⲉⲛⲕⲁϩ (sa 60)  : να, πέρασε ο χειμώνα, η βροχή έφυγε και πήγε στο μέρος της, τα λουλούδια εμφανίστηκαν στη γη, έφτασε ο καιρός της συγκομιδής, η φωνή του τρυγωνιού ακούστηκε στη γη μας |

Στο παραπάνω απόσπαμα του Κοπτικού ύμνου[[191]](#footnote-191), το εν χρήσει βιβλικό χωρίο δεν παρατίθεται ολόκληρο αλλά αποσπασματικά, αφού η φράση ⲛ̅ϯⲟⲩⲱ ⲁⲩⲟⲩⲱⲛ͞ϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲕⲁϩ ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓϣ ⲙ̅ⲡϫⲱⲱⲗⲉ ⲁϥⲉⲓ : *τα λουλούδια εμφανίστηκαν στη γη, έφτασε ο καιρός της συγκομιδής* παραλείπεται, ενώ ταυτόχρονα παρατηρούνται κάποιες λεξιλογικές και συντακτικές διαφοροποιήσεις, όπως για παράδειγμα η χρήση του ρήματος ⲁⲛⲁⲭⲱⲣ<ⲉ>ⲓ αντί του ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ που υπάρχει στο Κοπτικό Άσμα Ασμάτων ή η χρήση του υποκειμένου σε α΄ πληθυντικό αντί της παθητικής φωνής στη τελευταία πρόταση του παραθέματος.

**2.2.3. Παράληψη και ερμηνεία**

Το τελευταίο απόσπασμα του Κοπτικού ύμνου που θα μας απασχολήσει σ’αυτή την εργασία αποτελεί ενα χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα ερμηνευτικής προσέγγισης του πρωτότυπου βιβλικού κειμένου[[192]](#footnote-192). Στην αξιοποίηση του βιβλικού παραθέματος ο συντάκτης του ύμνου χρησιμοποιεί και πάλι την τεχνική της παράληψης, ωστόσο, στην προκειμένη περίπτωση θα εστιάσουμε την προσοχή μας περισσότερο στην ερμηνευτική του προσπάθεια.

|  |  |
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| **Ασμ. 5:1** | |
| Ο΄ | εἰσῆλθον εἰς κῆπόν μου, ἀδελφή μου νύμφη, ἐτρύγησα σμύρναν μου μετὰ ἀρωμάτων μου, ἔφαγον ἄρτον μου μετὰ μέλιτός μου, ἔπιον οἶνόν μου μετὰ γάλακτός μου· |
| Κοπτικός ύμνος | ϯⲛⲁ ⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲁⲕⲏⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲡⲟⲟⲩ ⲧⲁⲟⲩⲱⲙ ⲙⲡⲁⲟⲉⲓⲕ ⲡⲁⲉⲃⲓⲱ ⲧⲁⲥⲱ ⲙⲡⲁⲏⲣⲡ ⲡⲁⲉⲣⲱⲧⲉ ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲥⲟⲗⲟⲙⲱⲛ ⲡⲣⲣⲟ ϩⲙⲡϫⲱ ⲛⲛϫⲱ  ⲡⲁⲕⲏⲡⲟⲥ ⲡⲉ ϯⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲡⲁⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲙ̅ⲡⲥⲱⲣ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲉϥⲥⲛⲟϥ ⲉⲛⲁⲗⲩⲑⲓⲛⲟ ϣⲁⲩⲕⲁ ⲛⲉⲛⲛⲟⲃⲉ ⲛⲁⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ  : «θα μπω στο περιβόλι μου, σήμερα, για να γευτώ το ψωμί και το μέλι μου και για πιώ το κρασί και το γάλα μου», είπε ο βασιλιάς Σολομόντας στο Άσμα των Ασμάτων.  «Το περιβόλι μου» είναι η Εκκλησία, «το ψωμί μου» είναι το σώμα του Σωτήρα και το πραγματικό του αίμα· συγχώρησε τις αμαρτίες μας. |
| Κοπτικό Άσμα Ασμάτων | ⲁⲓⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲁⲕⲏⲡⲟⲥ ⲧⲁⲥⲱⲛⲉ ⲧⲁϣⲉⲗⲉⲉⲧ· ⲁⲓ̈ϫⲱⲗⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲁϣⲁⲗ ⲙ͞ⲛ ⲡⲁϣⲟⲩϩⲏⲛⲉ ⲁⲓⲟⲩⲱⲙ ⲙ̅ⲡⲁⲟⲉⲓⲕ ⲙ͞ⲛ ⲡⲁⲉⲃⲓⲱ ⲁⲓⲥⲱ ⲙ̅ⲡⲁⲏⲣⲡ̅ ⲙⲛ̅ ⲡⲁⲉⲣⲱⲧⲉ (sa 60)  : μπήκα στο περιβόλι μου, αδελφή μου, νύμφη μου, συνέλεψα το μύρο μου και τ’αρωμά μου, γεύτηκα το ψωμί μου και το μέλι μου, ήπια το κρασί και το γάλα μου |

Όπως γίνεται φανερό, η πρώτη στροφή του ύμνου αποτελεί μια επανεπεξεργασία του βιβλικού κειμένου, στην οποία το χρονικό πλαίσιο της αφήγησης έχει μετατεθεί απ΄το παρεθλόν στο μέλλον, ενώ ταυτόχρονα παραλείπεται μια φράση από την αυθεντική εκδοχή του Άσματος. Η δεύτερη στροφή του ύμνου περιλαμβάνει την ερμηνευτική προσέγγιση του παραθέματος που προηγείται, σύμφωνα με την οποία «το περιβόλι» αποτελεί την Εκκλησία ενώ το «ψωμί» λαμβάνει ευχαριστιακό συμβολισμό καθώς συνδέεται με την πραγματική, φυσική παρουσία του σώματος και το αίματος του Χριστού κατά της τέλεση του μυστηρίου της Θείας Ευχαριστίας.

**Συμπεράσματα**

Παρά το γεγονός ότι οι αναφορές στο Άσμα Ασμάτων που απαντώνται σε κείμενα της Κοπτικής λογοτεγνίας είναι σχετικά σπάνιες, μετά την παράθεση όλων των παραπάνω θα ήταν δυνατό να εξάγουμε τις ακόλουθες συμπερασματικές παρατηρήσεις: α) η πρόσληψη του Άσματος Ασμάτων στην Κοπτική λογοτεχνία χαρακτηρίζεται σε γενικές γραμμές από πιστότητα στο βιβλικό κείμενο των Ο΄, β) οι όποιες διαφοροποιήσεις από το πρωτότυπο ή παραλήψεις μέρους των παραθεμάτων δεν επηρεάζουν το εννοιολογικό περιεχόμενο του βιβλικού κειμένου και δικαιολογούνται λόγω του ειδικού χαρακτήρα της ποιητικής σύνθεσης και γ) η ερμηνευτική προσέγγιση στο κείμενο βασίζεται στην αλληγορική μέθοδο ερμηνείας που ηταν ευρύτατα διαδεδομένη στο Χριστιανισμό της ύστερης αρχαιότητας και σύμφωνα με την οποία το όλον κείμενο του Άσματος Ασμάτων αποτελεί αλληγορία της σχέσης μεταξύ Χριστού και Εκκλησίας.

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**Kirki Kefalea**

**Assoc. Professor of Comparative Literature**

**Department of Social Theology**

**School of Theology**

**National and Kapodistrian University of Athens**

**THE *SONG OF SONGS* IN MODERN GREEK POETRY**

The response of modern Greek literature and letters to the *Song of Songs* has been consistent, powerful and, I would say, extensive. The number of people who have taken an active interest in the poem is anything but negligible: there are at least 27 translations of it into Modern Greek, all but three of them done from the Septuagint version, and six adaptations of it for the stage, as well as a considerable number of interpretative works written by scholars. The impact it has had on Greek poetic writing is striking and wide-ranging. Both major and minor poets felt and continue to feel drawn to it.

In the course of a brief account of the relationship between these poets and the *Song of Songs,* one can only speak in examples. Thus, I will talk briefly about how the *Song of Songs* is present in the poetry of five outstanding poets: Solomos, Sikelianos, Papatsonis, Elytis and Engonopoulos.

**SOLOMOS**

The first Modern Greek poet in whose work the influence of the *Song of Songs* is not only detectable but powerful is Dionysios Solomos (1798-1857), a poet of profound religiosity and steadfast faith.

The sense of the sacred which permeates all Solomos’s poetry from first to last, and which is latent even in his most realistic poems, the satires, guaranteed that the poet would not remain indifferent to this most poetic of Biblical texts[[193]](#footnote-193). Its influence is extensive in the poems of his youthful period, most of them written in Italian, which was the language of his initial poetic development. Thirteen sonnets in his first poetic publication, the collection entitled *Rime improvvisate* (1822), along with another nine sonnets written in Italian from the same period, making twenty two in all, take their themes from the *Song of Songs[[194]](#footnote-194)*. Solomos draws attention to this by prefacing each sonnet with a line from the *Song of Songs*, while the content of each of them is defined by this heading or by other verses from the same text.

Let us look at one example from the *Rime improvvisate*, sonnet number 10. The following is a literal translation into English:

*Open to me, my sister…for my head is filled with dew (Song of Songs 5:2)*

*Open, my beloved sister, woe is me, I have lost*

*my way, sweet soul, open the door.*

*Open, the hour of dawn is distant,*

*the night is dark, and there is no comforting star.*

*And my wretched feet wander through*

*the illusions of the desert, with no companion.*

*Listen to the wind whistling, listen to the dog howling*

*on and on; all other voices are dead.*

*My hair is all wet with dew*

*which the bleak night rains down continually,*

*my soul quakes, and faints with fear.*

*Listen to the winds pounding increasingly*

*from all sides; and what will I do, woe is me,*

*if the roar of a fierce lion breaks out?[[195]](#footnote-195)*

We see how in this sonnet Solomos uses the first part of the quote from the *Song of Songs* at the start of his poem, and the second part in the first line of the first tercet. The other lines of the sonnet are not from the *Song of Songs*, but are, nevertheless, imbued with its atmosphere.

In his Greek poems, too, we come across echoes of the *Song of Songs*. The relationship of ‘The Unknown’ with the biblical text has been noted[[196]](#footnote-196). The first verse of ‘The Unknown’ is as follows:

*Who is this maiden*

*all in white clothing*

*coming, descending*

*down from the hill?*

This is a reference to the repeated phrase ‘*Who is this*…’in the *Song of Songs*:

*Who is this that comes up all white?* 8:5

*Who is this that looks forth as the morning?* 6:10

*Who is this that comes up from the wilderness?* 3:6

It is worth noting that four of Solomos’s religious sonnets begin with the phrase ‘Who is this?’

**SIKELIANOS**

Angelos Sikelianos (1884-1951) was a mystical poet with a profound sense of the sacred, but his writing is also exceptionally erotic. Thus, it was to be expected that his poetry should have absorbed and metabolised elements of the allegorical meaning of the *Song of Songs*, since religious experience is frequently expressed in his poems in erotic terms, and the sense of deification used to convey the erotic experience is often described in images similar to those of the biblical text. For example, the poem ‘Hymn to the Morning Star’ begins with the lines:

*There came a woman from the mountains, skipping*

*like a doe, shaking out her hair*

*like a young lion[[197]](#footnote-197)*

which must take their inspiration from the following verses from the *Song*:

*The voice of my kinsman! behold, he comes leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills.*

*My kinsman is like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Baethel*. (2: 8-9).

Of course, in Sikelianos’s poem the speaker is a man, whereas in the *Song* it is a woman. But the atmosphere created by the comparison of the beloved to a deer is the same, and it permeates the entire poem, using images similar to those in the *Song*.

In the poem ‘Rehearsing for Death’, the Shunnamite is she who went in to David, but she is described in terms of the Shunnamite in the *Song of Songs*:

*Even the Shunnamite did not lie like this*

*in David’s bed to warm his frozen limbs…[[198]](#footnote-198)*

The sacred ‘Garden of Love’ (in ‘The Garden’, 1936), which Sikelianos continually seeks in the person of his beloved in his attempt to liberate himself from the ‘pollution of the earth’, so it can ‘enclose’ him ‘with an archangelic stride’:

*Oh Night, is not this the Garden of my Love?[[199]](#footnote-199)*

recalls the ‘garden enclosed’ of love (4:12) with which the figure of the bride is compared in the *Song of Songs*:

*I am come into my garden, my sister, spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spices…* (5,1).

**PAPATSONIS**

Takis Papatsonis (1895-1976), the most important Greek religious poet of the 20th century, established a rewarding relationship with the *Song of Songs*, a relationship which is detectable or is explicit in much of his work. Possessed of a strength and faith that he derived from the sanctity of the holy liturgy, Papatsonis combines a transcendent mysticism - nourished by the mystics not only of the Orthodox but of the Catholic church as well (he himself observes that he is a pre-Schismatic Christian)[[200]](#footnote-200) – with naturalism, which led him to represent nature in symbols. He is, in addition, a love poet, and expresses the experience of supreme revelation in powerfully erotic terms, in the conviction that the celebration of sensuality is a way of expressing ‘the ecstasy of a sacred voyage’[[201]](#footnote-201).

The explicit references of Papatsonis to the *Song of Songs* appear in his collection *Ekloge II*, in the first section which is actually entitled ‘To Asmatikon’ [Book of Chants/Songs] (1962). The first poem in this section, ‘Ode to Aquarius (Fragment)’, has as its first lines a quote from the biblical text (8:7):

*‘Much water will not be able*

*to quench love, and rivers*

*shall not drown it.’*

*And how could it be otherwise, since*

*this water is the water of love?*

The spirit of the *Song of Songs* pervades the entire poem, while the description of the sacredness of erotic feeling is conveyed in his verse in terms and symbols that are Christian. Likewise, in the fourth poem in this section (‘Agitation and its Calming’), the figure of the woman as liberator emerges through a description of nature which recalls similar descriptions in the *Song of Songs*:

*Now, beside you, how restful it is*

*to be. If you want me,*

*I’ll stay here a while, protected.*

*Our happiness is shared between us.*

*Come, my sister, let me kiss you[[202]](#footnote-202).*

But the most creative moment of Papatsonis’s encounter with the *Song of Songs* comes in his previous collection of poems, written during the German occupation, and entitled *Ursa Minor* (1944). This is a poetic synthesis depicting, as the poet explains, the vision of an Idea of Love, which Papatsonis symbolises in the form of ‘a beautiful and courageous woman’ whom he calls ‘Exangelomene’, ‘she who comes from the angels’:

*she is the peace that accompanies*

*the time of turmoil*

*she is the certainty enthroned*

*in the bed of a pounding fever…[[203]](#footnote-203)*

The images of the poem (especially the similes and the metaphors) and the atmosphere of his descriptions bear such a resemblance to images from the *Song of Songs* that the connection with the figure of the Biblical beloved bride is obvious. I quote some extracts which describe her:

*now at last you have come*

*the glittering presence*

*leaping many-coloured*

*laughing and long-limbed*

*and a quarry that for the first time*

*is accessible to our touch*

*a tamed tigress*

*and also a leopard*

*and a lioness*

*to proclaim to us the wrestling match*

*of body with body*

[…]

*with one gesture you activate*

*the open craters*

*upon the threat of our black mountain*

*you spread out green vineyards*

*beside the sea*

*on the sulphured slopes of lava*

*you assemble dense armies*

*of lemon trees from the plain*

*and we can’t resist the double intoxication*

[…][[204]](#footnote-204)

**ELYTIS**

A love poet like Elytis (1911-1996) who was also deeply religious and an attentive reader of the poetic texts in the Bible (he translated the Revelation of St John into Modern Greek)[[205]](#footnote-205), could not have been untouched by the lyric quality of the *Song of Songs*, particularly its imagery, which is so close to the imagery of his own explorations, influenced as these were by the teachings of surrealism. The ascent to divinity through eros is a fundamental aspiration in Elytis, as demonstrated in these lines from his poem ‘The Two of the World (Variation)’ (1971):

*Uriel Gabriel and tonight what as I come again and go disguised as a happy man to mislead the path of the Moon!*

*But she knows and from the women’s quarters of the sky she smiles sadly with a pot of basil beside her as if she wants to say that something that is still true remains*

*Yes the dew and the translucence perhaps from the passing of the Gospel…[[206]](#footnote-206)*

Elytis himself, in his essay ‘The Technique of “Therefore”’ numbers the *Song of Songs* among his favourite poetic texts, and the images scattered throughout various poems appear to interact with the images of the biblical poem. In his love poems, the feeling of some of the man’s utterances to his beloved – the tone in which he addresses the other person – is no different from the analogous feeling in the *Song of Songs*, as for example in the poem ‘The Beauty in the Garden’ (1940), the first verse of which reads as follows:

*You wakened the waterdrop of the day*

*Upon the start of the trees’ song*

*Oh how lovely you are*

*with your joyous hair unbound*

*And you came with the fountain flowing*

*So I could hear you living and passing by![[207]](#footnote-207)*

This motif of ‘the beautiful girl in the garden’ made its first appearance in the *Song of Songs* and went on to become a commonplace of Western lyric poetry[[208]](#footnote-208). The line ‘Oh how lovely you are’, repeated with each verse, recalls the ‘Behold, thou art fair’ of the *Song of Songs*, which with its reiterations (1:16, 4:1, 4:7, 6:4) functions as a kind of refrain similar to the refrain of Elytis’s poem, whose erotic atmosphere seems to replicate the atmosphere of the biblical poem.

We also find the *Song of Songs* echoed in the *Axion Esti* (1959). The ‘Passion’ begins with lines that reproduce images from the biblical poem:

*Here then am I,*

*Created for the young Korai and the Aegean islands,*

*lover of the deer’s leaping…[[209]](#footnote-209)*

Tasos Lignadis has remarked on the similarity of these lines to the following lines of the *Song of Songs* (2: 8-9) *.[[210]](#footnote-210)*

*The voice of my kinsman! behold, he comes leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills.*

*My kinsman is like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Baethel.*

Elytis rearranges the elements of the lines quoted above. The image of the bride’s beloved, who comes leaping over the montains and hills like a roe or a young hart, is refashioned by the poet, who depicts the narrator of the ‘Passion’ as ‘a lover of the deer’s leaping’ – so that the deer are here the Korai for whom the narrator is ‘created’. We should note that both quotations contain place names: ‘the mountains of Baethel’ and ‘the Aegean islands’. In addition, both contain the indicative expression: ‘Here am I’ and ‘Behold, he comes’. In replacing the Biblical ‘he’ with ‘I’, Elytis puts the narrator in the position of the bridegroom in the *Song of Songs*, imparting a tone to his narration which is not just Biblical but prophetic (and in fact, the last section of the ‘Passion’ is entitled ‘Prophetic’)[[211]](#footnote-211).

**ENGONOPOULOS**

The surrealist Nikos Engonopoulos (1907-1985), poet of love and deeply versed in Greek and the Greek-language literary tradition, both lay and ecclesiastical, had constant recourse to ancient texts and was inevitably influenced by the *Song of Songs*. For this work, apart from its eroticism (in the broad meaning of the term), contains elements which could be considered a precursor to a fundamental feature of surrealist expression: the surrealist simile.

Given that the principal characteristic of surrealist poetry is its jarring juxtapositions and the resulting exposure of the invisible links which bind the most disparate things together, it is the surrealist simile and the surrealist metaphor, uniting as they do the most incongruous and dissimilar elements, which make up the main thrust of surrealist writing. Similarly, and due also to their allegorical meaning, a driving force of erotic expression in the *Song of Songs* is those lines containing comparisons whose elements break the mould of convention. I refer to places in the *Song of Songs* where the beauty of the bride is described in similes. The following is one example (4:1-5):

*…thine eyes are doves, beside thy veil: thy hair is as flocks of goats, that have appeared from Galaad.*

*Thy lips are as a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: like the rind of a pomegranate is thy cheek without thy veil.*

*Thy neck is as the tower of David, that was built for an armoury: a thousand shields hang upon it, all darts of mighty men.*

*Thy two breasts are as two twin fauns, that feed among the lilies*.

It is interesting to compare the similes in this passage with the similes in Engonopoulos’s poem ‘Eleonora’:

*her hair is like cardboard*

*and like a fish*

*her two eyes are*

*like a dove*

*her mouth*

*is like civil war*

*(in Spain)*

*her neck is a red*

*horse[[212]](#footnote-212)*

The engagement of these poets with the Biblical poem was fruitful not only for love poetry, but for Modern Greek poetry in general. This is because the *verset* form of the Septuagint text, which is close to the form of free verse, and its daring surrealistic similes and metaphors, developed into two avant-garde elements of the Greek literary tradition and stimulated the innovative tendencies of the end of the 19th and start of the 20th centuries, as well as the modernists of the inter-war period and the first post-war era during the transition of our poetry to modernism.

In my view, possibly the chief reason for the close relationship between Greek writers and the *Song of Songs* is the fact that although the poem is Hebrew, it acquired a Greek identity through the Septuagint and as such is considered a poem which belongs to the Greek literary tradition. Furthermore, the fact that the language of the Septuagint is easily comprehensible to a Modern Greek speaker acted not only as an incentive for it to be transcribed into Modern Greek, but meant that even in its original form, the poem could speak directly to the educated reader.

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1. \* I cordially thank Marietta Hämmerle for help with the manuscript. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See H. Lichtenberger, What is Bible? – A Response, in: K. Finsterbusch/A. Lange, What is Bible? Biblical Exegesis and Theology 67, Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA 2012, 157- 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For 4QCantc and 6QCant no evidence is available; 4QCantc is too fragmentary, 6QCant ends in Cant 1:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Numbers according to A. Lange, Handbuch der Textfunde vom Toten Meer, Bd. 1: Die Handschriften biblischer Bücher von Qumran und den anderen Fundorten, Tübingen 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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6. M.H. Pope, Song of Songs, The Anchor Bible, Garden City, NY 1977, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Schulz-Flügel, Canticum, 12: Tertullian quotes Cant 4:8 in TE Marc 4,11. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Biblia Patristica Supplément Philon d’Alexandrie, Paris 1982. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Pope, Song, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Pope, Song, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See Lange, Handbuch, 477-481. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. E. Tov in DJD 16, Oxford 2000, 195-219. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. M. Baillet in DJD 3, Oxford 1962, 112-114. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Already observed by Baillet, DJD 3, 113 with reference to 2Q18 (Rutha). See Tov, DJD 16, 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. (6) “What is that coming from the wilderness, like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the fragrant powders of the merchant? (7) Look, it is the litter of Solomon! Around it a sixty mighty men of the mighty men of Israel, (8) all equipped with swords and expert in war, each with his sword at his thigh because of alarms by night” (RSV). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. (4) “Your neck is like the tower of David, built in courses; on it hang a thousand bucklers, all of them shields of warriors. (5) Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, that feed among lilies. (6) Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, I will hasten to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense. (7) You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you” (RSV). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Lange, Handbuch, 447f. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Lange, Handbuch, 478f. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Lange, Handbuch, 479. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Lange, Handbuch, 479. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Measures according to Lange, Handbuch, 477-481. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. E. Tov, Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts from Qumran, in: RdQ 16 (1993-1995), 581-600, 600. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. 4QCantc and 6QCant are not relevant for the question because 4QCantc preserves only fragments of three words from Cant 3:7-8 and 6QCant is limited to Cant 1:1-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. H.-P. Müller, Das Hohelied, in: H.-P. Müller/O. Kaiser/J.A. Loader, Das Hohelied/Klagelieder/Das Buch Ester, ATD 16/2, Göttingen 41992, 1-90, 59. “The Beschreibungslied for the male reveals it’s origin in the cultic description-hymn of a god by its statuesque character: the young man appears as the statue of a god.” [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See his contribution in the Athen Symposion. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See Müller, Hohelied, 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Tov, DJD 16, 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. A. Lange/M. Weigold, Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature, JAJ.S 5, Göttingen 2011, 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Cant 4:4 – Eupolemos 3 (Eusebius, praep.ev. 9.34.20); Cant 4:8 – Jub 8:21; Cant 4:9.10.12 – Jub 27:14; Cant 4:11par – Prov 5:3; Cant 4:15 – Apoc. Mos. 29:6; Cant 8:7par – Prov 6:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. G. Jeremias, Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit, SUNT 2, Göttingen 1963, 251, note 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. M. Delcor, Les Hymnes de Qumran (Hodayot), Autour de la Bible, Paris 1962, 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Delcor, Hymnes, 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. M. Mansoor, The Thanksgiving Hymns, STDJ 3, Leiden 1961. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Y.Yadin, The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness, Oxford 1962. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. B. Jongeling, Le Rouleau de la guerre, Studia Semitica Neerlandica 4, Assen 1962. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Translation according to J.A. Fitzmyer, The *Genesis Apocryphon* of Qumran Cave I, Biblia et Orientalia 18, Rom 1966, 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Translation according to C. Burchard, Joseph and Aseneth, in J.H. Charlesworth, OTP II, 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. M. V. Fox, *The Song of Song and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, (University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 183-86. On the other hand, the Love Poetry of Mesopotamia is dealing with and expresses through variations and developments the *sacred marriage* *rite*, that is the ritualistic union between a goddess (most often the goddess of love and war Inanna) and the king, expressing (mainly) the theme of fertility. The texts date from the third to the middle of the first millennium BCE, and they mainly form a specific corpus of Sumerian texts, usually called the “Dumuzi – Inanna Cycle”. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The only comparable text would be the description of Sarah in the *Genesis Apocryphon* 1Q20, 20:1-9. But that text is rather an admiration song and not a description one. No metaphors are used in the description of Sarah and she is described in the third person singular. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. E. Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God: A Study in Biblical Intertextuality*, (Oxford University Press, 2009), 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. L. Schwienhorst - Schönberger, *Das Hohelied der Liebe*, (Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 2015) 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God*,130-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Translation taken from A. Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, (Oxford 1986), 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. The text here is cited according to the edition of F. Köcher, ''Der babylonische Göttertypentext'', *MIO* 1 (1953), 57- 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Köcher, ''Der babylonische Göttertypentext'', 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Old Akkadian Love Incantation (*MAD* V 8), The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince (*VAT* 10057), Ermitage Ostracon No. 1125, A Description of Baal (*RS* 24.245). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works*, 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. i. *VAT 8917* obv. 1-18, ii. *VAT 9946* rev. 9-17, iii. *CBS 6060* rev. 1-5 dupl. *BM 47463* obv. ii 31-5, and iv. *BM 34035* 41-2 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. C. Bezold, “Über keilschriftliche Beschreibungen babylonisch – assyrischer Göttentypen”, *ZA* 9 (1894), 115. Köcher, ''Der babylonische Göttertypentext'', 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. C. Bezold, Fr. Boll, “Eine neue babylonisch – griechische Parallele”, in *Aufsätze zur Kultur – und Sprachgeshichte vornehmlich des Orients: Ernst Kuhn zum 70. Geburtstage am 7. Februar 1916 gewidmet von Freunden und Schülern,* (München 1916)*,* 228. Bezold, Boll, *“Eine neue babylonisch – griechische Parallele”, 230.* See also Fr. Boll, *Aus der Offenbarung Johannis: Hellenistische Studien zum Weltbild der Apokalypse* (Stoixeia 1; Leibniz – Berlin: Druck und Verlag B.G. Teubner, 1914)*, 50-56.* [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Clearly in this direction goes the *Cant. Rabbah*, expanding the question: “The other nations say to Israel: 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved? What is thy God more than other deities?”. (V.9, §1). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. See for instance *Gen*. 32:4; *1 Sam* 16:12; *Deut.* 33:2; *Judges* 5:4 and the usage of the term “EDOM”, *Lam*. 4:7; *Ezek*. 1; *Dan*. 2:31-45; 7:9-14; 10: 5-6. *Rev.* 1: 14; *1 Enoch* 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (AB 7C; Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1977), 66 – 85, Schwienhorst - Schönberger, *Das Hohelied der Liebe*, 130 – 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God*, 182 - 184 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. cf. *Song* 8:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. *m*Yadayim 3:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. *Slavonic Enoch* 13:8; 39: 3-5. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, *The Revelation of Elchasai: Investigations into the Evidence for a Mesopotamian Jewish Apocalypse of the Second Century and its Reception by Judeo – Christian Propagandists*, (TSAJ 8; Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen 1985), 44-5, 100-01, 108-09. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. *The Gospel of Philip* in the NHC ii, 3.62:7-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See Κ. Θ. Ζάρρας, *Η Μυστική Θεολογία των Μανδαίων: Οι Ιουδαϊκές Αφορμές*, (Αθήνα: Έννοια, 2016), 135 – 218. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. *b*Hagigah 12a; *b*Baba Bathra 58a; *b*Shanhedrin 38b; Genesis Rabbah 8:1, 8:9-10, 24:2; Leviticus Rabbah 18:2; Midrash Tanhuma, Bereshit 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. *1 Cor* 3: 16-17; *2 Cor* 6:16; *Rom* 8:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. See R. Patai, *Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual*, (Thomas Nelson and Sons LTD, 1947), 113ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. M. S. Cohen, *The Shi'ur Qomah: Liturgy and Theurgy in the Pre – Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism*, (University Press of America, 1984). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ζάρρας, *Η Μυστική Θεολογία των Μανδαίων,* 110-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. G. Scholem, “Shi’ur Komah”, *EJ* 14: 1417-1418. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ζάρρας, *Η Μυστική Θεολογία των Μανδαίων,* 114-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. J. D. Baildam, *Paradisal Love: Johann Gottfried Herder and the Song of Songs*, Sheffield Academic Press 1999, 178. Also, see D. M. Carr, “Ancient Sexuality and Divine Eros: Rereading the Bible through the Lens of the Song of Songs,” *USQR* 54 (2000), 1-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. For the Near Eastern and especially Arabic poetic traditions that may have influenced the Song, see Sc. B. Noegel, G. A. Rendsburg, *Solomon’s vineyard: literary and linguistic studies in the Song of Songs*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, GA 2009, 129 ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. See P. J. Griffiths, *Song of Songs*, Brazos Press, Grand Rapids MI, 2011, 183: “when a person’s soul responds to the Lord, whether with joy or anguish, she (or he) acknowledges and represents herself (or himself) as a creature. The paradigmatic instance of this usage, for Christians, is Mary’s response to Elizabeth’s hymn of praise (“blessed are you among women”) at the visitation: “My soul [*anima*] proclaims the Lord’s greatness, and my spirit [*spiritus*] exults in God my savior” (Luke 1:46-47).” [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. A. Green, “Intradivine Romance: The Song of Songs in Zohar,” in P. S. Hawkins, L. Cushing Stahlberg (eds.), *Scrolls of love : reading Ruth and the Song of Songs*, Fordham University Press 2006, 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. J. A. Kates, “Entering the Holy of Holies: Rabbinic Midrash and the Language of Intimacy,” in P. S. Hawkins, L. Cushing Stahlberg (eds.), *Scrolls of love*: *reading Ruth and the Song of Songs*, Fordham University Press 2006, 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. In 1 John 4:8 it is clearly stated that “God is love” (ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. J. A. Kates, “Entering the Holy of Holies,” 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. G. Barbiero, *Song of Songs: A close reading*, Brill, Leiden 2011, 64. For Hunt (P. Hunt, *Poetry in the Song of songs: a literary analysis*, Peter Lang Publishing, New York 2008, 88), the ‘image’ depicted in this verse is ‘visual.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. See Song 2:9, 14; 3:1–4; 4:8; 5:2–6; 8:1–2, 13. Also, see Edm. Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God:* *A Study in Biblical Intertextuality,* Oxford University Press, New York 2009, 211 ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. G. Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Again, see the analysis in G. Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 65 ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. For Sc. B. Noegel and G. A. Rendsburg (*Solomon’s vineyard: literary and linguistic studies in the Song of Songs*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, GA 2009, 192, n. 14), the noun *ahavah* also means ‘alliance.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. It should be noted that in the Zohar (I:224b and III:70b) nefesh refers to a lower part of the soul, the vital or animal soul, that remains on earth after death. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. See Sc. B. Noegel, G. A. Rendsburg, *Solomon’s vineyard: literary and linguistic studies in the Song of Songs*, 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. See the commandment that Jesus Christ declared as the ‘first’ (Mark 12:29, πρώτη), "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (see Deut. 6:5; Mark 12:28-30). Notice the intrinsic connection of the ‘soul’ with ‘love’ and ‘God.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Deut 4:29, וּבִקַּשְׁתֶּ֥ם מִשָּׁ֛ם אֶת־יְהוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ וּמָצָ֑אתָ כִּ֣י תִדְרְשֶׁ֔נּוּ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ֖ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶֽׁךָ׃ [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. G. Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, p. 436, n. 7: “Thus MT *šalhebetya*. Along with numerous manuscripts, Ben Naphthali’s reading actually separates the two words *šalhebet-ya.* The ancient versions have understood differently: LXX has *phloges autēs* (‘its flames’), reading *šalhăbōtehā*, in parallelism with

    *rešāpehā*; similarly Vg *atque flammarum*, and the Syriac *wšlhbt’*, ‘the flames’.” [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. G. Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 39 and 464, where in note 133: “R. Tournay, the spelling *-ya* may have its origin in Aramaic influence (cf. Robert – Tournay [1963], p. 453), which would confirm the Hellenistic dating of the poem.” [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. G. Barbiero (*Song of Songs*, 466) calls attention to the fiery and the jealous character of God in Exodus, “For YHWH your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God” (cf. also Isa 33:14).” [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. G. Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 503. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. See what G. Garbini [*Cantico dei cantici*, *Biblica* 2 (Brescia, 1992)] has to say in G. Barbiero (*Song of Songs*, 456, n. 92), “The author wanted a female figure to substitute for Wisdom [. . .], which someone considered almost an hypostasis of Yahweh” (Garbini, p. 269).” [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. G. Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 506. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. It is highly probable that similar traditions were connected or even gave birth to those concerning the ‘body’ of Adakas Ziwa or Adam Kasia, the ‘secret Adam’ of the Mandaeans. See the relevant chapter and material in my *Η μυστική θεολογία των Μανδαίων: Οι ιουδαϊκές αφορμές* [*The mystical theology of the Mandaeans: The Jewish elements*], Έννοια, Αθήνα 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. See Edm. Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God:* *A Study in Biblical Intertextuality,* Oxford University Press, New York 2009, 185 ff. Also, G. G. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah,* The Jewish Publication Society and Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.Y., 1987, 18-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. G. Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 506. Also, Edm. Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God:* *A Study in Biblical Intertextuality,* 155 ff. Still, Fel. Waldman, “Edenic Paradise and Paradisal Eden:

    Moshe Idel’s Reading of the Talmudic Legend of the Four Sages Who Entered the Pardes,” *JSRI* 18/6 (2007), 79-87. For other approaches on the ‘paradise’ and the ‘garden,’ see Fr. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and difference in the Song of Songs*, Sheffield Phoenix Press, Sheffield 2011, 172 ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. See its presentation in my *Η Αρχαία Ιουδαϊκή Μυστική Παράδοση του Θρόνου* [*The Ancient Jewish Mystical Tradition of the Throne*], εκδ. Τυποφιλία, Θεσσαλονίκη 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. See the comments in J. Cheryl Exum, *Song of songs: A commentary*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky 2005, 92. Also, M. Fishbane, *Song of Songs*, *The JPS Bible Commentary*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Given the dire outcome of that story, where only one ‘enters in peace’ and ‘exits in peace,’ there is a strong connection between love and death in the Song, too (“Love is fierce as death,” Song 8:6, TNK). [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. *Peshat* is for the literal meaning, *derash* for its midrashic and religious dimension, *remez* for the allegorical sense, and *sod*for the mystical and hidden one. All the initial letters of the four methods form the term *PaRDeS*, meaning both their combined use and its successful outcome, that is, entry into paradise*.* For the ‘garden’ of the ‘lovers’ in the Song of Songs, see P. Hunt, *Poetry in the Song of songs: a literary analysis*, Peter Lang Publishing, New York 2008, 103-139.   [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. m*Yadayim* 3:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. H. Danby (ed. and trans.), *The Mishnah,* Oxford University (reprinted), Oxford 1974, 781. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. See J. A. Kates, “Entering the Holy of Holies: Rabbinic Midrash and the Language of Intimacy,” in P. S. Hawkins, L. Cushing Stahlberg (eds.), *Scrolls of love*: *reading Ruth and the Song of Songs*, 201. Also, see A. Bentzen, “Remarks on the Canonisation of the Song of Solomon”, in F. Hvidberg (ed.), *Studia Orientalia Johanni Pedersen* (Hauniae, 1953), 41-47. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. J. A. Kates, “Entering the Holy of Holies.” 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. See also Sc. B. Noegel, G. A. Rendsburg, *Solomon’s vineyard : literary and linguistic studies in the Song of Songs*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, GA 2009, 57 ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. See my “Η *Yaḥad* (יחד) ως αγιοποιημένος και αληθινός Ισραήλ: Στοιχεία μυστικής ιεροπραξίας και η Παρουσία του Θεού σε χειρόγραφα του Κουμράν” [“*Yaḥad* (יחד) as a sanctified and true Israel: Elements of mystic hieropraxy and the Presence of God in Qumran texts”], in *Synthesis*, Thessaloniki 2017 (forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. See J. Chrostofer King, *Origen on the Song of Songs as the Spirit of Scripture: The Bridegroom’s Perfect Marriage-Song*, Oxford University Press 2005 (esp. pp. 88, 110-112). [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. These ideas were even more cultivated in the centuries to come. See the material in R. Alfred Norris, *The Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. *Mekilta to Exodus*, Shirata, Beshallaḥ § 3 (cf. C. G. Montefiore, H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology,*

     Macmillan, London 1938, 101-102, §263). [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Song Rabbah I:43 (*Midrash Rabbah*, Soncino 1983). Also, see the relevant material in J. Neusner, *A Theological Commentary to the Midrash: Song of Songs Rabbah,* University Press of America 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Song Rabbah I:44. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Song Rabbah III:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Song Rabbah III:3-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Song Rabbah III:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. The ‘patriarchs’ are the sefiroth Hesed, Gevurah, Tiferet and together they all form the holy throne/chariot (merkavah) of God; see Zohar 328 (or I:99a, 154b, 229a). [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Elsewhere in the Zohar (I:1a. III:74a and 286b) and in the base of Shir haShirim 2:2 the Community of Israel is called the “lily,” corresponding to the sefirah Malkut. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Zohar III:17a-17b. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Zohar III:17a-17b. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Zohar III:42a-42b. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Tosefta Hagigah 2:3-**4.**  [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. See G. Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 506, where he finds “notable affinities with the Mesopotamian poems of sacred marriage … there is a greater closeness to the Egyptian love songs of the Ramesside epoch.” Also, see M. Nissinen, “Love Lyrics of Nabu and Tashmetu: An Assyrian Song of Songs?,” in M. Dietrich and I. Kottsieper (eds.), ‘*Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf,’ Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient, FS O. Loretz,* Munster 1998, 585-634. Still, B. Alster, “Sumerian Love Songs,” *RA* 79 (1985), 127-159. J. S. Cooper, “New Cuneiform Parallels to the Song of Songs,” *JBL* 90 (1971), 157-162. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. *Zohar Hadash*, Midrash Shir haShirim 70d. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. See also Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah: Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah* 2:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. For the above mentioned, see M. Fishbane, “*For your sake we are killed all day long*: The Sanctification of God in Love,” in his *The Kiss of God: Spiritual and Mystical Death in Judaism*, University of Washington Press 1996, 53 ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. M. Fishbane, “*For your sake we are killed all day long*,” 58-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. See also Deut Rabbah II.X, where God receives the soul of Moses with a kiss. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. See that R. Johanan interpreted the verse as applying to Israel, when they went up to Mount Sinai. See E. Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination*, Fordham University Press, New York 2005, 345 ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Kowalski, B. (2012). Die Johannesoffenbarung im Kanon der Bibel. Ein neu geschriebener Ezechiel. *Bibel und Kirche*, 67, 78-84 . On the concept of rereading (“relecture” in French) and its origin in Jewish hermeneutical principles see Fekkes, J. (1994). *Isaiah and prophetic traditions in the book of Revelation: visionary antecedents and their development*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, p. 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Unless otherwise noted, we are using the King James Version for the English translations. The Greek text of the New Testament is that of Nestle, E. et al. (Eds.). (2012). *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28 ed.). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft and the LXX edition is that of Rahlfs, A. & Hanhart, R. (2006). *Septuaginta: id est, Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes - Editio altera*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft. All references to *PG* are from Migne, J. P. (1866). *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca*. Parisiis: Garnier Fratres. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. «ἔστιν οὖν τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας καὶ τελείας μέγεθος ἐχούσης», Aristotle, *De Arte Poetica*, 1449b.24-25 in Kassel, R. (1966). *Aristotelis de arte poetica liber*. Clarendon Press: Oxford [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Lacocque, A. (2005). Η Σουλαμίτισσα (Α. Παπαθανασοπούλου & Φ. Σιάτιστας, Trans.). In A. Lacocque & P. Ricoeur (Eds.), *Ας σκεφτούμε τη Βίβλο [Thinking biblically: exegetical and hermeneutical studies]* (pp. 307-339). Athens: Artos Zoes and Ricoeur, P. (2005). Η γαμήλια μεταφορά (Α. Παπαθανασοπούλου & Φ. Σιάτιστας, Trans.). In A. Lacocque & P. Ricoeur (Eds.), *Ας σκεφτούμε τη Βίβλο [Thinking biblically: exegetical and hermeneutical studies]* (pp. 341-387). Athens: Artos Zoes . [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Rev. 1:5 “ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλέων τῆς γῆς”. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Scarvelis-Constantinou, E. (2008). *Andrew of Caesarea and the Apocalypse In the Ancient Church of the East. Part 1: Studies on the Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea. Part 2: Translation of the Apocalypse Commentary of Andrew of Caesarea*. Quebec: Ph.D. Dissertation - Université Laval **p. 56.** [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. **Justin the Martyr’s *Dialogus cum Tryphone* has many references to the book of Revelation.** [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Esther is read during the celebration of Purim, the Song at Pesach (Passover) and Ruth at the celebration of the beginning of the harvest (Shavuot **–** “Πεντηκοστή”). This is how a “female” contrast to the Law is created, although both their patterns remain the same: salvation – atonement – the quest for and finding of God, even though the Yahweh does not always intervene drastically: in his interventions, there is the fervour of love (Song) and doubt (Ecclesiastes). [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Rev. 1:10 “ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ **κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ** καὶ ἤκουσα ὀπίσω μου φωνὴν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος” [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. According to Origen and Gregory the Nazianzus (Origen, *Prologus - Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum*, 1.6-8. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orationes*, II.48). See *PG* 35.456-7: “Ἑβραίων μὲν οὖν οἱ σοφώτεροι λέγουσιν͵ ὡς ἄρα ἦν τις πάλαι νόμος Ἑβραίοις͵ ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα εὖ ἔχων καὶ ἐπαινούμενος͵ μὴ πᾶσαν ἡλικίαν πάσῃ Γραφῇ ἐνδίδοσθαι· μηδὲ γὰρ εἶναι τοῦτο λυσιτελέστερον͵ ὅτι μηδὲ πᾶσαν εὐθέως εἶναι παντὶ ληπτὴν͵ **καὶ τὰ μέγιστα ἂν τοὺς πολλοὺς κακῶσαι τῷ φαινομένῳ͵ τὴν βαθυτέραν**· ἀλλὰ τὰς μὲν ἀπ΄ ἀρχῆς ἀνεῖσθαι πᾶσι καὶ εἶναι κοινὰς͵ ὧν καὶ τὸ σωματικὸν οὐκ ἀδόκιμον· τὰς δὲ μὴ ἄλλοις ἢ τοῖς **ὑπὲρ εἰκοστὸν καὶ πέμπτον** γεγονόσιν ἔτος πιστεύεσθαι͵ ὅσαι δι΄ εὐτελοῦς τοῦ ἐνδύματος **τὸ μυστικὸν κάλλος περικαλύπτουσιν͵** ἆθλον φιλοπονίας καὶ λαμπροῦ βίου͵ μόνοις τοῖς κεκαθαρμένοις τὸν νοῦν ὑπαστράπτον καὶ φανταζόμενον͵ ὡς μόνης δυναμένης τῆς ἡλικίας ταύτης ὑπὲρ τὸ σῶμα γενέσθαι͵ **καὶ ἀναβῆναι καλῶς ἐπὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἀπὸ τοῦ γράμματος**˝.For a comprehensive presentation on the reception and interpretation of the Song in the Ancient Christian Church see Elliott, M. W. (2000). *The Song of Songs and Christology in the early church 381-451*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, especially pp. 15-50. For a comprehensive discussion on *deuterosis* see Pritz, R. (1992). *Nazarene Jewish Christianity: from the end of the New Testament period until its disappearance in the fourth century* (3rd ed.). Jerusalem; Leiden: Magnes Press, Hebrew University; E.J. Brill, pp. 65-8. *Deuterosis* should be understood in the context given by Bowman: “More informative is Justinian’s edict (Novella 146 (553)) banning the teaching of the *deuterosis*, which should be understood to be the oral tradition in addition to the Mishnah. That ban stemmed from an internal Jewish quarrel over the language to use in the reading of the Torah. (Most likely Greek Jewry followed the Palestinian triennial cycle of Torah portions with extensive midrashic exposition.) Apparently, there had been a migration of Hebrew literate scholars to Constantinople who demanded that the Torah be read publicly in Hebrew” Bowman, S. (2000). Greece, Practice of Judaism in (Byzantine Period). In A. J. Avery-Peck & W. S. Green (Eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Judaism - Vol. IV* (p. 1766). Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill . [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. An exception is Rev. 2:27, which is a direct quote from Ps. 2:9. The text of the Psalms reads “ποιμανεῖς αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ, ὡς σκεῦος κεραμέως συντρίψεις αὐτούς” (2:9), while Rev. 2:27 changes the morphology of the verbs, while retaining God as the subject (ποιμανεῖ) or implied agent of the second verb: “καὶ ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ ὡς τὰ σκεύη τὰ κεραμικὰ συντρίβεται”. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Swete’s seminal commentary on Revelation (1906) contains an excursus that demonstrates the literary affinity of John to the Old Testament, noting that “no writer of the Apostolic age makes larger use of his predecessors […] it appears that of the 404 verses of the Apocalypse there are 278 which contain references to the Jewish Scriptures”. See Swete, H. B. (1906). *The Apocalypse of St John: the Greek text with introduction, notes and indices* (2nd ed.). London; New York: Macmillan p. cxxxv. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Cp. Labahn, M. (2012). Die Septuaginta und die Johannesapokalypse: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer Verhältnisbestimmung im Spiegel von kreativer Intertextualität und Textentwicklungen. In J. Frey, J. A. Kelhoffer, & F. Tóth (Eds.), *Die Johannesapokalypse: Kontexte, Konzepte, Rezeption* (pp. 149-190, here: 150). Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck : the author of Revelation, being bilingual and using memorization techniques, is not quoting directly from the text, but creatively incorporates biblical motifs in his work. It is possible that his pre-text was a Greek translation. See also Stuckenbruck, L. T. & Mathews, M. D. (2012). The Apocalypse of John, 1 Enoch, and the Question of Influence. In J. Frey, J. A. Kelhoffer, & F. Tóth (Eds.), *Die Johannesapokalypse: Kontexte, Konzepte, Rezeption* (pp. 191-233). Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck . Another passage that emphasises the connection to Ezekiel (*Gog* and *Magog*) is Rev. 19:17-21, as well as 20:7-10. See Bøe, S. (2001). *Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38-39 as pre-text for Revelation 19,17-21 and 20,7-10*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. Osborne maintains that “John is fully cognizant of the context behind his allusions […] (he) transforms them by applying them to the new apocalyptic situation”. See Osborne, G. R. (2002). *Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, p. 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Rev. 4:3 “καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ὅμοιος ὁράσει λίθῳ ἰάσπιδι καὶ σαρδίῳ, καὶ ἶρις κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου ὅμοιος ὁράσει σμαραγδίνῳ”. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. There might also be an allusion in Lu. 12:35-38; “3*5Ἔστωσαν ὑμῶν αἱ ὀσφύες περιεζωσμέναι καὶ οἱ λύχνοι καιόμενοι· 36καὶ ὑμεῖς ὅμοιοι ἀνθρώποις προσδεχομένοις τὸν κύριον ἑαυτῶν πότε ἀναλύσῃ ἐκ τῶν γάμων, ἵνα ἐλθόντος* ***καὶ κρούσαντος εὐθέως ἀνοίξωσιν αὐτῷ****. 37μακάριοι οἱ δοῦλοι ἐκεῖνοι, οὓς ἐλθὼν ὁ κύριος εὑρήσει γρηγοροῦντας· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι περιζώσεται καὶ ἀνακλινεῖ αὐτοὺς καὶ παρελθὼν διακονήσει αὐτοῖς.* This view is supported by Lichtenberger, H. (2013). *Die Apokalypse*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, *ad loc.* and others. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. “Πάνδημος Ἀφροδίτη”, who is “a symbol of an inferior sensual love”, Blundell, S. (1995). *Women in ancient Greece*. London: British Museum Press, p. 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Rev. 1:3 “Μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ **οἱ ἀκούοντες τοὺς λόγους** τῆς προφητείας καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα, ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς”. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Lechner, T. (2007). Rhetorik und Ritual. Platonische Mysterienanalogien im Protreptikos des Clemens von Alexandrien. In F. R. Prostmeier (Ed.), *Frühchristentum und Kultur* (pp. 183-221). Freiburg; Basel; Wien: Herder . Clement of Alexandria transforms a dissuasive rhetorical speech to an exhortation, by employing the same methods that Plato uses in his dialogues. The aforementioned methods are connected by Lechner to the experience of the Eleusinian Mysteries. The philosopher guides his readers to a deeper understanding of the truth: catharsis / elenchus of false doctrines, initiation to the orthodox doctrines and so on. In Revelation, the listener / reader will answer to the eschatological tribunal, after *experiencing* and *abiding* by the narrative; Rev. 22:7 “καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ. Mακάριος ὁ τηρῶν τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου”. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. On Revelation as a polemic to the political establishment, see deSilva, D. A. (1992). The Revelation to John: A Case Study in Apocalyptic Propaganda and the Maintenance of Sectarian Identity. *Sociological Analysis*, 53(4)(4), 375-395 , esp. pp. 379-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Pate, M. C. (2016). *Interpreting Revelation and Other Apocalyptic Literature: An Exegetical Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, pp. 38-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Ricoeur. (2005). Η γαμήλια μεταφορά, p. 376. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Lacocque. (2005). Η Σουλαμίτισσα, p. 331. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Brenner, A. (1990). Paradox and Parody in the Song of Solomon: Towards a Comic Reading of the Most Sublime Song. In A. Brenner & Y. T. Radday (Eds.), *On humour and the comic in the Hebrew Bible* (pp. 251-276). Sheffield: Almond. It should be noted that Brenner’s approach is heavily influenced by postmodern hermeneutics, especially feminist rereadings. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Despotis, S. (2015). Die himmlische Liturgie der Apokalypse (Kap. 4–5) in ihrem Kontext und die Interaktion mit der östlichen irdischen Liturgie. In S. Alkier, T. Hieke, & T. Nicklas (Eds.), *Poetik und Intertextualität der Johannesapokalypse* (pp. 437-457). Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. Zhang, L. (1987). The Letter or the Spirit: The Song of Songs, Allegoresis, and the Book of Poetry. *Comparative Literature*, 39(3)(3), 193-217 . [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Origen parallelises this trilogy to the three branches of learning which the Greeks called Ethics, Physics and Enoptics (*Prologus - Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum* 3.17). [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Aristotle, *De Arte Poetica*, 1452a: ”Ἔστι δὲ περιπέτεια μὲν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἐναντίον τῶν πραττομένων μεταβολὴ καθάπερ εἴρηται͵ καὶ τοῦτο δὲ ὥσπερ λέγομεν κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ ἀναγκαῖον”. In 1456a, “περιπέτεια” is combined to the wondrous in its paradoxical sense: that, which is not expected: “ἐν δὲ ταῖς περιπετείαις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἁπλοῖς πράγμασι στοχάζονται ὧν βούλονται θαυμαστῶς· τραγικὸν γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ φιλάνθρωπον. ἔστιν δὲ τοῦτο͵ ὅταν ὁ σοφὸς μὲν μετὰ πονηρίας δ΄ ἐξαπατηθῇ”. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Rev. 3:17-20: “17ὅτι λέγεις ὅτι «πλούσιός εἰμι καὶ πεπλούτηκα καὶ οὐδὲν χρείαν ἔχω» (Hos. 12:9, cp. Sir. 11:18-9), καὶ οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ταλαίπωρος καὶ ἐλεεινὸς καὶ πτωχὸς καὶ τυφλὸς καὶ γυμνός, 18συμβουλεύω σοι ἀγοράσαι παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ χρυσίον πεπυρωμένον ἐκ πυρὸς ἵνα πλουτήσῃς, καὶ ἱμάτια λευκὰ ἵνα περιβάλῃ καὶ μὴ φανερωθῇ ἡ αἰσχύνη τῆς γυμνότητός σου, καὶ κολλ[ο]ύριον ἐγχρῖσαι τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου ἵνα βλέπῃς. 19ἐγὼ ὅσους ἐὰν φιλῶ ἐλέγχω καὶ παιδεύω· ζήλευε οὖν καὶ μετανόησον (cp. Prov. 3:11). 20Ἰδοὺ ἕστηκα ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν καὶ κρούω· ἐάν τις ἀκούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ ἀνοίξῃ τὴν θύραν, [καὶ] εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ δειπνήσω μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ”. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Lacocque. (2005). Η Σουλαμίτισσα, p. 325. For a brief history of the various Judaic and Christian interpretations of the Song, as well as contemporary hermeneutical approaches, see Garrett, D. A. & House, P. R. (2004). *Song of Songs - Lamentations*. Nashville: T. Nelson, pp. 59-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. Rev. 3:18 “συμβουλεύω σοι ἀγοράσαι παρ᾿ ἐμοῦ χρυσίον πεπυρωμένον ἐκ πυρὸς ἵνα πλουτήσῃς, καὶ ἱμάτια λευκὰ ἵνα περιβάλῃ καὶ μὴ φανερωθῇ ἡ αἰσχύνη τῆς *γυμνότητός* σου, καὶ κολλ[ο]ύριον ἐγχρῖσαι τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου ἵνα *βλέπῃς*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Ricoeur. (2005). Η γαμήλια μεταφορά, pp. 348-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. Paulien, J. (1988). Elusive Allusions: The Problematic Use of the Old Testament in Revelation. *Biblical Research*, 33, 37-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Despotis, S. (2007). *Η Αποκάλυψη του Ιωάννη. To βιβλίο της Προφητείας. Λειτουργική και Συγχρονική Ερμηνευτική Προσέγγιση, Τόμ. Β [The Revelation of John: The Book of Prophecy. Liturgical and Synchronic Hermeneutical Approach. Vol. II]*. Athens: Athos. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. *16  Ἐγὼ Ἰησοῦς ἔπεμψα τὸν ἄγγελόν μου μαρτυρῆσαι ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ῥίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαυίδ, ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός. 17  Καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ νύμφη λέγουσιν· ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω· ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν. 18  Μαρτυρῶ ἐγὼ παντὶ τῷ ἀκούοντι τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· ἐάν τις ἐπιθῇ ἐπ᾽ αὐτά, ἐπιθήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν τὰς πληγὰς τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ, 19 καὶ ἐάν τις ἀφέλῃ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφελεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ. 20  Λέγει ὁ μαρτυρῶν ταῦτα· ναί, ἔρχομαι ταχύ. Ἀμήν, ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ 21  Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων.* [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Η παρούσα εργασία αποτελεί επεξεργασμένη εκδοχή της εισήγησης που παρουσιάστηκε με τίτλο «Some remarks on the reception of the Canticum Canticorum in Coptic literature» στο Συμπόσιο *The Song of the Song in the Jewish and Christian Literature*, το οποίο έλαβε χώρα στην Αθήνα στις 19.03.2016. Απ’ τη θέση αυτή θα ήθελα να εκφράσω τις ειλικρινείς μου ευχαριστίες στον υπ.διδ. Αναστάσιο Ακρίδα, για την ευγενική του χειρονομία να με συμπεριλάβει στους εισηγητές του Συμποσίου. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Για μια εισαγωγική προσέγγιση στα βιβλία της Παλαιάς Διαθήκης και το ζήτημα του σχηματισμού του Κανόνα βλ. ενδεικτικά W. Brueggemann, *An introduction to the Old Testament: the canon and the Christian imagination*, Atlanta 2003. Th. Römer - J.-D. Macchi - Ch. Nihan (επιμ.), *Introduction à l’Ancien Testament*, Gèneve 2009. E. Zenger (κ. αλ.), *Einleitung in das altes Testament*, Stuttgart 20087. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Το γεγονός ότι οι Κοπτικές εκδοχές των ελασσόνων Προφητών στη σαχιδική και την αχμιμική διάλεκτο παρουσιάζουν στενότερη σχέση με το Εβραϊκό παρά με το κείμενο των Ο΄, είχε οδηγήσει κατά το παρελθόν στη διατύπωση της θεωρίας σχετικά με μια ενδεχόμενη αναθεώρηση του βιβλικού κειμένου με βάση το εβραϊκό πρωτότυπο. Η νεότερη έρευνα, ωστόσο, έχει αποκλείσει αυτό το ενδεχόμενο και αποδίδει τον ιδιότυπο αυτό «εβραϊσμό» μάλλον στην επίδραση που άσκησαν τα Εξαπλά του Ωριγένους και συγκεριμένα η πέμπτη στήλη (quinta). Βλ. P. Nagel, «Old Testament, Coptic Translations of», *CopEnc* 6 (1991) σσ. 1837-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Το συγκεκριμένο κενό στο χώρο των Κοπτικών Σπουδών και την Βιβλικής έρευνας γενικότερα φιλοδοξεί να καλύψει το εν εξελίξει επιστημονικό πρόγραμμα της *Akademie der Wissenschaften zu* *Göttingen* με τίτλο *The Digital Edition of the Coptic Old Testament* που έχει σκοπό την καταγραφή και ψηφιοποίηση σύνολης της χειρόγραφης παλαιοδιαθηκικής παράδοσης στην Κοπτική γλώσσα καθώς και την εκπόνηση κριτικών εκδόσεων σ’ όλα τα βιβλία της Παλαιάς Διαθήκης, με παράλληλες μεταφράσεις στην Αγγλική, τη Γερμανική και την Αραβική. Βλ. H. Behlmer - F. Feder - U. Pietruschka (επιμ.), *Digitale Edition der koptisch-sahidischen Septuaginta. Fragestellungen und Herausforderungen*, Halle 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Βλ. J.-M. Auwers, *L’interprétation du Cantique des Cantiques à travers les chaînes exégétiques grecques*, [Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia 56], Turnhout 2011, σελ. 20. Μέχρι τη στιγμή της δημοσιεύσης αυτής της εργασίας, εξακολουθούν να βρίσκονται σε ισχύ οι παρατηρήσεις του J. - M. Auwers. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Κ. Schüssler, *Biblia Coptica: Die koptischen Bibeltexte: Das sahidische Alte und Neue Testament*, Band 1.1-4, Band 2.1, Band 3.1-4, Band 4.1-4, Wiesbaden 1996-2012. Για μια πληρέστερη παρουσίαση της χειρόγραφης παράδοσης και της εκδοτικής παραγωγής του Άσματος Ασμάτων στην Κοπτική βλ. R. Kasser R. - Ph. Luisier, «P. Bodmer LX: Cantique des Cantiques en copte saidique», *Orientalia* 81 (2012) 154-157. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Α. Ralfs (ed.), *Septuaginta: id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*, Stuttgart 1979. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. Schüssler, *Biblia Coptica,*1.3, σελ. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. R. Kasser - Ph. Luisier, «P. Bodmer LX: Cantique des Cantiques en copte saidique», *Orientalia* 81 (2012) 149-201. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. Schüssler, *Biblia* Coptica,1.3, σσ. 91-92. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. L.A. Shier, *Coptic Texts in the University of Michigan Collection*, Ann Arbor/London 1942, σσ. 125-155. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Schüssler, *Biblia* Coptica,1.3., σσ. 71-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. H. Thompson, *The Coptic (Sahidic) Version of Certain Books of the Old Testament from a Papyrus in the British Museum*, London 1908. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Schussler, *Biblia Coptica*, 1.2., σσ. 15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. G. Maspero, «Fragments de manuscripts coptes-thebains de l’ancien testament», *MMAFC* 6 (1892) 200-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. G. Maspero, «Fragments de manuscripts coptes-thebains de l’ancien testament», *MMAFC* 6 (1892) 197-200, 203-206. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. G. Maspero, «Fragments de manuscripts coptes-thebains de l’ancien testament», *MMAFC* 6 (1892) 200-1, 206-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. Το συγκεκριμένο χειρόγραφο, λόγω του τόπου προέλευσης αλλά και της χρονολόγησής τού, αποτελεί την εγγύτερη, χρονικά και τοπικά, μαρτυρία του Άσματος Ασμάτων στο Σενούτε και γι’αυτό θα προτιμηθεί στη σύγκριση των βιβλικών παραθεμάτων της ομιλίας του, χωρίς, ωστόσο, να αποκλειστεί η χρήση και των άλλων μαρτυριών, όπου αυτό κριθεί απαραίτητο. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Το βίο του Σενούτε κατέγραψε λίγο μετά την κοίμησή του ο μαθητής και διάδοχός του στην ηγουμενία της Λευκής Μονής αρχιμανδρίτης Βήσας. Για το κείμενο του βίου, ο οποίος σώζεται στη βοχαϊρική διάλεκτο βλ. I. Leipoldt - E. W. Crum (επιμ.), *Sinuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia*, vol. I: *Sinuthii vita bohairice*, CSCO 41, Paris 1906, με λατινική μετάφραση που επιμελήθηκε ο Η. Wiesmann. Για την αγγλική μετάφραση βλ. D. N. Bell (επιμ.), *Besa: The life of Shenute: introducion, translation and notes*, Kalamazoo 1983. Για την προσωπικότητα του Σενούτε και τη συμβολή του στην εξέλιξη του Κοπτικού μοναχισμού βλ. ενδεικτικά C. Schroeder, *Monastic Bodies: Discipline and Slavation in Shenoute of Atripe,* Philadephia 2007. R. Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery: Egyptian monasticism in late antiquity*, Oxford 2002. J. Leipoldt, *Shenute von Atripe und di Entstehung des national ägyptischen Christentum*, Leipzig 1903. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Για τη μελέτη του συγγραφικού έργου του Σενούτε θεμελιώδης είναι η συγκεντωτική παρουσίαση από τον S. Emmel. βλ. S. Emmel, *Shenoute’s Literary Corpus*, vol. I-II, CSCO 599-560, Leuven 2004. Από την πλούσια βιβλιογραφία των εκδόσεων και του σχολιασμών των κειμένων του Σενούτε βλ. εντελώς ενδεικτικά H.-J. Cristea, *Schenute von Atripe: Contra Origenistas*, [Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 60], Tübingen 2011. D. Brakke - A. Crislip, *Selected Discourses of Shenoute the Great: Community, Theology and Social Conflict in Late Antique Egypt*, Cambridge 2015. B. Layton, *Canons of our Fathers: Monastic Rules of Shenute*, [Oxfrond Early Christian Studies], Oxford 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Στην αρχική της έκδοση η ομιλία φέρει τον τίτλο *Ad Philosophum gentilem* καθότι σύμφωνα με εσωτερική μαρτυρία του κειμένου αφορφή για τη σύνταξή στάθηκε η επίσκεψη ένος εθνικού φιλοσόφου στον ηγούμενο της Λευκής Μονής. Βλ. Ι. Leipoldt - E.W. Crum (επιμ.), *Sinuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia*, Vol. III: *Sinuthii opera*, Leipzig 1908, σσ. 22-34 (κοπτικό κείμενο), σσ. 44-62 (λατινική μετάφραση). O S. Emmel, ωστόσο, καθιέρωσε τον τίτλο της ομιλίας σύμφωνα με την αρχική της φράση. Βλ. S. Emmel, *Shenoute’s Literary Corpus*, vol. II, CSCO 560, Leuven 2004, p. 613. Για την αγγλική μετάφραση της ομιλίας βλ. D. Brakke - A. Crislip, *Selected Discourses of Shenoute the Great: Community, Theology and Social Conflict in Late Antique Egypt*, Cambridge 2015, σσ. 39-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. Για την εκκλησιολογική προσέγγιση της ομιλίας βλ. D. W. Johnson, «As I Sat on a Mountain: Shenoute’s Theology of the Church», *Coptica* 9 (2010) 59-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Βλ. Ι. Leipoldt - E.W. Crum (επιμ.), *Sinuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia*, Vol. III: *Sinuthii opera*, Leipzig 1908, σελ. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Παρόμοιοι πίνακες θ’ακολουθήσουν και για τα υπόλοιπα βιβλικά παραθέματα των χωρίων της ομίλιας. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Βλ. G. Maspero, «Fragments de manuscripts coptes-thebains de l’ancien testament», *MMAFC* 6 (1892) 202. Και σ’αυτή την περίπτωση, ωστόσο, η μαρτυρία sa 60 βρίσκεται σε συμφωνία με το παράθεμα του χωρίου, όπως διασώζεται στην ομιλία του Σενούτε. Βλ. R. Kasser- Ph. Luisier, «P. Bodmer LX: Cantique des Cantiques en copte saidique», *Orientalia* 81 (2012) 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Βλ. Ι. Leipoldt - E.W. Crum (επιμ.), *Sinuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia*, Vol. III: *Sinuthii opera*, Leipzig 1908, σελ. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. R. Kasser- Ph. Luisier, «P. Bodmer LX: Cantique des Cantiques en copte saidique», *Orientalia* 81 (2012) 162. Πρβλ. και H. Thompson, *The Coptic (Sahidic) Version of Certain Books of the Old Testament from a Papyrus in the British Museum*, London 1908, σελ. 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. Ωριγένης, *Commentarium in Canticum Canticorum,* 3,1,4: *Quod autem oculi eius comparatur columbis, ob hoc profecto quia Scripturas divinas non iam secundum litteram, sed secundum spiritum intelligat, et adspiciat in iis spiritalia mysteria; columba enim indicium ests Spiritus sancti. Spiritali ergo sensu intelligere legem et prophetas, hos est oculos columbae habere*. Βλ. L. Brêsard - H. Crouzel (επιμ.), *Origène: Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, II, SC 376, Paris 1992, σελ. 494. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. Βλ. Ι. Leipoldt - E.W. Crum (επιμ.), *Sinuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia*, Vol. III: *Sinuthii opera*, Leipzig 1908, σσ. 52-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. Για την Κοπτική ποίηση γενικότερα βλ. K. H. Kuhn, «Poetry», *CoptEnc* 6 (1991) 1985-1986, όπου και η σχετική βιβλιογραφία. Πρβλ. επίσης R.-G. Coquin, «Langue et littérature coptes», *Christianismes orientaux: Introduction a l’étude des langues et des littératures*, Paris 1993, σελ. 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. H. Junker, *Koptische Poesie des 10. Jahrhunderts*, Teil I-II, Berlin 1908-1911. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. Για την περιγραφή του χειρογράφου βλ. W. Beltz, «Katalog der Koptischen Handschriften der Papyrussammlung der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin», *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete* 26 (1978) 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. G. Möller, «Eine neue koptische Liederhandschrift», *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 39 (1901) 104-113. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. Για το απόσπασμα του Κοπτικού ύμνου βλ. H. Junker, *Koptische Poesie des 10. Jahrhunderts*, Teil II, Berlin 1911, σελ. 116. Για το Κοπτικό Άσμα Ασμάτων βλ. R. Kasser R. - Ph. Luisier, «P. Bodmer LX: Cantique des Cantiques en copte saidique», *Orientalia* 81 (2012) 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. Για το απόσπασμα του Κοπτικού ύμνου βλ. H. Junker, *Koptische Poesie des 10. Jahrhunderts*, Teil II, Berlin 1911, σελ. 118. Για το Κοπτικό Άσμα Ασματων βλ. R. Kasser R. - Ph. Luisier, «P. Bodmer LX: Cantique des Cantiques en copte saidique», *Orientalia* 81 (2012) 164-166. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. Για το απόσπασμα του Κοπτικού ύμνου βλ. H. Junker, *Koptische Poesie des 10. Jahrhunderts*, Teil II, Berlin 1911, σελ. 122. Για το Κοπτικό Άσμα Ασμάτων βλ. R. Kasser R. - Ph. Luisier, «P. Bodmer LX: Cantique des Cantiques en copte saidique», *Orientalia* 81 (2012) 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. For the intertextual relations of the poems of Solomos with the *Bible*, seeN. Bougatsos, “The literary Influence of the *Bible* on the poetical work of Dionysios Solomos”: *Αθηνά* 61 (1957), p. 17-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. See also the Introduction of Gerasimos Zoras in the edition of the collection: *Rime improvvisate (1822),* edited and translated by Gerasimos Zoras (Athens: Kostas and Eleni Ourani Foundation [Modern Greek Library], 2000), p. 29-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. Dionysios Solomos, *Rime improvvisate,* p. 62-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. Lambis Apostolidis, *Dionysios Solomos: The poet of the Theology* (Corinth, 1957), p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. Angelos Sikelianos, *Lyrical Life,* edited by G.P. Savvidis, vol. 5 (Athens: Ikaros, 1968), p. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. Angelos Sikelianos, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. Angelos Sikelianos, *Lyrical Life,* edited by G.P. Savvidis,vol. 6 (Athens: Ikaros, 1969), p. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. See Alexandros Argyriou (Ed.), *Takis Papatsonis* (Athens: Gavriilidis, 2009), p. 52; Nasos Vayenas, “Papatsonis and the Avant-Garde”: *The Athens Review of Books,* Nr. 41 (June 2013), p.25. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. T.K. Papatsonis, *Ekloge A’ Ursa Minor, Ekloge B’* (Athens: Ikaros, 2nd edition 1962), p. 46-47. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. T.K. Papatsonis, p. 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. T.K. Papatsonis, p. 138 [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. T.K. Papatsonis, p. 158-159. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. John’s *Book of Revelation,* Translation into Modern Greek by Odysseas Elytis (Athens: Ypsilon/books, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. Odysseas Elytis, *Poetry* (Athens: Ikaros, 2002), p. 228. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. Odysseas Elytis, *Poetry,* (Athens: Ikaros, 2002), p. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. For the motif and the symbolism of the garden, see Jean Chevalier/Alain Gheerbrant, *Dictionnaire des symbols: Mythes, reves, coutumes, gestes, forms, figures, couleurs, nombres,* vol. 3 (Paris Robert Laffont/Jupiter, deuxieme edition, 1969), p. 67-72; Michel Ferber, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 82-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. Odysseas Elytis, Poetry, p. 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. Tasos Lignadis, *The Axion Esti of Elytis: Introduction, Comments, Interpretation* (Athens: Publishing House Konstantinidi and K. Michala, 1971), p. 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. See Anthony Hirst, *God and the Poetic Ego: The Appropriation of Biblical Poetry and Liturgical Language in the Poetry of Palamas, Sikelianos and Elytis* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 348. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. Nikos Engonopoulos, *Don’t talk to the Driver; Ta kleidokymvala tis siopis* (Athens: Ikaros second Edition 1966), p. 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)