CHAPTER TEN

EPILOGUE

(Song 8:5–14)

I

Chorus  “Who is this who rises from the desert,¹
leaning on her beloved?”²

Woman  “Under the apple tree, I awakened you,³
there your mother travailed,⁴
there she travailed, and gave you to the light.⁵
⁶Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm,

¹ Instead of ‘from the desert’, LXX has, ‘made white’ (leleukanthismenē, cf. Vetus Latina candida). This is probably a case of derivation from 6:10, therefore a secondary reading, contra Garbini (1992), pp. 117–118. Vg adds to ‘desert’ deliciis affluens, probably understanding in an allegorical sense.
² The Hebrew mitrappeqet is an hapax, but the root rpq with the sense of ‘to lean’ is attested in rabbinic Hebrew, Arabic and Ethiopic (cf. HALOT, p. 1279). Moreover, the versions also understood it thus (LXX epistērizomenē; Vetus Latina incumbens; Vg nixa super; the Syriac mstmk’).
³ Throughout the verse, the MT has a masculine object, for which the subject of the verb is undoubtedly the woman. In the Greek and the Latin, the gender of the pronoun is not determined, but G⁴ (Codex Alexandrinus) and G⁵ (Codex Sinaiticus) are provided with a marginal note which puts the phrase into the mouth of the bridegroom: ho nymphios (tade pros tēn nymphēn). The Syriac has the suffixed object in the feminine. But in the case of the two LXX codices and the Syriac, we have a lectio facilior, dictated by an allegorical interpretation of the text. MT is incompatible with this interpretation which identifies the bridegroom with YHWH. Precisely for this reason, it is less suspect of manipulation.
⁴ MT’s ḥibb’latkā means literally: ‘She had had the pains (of childbirth) for you’ (cf. LXX’s ὀ又好又快). Vetus Latina omits the double mention of the verb and translates simply: Ⅿllic parturivit te mater tua. Aquila’s diephtharē and Vg’s corrupta est, understand, both times, a ḥabal III, ‘to corrupt, to ruin’, as in Song 2:15.
⁵ With MT’s y’lādatkā (there, however, the two verbs ḥbl and yld are joined asyndetically). LXX ἥ tekousa sou and Vg genetrix tua have read a participle instead of a perfect, something which better respects the parallelism with ‘your mother’ in the preceding stich. But thus we would have a tautology, while MT reflects the various phases of childbirth.
for Love is strong as death, 
Jealousy relentless as the grave. 
Its darts\(^6\) are darts of fire, 
a flame of Yah.\(^7\)
\(^7\)The great waters are not enough 
to quench love, 
no rivers sweep it away. 
If a man were to give all the wealth of his house 
in exchange for love, 
scorn is all he would obtain”.

II

\textit{Chorus} \(8\)“We have a little sister, 
and she does not yet have breasts. 
What shall we do for our sister, 
in the day that she is spoken for? 
\(^9\)If she is a wall, above her 
we shall build battlements of silver. 
If she is a door, 
we shall bar her\(^8\) with a board\(^9\) of cedar”.

\textit{Woman} \(10\)“I am a wall, 
and my breasts are like towers: 
but, in his eyes, I have become 
like one who has found peace”.

\(^6\) The Hebrew term \textit{rešep} is primarily the name of a divinity (cf. the commentary). LXX has \textit{periptera}, ‘sparks’; Vg \textit{lampades}; the Syriac \textit{zlyql}, ‘rays’.
\(^7\) Thus MT \textit{šalhebêyâ}. Along with numerous manuscripts, Ben Naphthali’s reading actually separates the two words \textit{šalhebet-yâ}. The ancient versions have understood differently: LXX has \textit{phloges autēs} (‘its flames’), reading \textit{šalhābēthā}, in parallelism with \textit{rešāpēhā}; similarly Vg \textit{atque flammarum}, and the Syriac \textit{wšlhbt’}, ‘the flames’.
\(^8\) The verb \textit{šwr} has three possible meanings (cf. \textit{HALOT}, pp. 1015–1016). The context recommends \textit{šwr} I (\(=\) \textit{šārār}), ‘confine’. The versions have understood otherwise. LXX \textit{diagrapōmen} and Vetus Latina \textit{describamus} have read \textit{šwr} III (\(=\) \textit{yāšar}), ‘to form, cast’. Perhaps at the base of this interpretation there is an allegorical intention, which is made explicit in the Targum (‘Law, […] which is written on the table of the heart’, cf. Garbini [1992], p. 280). Vg’s \textit{compingamus} probably reflects \textit{šwr} II, ‘to attack, fight’.
\(^9\) With MT and LXX. The Syriac, Vg, Vetus Latina and Symmachus have the plural.