LANDSCAPES OF THE SONG OF SONGS

POETRY AND PLACE

ELAINE T. JAMES

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It is my hope that this modest contribution to the vast scholarship on the Song of Songs will offer one way of situating poetic readings in the ethical tasks of caring for landscapes, imagining the many more readers who are yet to come.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
AcT	*Acta Theologica*
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
AEL	*Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Miriam Lichtheim. 3 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971–1980
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969
ARE	*Ancient Records of Egypt*. Edited by James Henry Breasted. 5 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906–1907. Repr., New York: Russell & Russell, 1962
ASH	Ancient Society and History
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
ASV	American Standard Version
AThR	*Anglican Theological Review*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BARIS	BAR (British Archaeological Reports) International Series
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
BHQ	*Biblia Hebraica Quinta*. Edited by Adrian Schenker et al. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004–
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Edited by Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983

BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BLS	Bible and Literature Series
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006
CANE	*Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Edited by Jack M. Sasson. 4 vols. New York, 1995. Repr. in 2 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
COS	*The Context of Scripture*. Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill: 1997–2002
CTU	*The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places*. Edited by Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995
EBib	*Etudes bibliques*
EBR	*Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. Edited by Hans-Josef Klauck et al. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009–
EncJud	*Encyclopedia Judaica*. Edited by Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum. 2nd ed. 22 vols. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007
HANE/M	History of the Ancient Near East/Monographs
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HThKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*

JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
KJV	King James Version
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio Divina
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
MGWJ	*Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*
MT	Masoretic Text (of the Hebrew Bible)
NAB	New American Bible
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NEB	New English Bible
NIB	*The New Interpreter's Bible*. Edited by Leander E. Keck. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994–2004
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDB	*New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld. 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–2009.
NIV	New International Version
NJPS	*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text*
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
Or	*Orientalia* (NS)
OTL	Old Testament Library
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PRU	*Le palais royal d'Ugarit*
RB	*Revue biblique*
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature (Lang)
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*

UNP	*Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*. Edited by Simon B. Parker. WAW 9. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

1

Introduction

LANDSCAPE AND LYRIC

THIS IS A book about poetry. It considers the way that the poetry of the biblical Song of Songs draws on human experience in landscapes, and how it creates experiences of landscapes. This work uses methods that will be familiar to readers of poetry: it explores how language, imagery, sound, tone, and form create the poem. At the same time, it moves beyond formal description to ask a larger question: What is the human place in the natural world? As geographer Yi-Fu Tuan argues, this is a basic question of humanistic inquiry, with historical precedents in every time and place. Its significance is cross-cultural, and its domain is interdisciplinary. It is a topic that must be "a fundamental concern to all thinking people."[1] As such, it is a perennial question in need of "perspectives, elucidations, and illustrative instances."[2] Such elucidations are an ongoing need in the field of biblical studies, in part because questions about "nature" and "worldview" in this field have to some extent been governed by strains of twentieth-century Old Testament theology, which tended to emphasize a prevailing interest in sacred history.[3] As G. E. Wright strikingly claims, "[t]he basis of [Israel's religious] literature was history, not nature, because the God of Israel was first of all the Lord of history who used nature to accomplish his purposes in history."[4] In light of the current ethical imperative of the ecological crisis, however, scholars have increasingly given attention to the Bible's rich imaginary of the non-human world.[5] This study adds to this important, growing conversation by considering how the Song imagines the human place in the landscape.

This study has two essential starting points. The first is the idea that landscape fundamentally forms human experience. But this influence does not flow in only one direction: as geographers and archaeologists have emphasized, there is a meaningful circle of influence between human cultures and their physical environs, since humans are shaped by their topography, and shape their topography in turn. The landscape thus is not merely a material fact, but also a cultural product that encodes meaning and promotes values. When literary texts describe landscapes, then, they are not neutral backdrops against which the literary event takes place; rather, the texts themselves are conceptualizing the landscape. The ancient literature of the Bible is no exception: these texts evoke, respond to, and significantly shape landscapes—both the landscapes in which they were produced, and many subsequent real landscapes quite distant in time and geography. In this study, I will consider how one particular set of texts—the poems of the Song of Songs—conceptualize the relationship between humans and their environs.[6] The second starting point is that the Song is love poetry, and so the way that the Song conceptualizes the human place in the landscape is thoroughly lyrical, and its landscapes are ethically charged poetic creations that draw the reader into its meditation on the human place in the natural world. A consideration of the landscapes of the Song must take the poetic medium seriously as its mode of constituting knowledge.

Attention to the Song is especially pressing because it offers such a ready and rich "illustrative instance"—to use Tuan's phrase—of the conceptualization of the human situation in the larger world. Arguably more than any biblical text, it is saturated with imagery relating to the natural world, including, for example, vineyards (1:6, 14; 2:15; 7:13; 8:11, 12), fields (1:7–8; 2:7; 3:5; 7:12), and gardens (4:12–5:1; 6:2, 11; 8:13, 14).[7] The thematization of such landscapes profoundly shapes the poetry, and provides a visual vocabulary for the lovers, who describe themselves and one another with terms drawn from these landscapes. Animal elements are used, as when the young man is compared to a gazelle or deer (2:8–9; 8:14), the young woman to a mare (1:9) and a dove (1:15; 2:14). But plant life is all the more richly described: twenty-four varieties of plants are mentioned, including aromatic plants like *môr* ("myrrh"; 1:13; 3:6; 4:6, 14; 5:1, 5, 13); wild flowers such as *šôšannah* ("lily"; 2:1, 2, 16; 4:5; 5:13; 6:2, 3; 7:3); and trees (1:17; 2:3, 5; 7:9; 8:5). As Daniel Grossberg writes, "[t]here is hardly a thought, feeling, or movement . . . that is not likened to a plant or living creature."[8] Its densely metaphorical imagination consistently situates

humans in natural landscapes, and draws parallels between those landscapes and their human inhabitants. The Song is therefore an important text for exploring ancient conceptualizations of the land, although it has rarely been read with that sustained emphasis. Ultimately, this study will show that the Song imagines humans deeply embedded in the landscape and bonded to it by disciplines of attention, affection, and care.

Landscape in the Song's History of Interpretation (Very Briefly)

Despite the prominence of the Song's landscapes, and a general acknowledgment of this prevalence among interpreters, there is not yet a consistent effort to explore how these elements work together toward a conceptualization of the landscape. This lacuna can be seen in the Song's history of interpretation, which has tended to focus on mining its allegorical meaning, or on solidifying its "literal" sense as erotic poetry. I will not attempt here to survey the Song's entire history of interpretation, which is both voluminous and astonishingly complex.[9] I will suggest very briefly that both allegorical and literal readings of the Song tend to divert attention away from the landscape.

The predominant way of reading the Song throughout its history has been allegorical.[10] The general impulse of allegorical interpretation has an upward trajectory, moving away from the text in preference for a concealed meaning: "The procedure is dialectical, aimed at the discovery of truth, and characterized by unbroken ascent."[11] Allegory ascends away from the text, and therefore also from the physical landscape conveyed by the text, which is therefore not treated as a subject in its own right. The text, as well as the natural elements it conveys, become, rather, an occasion for talking about something else—in the case of the Song, retelling the history of Israel, or disclosing the true nature of the soul. That being said, some ancient readers did have interest in the landscape of the Song of Songs. Jewish commentators on the Song operated with the underlying assumption that the place names and natural features in the Song (Lebanon, 3:9; 4:8, 11; 5:15; 7:5; Sharon, 2:1; Ein-Gedi, 1:14; Jerusalem, 1:5; 2:7; 3:5, 10; 5:8, 16; 6:4; 8:4; Tirzah, 6:4) are important precisely because they make the allegory clear: They reveal the identity of the young woman to be the nation of Israel. The Targum Song of Songs, for example, elaborates the entire Song in terms of Israel's history, and identifies the young woman as Israel, who is the lover of God.[12] Its midrash on Song 2:1 ("I am a rose of Sharon, a

lily of the valleys") takes the geographical specificity of Sharon to signify that Israel was "hidden in the shadow of mount Sinai, and in a brief space I blossomed forth in good deeds before Him like a lily with hand and heart, and I said before him, All that the Lord has said we will do, and obey (Ex. XXIV, 7)."[13] In this way, the physical landscape signifies geographically, nationalistically, and historically—it indicates the place of Israel, its nationhood, and its covenant relationship to God.[14] By the same token, the floral and faunal elements did not escape the notice of the rabbis; their characteristics take on heightened, symbolic meanings. For example, in Rashi's commentary on 2:1, he claims that the particular type of rose mentioned (*ḥăbaṣṣelet*) is "prettier than the rose of the mountains because it is always moist."[15] In this way, for early Jewish commentators, the natural elements are taken to be significant indicators of historical and geographical experience. At the same time, however, they are atomized and interpreted to accord with a relatively restricted set of theologically determined meanings;[16] thus the landscape and its elements are in some sense important to these allegorical interpreters, although they never become an explicit subject of interest.

Christian allegorical interpretation, on the other hand, tends to deemphasize the landscape altogether, focusing the allegory not nationalistically, but on the church, Christ, Mary, or the individual soul.[17] Broadening its possible range of meanings, these interpreters effectively remove the poetry from its roots in the landscape. For example, reading the same verse about the lily of the valley, Origen comments, "Christ is to be understood as speaking in this way with reference to the Church, and to be calling Himself 'the Flower of the field and the Lily of the valleys.' "[18] Theodoret similarly relates the flower to Christ, while explaining that the valley indicates Christ's further humiliation, when he descended to Hades.[19] Eventually, Bernard would write with characteristic verve: "The flower is virginity, it is martyrdom, it is good works" (Sermon 47).[20] More to the point, the significance of Jerusalem as a geographically and historically real city recedes in favor of a spiritual location, the heavenly Jerusalem. In the sixth century, for example, Cassiodorus writes, "The daughters of Sion are the same as the daughters of Jerusalem, children of the Church, holy souls, citizens of that city on high who with the angels enjoy perpetual peace, and by contemplation behold the glory of God."[21] If early Jewish interpreters maintained a vested interest in the specific landscape of Israel, the trajectory of Christian allegorical interpretation would downplay the pervasive

natural imagery in favor of spiritual and tropological meanings directed to the Church or the individual believer.[22]

Later interpreters have moved strongly away from allegorical interpretation, toward more or less "literal" readings of the Song—proposing that the Song is a drama, a wedding rite, or simply erotic poetry[23]—but this emphasis on the literal content has largely not yielded a greater sensitivity to the setting in a landscape. For example, in the nineteenth century, Karl Budde formalized a theory that the Song is a cycle of wedding poems, drawing on parallels between the Song and modern Syrian marriage ceremonies, a seven-day celebration in which songs are sung and dances are danced, and recitations are given of the bride and groom's beauty.[24] On this "literal" reading, the Song is folk poetry, "a large circle of single songs and fragments of songs"[25] that celebrates "wedded and married love. . .."[26] While Budde's reading insists that the Song is non-allegorical, he nevertheless draws attention away from the landscape, arguing that natural elements are purely "figurative," and he rejects more severe landscape features (such as the mountains of Lebanon) as editorial insertions that have no place in the bucolic joy of wedding poetry.[27] It seems that Budde's preconception about what kinds of idyllic settings are possible in wedding poetry foreclosed the possibility that some more severe landscape features were original to the text. Even more to the point, the perceived subject of the wedding eclipses the landscape itself.

Lyric reading strategies, which also see themselves as "literal" (as opposed to "allegorical") interpretive modes, either minimize the significance of landscape, or relate it to interior psychological experience. In his path-setting 1983 volume *Paradoxes of Paradise*, Francis Landy argues that the Song is Wisdom literature, in that it is an inquiry into "the nature of love and therefore of man [*sic*]."[28] His reading explicates a reified opposition between nature and culture, emphasizing the polarities of the mountains of Lebanon and the garden in order to explore "twin aspects of the Beloved, the archetypal Mother, from whom the two lovers—brother and sister—are differentiated."[29] While Landy notes that the landscape is a productive site of meaning in the Song of Songs, and while he perceptively identifies some of the subtle oppositions between its landscapes, they are always principally emblems of private psychological experience—not potentially indicative of cultural values about the natural world. J. Cheryl Exum, in offering one of the strongest cases for the Song's lyricism, defers most questions about landscape, favoring the view that its features of geography and place are usually imaginative,

hyperbolic, and fanciful.[30] Jill Munro, who attends to natural features in order to unpack their significance as symbols, puts this most succinctly: landscapes are never "the object of interest"; rather, they serve as vehicles "forever subordinate to the primacy of the lovers and their love."[31] The literal/erotic interpretation of the Song results in directing attention away from the landscape as thoroughly as allegorical approaches do.[32] This trend—to defer attention to the landscape itself in preference for the true "subject" (whether this is perceived to be religious or erotic)—is pervasive. It is my hope to show that turning our attention to the constructions of landscape can enrich our understanding of the poetry, and complicate our sense of its "subject."

Lyric Poetry and Landscape

The preceding "literal" interpretations of the Song rightly emphasize the Song's lyric mode, its genre. This project draws substantially on and owes a great debt to these lyric readings, which have the advantage of offering clear assessments of the Song's poetry as its mode of thought and pointing out pitfalls in earlier attempts to reconstruct the Song as "allegorical," or "narrative," or "cultic" poetry. But my reading of the Song as lyric and landscape expands the understanding of lyric to accommodate the observed phenomena of the Song itself.[33] Here, I will briefly describe what I mean by "lyric," and will begin to suggest how my readings will progress.

By "lyric," I mean a relatively short, non-narrative poem that is constituted by verbal artistry: sound, rhythm, structure, voicing, and figures of speech are its stock in trade. It is "exemplary creativity."[34] As F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp has argued, many—though not all—biblical poems "may be usefully and accurately described as lyric" under such a minimal definition.[35] In acknowledging the Song as a lyric text, the reader is invited to appreciate some of the many possible characteristics that are peculiar to this mode, for example, its resistance to narrative; its use of deictic markers that keep the reader's experience in the present tense; and its lack of representation of events (mimesis), which allows voicing and address to be prominent.[36] The use of the term "lyric" already insists that the poem's aesthetic form constitutes its meaning—poems are irreducible works of art whose characteristics are not merely ornamental.[37] Understanding the Song, then, can only proceed by "paying attention to the *way* it presents its vision of love."[38] One especially distinctive element of the lyric style of biblical Hebrew poetry is the way it lays bare interiority. This can be seen especially

in contrast to biblical narrative. As Tod Linafelt has cogently argued, if biblical narrative consistently suppresses explorations of thought, psychology, motivation, and interiority (biblical narrative is "fraught with background," to use Erich Auerbach's classic phrase[39]), biblical poetry consistently foregrounds precisely those features. Linafelt writes:

> Lyric poetry tends to direct its attentions inward rather than outward. The literary scholar Barbara Hardy writes, "The advantage of lyric in itself is its concentrated and patterned expression of feeling. This advantage is negatively definable: the lyric does not provide an explanation, judgment, or narrative; what it does provide is feeling, alone and without histories or characters." Thus, the lyric's concerns are, primarily, with the inner life rather than the outer world, and its tools are the tools of linguistic play, that is, of structure, syntax, metaphor, productive ambiguity, etc.[40]

Biblical poetic style—especially when taken in contrast to biblical narrative style—does allow access to the inner experiences, the *feelings*, of speakers. This is one of its hallmark features. As Linafelt writes elsewhere, "[i]f biblical narrative trades in opaqueness of characterization, biblical poetry fairly revels in the exposure of subjectivity. When biblical authors wanted to convey feeling or thought, they resorted to verse form."[41] As a result of this orientation to lyric, Linafelt locates the Song's meaning in human, emotional experience, to the extent that descriptions of the external world primarily signify psychological states or experiences. The Song is "in the business as all lyric is of elucidating the inner life more than the world outside."[42] Certainly the Song is interested in human interiority—its language is full of expressions of emotion, including references to *nephesh* ("soul/self"; Song 1:7; 3:1, 2, 3, 4; 5:6), for example, and *ʾahăbâ* ("love"; Song 2:4, 5, 7; 3:5, 10; 5:8; 7:6; 8:4, 6, 7). But this observation does not get us close enough to accounting for the Song's insistent evocation of the natural world. If one standout feature of biblical poetry is its disclosive exploration of human emotion, another is its consistent use of techniques of description—its decided orientation toward "the world outside."

As I will suggest here only briefly, an important hallmark of biblical Hebrew poetry is its use of descriptive techniques, especially its description of landscape. One place where this is evident is in the contrasting styles of biblical narrative and biblical verse in Judges 4 and 5. Judges 4 is a narrative account of the defeat of Sisera's army at the hands of Deborah, Barak,

and Jael. The narrative describes how Barak repulses Sisera's army: "So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand warriors following him. And the Lord threw Sisera and all his chariots and all his army into a panic before Barak . . . " (Judg 4:14b–15a). The poetic account—the Song of Deborah in Judges 5—on the other hand, includes a descriptive account of the landscape:

> The stars fought from heaven,
> From their courses they fought against Sisera.
> The torrent Kishon swept them away,
> The onrushing torrent, the torrent Kishon.
> March on, my soul, with might!
> Then drummed the horses' hoofs
> from the galloping, galloping of his steeds. (Judg 5:20–22)

Here, the poet describes the experience of war in typically lyrical fashion. This includes, but is not limited to, the interior experience of the speaker, who feels the ground thunder as the chariots roar past. The Hebrew is highly rhythmic, capitalizing on the strong accent of the initial syllables: *ʾĀZ HĀləmû ʿIQqəbê-SÛS* ("then drummed the horses' hoofs"). The pattern juxtaposes short, stressed syllables so that the line itself drums a persistent beat. This beat is redoubled in the second line: *midDAhărôt DAhărôt ʾABbîrāyw* ("from the galloping, galloping of his steeds"). The pattern here uses multiple unstressed syllables and a repeated word. Like the sound "galloping, galloping" in English, the line is onomatopoetic, and through it the reader experiences the onrush of the powerful warhorses in the thunder of the land under their feet. The interiority is notable in the irruptive cry, "March on, my soul, with might!" (Judg 5:21). At the same time, this description is not *limited* to the interior experience of the speaker. The poet is also aptly describing the landscape itself under the assault of war. The hoofbeats of the horses are matched by the sweep of stars and the torrents of the Kishon river (Judg 5:20–21), notably absent in the narrative account. As is clear from this example, the poem's interest in the outside world is not merely mimetic, but also imaginative: the stars, too, engage in the battle. The descriptive possibilities of biblical poetic style are strikingly mobilized elsewhere. In Moses' blessing at the end of Deuteronomy, for example, the wilderness experience is described with a metaphorical pathos:

He found him in a desert land,
in a howling wilderness waste.
He encircled him
he cared for him
he guarded him like the apple of his eye.
As an eagle stirs up its nest
and over its fledglings it hovers,
so he spreads out his wings and catches him
he lifts him on his pinions.
Yhwh alone guided him
No foreign God was with him.
He bore him up to the heights of the land
and fed him with the produce of the field:
he suckled him with honey from the rock
and oil from the flinty rock,
curds of cattle and milk of sheep
with fat of lambs and rams
Bashan bulls and goats
with the very choicest wheat
and the blood of grapes, you drank wine. (Deut 32:10–14)

The poem gives a "bird's-eye view" of the howling wilderness waste—which from this angle is both precipitously dangerous and paradoxically full of nourishing plenty. Psalms, too, regularly describe features of the landscape, sometimes in minute detail. Psalm 65, for example, devotes five climactic verses to a description of agriculture. Its final lines concentrate attention on the fields themselves and the perception that their fertility is a kind of celebration:

The wild pastures drip
with joy the hills dress.
the meadows wear flocks
And the valleys robe themselves with crops.
They shout out, they even sing. (Ps 65:13–14)

This particular poem even seems self-conscious of minimizing the role of the speaker, whose voice is to some extent subsumed by the voice of the land (cf. Ps 148). The book of Job (especially but not exclusively in

the Yahweh speeches, Job 38–41) also devotes concerted attention to the landscape and its various creatures, sometimes describing them at great length. The warhorse in Job 39:19–25 is a case in point: the poet lingers for many lines over its beauty and prowess, not to disclose something about the interiority of the speaker, but to point beyond the speaker and beyond the human world altogether. It is an example of the principle that Job articulates in his response to Zophar:

> But ask the beasts, and they will teach you
> The birds of the heavens, and they will tell you
> Or the plants of the land, they will teach you
> They will tell you—the fish of the sea.
> Who among all these does not know
> That the hand of the Lord has done this? (Job 12:7–9)

Knowledge of floral and faunal life in the ancient Near East is a subject of wisdom literature, which is generally poetic.[43] So Solomon's knowledge of "trees, from the cedar that is in the Lebanon to the hyssop that grows in the wall . . . of animals, and birds, and reptiles and fish" is related to his composition of "three hundred thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five" (1 Kgs 4:32–33). The book of Proverbs itself is rich with appeals to natural phenomenon, for example: "the ants are a people without strength, yet they provide their food in the summer" (Prov 30:25; this chapter is especially dense with reflections on natural elements. Cf. Isa 34–35).[44] The contrast with biblical narrative is striking: rarely do narratives describe landscapes, their elements, or experiences *in* landscapes in detail. An exception, perhaps, is Exodus, which describes in prose a series of events that afflict the land. Even here, though, the description of the landscape is relatively spare in the prose account; what details there are serve the developing plot:

> The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and their left. (Exod 14:21–29)

The sea is "turned into dry land," and the waters are "divided." The poem celebrating the same Exodus event, on the other hand, offers a triplet that qualifies and intensifies the experience of the sea:

> At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up
> They stood up like a heap, the floods
> the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. (Exod 15:8)

Describing experiences in landscapes, it seems, is one of the unique provinces of biblical poetic style. We might therefore offer an addendum to Linafelt's claim that "[w]hen biblical authors wanted to convey feeling or thought, they resorted to verse form,"[45] something like this: When the biblical poets wanted to evoke an experience in a landscape, they turned to poetry. The benefit of this type of landscape approach is twofold: first, it allows the reader to acknowledge and investigate how poetry conceptualizes the land; second, it can permit more expansive lyric reading. This emphasis on landscape and lyric allows us to consider how the subject is embedded in a larger context that brokers a relationship not just between human lovers, but between humans and their communities—both human and environmental. Because the Song is steadfastly descriptive of the landscape and its elements, as I have begun to suggest in the preceding, readers will miss the opportunity to explore their significance when focusing exclusively on eroticism. It is possible to the read the Song as lyric—paying close attention to its style and its formal features (diction, lineation, wordplay, sound, rhythm, figures of speech, etc.)—while still acknowledging that the Song's subject is not limited to the representation of emotion.

This lyric landscape approach accepts the modern assessment of the Song as love poetry. The Song is abundantly concerned with lovers and their passions. It begins in *eros*: it opens, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" (1:1), but it does not end there. It persistently dwells and ultimately ends in a landscape: "be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices" (8:14). Moreover, the lyric form itself does not end in the eros of human pleasure (the love shared between lovers), since it necessarily opens to its readers. Lyric theorist Susan Stewart writes, "for some unarticulated reason, pleasure does not suffice and the poet feels compelled toward meaning, that meaning that only comes into being in its encounter with the third position—the listener who introduces the social realm of intersubjectivity."[46] The invitation draws the audience to a consideration of the range of sense experience that is the ground of the poem. The sense experience assumes a common engagement with the larger world. A landscape approach allows us to explore how the Song as lyric poetry both assumes and conjures a variegated world of sensory experience—especially the landscape—by means of its lyric techniques.

The poetry builds its vision of love through a complex eidetic process that not only draws on existing cultural knowledge, but also constitutes new knowledge. The opening to the reader is to strive to constitute and re-enact the meaning of this relationship between the lover and the landscape.

My concern about the reductive nature of the purely "secular" or "literal" erotic reading of the Song shares some concerns with, though it is not identical to, recent work that re-engages the spiritual and religious dimensions of the Song of Songs. As Martti Nissinen and others have noted, the dichotomy between allegorical and spiritual approaches to the Song that has dominated particularly the last decades of scholarship may be inimical to the nature of the poetry itself.[47] Throughout the ancient Near East, erotic poetry was consistently a medium for imagining the divine-human relationship. The earliest audiences for the Song did not assume that the Song could be restricted to a single (literal) meaning, but recognized that its theological potential was directly linked to its literary form as erotic poetry.[48] This assumed plenitude of meaning that emerges intersubjectively through the processes of reading is worth recovering. A landscape view focalizes the Song's potential meanings in light of the ethical concerns of the present moment. We see ourselves with clearer vision through the reciprocal vision of the poem. The lyric models an encounter—with the world, and with the other person—and the Song in particular offers a lyric vision for encountering our own world and its exigencies. Lyric poetry is not necessarily a fixed form, but an intellectual process, a form of *making* that engages the audience in a studied reflection on particular aspects of human existence. Some of those aspects that come into view in reading the Song are ethical orientations to land.

Made Things: Landscape in Theory

I have emphasized the *made* quality of the Song. The Song is an art form, an aesthetic product that emerges from human experiences and engages human experience. There is a link here to the concept of landscape. The term's etymology conveys the sense of land that responds to human intervention.[49] Colloquially, "landscape" signifies topography, and so one can speak of the "landscape" of Israel and mean its geographical characteristics. But the English term "landscape" comes from the Old English precursors *landskipe* and *landscaef*, meaning to scrape and shape, to hew or form the earth.[50] A "landscape" was epitomized by a plowed field. John Stilgoe's classic definition captures this sense: "the antithesis of wilderness is

landscape, *the land shaped by men* [*sic*]."[51] Both a poem and a landscape are artifactual:[52] they are *made* things. There is an ancient connection between writing poetry and working land: the Hebrew root *ḥ-r-š* refers to both plowing and inscription; the Greek adverb *boustrophedon* describes both plowing and writing in lines in alternating directions, in the way an ox turns at the end of the row to plow the next one.[53] There is, then, a certain fittingness to exploring poetry through the concept of landscape: landscapes are both processes and experiences—both engagements with and reflections on places—and so they are able to account for the material grounding as well as the aesthetic form of the Song's lyricism. I will explore this double aspect of landscape in the following.

Geographers have developed a robust articulation of landscape that accounts for both these features, which I will borrow. The first aspect of the landscape concept is the material intervention of humans in the land. It is important to distinguish between the given—the land itself—and the made—the landscape; that is, landscape is not merely the given geophysical characteristics of a portion of the earth. As Augustin Berque writes, "Landscape is not the environment."[54] If "environment" is a term that assumes human absence, or imagines that the world is a neutral backdrop against which the history and activities of humans unfold, "landscape" acknowledges the deep association between humans and the land. Landscape is a complex of interdependent phenomena. It is "an area made up of a distinct association of forms, both physical and cultural."[55] This association of forms, this closely intertwined relationship between the physical environs and human experience, is captured by Carl Sauer's term "cultural landscape." He writes, "[t]he cultural landscape is fashioned from the natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result."[56] In order to understand the natural landscape, that is, one must account for the ways in which this topography is continually shaped by evolving cultural forces and habits of daily life.[57] To study the landscape means, at least in part, to study human interventions in the landscape. Such a study acknowledges that landscape is a process, an idea already latent in the verbal usage, "to landscape."[58]

The second aspect of landscape's double meaning draws out human experience and aesthetic form. In addition to the shaping of the land (especially through practices of farming and gardening), the term also signifies an aesthetic form. When the Dutch term *landschap* was introduced to English in the sixteenth century, it came from the visual arts as a

technical term for a type of painting: the figuration of natural scenery. For several centuries in Europe (particularly in England), the idea of landscape involved both of these two aspects: "landscape" refers to worked land, and to artistic reflection on land.[59] Berque goes on to write, "[t]he environment is the factual aspect of a milieu: that is, of the relationship that links a society with space and with nature. Landscape is the sensible aspect of that relationship."[60] By emphasizing the "sensible aspect" of the relationship between society and nature, Berque foregrounds the communal and symbolic.[61] Landscape is an experience that is mediated symbolically. One place that such symbolic aspects are worked out is in texts:

> Landscape as experience takes into account the degree to which the landscape was perceived by the original inhabitants and was imbued with meaning. Ironically, in the Near East, given the superb textual corpus that often refers to the metaphysical world or the world of experience, this area of research has been rather untapped.[62]

The texts offer a window into "landscape as experience": how humans invest the topography with meaning. A landscape thus has cognitive dimensions; it draws on emotions, imagination, and tradition. Textual representations of landscape (through poetry, maps, lists, paintings, or myths) are a crucial aspect of the community's engagement with land.[63]

A minimal definition might be drawn out of this double meaning I have been highlighting: When I use the term "landscape," I mean a materially grounded textual representation of human experience in a locale.[64] I propose this definition tentatively and pragmatically, hoping to provide some clarity and specification, since "landscape" is used in a wide diversity of ways, variously to signify topography itself; or certain approaches to archaeology, geomorphology, iconography, political boundaries, ideologies of empire and expansion; or still yet, as a backdrop for literary events.[65] While the breadth of use indicates the generative possibilities of the landscape concept, it also points to a need for critical specification of concepts and terminology. For our purposes, "landscape" refers to physical topography, as well as to the human experience of that topography, which both conditions and is conditioned by the land.[66] These two aspects of the landscape concept—process and experience—are especially apt since they imply a close relationship between materiality and textuality (or, history and literature).[67] Both are necessarily mediated by embodied experience in a place.

I choose the word "place" here, in distinction from the broader term "space," which has been used more frequently in discussions of biblical texts (drawing from the work of Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja).[68] But, while "space," is abstract, "place," on the other hand, indicates a space from a humanistic perspective, one that is seen, known, and integrated into a system of thought or worldview. Yi-Fu Tuan writes, "What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value."[69] "Place" highlights the element of experience, which has also been central to my discussion of landscape. How does a space become a place? Through time and proximity: "when space feels thoroughly familiar to us, it has become place."[70] Tuan theorizes "human-place relations with an eye toward restoring 'place as the locus of human fulfillment.' "[71] Like the "critical spatiality" approaches, a landscape approach is a "constructionist discourse" that seeks to study "how spaces are arranged, constructed, perceived, valued, practiced, and resisted."[72] It differs, though, in its decided emphasis on the lyrical experience of places. So, for example, Christopher Meredith and Sophie Thöne both offer spatial readings of the Song that describe how space constitutes relationships. For Meredith, space is "a process by which relationships come into being: relationships between scenes, between characters, and, ultimately, between readers and pages."[73] For Thöne, space constitutes gendered relationships, especially by dichotomizing male and female.[74] My intention, though, is to turn the object of consideration around to look at the landscape not only for what it tells us about human relationships, but also how it shapes and is shaped by land itself.

As I have been insisting, textual representations of landscape are crucial to understanding a society's modes of valuing the natural world, its sense of *place*. Such works "are the encodings that set and enframe human situations. They are the posts that map out a 'landscape.' "[75] As we read the Song, then, we will examine the kinds of experiences that human beings may have had in actual landscapes, and the types of values with which they invested the land as a result of that experience. Many of the landscapes in the Song are *places* in Tuan's sense: they are sites of yearning, memory, and knowledge. One example of this is the appeal to the mother's house:

> O that you were like a brother to me
> who suckled the breasts of my mother.
> I would find you outside and I would kiss you
> and no one would even look down on me.

> I would lead you, I would bring you
> into the house of my mother who bore me.
> I would give you spiced wine to drink,
> the juice of my pomegranates. (Song 8:1–2)

The young woman articulates her desire for her lover in terms of an intimately known landscape—the mother's house. But this is not merely a "space" that symbolizes union. It is also a highly charged "place" that draws on childhood memories of nurture and care, as well as a lifetime of experiences of food production.[76] It enables us to perceive significant continuity with the passage that precedes it, in which the young woman imagines bringing the young man into a vineyard, to see whether "the pomegranates are in bloom" (Song 7:12). A landscape approach allows us to describe the material experience of life in the ancient world—the processes by which a vineyard is first a site of labor (care for tender pomegranate plants) and food production (sustenance for a household), and then becomes charged with erotic meaning. The pomegranates in blossom are a metaphor for the young woman's sexuality, hence the pleasing pain of longing to give her lover their juice. The poem enables us to savor the transformations of such experiences in landscapes that would otherwise be lost. In this way, as Tuan writes, "[l]iterary art can illuminate the inconspicuous fields of human care."[77]

Reading for Landscape in Song 2:8–17

As lyric, the Song's landscapes are fragmentary, episodic, and evocative; they are "impossible to put on a map."[78] For example, Song 1 opens with a royal setting: "the king brought me to his chambers" (v. 4). But the poem doesn't dwell there for long: the young woman's speech moves the reader imaginatively into the desert as she compares herself to the "tents of Kedar" (v. 5), then imagines herself in a vineyard (v. 6), and, in another breath, the sheep's pasturage (v. 8). The landscapes of the Song are always blending and shifting. This is part of the Song's poetic strategy, which also switches easily from rich metaphors to more direct narration, and back.[79] The poet's viewpoint is not fixed, but ranges through a variety of landscapes, drawing freely on diverse elements in its meditation on love. And yet, the repertoire is somewhat restricted: the landscapes of the Song tend to coalesce around productive, small-scale agriculture.[80] In one of the

more clearly individuated early poems of the Song (Song 2:8–17), several poetic strategies crystallize the issue of landscape. In it, we can see the two-part concept of landscape that I have been working out: its material grounding in human process, and its aesthetic dimensions.

Song 2:8–17 is poem of springtime: it is part of that universal celebration of eroticism, in which the lovers awaken to one another just as the land and its creatures awaken to the return of sun and growth: "Love is springtime."[81] In this text, the poet capitalizes on the material heterogeneity of the physical topography of ancient Israel, with its hills and mountains (v. 8; v. 17), its familiar architecture of the home (v. 9), its agricultural fields in springtime (vv. 10–13), and its shepherds at pasture (v. 16). In this way, Song 2:8–17 serves as a microcosm of the physical landscape of the whole book, relying on the experience of the pattern of life in a rural or semi-rural settlement that would have been relatively consistent throughout history in the region. The ease with which the poet shifts back and forth between the images reflects a sense of the material reality of daily life in this ancient environment, in which these distinct landscapes also would have been interwoven, perhaps even proximate enough to be traversable by foot. At the center of the poem, the lover speaks:

> Arise, my dear, my *beauty*, and come.
> For look, winter is gone
> The rains are over and gone
> flowers appear in the land.
> The time of singing has come
> and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.
> The fig ripens its fruit
> the vine blossoms give fragrance.
> Arise my dear, my beauty, and come. (Song 2:10–13)

Here we see clearly the poem's grounding in a material reality of land. The poem draws on landscape features, and does so with some descriptive density, drawing our attention to a place in time and space. This is, in fact, one of the most detailed descriptions of the natural world in the Song (perhaps surpassed only by the garden text, Song 4:12–5:1). The young man describes the season in detail—noting climatological factors (the rains have gone), telltale features of the natural environment (the flowers have appeared, the turtledove is singing), and the human practices that attend

the season (*ʿēt hazzāmîr*, the time of singing), which result in flourishing crops (figs and vines, vv. 6, 7). The description is available phenomenologically, through all of the senses: the rain is heard and seen and felt, flowers are seen and smelled and touched, birds are heard, and the fruits are fragrant and perhaps tasted. The poem draws on local, seasonal knowledge, a signal of the landscape idea. The return of the migratory turtledove (*hattôr*) is an emblem of the arrival of spring, when the birds travel north again for the summer months.[82] The landscape available to the young man's perception is thus not static or atemporal, but shifts in undulating patterns over time. The perception of changing time is reiterated: the rains have passed and gone, and this is now "the time of singing/pruning." There is a subtle wordplay here: *ʿēt hazzāmîr higgîaʿ*, I translated earlier as "the time of singing has come." But *hazzāmîr* ("singing") is a homonym that also means "pruning." Translators, of course, must choose one or the other, but the poet plays with the coincidence, which allows human voices to mingle with the voice of turtledove, even while they celebrate their own labor in the fields. This is landscape in the first sense that I highlighted—namely, it evokes a lived, material experience of human intervention in the topography. It is not "wild nature," but land that is *shaped*.

The second sense of landscape I have been highlighting is its aesthetic dimension. A prominent strategy of this poem is a series of rhetorical frames that crystallize its aesthetic. The first of these frames can be seen by taking a step back to the beginning of the poem:

> The voice of my lover! Here! he is coming
> leaping on the mountains
> bounding on the hills.
> My lover resembles a gazelle
> or a young deer.
> Here he is, standing
> outside our wall,
> peering through the window,
> gazing through the lattice.
> My lover speaks and says to me . . . (Song 2:8–9)

The lines describing the spring landscape I cited earlier are quoted speech—the description is framed within the young woman's speech. The young woman speaks, and discloses what the young man says. This

initial frame is complemented by a second frame: the young man's speech frames yet another speech, *qôl hattôr* ("the voice of the turtledove"). The "voice" of the bird is embedded in the "voice" of the young man, which is embedded in the "voice" of the young woman (which is of course also embedded in the voice of the poet). This artful framing enacts an aesthetic of landscape as it embeds the lovers' relationship in an experience of and discourse about land. At the same time, the land can only be accessed by the reader through the several frames of the poem's speakers. It comes to us consciously mediated by human perception and judgments of value.

The role of perception is a significant structural principle in the poem. The twice-repeated presentative particle *hinnēh* ("Here!") emphasizes the young woman's perception of her lover, even as it positions us as perceivers, both as her and beside her, at the window. Similarly, the verb *dômeh* ("resemble") self-consciously distances the lover from the young woman's metaphor about him: "My lover *resembles* a gazelle or a young deer" saturates the description with her own awareness of her sense of perception. The self-conscious *making* of the poem is both grounded in the landscape and is itself an aesthetic of landscape, dependent on the sense of the human perceiver.

Seen through the eyes of the young-woman-as-perceiver, the young man's form is part of the landscape. He is like a gazelle or the fawn of a deer "coming," "leaping," "bounding," "appearing," "standing," "peering," and "gazing." All these verbs are participles, not finite verbs. They render the lover, as it were, in still life. He is framed by her vision through the window, forever in movement, but always static, near and far at once. He is like a gazelle in a painting: She perceives his presence, but cannot fully access it, arrested as it is in time and space.[83] She describes the material landscape, drawing on memories of the gazelle, both elegant and timid, part of the known landscape but not (yet) fully known. While the poem places the young woman peering out through a window, she is also the active agent whose speech enfolds his speech, and whose description gives him the bounded vitality of an image. In this way, the poem destabilizes its own gender roles: while in one sense the young woman is "enclosed, surrounded, and contained"—she looks through a window—in another sense the young woman is the source of the only real action of the poem, which is description.[84] It is her voice that animates her lover.[85] This animation depends on an acute awareness of the human perceiver, who is attentive to the landscape and whose art speaks in its terms.

This structural embeddedness that I have noted—the voice of the land nested in the voice of the young man, which is nested in the voice of the young woman—echoes a larger thematic bias that we see throughout the Song, namely, that human experience is inseparable from the appreciation of and experience within the material landscape. The play with the repeated word *qôl* ("voice/sound") is one example. The word *qôl* ("voice/sound") is repeated four times, threading a stitch of coherence through each level of the poem's frames (2:8, 12, 14). It is the first word of the young woman's speech ("The voice of my lover!"); it is what the young man longs to hear from the young woman ("let me hear your voice / for your voice is sweet"); it is what the turtledove says ("The voice of the turtledove is heard in our land"). The Song consistently blurs boundaries, making us wonder where people end and the earth begins. The young man is imagined as a gazelle, and so when we hear his approach (*qôl dôdî*, "the voice of my lover!"), it is not clear whether it is his speech or the sound of his hooves rustling the brush outside her window. Similarly, the young woman is described as a dove, so when the young man says that her voice is sweet, is it the speaking voice of a human he describes, or the coo of a dove? In the case of *qôl* here in v. 14, Brown-Driver-Briggs calls it an instance of "human speech," while Koehler-Baumgartner analyzes it as a "loud noise of animals." This interpretive disagreement points up a dynamic that the poetry seems quite happy to exploit: Is it a sound or a voice? A human one, or an animal one? The poetry self-consciously blurs boundaries between the landscape and the lovers. We will see this metaphorical sensibility manifested in other ways, especially as the young man is imagined as the shepherd, and the young woman is imagined in terms of the vineyard, the garden, and the city. It is a kind of pleasant astigmatism that threads throughout the entire book.

This poem, with its clear representation of the land and its aesthetic embedding of voices, offers one example of the sense of landscape I have been advocating, and hopefully gives a sample of its productive potential for reading poetry. It can help us to explore the worldview of the ancient writers and to understand "landscape as experience."[86] The texts are a profound and still largely untapped resource in this way.

At the same time, it is one of the arguments of this study that such understanding also has ethical implications for contemporary readers.[87] It is one of the privileges of lyric poetry to draw readers to reciprocal reflection on their own place and experience. As the young woman speaks, we speak. In this way, the Song's dialogic mode offers us an encounter—with

ancient lovers, with ancient poets, and with their landscapes—that asks us to see the world in a particular way. The poem beckons us: "see things like this." So for good reason, ecologically minded readers have begun to turn to the Song for one source of ethical resources for thinking about and responding to the contemporary ecological crisis. But for such readers, the Song has largely been used as an example of "Eden restored," a celebration of an ideal of harmony.[88] For example, Ellen Bernstein writes, "Neither anthropocentric nor biocentric, the Song expresses a 'natural intelligence.' What I mean by this is an intimacy with nature, an identification with nature, an intuitive knowing of nature born of the continuity between the body of flesh and the body of the earth. . .. [It] is a paean to love, nature, beauty, and wholeness."[89] Similarly, Daniel Grossberg writes, "The delights of nature abound in Song of Songs to the virtual exclusion of harshness . . . [It] sings of the harmony in nature."[90] As such, readers have rightly noted, there is a pervasive insistence in the Song on flourishing. But to focus exclusively on flourishing does not do justice to the complexity of the Song itself.[91]

As I will suggest only briefly here—but which I will draw out in the readings in each of the following chapters—is that there are two ethical benefits to working with a landscape concept. The first is that it is humanistic (though not anthropocentric) in its orientation. This is easy to see in the Song, since humans and human love provide the central tension. Reading for landscape, then, will not be a pursuit of pure "nature," as opposed to culture. As landscape architect James Corner writes, "[o]wing to the inevitable imaging that enframes and represents nature to a given society, the possibilities of a cultureless nature necessarily remain absolutely unknown and unimaginable."[92] On the Song's own evaluation, I will suggest, a properly ordered humanism is capable of centering our values of the natural world through the perspective of flourishing—and human flourishing is not incidental to this, but intrinsic.[93]

The second benefit of a landscape approach for ethical reflection is that its aesthetic orientation prioritizes the complexity of the lyric mode. It does not attempt to resolve the landscapes of the Song into reified categories (male-female, public-private, nature-culture, sexy-unsexy, etc.). Meredith helpfully describes the problem: "[Such scholarly] divisions beg the question of why the text is more spatially coherent in analysis than it is in reading."[94] Meredith argues that the resistance to such easy categorization is a function of the Song's textuality: "*Texts are, in fact, re-performances of the spatialities by which texts come into being.* By the same stroke, space

is a re-performance of the textualities by which spaces comes into being. The interplay, or better: the intercourse, that takes place between these two projects is in a sense the very heart of the Song's sexual discourse."[95] As I have begun to suggest, though, this is more specifically a function of the Song's lyricism. And these spaces are not exclusively "harmonious," as the ecological readings cited earlier aver;[96] rather, the Song seems cognizant of threats to order and to love. The garden, the desert, cultivated spaces like the vineyard and pasturage for sheep occur in a pattern of appearance and disappearance that interlock in ambivalent ways with more strictly human spaces like the city and the homestead. In this same poem, Song 2:8–17, some of this ambivalence comes into view:

> Catch us the foxes
> the little foxes
> who are ruining the vineyards.
> Our vineyards are in blossom. (2:15)

A number of questions present themselves: Who is speaking? Who is addressed? Who is charged to catch foxes? Who is implied in "our vineyards"? What do the foxes, and the catching of foxes, signify? How do foxes spoil vineyards, anyway?[97] In raising these questions, I am lifting up the perplexing quality of these lines: In a poem that has had such a clear framing of voices, these lines feel almost disjointed—a breach in the frame, an interlude without a clear connection to what precedes and follows. But if we pause, and turn the attention back to the landscape, several things emerge. In the world of the poem, there are foxes in the vineyard. They are ambivalent themselves—they are "little," which mitigates the sense of their threat. But they are still threatening: the verb √*ḥ-b-l* ("destroy") is never used for benign action; moreover, foxes are conventional agents of destruction in biblical texts (Judg 16:4; Ezek 13:4; Ps 63:11; Lam 5:18; Neh 3:35).[98] Despite this destructive potential—and increasing the sense of urgency about the foxes—the vineyards are budding (*səmādar*[99]). A landscape awareness enables us to see that the poem presents a world that is still coming into full fruition. It is enough, without attempting to fully unpack the metaphors, to see that the landscape contains competing forces; it is beset. As Marcia Falk has argued, the foxes are one of the "ominous undercurrents" that weave through the Song.[100] Foxes are opportunistic omnivores who would happily prey on ground-feeding birds like pigeons and gazelles, and so they pose a threat to the lovers, who in this

poem are imagined as dove and gazelle.[101] Other hints of such ominous undercurrents—and they are mostly hints, not fully limned—include the lion and leopard that haunt the mountains (4:8), and the city whose guards wound the young woman (5:7). According to the imagination of the Song, landscapes are shaped by potentially dangerous competing forces.[102] At the same time, this poem gives a clue to the ethical potential I have begun to introduce: the vineyards are "ours" (*kərāmênû*). The first person common pronoun "our" signals that landscapes are not neutral backdrops; rather, they are places with the dignity of personal knowledge and the pride of possession.[103] This echoes the description of land earlier in the poem: "the voice of the turtledove is heard *in our land*." The only time the word *ʾereṣ* ("land,") occurs in the Song is twice, here at the heart of the poem of 2:8–17. It is not "earth" as an autonomous agent or an abstract space.[104] It is a bounded, perceivable landscape that provides a place for the perpetual tasks of daily life, the patterns of work and relationship that persist in the topography of the known. "Our land" is the place where lovers share a sense of belonging. In the "foxes" interlude, this sense of belonging comes with a sense of requirement, even troth.

But in a moment, as quickly as they have come, the foxes are gone again. In a similar way, the lovers appear and disappear to one another—she is a pigeon hiding in the cracks of the rock, he is a gazelle darting away over the hills. The landscape of the Song, in this way, is a patchwork of appearance and disappearance; it enfolds the lovers, and it is also subject to their care. The sense of identity and belonging in the land and the attendant notions of obligation and care, I will seek to show, largely define the sense of landscape in the Song of Songs.

As this reading has begun to suggest, the Song is clearly cognizant of land, and so we can expect our investigation into its imaginational landscapes to illuminate the experience and values of the natural world for the ancient poet and audience. At the same time, a landscape concept enables us to move nimbly through aspects of lyric interpretation. In what follows, I will spend time with selected texts, showing how the Song moves in and out of different imagined landscapes to build a complex, eidetic, and highly variable experience. The Song seems to conceptualize the natural world with distinct but fluid boundaries. I will trace four imaginational landscapes in the Song, illuminated by the theoretical orientation I have described here. Such an approach is not a methodology in a strict sense; rather, it is a practical disposition that enables the reader to account for a variety of features in the text. The advantages of this type of approach

are several: first, it reveals how the poetry itself puts a high premium on its material context. "Never is the power of the landscape idea underestimated or severed from physical space."[105] This will be the central emphasis of Chapter 2, which explores the agrarian landscape that would have grounded human experience in the ancient world. A landscape approach also recognizes the necessarily complex relationship between the material environment and the cultural processes that characterize human life in that environment. The processes of shaping and reshaping will be examined, in different ways, in Chapters 3 and 4, which examine two landscapes of particular intensification: the garden and the city. Finally, the landscape concept retains the idea of the human perceiver, which is a crucial subject of the Song's descriptive poems, absorbed as they are with the gaze that beholds the lover's body and finds a geography (the subject of Chapter 5). Throughout these examinations, I will continue to draw on aspects of landscape theory to enrich my analysis. Ultimately, the Song of Songs imagines the lovers and the land as landscapes shaped by desire and subject to conditions that require an ongoing ethic of care.

2

The Agrarian Landscape

What connections or responsibilities do we maintain
between our bodies and the earth?

WENDELL BERRY (1977)

ONE OF THE most prominent landscapes in the Song is the farm.[1] The farm is close to the original sense of "landscape": It is a portion of land hewn by human hands, which Cicero called "second nature." In his philosophical treatise *On the Nature of the Gods*, he writes, "we sow corn, we plant trees, we fertilize the soil by irrigation, we confine the rivers and straighten or divert their courses. In fine, by means of our hands we essay to create as it were a *second nature* within the world of nature" (II.lx).[2] In the Song, this "second nature" is a frequently evoked landscape, evident in the pervasive imagery related to fields and vineyards (1:6, 14; 2:15; 7:13; 8:11, 12), cereal crops (2:7; 3:5; 7:2, 12), and orchards (4:13; 2:4; 3:4; 7:11–12; 8:2), all of which were staples of the agrarian economy in ancient Israel and Judah.[3] The Song's agricultural milieu is furthered by reference to animal husbandry, the other cornerstone of the ancient agrarian economy: shepherds and sheep, too, frequently appear in the Song (1:7–8; 4:1–2; 6:5–6).[4]

The ancient farm was, persistently, a family farm. This farm was traditional, and its characteristics would be recognizable throughout much of history in ancient Israel and, indeed, across the world. It was a configuration of nature, enclosed by human work, and directed toward human ends. It would have utilized a variety of cultivated plants in order to diversify nutritive value and maximize production.[5] In the region of ancient Israel and Judah, it would have comprised mainly fields and vineyards, which are frequently evoked together in biblical texts as a merism for agricultural potential (Lev 25:3–4; 1 Sam 8:14; Exod 22:4; Neh 5:11; Deut 32:32; Isa 16:8; Hab 3:17; cf. CTU 1.23.8–11).[6] These would have been the principal products of such farms: "wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make

his face shine, and bread to sustain the human heart" (Ps 104:15). Such a farm was usually worked by a family, which would have shared the various tasks of labor, and so family members appear throughout the Song (1:6–7; 3:4, 11; 6:9; 8:1, 2, 5).[7] A small-scale family farm would have to have been locally adapted to the hilly, variable topography of Palestine. Because of the dramatic contours of the region, steep ravines, and thin topsoil, the productive capability of particular plots of land would have been highly particularized. Farmers would have needed an intimate, local knowledge of their small parcels of geography.[8] The success of such a farm, then, would have depended upon the adaptation of agricultural practices to the unique aspects of its location, effectively combining its productive elements to stave off starvation, as well as resisting threats, including natural forces such as drought, disease, and wild animals.

Despite the vulnerability of the small farm, this model is remarkably resilient: "Like the annual plants on which farming life mostly depends, the forces of nature and man can easily destroy it: but also like the grasses razed by fire, it quickly re-establishes itself so long as some people remain."[9] Even the incursion of Assyria into the Levant, which brought with it tributary expectations and new systems of production and exchange beginning in the second half of the ninth century, would have decreased the reserves and perhaps ownership patterns of individual farms, but probably not their self-sufficiency or their family-based labor distribution.[10] Indeed, the tenacity of the farm is evident in the resurgence of rural settlements in Yehud during the Persian period (one plausible time of the Song's origin) following the drastic decline at the end of the Iron Age.[11] The combination of vulnerability and fecundity is key to the lyric imagination of the Song of Songs. The farmstead is a primary landscape in the Song, and it provides a significant resource for the metaphorical imagination of the lovers. In what follows, I offer readings of two texts that are grounded in the agricultural landscape: Song 1:5–8 and 7:10–13. Close to the beginning and end of the Song, they offer a sort of agrarian "frame," recalling the fields to the mind of the reader, reiterating a deep-seated connection between these human lovers and their larger world. As I move through these readings, I will draw some insights from contemporary agrarianism in order to help underscore the ethics of agriculture.

Song 1:5–8

In an early section of the Song, the young woman and the young man are imagined in an agricultural landscape like the one I have just described.[12]

The poem plays with shifting landscapes. It is composed structurally of three sections. In the first two sections, the young woman speaks, addressing first her friends, "Dark I am, but lovely / O daughters of Jerusalem"; then addressing the young man, "Tell me / O you whom I love / where do you pasture?" In the third section, the young women reply: "If you do not know / O beautiful among women / go out in the tracks of the flock" (v. 8).[13] Each moment of direct address is followed by an evocation of an imagined landscape, the countryside in various manifestations: desert (v. 5); vineyard (v. 6); and pasturage (vv. 7, 8). As I will show, the speakers evoke the materiality of the agrarian landscape, which then provides the substance of playful metaphors for the lovers themselves. The conceptualization of these agrarian landscapes has particular ethical implications, as it orients the poem around labor, cultivation, and care.

The Materiality of the Vineyard

The poem begins with a striking claim:

> Dark I am, but[14] lovely,
> O daughters of Jerusalem
> Like the tents of Kedar
> Like the curtains of Salmah.[15] (1:5)

This claim about her beauty is elaborated with descriptive language that evokes the desert: the young woman says that she is "dark," and "darkish," like the "tents of Kedar." The name Kedar (*qēdār*) plays on the root *q-d-r* meaning "to be dark" (1 Kgs 18:45; Jer 4:28; 8:28; Ezek 32:7–8; Joel 2:10; etc.).[16] The name evokes a distant, pastoralist nation (Jer 2:10) associated with flocks (Isa 60:7; Jer 49:28–29; Ezek 27:21), and remembered for fierceness in battle (Isa 21:16–17). Their iconic black goats-hair tents would be the refuge of nomads from the desert sun (Ps 120:5; Jer 49). By the image of the black goats-hair tents in the desert, the young woman speaks of herself in exoticizing terms, creating an image of a fierce foreign tribe surviving in the desert, and conveys a sense of exposure to the elements: she is as exposed as the open desert. In this couplet, and in the following two couplets, the poem plays with the idea that the young woman is a shepherd in this desert landscape. It delays for eight lines the non-metaphorical "aside" in which she reveals the reason for her darkness: "they made me keeper of the vineyards" (v. 6d). This belated revelation enjoins the reader to reimagine the lines already heard, through a

process of "retrospective patterning."[17] Through the temporal experience of the poem, new thematic information is added that demands a revision of the previous working understanding of the poem.

> Do not look at me because I am dark,[18]
> Because the sun has gazed at me.
> My mother's sons burned against me.
> They made me keeper[19] of the vineyards.
> My own vineyard I have not kept. (1:6)

The poem plays with the *š-* sound here, repeating the hushing sibilant sound "sh" at the beginning, middle, and end of four words in a row: ***Še'ănî Šəḥarḥōret/šeŠŠězāpatnî haŠŠāmeŠ***. This strong consonance links the young woman's "darkness" (*šəḥarḥōret*) with the "burning sun" (*šeššězāpatnî haššāmeš*), and it recalls the hushing tones of the Song's ascription, ***Šîr haŠŠîrîm 'ăŠer liŠlōmōh*** ("the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's," 1:1) and its opening acclamation *yiŠŠāqēnî minnəŠîqôt pîhû* ("let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth," 1:2). These words push the sounds to the front of the mouth, like a whisper. They build the sense that what we are hearing is overheard, a kind of private revelation. This soundplay also creates a thematic link between the darkness of the young woman with the burning sun. The natural initial reading of this line is that the young woman is dark because of the burning sun of the open desert. But the belated revelation that she is the keeper of vineyards (v. 6d) causes a retrospective revision of this reading—we see now that we are not in the desert, but rather a domestic vineyard. At this revelation, the reader must revisit the idea of the desert with which the poem begins to consider in what ways the young woman in the vineyard is like that desert landscape. The answer to that question requires that the reader or listener draw on a bank of assumed knowledge about the material realities of vine dressing in ancient Israel.

One material reality of vine dressing on which the poem capitalizes is the young woman as a vine dresser laboring outdoors (1:6). This reflects a likely agricultural reality for small-scale farmers, ancient and modern alike: the household and all of its able-bodied members would have been involved in the production of food (with varied seasonal intensity, with all hands helping during the harvest, for example). Other biblical texts serve as witnesses to women's involvement in several aspects of viticulture, including purchasing and participating in the household's vineyard (Prov 31:16), attending the grape harvest, perhaps with ritual roles (Judg

21:20–22), and drinking wine (Judg 16:27; Ruth 2:14; 1 Sam 1:9).[20] Tasks for youth likely involved hoeing, weeding, planting, harvesting, and—as this text indicates—guarding the vineyard.[21] As a guard, she would have kept threats such as thieves and wild animals like boars or jackals at bay ("Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards," 2:15; cf. Ps. 80:14). The poem plays with this material background, drawing out the sense of the vineyard's vulnerability as it works out its lyrical purposes. Vines are grown from shoots of existing plants, are transplanted into terraced groves, which require planning and heavy landscaping labor, and then they require training and pruning.[22] These activities are future-oriented, and would provide a farm with crops of grapes for generations. Vines generally do not produce their first meager crops until at least their fourth or fifth years after planting, and a full crop often takes a full decade to mature.[23] The grape harvest is labor-intensive and intergenerational, in part because of the vulnerability of grapes to overripeness and rot, which requires a fast-moving and skilled team of harvesters.[24] In this way, the depth and power of the vineyard's symbolism stem from viticultural realities: Vines are a high-commitment crop that takes years of intensive care and cultivation in order to be productive. Wine, their main product, is itself also labor-intensive, involving harvesting, treading the grapes on presses, collecting the juices in vats, then transporting and storing the must while it fermented into wine.[25] Fermentation, the final step in the process, acts as a preservative, effectively converting an unstable fruit into a source of nutrition and enjoyment that would last. All these realities suggest that the ultimately desirable products—fruit, wine—will only be the reward of intensive, ongoing maintenance. Both the vineyard and wine evoke a sense of hopeful futurity that is nevertheless fundamentally contingent on human care.

Like the desert, the vineyard is subject to the heat of the sun. That is, the sun's somewhat hostile quality represents the challenging realities of subsistence agriculture in a hot, arid region. The summer (from mid-June to mid-September) is marked by a complete absence of rainfall, and this long dry period can be intensely hot under the unrelenting sun. It is during this period that the vines flourish and grapes ripen, relying on the morning dew for their moisture, and it would also be during this period that much of the work of vine dressing would take place.[26] In this way, the climate interacts with the landscape, an interaction expressed most visibly in vegetation, which "arrests or transforms the climactic forces."[27] Pruning both the leaves and branches of the vine would increase the

fruit's exposure to the sun during the grape's final stage of ripening.[28] The tenth-century Gezer inscription reflects the agricultural cycle in ancient Palestine, and includes *yrḥw zmr* ("two months of pruning").[29] Given its context in the calendar (taking place after harvesting, sowing, and the barley harvest, but before the fall month of ingathering), the task is set in July and August, which corresponds to contemporary Palestinian practices.[30] Pruning is a fundamental practice of cultivation that makes the vine flourish, and leaving off the task of pruning is a figure for abandonment: "I will put it to waste: it will not be pruned or hoed" (Isa 5:6; cf. Lev 25:3–4; perhaps also CTU 1.23, obverse 8–11). The young woman is imagined in the material landscape of the vineyard in the heat of summer, in which she is working to maintain the vines. Both the young woman as the exposed worker and the vines themselves are vulnerable to the blazing sun. The grape crop, too, can be devastated by exposure: "Will [the vine of Judah] not utterly wither when the east wind strikes it—wither away on the bed where it grew?" (Ezek 17:10).[31] Similarly, in the Ugaritic epic of Aqhat, Daniel "[a]djures the clouds in the awful heat, / 'Let the clouds make rain in the summer, / the dew lay on the grapes.'"[32] The sun is personified, "gazing" at the young woman, and is an ambivalent figure, emblemizing both the hostile elements and the possibility of the vineyard's growth.

In the next lines, a wordplay capitalizes on this ambivalence: "The sons of my mother burned against me, / They made me keeper of the vineyards" (1:6). The word "burned" (*niḥărû*) can be construed either from the root *ḥ-r-h*, meaning "to burn, be angry" (cf. Isa 41:11; 45:24), or from the root *ḥ-r-r*, meaning "to burn, scorch" (cf. Ps 102:4). There is a nice symmetry here—while the sun is personified as it gazes at the young woman, the brothers take on the characteristics of the sun: they burn. The role of the brothers here is somewhat opaque; but a kin-based agricultural system would have relied on their labor, along with the young woman's. Like the sun, their anger has a bit of a sinister tone. Just as the sun is both a necessity and a potential threat, the brothers are also a necessity to the vineyard as well as a potential threat to it. The intertwined themes of exposure and refuge suggest that the desire for erotic encounter hinges on the power of the sun that blends into the possibility of harm. This vulnerability is also played up in the expressed need to "guard" the vineyard. The vineyard would have been vulnerable, not just to the elements, but to threats of all kinds. Both walls and towers are known features of ancient vineyards (Isa 5:1–7; Isa 27:3), and would have provided deterrence for animals

and defense from attacking forces in war, which would routinely raid or destroy orchards, fields, and vineyards (Judg 6:3–6; 15:3–5; 2 Kgs 3:5).[33] Implicit in these lines, then, is a sense of the landscape's vulnerability, which will require the young woman's vigilant care.

The Materiality of Shepherding

In verses 7–8 the landscape shifts from the vineyard to the shepherds' fields (cf. 2:16–17; 6:2–3, 11).

> Tell me,
> O you whom I love,
> Where do you pasture?
> Where do you rest at noon?
> Why should I be like one wrapped up
> Beside the flocks of your companions? (1:7)

This easy transition is a feature of the Song's poetic style, as well as a reflection of the material reality of closely interweaving agricultural zones. Sedentary herding practice was to pen flocks at the homestead at night, and to graze during the day among both uncultivated pasturage and cultivated fields. This meant that shepherds and farmers would overlap in their daily work. Occasionally this would lead to competition; literary texts such as the Sumerian dialogue "The Shepherd and the Farmer" and the story of Cain and Abel (Gen 4) dramatize this dynamic interaction between farming and shepherding. Despite the potential for conflict, the Sumerian dialogue resolves in hospitality and friendship: "Let your sheep pasture amid my grain-stalks . . . become my companion."[34] Likewise, here in the Song the two modes seem complementary.

Commentators frequently take the shepherding imagery to represent leisure and pastoral idleness. For instance, Marvin Pope has written, "[the shepherd] is idle all day and alone in the field and thus always accessible for a love tryst."[35] Similarly, J. Cheryl Exum writes, "the harmony and simplicity of life in tune with nature enjoyed by shepherds and other rural folk is idealized."[36] Such readings highlight the presumed ease of an agrarian life. And there are certainly images of pleasure and of rest in this passage and throughout the Song of Songs. Here, for instance, the young woman is seeking the shepherd's tents (v. 8) to find where they are resting during the heat of the day (v. 7). Elsewhere in the Song, lovemaking

is compared to a king's leisure on his couch (1:12) and to resting in the shade of an apple tree (2:3; 8:5). To exclusively highlight the leisure of love, though, doesn't fully acknowledge the fragility of the landscape of food production. Ruminants such as sheep and goats become more susceptible to diseases as a result of breeding, and the domesticated flocks live in large groups in the open country when they are under human care, making them all the more vulnerable to predation.[37] The very fact of human intervention in raising sheep and goats thus leads to the animals' greater dependency on human care. As the shepherd attends the flock, he is exposed to the same risks as his animals. The biblical traditions remember David as a shepherd who had to defend his herd against a lion and a bear, using the same defensive skills that enabled him to kill Goliath in battle (1 Sam 17:34, 49). The kinds of risks a shepherd might face are articulated by Jacob's complaint to Laban in Genesis 31 about the many hardships he faced as a shepherd:

> These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. That which was torn by wild beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself; of my hand you required it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. It was like this with me: by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. (Gen 31:38–41)

His (melodramatic) complaint points to the potential difficulties faced by flock and shepherd. These include starvation (v. 38), wild predators, thieves (v. 39), exposure to extreme elements, fatigue (v. 40), and precarious economic circumstances (v. 41). Jacob summarizes this laundry list of difficulties as "my affliction and the labor of my hands" (v. 42). Similarly, the comfort the shepherd provides in the Twenty-third Psalm is a contrast to the dark valley and the fear of harm that might come upon the sheep (Ps 23:4). The Song, too, does not forget that the labor of the shepherd's hands is rife with peril: wild animals lurk in the hills, as lions and leopards in the mountains are a distant but very real menace to the shepherd and the flock alike (4:8). As these examples indicate, shepherding presupposes not just the leisure for a "love tryst," but, on some level, an awareness of struggle for survival.

In this poem, the shepherd and his flock are subject to the burning sun, much in the way that the young woman and her vines are. The young woman cannot find him (v. 7) because he is taking shelter at noon from the highest heat of the day. The poem continues to plays with the ambivalent presence of the sun. The consuming heat in the exposed pasturage forces the young man to seek shelter, drawing on the same perceived threat of high heat as in Jacob's complaint, "... by day the heat consumed me" (Gen 31:40). In seeking refuge, he becomes hidden to the young woman. As she searches for him, she, too, voices an anxiety about needing to find shelter, "Why should I be like one wrapped up?" The agricultural landscape indexes the lovers' longing by providing an obstacle—the searing sun—that prolongs their unfulfilled desire. At the same time, this obstacle also provides an occasion for their desire—if she can find his tent, perhaps there they will enjoy a tryst after all.

> If you do not know for yourself,
> O beautiful among women,
> Go out in the tracks of the flock
> and pasture your kids
> beside the dwellings of the shepherds. (1:8)

The Daughters of Jerusalem, who have been listening to the young woman, address her with their characteristic phrase *hayyāpāh bannāšîm* ("beautiful among women"; cf. 5:9 and 6:1), which bolsters the young woman's assertion of her beauty ("dark I am, but lovely," 1:5). This last section of the first poem diverges somewhat from the lines that precede it. It is not marked by soundplay, like the repeated *š-* and *ī-* sounds of verse 6; it doesn't use syntactic parallelism to create symmetrical lines through word repetition, as previous lines do: "like the tents of Kedar / like the curtains of Salmah," "Where do you pasture? / Where do you rest?" (vv. 5 and 7). Instead, these lines are a single, long prose-like sentence advising the young woman to go on a journey, to follow the flocks into the landscape in pursuit of her lover. They reiterate the theme with which the poem began—the idea that the young woman, too, is a shepherd—which had been deferred by the interlude about the vineyard. These lines imitate the journey they bespeak—they are themselves an unusually long path—and they put to good effect another material reality, namely, the knowledge involved in shepherding. The shepherd comes to know the landscape intimately because he ranges over it by foot, driving the flock

to pasture. One reason the domestication of flocks is so appealing as part of the mixed agricultural strategy is that these animals are able to utilize marginal land that would not otherwise support human life.[38] Regions—particularly hilly ones—that do not receive sufficient annual rainfall to support agriculture are amenable to flocks that graze unselectively on a diet of available vegetation. In return, the flocks provide profitable goods, including a daily supply of milk, dung for fertilizer and fuel, a yearly supply of wool or goats' hair, as well as skins and meat on occasion.[39] These flocks effectively turn otherwise useless land into a variety of tangible resources. But for shepherds to find sufficient pasture and water among the marginal countryside, they needed to cover a large swath of land, often traveling up to six miles twice a day during the dry season.[40] During these long journeys, shepherds develop an intimate knowledge of the landscape across which they range, driving the flocks to new pasture, seeking hidden refuge and water. This motif of the hidden shepherd is a literary convention. It is also evident, for example, in the Dumuzi-Inanna cycles from Mesopotamia, where the god Dumuzi is consistently rendered as a shepherd, and he is frequently pictured out in the steppe, away from his lover, who must seek him. In this late Akkadian poem, Ishtar seeks her lover Dumuzi. He is described as follows:

> He leads his cattle, one after another,
> He seeks a pasture where the grass conceals the moistest areas,
> Where anemone-flowers blossom at the edge of the wood.
> His eyes scan pasture and meadow,
> They seek out springs in the open country
> And the forests of the mountains.[41]

The salient aspect here is the keen perceptiveness of the shepherd to the—often hidden—potential of the land. The grass conceals moisture, the flowers blossom at the edge of the wood—one has to know to look for such things. At the same time, the hidden potential also enfolds the shepherd into the landscape: as he seeks the hidden springs, he disappears and becomes hidden himself, so Ishtar must seek him out. This sensitivity to the landscape is also in view here in the Song, where the young man disappears with his sheep, so that the young woman is unable to find him (something he is often doing throughout the Song): "Where do you pasture? Where do you rest at noon?" (Song 1:7). But the friends present this type of knowledge as available to the young woman as well—she too might

journey with her sheep; she too might pasture; she too might be enfolded into the landscape with her lover.

Agriculture and Metaphor

At the same time as the poems draws on the materiality of the ancient agricultural economy, its lyrical imagination sets this materiality into motion, pushing the imagery ever closer to metaphor. The poetry plays with the idea that the lovers are themselves the landscape or part of the landscape. As material experience becomes a source for metaphors about the lovers and even about love itself, it mediates symbolic knowledge about the world. As Christopher Tilley, a post-processual archaeologist and theorist of landscape, has argued, the phenomenological experience of landscape becomes the source of greater cultural signification. Tilley relates the Apache metaphor, "wisdom sits in places," which exhibits an orientation toward the topography that invests environmental features with symbolic dimensions, and creates knowledge by reflecting on them. In this way, a moral aspect is encoded in the physical environs. He writes, "[a] sense of place is a way of imaginatively engaging with one's surroundings and finding them significant, a personal and cultural appropriation of the world."[42] The material context—in this case, ancient agriculture—becomes the source of social and personal knowledge. It encodes values about the environment. As we shall see, the poetry presses us to see that the material farms are also suggestive of the lovers themselves. By appropriating the landscape in this way, the poem develops imaginational resources for moral responses to the natural world and to human sensuality. These metaphorical aspects of the poetry mean that the boundaries between the lovers and their objects of comparison are consistently obscured, drawing the reader into a kind of astigmatism that sees the lovers' bodies in terms of the land, and the land in terms of the lovers' bodies. Even as the lovers are depicted in an agricultural landscape, the poem presses the similarity between them and their natural environs.

This metaphorical sensibility is most clearly on display in the vision of the young woman as both the vine dresser and the vineyard. As I discussed earlier, the young woman is the keeper of the vineyards (1:6). There is an element of irony and chagrin in the young woman's admission that she has kept her family's vineyard but not her own (1:6). It is not likely that this refers to her own literal vineyard, her own plot of planted vines. Instead, the reference appears to be symbolic of herself, or perhaps her readiness

for lovemaking, as scholars have often noted.[43] This is elaborated throughout the Song of Songs, as when her breasts are extolled as clusters of the vine (7:8), and the vines' ripeness signals her readiness to give the young man her love (7:12). This reference to her own vineyard is picked up and reiterated with a tone of confident self-determination in 8:12, when she declares, "my own vineyard is for myself." In this way, when the vineyard is evoked, the poet is also conjuring the body of the young woman. As I alluded to earlier, the nuances of this metaphor of the young-woman-as-vineyard are necessarily colored by the realities of ancient viticulture in Israel. The vine's significance lies not just in its heady delicacy, but in its stability—both in terms of the longevity of the vineyards, and in the longevity of the product, wine. That is, the young woman, imagined as a vine dresser and as a vineyard, is full of potential that must be developed. When she voices anxiety and regret ("my own vineyard I have not kept," v. 6), she likens the vineyard's vulnerability to her own need for cultivation: the care that she must give to the grapes—guarding their precious crop—she must also give to herself. Like the grapes, she too must be cultivated, attended to vigilantly. There is a sense of communal value implicit in the image. After all, the value of the vineyard is ultimately in its provision of goods for the community: grapes, raisins, and—most important—wine.[44] While the young woman desires to keep her own vines, she includes the young man in the horizon of ownership: "Our vineyards are in blossom" (2:15). In this sense, the metaphorical significance of the vineyard as the body also imagines the lover sharing in body and desire. The landscape of the vineyard suggests an expectation of proleptic abundance that will depend on care.

The shepherd at pasture, too, while not an explicit metaphor, moves in the direction of the metaphorical. The young man becomes part of the landscape as he drives the flock, but in so doing he blends together with the sheep he cares for. The poem underscores this analogy between the young shepherd and his sheep when the young woman inquires after her lover: "Tell me, whom my soul loves, / Where do you pasture?/ Where do you rest at noon?" (1:7). The object "your flocks," or "your sheep" is frequently supplied by translations: "Tell me . . . where you pasture *your flock*" (emphasis added; NRSV, KJV, ASV, NIV, JPS, etc.) But in the Hebrew there is no object, so the verse literally reads, "Tell me . . . where do you pasture?" The verb "pasture," (√*r-ʿ-h*) can have both transitive and intransitive senses,[45] but the absence of the object makes the scene ambiguous: the lover is imagined as a shepherd who will take his flocks to rest in the pasture; at the same time, the lover himself could be understood as the

grazing animal. "Tell me . . . where do you pasture?" imagines the young man as both shepherd and sheep. The same creative ambiguity is used in 6:2: "My lover has gone down to his garden . . . to pasture in the gardens." This text, too, closely identifies shepherd and sheep. The poem plays with this double vision of the human caretaker, who is also metaphorically a sheep in need of care. Elsewhere in the Song, the young woman is also the lilies on which the flocks—or the young man—graze (2:16; 4:5; 6:3; cf. 6:2). This play on the lilies throughout the Song evokes the young woman's beauty and seductiveness: In 2:1, she declares "I am a lily of the valleys," which the young man eagerly affirms: "As a lily among brambles, so is my friend among the other young women" (2:2).[46] His grazing among the lilies suggestively if subtly evokes an erotic enjoyment of the lover's body, once again blending the human toward the metaphorical.

The young woman is also—less frequently—imagined as a shepherdess: in the final lines of verse 8, the daughters of Jerusalem beckon her to attend to the pasture:

> Go out in the tracks of the flock
> And pasture your kids
> Beside the dwellings of the shepherds. (1:8)

While the young woman imagines the young man as a sheep needing rest, the daughters of Jerusalem urge her to be the shepherd who pastures her flocks, blending her caretaking of the vineyards (herself) with her caretaking of the sheep (the young man).[47] The effect of these blurred boundaries between objects and agents of pasturing conveys the vulnerability of both lovers, the parity of their shared desire, and the persistent need for care.

Gender and Landscape

As is clear from the preceding discussion, the metaphors drawn from the landscape are conspicuously, if not strictly, gendered. As I have just described, the young man is imagined as a shepherd much more consistently than the young woman is, and he is allied with the flock in a way that she never is: While she might pasture the flock, the Song does not allow her image to slip into the image of the flock, as it does with the young man. As I have shown earlier, the subject-object slippage of his pasturing makes the metaphor of him as a flock also possible; when it comes to the young woman, however, the object is supplied: he tells her, "graze

your kids" (that is, she is not imagined to be grazing *herself*, as the young man is; 1:8). In this instance, the young woman is the landscape, while the young man is the shepherd/flock that ranges through the landscape. Like a shepherd who is persistently moving over the hills, he is also imagined bounding *lə'ōper hā'ayyālîm* ("as a fawn of a deer"; 2:9, 17; 8:14), both approaching the house and fleeing it. The roe deer, once the most widespread variety in the ancient Levant, was a very small animal (only standing ca. 28 inches in height); it lived alone, almost entirely in forest cover, emerging only occasionally to graze in nearby fields.[48] The description is not so much one of majesty (which the English translation "stag" perhaps mistakenly conveys[49]), but rather of solitude and secrecy, emphasizing the lover's swiftness and subtlety. When he is imagined as one of these wild creatures, he is both shy and fleet, which will make it possible for him to arrive and vanish quickly.[50] An ancient Egyptian love song also portrays the male lover as a gazelle, also imagining him coming through a wild landscape to approach the domicile:

> If you would only come to (your) sister swiftly,
> Like a gazelle bounding over the desert,
> Whose legs are shaky, whose body is weary,
> For fear has entered his body.[51]

The lovers are described in terms of cultivation (vineyards, shepherds), but the imagined landscapes are not exclusively domestic; they incorporate wild elements as well. What the shepherd, the flock, and the gazelle share as images of the young man is the sense of creatureliness, as he emerges from and disappears into the landscape.

The young woman, on the other hand, is depicted more or less as a landscape herself: she is a vineyard. The gendering of the landscape participates in a larger conceptual motif in ancient Near Eastern literature. Other biblical texts play on the symbolic significance connecting agricultural productivity and human sensuality. For example, the book of Ruth connects an abundant barley harvest with a story of marriage and conception. The fertility of the harvest and the availability of food signify and prepare for the marriage of Ruth to Boaz and their own ability to produce an heir. Similarly, Samson's accusation of the Philistines after they have plied Delilah to discover the answer to his riddle employs the motif of likening agricultural labor to human sexuality, and does so to bawdy effect: "If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle"

(Judg 14:18). The analogy between sexuality and the productive landscape is neither exact nor explicit, though these examples are suggestive.[52] In Sumerian literature in particular, though, the analogy is reified, and plowing is an important metaphor for lovemaking. Take, for example, the following hymn, where the goddess Inanna describes her "nakedness," as various types of land that need to be cultivated:

> My chased vulva so nailed down
> As (with) linchpins attached to a big cart,
> ". . . [My] boat of heaven, that which is fastened with ropes,
> Like the new moon is full of allure;
> M[y] uncultivated land, that which is *left fallow* in the steppe,
> M[y] field of ducks, where the ducks teem;
> My high field, that which is well-watered,
> My own nakedness, a well-watered, *a rising* mound—
> I, the maiden—who will plow it?
> My nakedness, the wet and well-watered ground—
> I, the young lady—who will station there an ox?"
> "Young lady, may the king plow it for you,
> May Dumuzi, the king, plow it for you!"[53]

The fallow field and the rich earth represent the eroticism (and perhaps the fecundity) of female sexual organs, and the act of plowing is associated with intercourse.[54] The "tender, sensuous sexuality" of the cycle of love poetry of Dumuzi and Inanna, as in the example given here, is much more interested in the vulva than the penis, and these poems tend to linger with images of durative cultivation. In this way, the tone differs quite distinctly from the phallicism of mythology, for example in the mythological image of Enki thrusting his phallus into the canebrake. The result of phallicism in the myths of Enki and Ninḫursag, Enki and Ninmaḫ, and Enlil and Ninlil is always conception and childbirth.[55] The god's penis is imagined as a plow or pick, capable of providing seed as well as freshwater irrigation (the basis of Babylonia's agriculture).[56] In Egypt, the same analogy is discernible, if more attenuated. For example, in an Old Egyptian love song, a young woman refers to herself as the earth in which a young man dug a canal. The analogy between the young woman and the earth is clear, but not uncomplicated, since her breasts, too, are like gazelles, her teeth like sheep, and she is compared to a city.[57] And, as a result, crop agriculture and the cycles of plowing and reaping are

depicted in congruence with human sensuality and fertility. Both farming and sexual partnership are related through fertility. But this is not merely phallic. The Song resists a reductive or explicit link between intercourse and fertilization. While the beauty of the young woman's belly is likened to a cereal agricultural product, neither the sex act itself nor the fertilizing properties of the phallus are foregrounded. Note, for example, that despite the Song's strong emphasis on agriculture, it lacks the vocabulary of plowing (*ḥ-r-š*, for example). Instead, in this line, "your belly is a heap of wheat," the young man's aesthetic vision of the young woman is the primary interest. Such resistance to explicit analogizing takes part in the Song's consistent preference for highlighting not the sex act itself, but the aesthetics of desire. The Song prefers the exploration of feminine sexuality through the medium of the vineyard, which, as I have noted with some detail earlier, has much stronger associations with long-term cultivation, skill, and the heady satisfaction of wine. No doubt the significance and success of the vine in Canaan prompted its particular significance in those traditions (including ancient Israel and Judah); we see the metaphor in operation at Ugarit, where the myth of how the moon god Yariḫ obtained his bride Nikal includes the vineyard in the imagined sensuality of the woman: "I will make her field into a vineyard, / the field of her love into a flower-garden" (CTU 1.24.22–23).[58] Like the Sumerian love poetry, the Song of Songs is not explicitly interested in the phallus, or in the ubiquitous implications of sexuality: marriage, pregnancy, or progeny (although there are echoes of motherhood and labor throughout).[59] The emphasis on the landscape and on images of cultivation in the landscape suggest that the sensuality of the Song is not phallocentric, nor is it occupied with conception as a direct outcome of the erotic relationship. At the same time, there is an underlying interest in fertility that is underscored by the agricultural imagery throughout. As I will suggest in the following, the contemporary agrarian movement helps to frame this connection between agriculture and sensuality.

Contemporary Agrarianism

The discussion thus far has drawn out some of the agricultural features of the Song, showing how the poetry employs them in its imagination of the lovers. I will pause for a moment here to pick up some insight from contemporary agrarianism in order to give a bit more substance to the critical understanding of the landscapes of food production in this poetry of love.

There is no more intelligible and sustained modern conversation about the values and cultural significance of agriculture than the contemporary agrarian movement. Agrarianism, broadly understood, is a set of practices and commitments that advocates the importance of agricultural production and rural life.[60] The contemporary agrarian movement, most closely associated with the work of Kentucky writer and farmer Wendell Berry, has at its heart this central concern for the role of agriculture in both ecological and cultural sustainability. "Agrarian" has historically referred to practices and lifestyles of farming, and as such "[it] is primarily a practice, a set of attitudes, a loyalty, and a passion; it is an idea only secondarily and at a remove."[61] The West has become increasingly removed from its agrarian roots: now less than 2 percent of the population in North America are currently responsible for growing over 95 percent of its food. This is a stunning contrast to the 80 or even 90 percent of the population that were involved in farming in the ancient world. Modern industrial agriculture has led to grievous loss of topsoil, poisonous levels of pesticide use, and species extinction—only a few of the increasing indicators of an agricultural system gone awry. Of course this is not just a modern problem. Well-known examples of deleterious ancient practices include the permanent deforestation of large swaths of the Levant and the salination of the Mesopotamian farming plains.[62] Since every person eats, and all food ultimately comes from the earth through the photosynthetic processes of plant life derived from solar energy, eating is the crucial link between the health of humans and the health of the land.[63]

As a movement, agrarianism is loosely defined. It is largely literary, aligning itself with traditional farming practices, and it sees continuities with diverse writers, both ancient and modern.[64] In contemporary use, the title "agrarian" can be largely traced to the catalyzing impact of *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (1930).[65] This collection of essays by "twelve Southerners" was conceived as a defense of Southern culture that advocated rooting its cultural recovery in the agrarian traditions of the South. Such a recovery was necessary, the authors argued, to stem the destructive impact of industrialization, urbanization, and the loss of unique local cultures. Since that time, agrarianism has broadened its influence significantly.[66] Its consistent ideological commitment still takes the central insight of the "twelve Southerners," which is that farming, the "vocation of the soil," is "the best and most sensitive of vocations, and that therefore it should have the economic preference and enlist the maximum number of workers."[67] This commitment to agricultural labor valorizes

food production and rural communities, with the belief that in the careful production of food lies the clearest potential for the vitality of people, cultures, and the land. Berry writes that "[e]ating ends the annual drama of the food economy that begins with planting and birth."[68] Agrarianism is an attempt to realistically assess human dependence on and involvement in the natural world, and to acknowledge the necessity for complex forms of cultural thinking to preserve the health of these relationships for the sake of human and ecological flourishing.

As Ellen Davis has persuasively argued, agrarianism is "the way of thinking predominant among biblical writers."[69] In *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture,* she offers close readings of selected biblical texts that show how the ecological sensibility of the Bible is largely concerned with the daily and seasonal habits of interacting with the soil, and its capacity to produce food.[70] In many ways, the present study of agriculture in the Song is guided by and furthers Davis's inquiry. It differs, though, in the approach to the Song of Songs. Her chapter on the Song helpfully describes how human flourishing in the Song is situated in a complex web of relationships that are familial, social, geographical, political, and ecological. The main thrust of her reading emphasizes the young woman as an icon of the city of Jerusalem during the Persian to Hellenistic periods.[71] Davis insightfully emphasizes the agrarian situation of the ancient city of Jerusalem, and helpfully describes the integration of the city with its hinterland, with its interweaving of productive landscapes. However, her selective emphasis on the city of Jerusalem in the Persian period leaves room for attention to the various other landscapes that also shape the sensibility of the Song. Furthermore, Davis senses profound socioeconomic rifts and exploitative economic practices in the cultural background of the Song of Songs, which speaks "against a greedy urban-dominated agriculture that is oblivious to rural or common people, with their practices and their needs."[72] Crucial to Davis's argument is the idea of rapid agricultural and technological developments during the Persian and Hellenistic periods that led to sharp socioeconomic divisions, such that the "economic domination of the countryside [by Jerusalem] was complete."[73] But it is difficult to sustain this reading, for two reasons. First, such divisions are not obvious in the archaeological record of the Persian period in Palestine—the consensus seems to be that this period was characterized not by rapid urbanization, but by urban decline and a return to a predominantly agrarian subsistence economy with significant tributary expectations.[74] Second, neither is there strong evidence for such divisions within the Song of Songs itself.

Davis finds hints of social and economic divisions in three places: between the daughters of Jerusalem and the young woman (e.g., Song 1:5–6); in the tension between the young woman and her brothers (1:6); and in the prominence of Solomon's vineyard (Song 8:11–12).[75] But both the daughters of Jerusalem especially encourage the young woman (1:4, 8; 5:9; 6:1, 9–10); memorably they chant, "Eat friends, drink, and be drunk with love!" (5:1); and the brothers signify a family-based agricultural system, so conflict can be read as a necessary part of cooperative labor, not necessarily as evidence of an exploitative imperial economy.[76] Solomon's vineyard and tenants appear to be the only real indication of agronomic consolidation and its socioeconomic ramifications, but this serves primarily as a foil for the lovers, and appeals to a tenth-century context to do so. The small vineyard is preferred to the magnificent royal vineyard: "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-Hamon . . . My own vineyard is for myself. The thousand is yours, Solomon!" (Song 8:11–12). The tone suggests pride in the personal crop, and defies consumption with an illogic of affection that is happily at odds with rational judgment. It is the same logic that makes a child "singular to her mother / flawless to the one who bore her" (Song 6:9). It is the same logic that prefers affection to wealth: "if a man gave all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned" (Song 8:7). While the king is on his couch (1:12), the lovers, in a contrarian fashion, revel in imagining themselves not in luxurious quarters, but outside:

> Truly, our couch is green
> The beams of our house are cedar
> our rafters are pine. (1:17)

In ways such as this, the Song celebrates the dignity of life on a small scale. In what follows, I will draw from the work of contemporary agrarian writers, highlighting two elements: first, the emphasis on "land" as community or membership; second, the underlying analogy in agrarianism between people and the land.

Agrarians speak in terms of "land," not of "nature" or "earth," because the latter terms imagine an extractable and abstracted subject. "Land," on the other hand, acknowledges intricate interconnections among soil, air, water, and the unimaginably diverse organisms they support, from microscopic bacteria to all varieties of plant life, to humans and animals. As a term, "land" thus acknowledges the interconnected implications of natural and cultural realities that cross easily from one domain to another.[77] This is

the same sensibility that motivated Aldo Leopold's classic formulation of the "land community." Such an orientation acknowledges that the role of humans in the land community is properly that of "member and citizen," and as such entails a posture of respect for the sake of the whole.[78] For Berry, the term that captures this sense of wholeness is "membership." He writes that the world "is not the 'sum of its parts' but a membership of parts inextricably joined to each other, indebted to each other, receiving significance and worth from each other and from the whole."[79] Berry explores this idea in his fiction, essays, and poetry. Berry writes about how membership is the "form" of the farm, which is made "of delight."[80] His poem "From the Crest" (1977) is a direct address of a farmer to a farm, and is marked throughout by the sense of belonging, the farmer to the farm, and to all the parts of the world whose lives are made by and weave through the small plot of land. It is the poem, uttered by the speaker together with the farm, that will

> . . . tell them of the great
> membership, the mystic order,
> to which both of us belong.

The farm is both "motherland," and "brotherhood," with whom the speaker takes his place alongside all the plants, animals, and creatures, both visible and invisible, whose lives are dependent on its "sod." In this view, "membership" is the literal sustenance the farm provides for a family; it is also the network of interdependence that makes the farm and its creatures "one body."

In his fiction, Berry tells stories of the Port William Membership, an imagined community Berry traces through four families and seven generations. One character, Andy Catlett, experiences dislocation, despair, and a loss of connection to his place and his marriage, but finds restoration when he returns home. This return enables him to be "re-membered," as he walks through his place with the memories of those who have gone before him. Berry describes Andy's ineffable re-entry into his own sense of belonging:

> Over town and fields the one great song sings, and is answered everywhere; every leaf and flower and grass blade sings. And in the fields and the town, walking, standing, or sitting under the trees, resting and talking together in the peace of a sabbath profound and

> bright, are people of such great beauty that he weeps to see them. He sees that these are the membership of one another and of the place and of the song or light in which they live and move.[81]

This "membership" belongs to the land, its creatures, and to all who have made their lives there, both the living and the dead. This sense of connection is articulated by many of Berry's characters, like Burley Coulter, who would

> preach the membership, mocking a certain kind of preacher, yet meaning every word he said: "Oh, yes, brothers and sisters, we are members one of another. The difference, beloved, ain't who is and who's not, but in who knows it and who don't. Oh, my friends, there ain't no nonmembers, living nor dead nor yet to come. Do you know it? Or do you don't? A man is a member of a woman and a worm. A woman is a member of a man and a mole. Oh, beloved, it's all one piece of work."[82]

The land and its inhabitants (man, woman, worm, mole; one could add: soil, sun, tree, river, every imaginable and not-yet-imagined thing) are part of a single fabric of belonging. Thus every part of this "membership" has an integral belonging that has practical as well as religious dimensions. Berry writes: "One is obliged to 'consider the lilies of the field,' not because they are lilies or because they are exemplary, but because they are fellow members and because, as fellow members, we and the lilies are in certain critical ways alike."[83] Here, Berry pushes the idea of membership toward the sense of fundamental likeness between humans and the earth.

The analogy or likeness between the land and people has already been apparent in the earlier discussion of the Song of Songs. Agrarianism accounts for the use of agricultural elements in love poetry, which some modern readers have found bizarre or off-putting. How is hair like a flock of goats? Or cheeks like a pomegranate?[84] But for agrarians, the fundamental resemblance between human sexuality and agricultural fertility is "plain and strong and apparently inescapable."[85] Perhaps most apropos is this highly poetic formulation, from Berry's seminal early critique of American agricultural orthodoxy, *The Unsettling of America*:

> [O]ur bodies live by farming; we come from the earth and return to it, and so we live in agriculture as we live in the flesh. While we

> live our bodies are moving particles of the earth, joined inextricably both to the soil and to the bodies of other living creatures. It is hardly surprising, then, that there should be some profound resemblances between our treatment of our bodies and our treatment of the earth.[86]

The "profound resemblances" that Berry has in mind are literal ones—the health of the land is the real index of human flourishing insofar as flourishing is determined by stability, physical vitality, and connectedness to community. At the same time, the relationship between the two is analogical, such that harmful treatment of the earth originates from attitudes that also enable harmful treatment of people. He writes, "[t]here is an uncanny resemblance between our behavior toward each other and our behavior toward the earth. . . . By some connection that we do not recognize, the willingness to exploit one becomes the willingness to exploit the other."[87] Ultimately, Berry argues that the well-being (or destruction) of agricultural land cannot be entirely separated from human well-being (or destruction). The possibility for the wholeness of each (the land, a lover) is in the disciplines and joy of affection. In many iterations, Berry's essays, poems, and fiction affirm a connection between agricultural and erotic love, such that what moves in farming is the same "delight that moves / lovers in their loves."[88] Here in the Song, the landscape's flourishing suggests symbolically the erotic potential of the couple. As I will show in what follows, Song 7:11–14 plays creatively with this agrarian sensibility.

Song 7:11–14 (MT; 10–13, Eng)

Toward the end of the Song, a brief poem is again occupied with the more or less literal fruits of agricultural labor (7:11–14).[89] The imagery of this poem draws once again from a fund of agricultural knowledge, imagining the lovers as farmers, knowledgeable about plant life and attentive to the season and productivity of the land. It is an evocation of springtime, of fields just coming into bloom.

This poem is structured by three single-line claims framing a set of three triplets. The claims are relatively straightforward general statements about the lovers' relationship: "I am my lover's, and his desire is over me"; "There, I will give you my love"; "My lover, for you I have treasured them." But they are punctuated by three triplets that explore the general claims

about love among the very particular stirrings of local crops. The triplets establish the terms on which the general statements might be understood to be true. As I will show, the erotic claims of the poem are examined through a subtle analogy between the lovers and the land. This is mobilized lyrically by structural symmetry and wordplay.

Before examining these particular lyric strategies, I will consider briefly how this poem might be considered an agricultural text. The young woman's voice speaks throughout: "Come, my lover, let us go out to the field." Commentators commonly describe this text as a retreat into nature. Hendrik Viviers, for example, writes that this is a "retreat from 'culture to nature,'" and "wild, untamed Nature becomes a haven to [the lovers]."[90] Gianni Barbiero writes, "By contrast with cultivated nature, *śādeh* [field] expresses nature in the wild beyond the dominion of man."[91] It is true that *haśśādeh* ("the field") can conjure images of wildness—idiomatically, wild animals are "beasts of the field," and the young woman's adjuration in the Song evokes such wildness: she swears "by the gazelles and does of the field," (2:7; 3:5).[92] However, interpreters frequently overestimate the disjunction between the field and the city in an oversimplified antithesis between "nature" and "culture." Biblical evocations of "the field" generally portray not wilderness, but the agriculturally productive land surrounding a village or a walled city (cf. Lev 25:31, 34). The field is widely associated with the tasks of human cultivation, which are nicely summarized in Psalm 107: "They sow fields, and plant vineyards, and they produce a fruitful harvest" (Ps 107:37).[93] Fields are tilled (Gen 4; 41:48; 47:48; 2 Chron 27:26), sown (Ps 107:37), and plowed (Jer 26:18; Mic 3:12). They are the place for reaping and gleaning (Job 24:6; Ruth 2:2), and for orchards of fruiting trees (Ex 10:5; Judg 9:27; Isa 55:12; Jer 7:20; Ezek 17:24; 31:4–5) and for vineyards, which also housed the presses for wine (Prov 3:16; Judg 9:27).[94] In this particular text, the close synonymous parallelism highlights cultivation:

> I am my lover's, and his desire is upon me.
> Come, my lover, let us go to the field
> let us spend the night among the henna
> let us rise early for the vineyards (Song 7:12–13 [11–12 Eng])

The fields and vineyards—and the plants described therein—denote spaces of cultivation. The plants evoked in these lines are regional crops: Henna (*kəpārîm* = L. *Lawsonia inermis*) was cultivated very early on for making

dyes and perfumes.[95] A spring bloomer, its large clusters of whitish flowers are powerfully fragrant. The vine (L. *Vitis vinifera*) was one of the most important agricultural products throughout Israel's history. The high regard for this cultivated crop is contrasted with the worthlessness of its wild counterpart in Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard:

> [He] planted it with choice vines . . .
> he expected it to yield grapes (*ʿănābîm*),
> but it yielded wild grapes (*bəʾūšîm*). (Isa 5:2)

The wild vines would have produced a small, bitter berry unfit for human consumption, unlike the domesticated vine with its juicy grapes (cf. Lam 2:6).[96] This contrast displays how the vine is a particularly strong emblem not of wild "nature" but of cultivation. In this text, the high regard for the vine is underscored by the use of three different terms: the vineyard (*kərāmîm*), the grape vine (*gepen*), and the vine blossom (*semādar*):[97]

> Let us see whether the vine has budded,
> the grape blossom has opened,
> the pomegranate has bloomed.
> There, I will give you my love (Song 7:13 [12 Eng])

Like the vine, the pomegranate tree is also cultivated for its fruit (*rimmônîm* = L. *Punica granatum*, v. 13). The seeds of this tree are highly juicy and can be eaten fresh or made into spiced wine.[98] While it is not prevalent in contemporary Israel (it has in many cases been replaced by more profitable fruiting crops), it once was plentiful in orchards, and during late spring would have been ablaze with crimson flowers. When the lovers go out into these fields, then, they are taking a familiar journey common to young and old alike in the ancient world: out into the fields, to see how the crops are growing. Their destination is not uncultural, but agricultural.

These agricultural fields are not just a backdrop to the amorous encounter of lovers. They are part of the material the poet employs to its lyric ends, and they construct a vision of the ethical relationship between humans and the land. A landscape, as I have suggested, is never neutral. In these lines, the poem draws the landscape into a subtle analogy with the human lovers. This analogy is strikingly apparent in the poem's structural symmetry. The structure of the poem, as I have suggested earlier, makes

claims about human love in one-sentence statements, then qualifies them with triplets situating the lovers in an agricultural landscape. These triplets imagine erotic fulfillment as a condition of the landscape. The first triplet calls the lover to join the young woman among the crops:

> Come, my love! Let us go to the field
> let us spend the night among the henna
> let us go early to the vineyards (vv. 12–13)

The second triplet follows an identical pattern, which I will render woodenly here to make the parallelism of the Hebrew more obvious:

> Let us see whether it has budded, the vine
> it has opened, the grape-blossoms
> they have bloomed, the pomegranates (v. 13)

What becomes apparent in rendering this so literally is the close analogy between the lovers and the land. In the first triplet, the subject is the lovers and their actions ("let us . . ."). The crops are the objects of these sentences, the destinations they seek. In the second triplet, there is a shift: the action of the lovers is conditional ("Let us see whether. . ."), and each line focuses not on the lovers, but the plants, which are now the subjects of the verb, not objects: "the vine has budded, / the grape-blossoms have opened." The symmetrical structure closely links the lovers' pursuit with the flourishing of the crops. The expectation established by the first triplet is that the human couple is both the subject and the originating significance of the poem, but this expectation is subverted in the second triplet, as the plants are ascribed their own agency. The erotic encounter, it turns out, is contingent on the flourishing of the landscape. The symmetry of the two triplets establishes a likeness between the lovers and the plants that are coming into bloom.

This likeness between the lovers' desire and the flowering plants is also developed by wordplay. This wordplay comes most plainly into view in the last lines of this poem:

> The love-fruits give off their scent,
> and over our doors are all our choice fruits,
> new as well as old.
> My love, for you I have treasured them. (Song 7:14 [13 Eng])

Here, the poem takes up and transforms the use of the word "love" (Heb. *d-w-d*) through creative patterning. The word *d-w-d* ("love") is repeated five-fold times. The poem is framed by addresses to the young man as *dôdî* ("my lover"):

> I am my lover's (*lədôdî*), and his desire is upon me (v. 11)
> Come, my lover (*dôdî*), let us go out to the field (v. 12)
> My lover (*dôdî*), for you I have treasured them (v. 14)

But in the center of the poem, there are two additional references that play with the same word (*d-w-d*, "love") evoking lovemaking and horticulture:

> There, I will give you my lovemaking (*dōday*; v. 13)
> The love-fruits (*hadûdaʾîm*) give scent (v. 14)

Lovemaking (*dōday*) connects the theme of love with sex. The next occurrence of the root related to love (*d-w-d*) is the word *hadûdaʾîm*. Although it is commonly regarded as the mandrake, I have translated it as "love-fruits," which highlights the wordplay that can be heard or seen in Hebrew. The actual plant referenced by "love-fruits" is not entirely certain, but its sexual associations are apparent etymologically, which is corroborated by the biblical story of Reuben collecting these "love-fruits" to enhance Rachel's fertility.[99] The evocation of literal lovemaking is closely echoed by the plant's fruitful effusions. Just as the young woman will give (*nātan*) her love, so the "love-fruits" give off (*nātan*) their heady fragrance. The plant closely echoes and subtly analogizes the erotic potential of the young woman. In this way, the entire passage is saturated with references to love. The final use of the root *d-w-d* in the last line closes this section by drawing the young man back into the circle of her love: "my lover (*dôdî*), I have stored them up for you" (7:14). This playful repetition of *d-w-d* throughout creates a sonic structure that reads like a lighthearted refrain, an echo of the love that circulates from the young woman's body, through the plants, to the identity of the young man. It creates the sense of the all-pervasive quality of love, which catches up both human lovers and the natural world. In these ways, especially through the poem's structural symmetry and wordplay, there is a bond imagined between the lovers and the land.

This bond between the lovers and the land is emblemized by flowers ready on the branches, which are at once extravagant expressions of sensual pleasure (visually beautiful and heady with scent), but also a signal

of fertility. These lines express hope that the plant's flowering potential is bursting forth, opening out to the world as the blossoms break through the shielding husks, displaying their colorful petals. This "opening" (*pataḥ*) indicates the availability of the plant for fertilization.[100] The delicate wish to see whether the grape blossoms are "open" heightens the erotic saturation of the passage. Elsewhere in the Song of Songs, the same verb (*pataḥ*) is suggestive of human desire: the young man knocks at the door and calls "Open to me, my sister, my dear!" (5:2, 5–6). It is fitting, then, that after this section of Song 7 meditates on the opening of flowers, the young woman declares that all kinds of fruit are over *pətaḥênnû* ("our doors," or more literally, "our openings"; 7:13). The recurrence of the word "open" is not only suggestive of the physiology of lovemaking, but it perhaps also suggests an emotional openness—vulnerability; that is to say, the doors will not prevent their love, as when they stand on either side of the bolted door (5:4–5); rather, the doors will be garlanded with fruit: "over our doors are all our choice fruits, new as well as old. My love, for you I have treasured them" (7:14). Fruit—and eating—are a kind of agricultural consummation, and are potently symbolic of sexual consummation. As the agrarians are eager to emphasize, it is eating that is finally the formal bond between humans and the land. And so too in the Song, the edible products of plants are always in view. Kisses and lovemaking are described as good wine, which are intoxicating and offer delight to the lips, palate, and throat (1:2, 4; 5:1; 7:10), and raisins signal sustenance and satisfaction (2:4; 4:10; 8:2). In this way, labor in the vineyard is associated with food, the reward of its agricultural efforts. This important trope is a key to understanding the farming landscape of the Song of Songs. Food is the visible connection between human labor and flourishing.

The agricultural context and subtext of this poem embed the human lovers in a productive landscape. The pleasure of the couple in love is somehow also the pleasure of the person who works in a field, is somehow also the pleasure of the fields themselves. Berry's character Andy Catlett describes working together with his community at the Crayton farm. As he is hoeing tobacco, he stands and pauses to look over the fields: "The field was beautifully laid out, so that all the rows followed the contours of the ridge . . . a human form laid lovingly upon the natural conformation of the place."[101] The farm itself is an art form, affirming the value of human labor, guided by affection, to seek the flourishing of the landscape and in so doing to make it beautiful by attention and care. Such work enacts the "membership" of people in their place: "I saw how beautiful the field was,

how beautiful our work was. And it came to me all in a feeling how everything fitted together, the place and ourselves and the animals and the tools, and how the sky held us. I saw how sweetly we were enabled by the land and the animals and our few simple tools."[102] The "fitness" of the human lovers of the Song is indexed by nature's own readiness in the opening of its blossoms. This openness to fertility points to the synecology of the cultivators in their landscape.

Conclusion: The Pastoral Impulse

This chapter has highlighted the agricultural landscape of the Song of Songs, especially as it can be seen in Song 1:5–8 and 7:10–13. The contemporary agrarian movement illuminates how the evocation of farming practices emphasizes the role of humans as interdependent cultivators in the natural world, and makes sense of the link between human sexuality and the fecund earth. It imagines them imagining working together, as a couple in the ancient world would expect to do. Sharing their labor is a perception of and response to the desire to see their lives commingled, which "strengthen[s] bonds of interest, loyalty, affection, and cooperation. . . ."[103] The lovers imagine such a bond, perhaps, but it is as yet only desired. For now, these young lovers will make do with a house made of trees: "the beams of our house are cedar, are rafters are pine" (Song 1:17). In such ways, the affection that grounds erotic desire is imagined as related to and encompassing many greater loves, including the love of a land. Berry describes the love shared by two characters, Elton and Mary Penn, in terms that echo this sense of the nesting of affection within the larger world: "At his best, Elton was a man in love—with her but not just with her. He was in love too with the world, with their place in the world, with that scanty farm, with his own life, with farming. At those times she lived in his love as in a spacious house."[104] The sense of embeddedness that the Song relies on reveals a sense of the commitment to a given landscape. It models a stance toward the subject that is marked by dignity and affection.

The discussion of this chapter is not meant to suggest that the poet of the Song of Songs was necessarily a farmer—although this is certainly a possibility, and should not be dismissed. Dissenters might argue that the Song's literary qualities, its rarified diction, and its references to king and palace are indicators that the Song is not agrarian at all, but courtly. This has, indeed, been a significant emphasis in scholarly interpretation of the

Song. Hans-Peter Müller, for example, emphasizes the Song as a form of nostalgia, a pastoral idyll composed and enjoyed by disaffected urban elites.[105] And this, too, is a possibility that should not be dismissed. But even if the Song is composed by and/or for an urban elite—an assumption that is merely speculative—it conveys a deep commitment to a particularized landscape, and with it an explicit valorization of agricultural labor. It should not be surprising for an emphasis on farming to emerge from a largely agrarian ancient milieu; even an "urban" poet from the ancient world likely had much closer experience of and knowledge about agriculture than many contemporary readers, since the cities of the ancient world were themselves, of course, predominantly agrarian. Ultimately, though, this argument does not stand or fall on the Song's compositional history. The question asked here is how the poetry of the Song offers a mode of thought that meditates on the human situation in the natural world. Is there, even within the conventions of pastoral poetry, "a certain indispensable truth and health"?[106]

In the two agrarian poems from the Song discussed in this chapter, humans are envisioned as laborers in a landscape, as well as metaphorically elided with the land. The blending of the lovers' bodies with the farmed landscape suggests that love itself is a kind of cultivation. By "cultivation" I have in mind the attentive labor required by a human worker on a farm.[107] It is like the antique term "husbandry," which also implies a relationship of care. The labor of cultivation means "to use with care, to keep, to save. . . . Husbandry is the name of all the practices that sustain life by connecting us conservingly to our places and our world: it is the art of keeping tied all the strands in the living network that sustains us."[108] Both farming and love require intimate knowledge and careful work. Yet this work is not conceived of as drudgery, as the poem consistently reminds the reader that bountiful yields of sensual fulfillment can be hoped for: fresh food, wine for the palate, fruits and spices in plentiful array. The fact that love is cast in terms of cultivation suggests that the qualities of affection and husbandry in human relationship will produce goods equally satisfying to the senses: kisses as delightful as wine, lovemaking as a storehouse of delicacies. But these positive outcomes are not altogether assured. Rather, like a crop of grapes that is planted, it must be watched; and like a flock of sheep, it must be pursued. Such threats as the burning sun imply the vulnerability of the grape crops and the young woman. As Berry writes, "This is no paradisal dream. / Its hardship is its

possibility."[109] Under the "gaze" of the sun, the possibility of neglect ("my own vineyard I have not kept" 1:6), and the indeterminacy of "whether the vine has budded" (7:12), how could a vineyard, or love, flourish? The only way the vines will flourish, the only way that mutual desire will be realized, the poetry suggests, is by attentive long-term cultivation.

3

The Garden

> Let no one think that real gardening is a bucolic and meditative occupation. It is an insatiable passion, like everything else to which a man gives his heart.
>
> KAREL ČAPEK (1984)

READING YOUR WAY through the Song of Songs, you will stumble upon a garden at nearly the center: "a locked garden" (*gan nāʿûl*, 4:12), which is described in the ensuing four verses, 4:12–5:1.[1] This section details the various elements of the garden, including its plant life, its irrigation system, and the fruits it produces. This landscape is formally enclosed by the rest of the Song, which on either side moves from more fragmentary (Chapters 1, 8) to more structured (it is surrounded on either side by the "city" sequences in Chapters 3, 5). While this poem stands apart both stylistically and thematically from the rest of the Song, glimpses of the garden and its aspects spring up at various moments in the rest of the poetry, heightening the sense that it is a crucial and generative image for the entire book. The garden is quintessentially a landscape, in the twofold sense of both a material process and an aesthetic product. In what follows, I suggest that the garden in the Song is the emblem of ancient ideals about the natural world. Through a close reading of this poem, we will see that both order and abandon have their place in this garden.

The Garden Is a Garden

To begin, I suggest that this poem has an intrinsic interest in the natural landscape—constituted as it is by a lengthy description of plants in a garden. This poem's controlling strategy is the list; it proceeds by itemizing plants:

> . . . Pomegranates
> with excellent fruits

Henna with nard
Nard and saffron
cane and cinnamon
With all the trees of incense:
Myrrh and eaglewood
with all the prime spices (Song 4:13–15)

This list is one of the most detailed descriptions of natural phenomena in the Song. The garden itself is the center of the poem's gravity, pulling our attention toward the flourishing plant life that constitutes it. Its representation of natural elements, however, has been almost entirely overshadowed by an interpretive fixation on the garden as a metaphor for the young woman's sexuality.

Interpreters of this passage of the Song have most frequently taken the garden to be a symbol of female sexuality, and the "locked garden," therefore, as a symbol of chastity. So, for example, the ancient Aramaic commentary of the Targum Song of Songs includes the following interpretation of these verses: "You women who are married are chaste like a chaste bride, and like the Garden of Eden, which no one has permission to enter save the righteous. . .. Your virgins are sealed thus they are like the spring of living water. . .."[2] Ambrose likewise writes, "Thou, O virgin, art a garden inclosed, preserve thy fruits, let no thorns arise in thee, but let thy grapes flourish, let not any take from thee the fence of thy modesty . . ." (de Inst. Virg. C. 8),[3] and the Vulgate's *hortus conclusus soror mea sponsas* became crucial in the Christian interpretation of Mary's virginity.[4] This view, that the garden represents female chastity, persists among some contemporary interpreters,[5] while a more liberal attitude toward the young woman's sexuality has gained prominence. Othmar Keel writes, for example, "[t]his image is simply about the inaccessible loved one, whose charms are all the more wonderful, mysterious, and exotic the tighter the doors that lead to them are locked."[6] Or, J. Cheryl Exum: "Here the garden is a sexual image for the woman herself and her sexuality in particular. The man sees his lover as his private, locked garden for his exclusive pleasure."[7] Whichever specific way it is interpreted, there is a broad consensus that the garden in the Song is primarily a metaphor for the young woman's body, or her sexuality.[8] But, as I will suggest more fully in the following, to focus exclusively on the metaphorically suggestive dimensions of the garden is to neglect the poem's own insistent focus on the landscape itself.

To be sure, it has been widely recognized that across ancient Near Eastern literature the garden is a pervasive motif of eroticism. An Old Akkadian love incantation includes the garden as both a setting for love and an emblem of female sexuality:

> Two beautiful maidens were blossoming,
> They went down to the garden,
> To the garden they went down,
> They cut from the sapflow of the incense-tree.[9]

In an Old Babylonian text known as the "Manchester Tammuz," the young woman expresses the desire for her lover's presence in garden terms: "Into the garden of apple trees he brought joy . . . Into the garden of grapes he brought joy."[10] In Ludingira's description of his "mother," she is "a garden of delight, full of joy, / an irrigated fig tree, covered with fir-cones. . . ."[11] The Assyrian Love Lyrics of Nabû and Tašmetu include an appeal to go to the garden, and articulate the wish, "May my eyes see the plucking of your fruit!"[12] The Ugaritic myth of how the moon god Yariḫ obtained his bride Nikkalu contains the following lines: "I will make her field into a vineyard, / the field of her love into a flower-garden" (CTU 1.24).[13] Egyptian poetry also draws on this motif to some, although lesser, extent: "I am yours like the field / planted with flowers / and with all sorts of fragrant plants."[14] Horticulture in broad perspective seems to evoke female sexuality and fertility. It is not obvious, though, that the garden is a strong metaphor for "the pudenda in particular," as Shalom Paul has argued.[15] This may be the case in the more sexually explicit Sumerian love poetry, but this text of the Song includes no itemization of the lovers' body parts, nor does it seem interested in assigning parts of the garden to particular referents—such a strategy does not do justice to the subtlety of the imagery. As my earlier discussions have emphasized, a landscape approach helps us to dwell with the poem's landscapes, appreciating their materiality and their aesthetic dimensions, and ultimately shaping ethical responses to land. If this text is governed by the metaphor "a young woman is a garden," the young woman is the *target domain* and the garden is the *source domain*. In terms of conceptual metaphor theory, a landscape approach examines the *source domain*, the garden, instead of emphasizing the *target domain*. Or, as Roland Boer has written, it focuses "on the metaphoric screen rather than assume something lies behind it."[16] Nevertheless, despite interpreters'

insistence that the garden here is a clearly and exclusively a metaphor for the young woman, the Song is somewhat more reticent.

One place where we can see most clearly the Song's own reticence is in the first line: *gan nāʿûl ʾăḥōtî kallāh*. This phrase is commonly translated "a garden locked *is* my sister, my bride"; the verb "is" has been supplied by English translations, making the equation of the young woman with the garden explicit, and crystallizing the interpretive fixation on establishing and explicating the metaphor (NRSV, emphasis added; cf. KJV, ASV, Luther, JPS, NIV, NLT, etc.). But the syntax of the first line gives the reader a moment of pause. The phrase is verbless, which is capable of preserving a bit of ambiguity. The participle "locked" could as easily be translated "A locked garden, my sister bride,"[17] (the participle working as attributive adjective) or "A garden *is* locked, my sister bride,"[18] (the participle working as a predicate adjective). In either of these readings, "my sister bride" might be not a third person description, but a vocative, an instance of direct address. It might be observed that interpreters do not insist on supplying an "is" later in 4:12b or in 4:15, both of which share the same paratactic pattern:

A garden locked, my sister bride (4:12a)
A garden locked, a spring sealed (4:12b)
A garden fountain, a well of living water (4:15)

That the young woman might be addressed here, not described, has a certain appeal because the immediate context is saturated with precisely such invocations. In the four previous verses, and the two verses following, the young man directly addresses the young woman with these two terms, "my sister," and "bride":

[Come] with me from Lebanon, my bride (4:8)
You have ravished my heart, my sister bride (4:9)
How sweet is your love, my sister bride (4:10)
Your lips distill nectar, my bride (4:11)
I enter my garden, my sister bride (5:1)
Open to me, my sister, my friend (5:2)

Six times in succession, the young man employs this pattern, using "bride" or "sister bride" in the second half of the line to address the young woman directly. So when we encounter the same pattern here, it gives us

a moment of pause: Is the young man speaking about the young woman? Or to her? Is the subject the young woman? Or the garden? This ambiguity momentarily defers the explicit equation of the garden with the young woman. As it does so, the garden itself, standing at the head of the line, emerges as the foremost subject, which is reinforced and elaborated by the rich description of plant life that follows. As Murphy has rightfully observed, "[t]he woman is almost forgotten in the full description" of the garden, whose own qualities take center stage.[19] If the garden is a metaphor for the young woman, it is much more obliquely so than many interpreters imply. The subtle cues of the poem draw our attention back again and again to the garden, the garden, the garden. In light of these considerations, I suggest that the poem has an intrinsic interest in the garden, which becomes a window into its conceptualization of the idealized natural world.

"*Third Nature*": *Gardens in Theory*

In order to consider the complex of values generated by the garden, it is helpful to consider briefly theorizations of the garden—attending to an increasing interest in garden practices and their significance.[20] As a constructed space closely related to agriculture, the garden both refers to and contains nature, but it is not nature per se. The garden, rather, is a cultural form that serves as a microcosm for ideals about the natural world.[21] I will consider each of these aspects in brief.

The first and crucial aspect of the garden is that it contains and refers to nature. As a branch of landscape management that utilizes the found environment—most prominently its plants, along with its rocks, soils, and waterways—it must imitate the native ecosystem closely enough to ensure the survival of its elements. In that sense, it must be aware of and, to a certain extent, attuned to the patterns and capabilities of the natural landscape. Garden making, then, is intimately related to nature. This is famously (though not originally) articulated by Alexander Pope:

> Consult the Genius of the Place in all;
> That tells the Waters or to rise, or fall,
> Or helps th'ambitious Hill the heav'ns to scale,
> Or scoops in circling theaters the Vale,
> Calls in the Country, catches opening glades,
> Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades,

> Now breaks, or now directs, th'intending Lines;
> Paints as you plant, and, as you work, designs.[22]

Pope's enjoinder to Lord Burlington has been an important theme in contemporary landscape architecture—an imperative to locate the garden in the particularity of a site, its unique physical constituents and features—which is to say, the garden is not a concept that can merely be transported and reapplied in any given location.[23] This ancient Roman idea of the *genius loci*, the "genius of a place," as Pope has it, encapsulates the inescapable significance of the site itself. Philosopher Mara Miller writes that "it is virtually impossible to get the same effect (including specifically aesthetic effects) in two different gardens . . . differences in microclimate, in soil composition, in drainage make it difficult to reproduce a given garden somewhere else. . . ."[24] Every garden is a unique engagement with natural elements. Site uniqueness may be especially important in ancient Israel/Palestine, whose strikingly variable landscape comprises particularized microclimates and broadly ranging soil qualities throughout the region.

The second important thing to note is that, although it contains and refers to nature, the garden is not identical with nature. Insofar as the garden departs from the native ecosystem (for example, through the intensification of planting, or the importing of non-native species), the gardener must make accommodations—providing irrigation to thirsty plants, adjusting soil acidity, fertilizing relatively poor soil, weeding—so that the plants can be "at home" in this foreign environment. Such adjustments are necessary precisely because the garden is not "natural." Rather, "[i]f it is nature at all that we appreciate in such cases, this is 'nature-as-affected-by-humanity.' "[25] Human intervention is represented foremost in the gardener, whose presence is presumed by the garden. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan notes that the garden is an art-form, "a blending of nature and artifice."[26] Unlike other forms of artwork—painting, for example, or even sculpture—a garden is ephemeral and phenomenal. It must be maintained, or it will revert to a natural state, becoming a non-garden; a garden "requires constant vigilance."[27] The form of the garden itself, then, presumes human actors who are continually invested in the preservation of the site. For this reason gardens have invited comparisons to theater arts, which, too, are ephemeral, subject to temporal vacillations, and require human presence.[28] This reliance on human intervention is evident in biblical references to gardens: In the quintessential biblical garden, God places the human in Eden "to till it and to keep it" (Gen 2:15). What is sown

presumes that someone is sowing (cf. Isa 61:11). Gardens are an intervention in nature, serving the food-production needs of humans (Gen 2:9, 16; 3:1), and are symbols of a long-term investment in a particular place (Jer 29:5, 28). Thus the garden, while it is distinctly natural, is also distinctly cultural: "The garden is a cultural construction derived from nature under the aegis of the fine arts."[29]

This hybrid character was designated during the Italian Renaissance by the term *terza natura* ("third nature"). This phrase was coined by Jacopo Bonfadio, a sixteenth-century Italian humanist, in a letter to refer to villa gardens. He writes the following in a description of his country seat in Tuscany: "For in the gardens . . . the industry of the local people has been such that nature incorporated with art is made an artificer and naturally equal with art, and from them both together is made a third nature, which I would not know how to name."[30] "Nature," in Bonfadio's terms, is a wild space, while "art" refers to "second nature," the agricultural strategies I outlined in Chapter 2. Bonfadio, in his survey of his beloved home landscape, is at a loss to describe gardens in terms of these "two natures" alone. The combination of the two, "nature," and "art," results in something new: a "third nature." For Bonfadio, this blending together of nature and art extend well beyond utilitarian practices, such that the functional needs of the site (i.e., to produce food) are exceeded by the formal, aesthetic effects. This is not to suggest that there is an opposition between function and aesthetic (even though such a distinction is implied by Bonfadio's contrast between agriculture and gardening)—rather, it is the particular capacity of the garden to prioritize aesthetic value while preserving utilitarian function. This is the last aspect of the garden that I wish to emphasize, and the one that will be the most important for the present analysis: the garden prioritizes aesthetics, and as such is a form that both expresses and generates cultural values.

The idea of an aesthetic aspect of the garden is retained by the name of the quintessential biblical garden, "Eden," which means "luxury," or "delight."[31] The relationship with the natural world is thus construed as one of human obligation that yields pleasure. This aesthetic emphasis is readily apparent in biblical texts: in Isaiah, for instance, oaks trees are described as a delight (Isa 1:29), and in the celebratory images of harvest, which in its plenty becomes "like a watered garden" (Jer 31:12). It also is present in Ezekiel's enumeration of various precious stones in conjunction with the beauty of Eden, the garden of God (Ezek 28:13). This "artifice," as Bonfadio calls it, the desire to make a site beautiful, results

in joining metaphysical concepts with the concrete physical forms that comprise the site.[32] Human desire, therefore, shapes the space and leaves traces of its shaping—as such, the garden is always a testament to the designs and ideals of its maker, most specifically, the desired or sought relationship with nature. Such ideals about nature are always referenced by the gardens themselves, which always retain "a signature of the human agency to which they owe their existence."[33] In the Song of Songs, these "signatures" abound: in the passive participles (*nāʿûl*, "locked," and *ḥātûm*, "sealed," 4:12); in the water courses (*maʿyan*, "spring," *bəʾēr*, "well," vv. 12, 15) that were such a crucial part of ancient Near Eastern horticulture;[34] in the list of exotic plants (vv. 13–14), which I will discuss in greater detail later; and, most obviously, in the presence of the person in the garden (4:16–5:1). The human interventions of which the poem is self-conscious indicate that the garden is a natural space, shaped to accord with ideas about the natural world.

These human desires and ideals are formally contrived, and they are also diverse. By suggesting that gardens are a function of human desire and ideas, I do not mean to say that they necessarily or always express a single desire or idea. It should be stressed that there is a profusion of meanings that inhere in gardens.[35] These differ across cultures and through time. In the ancient Near East, for example, the garden has a "utilitarian purpose" as a space for intensive food production. Evidence for this includes, for example, the Roman and Egyptian kitchen gardens, which would have served the immediate needs of the household.[36] Vegetables, which have soft vegetal tissues that are eaten fresh (often before the plant sets its seed), leave little archaeological trace, and so they are difficult to verify empirically, but they were likely grown in garden plots throughout the ancient world. The Sumerians, for example, developed a strategy of shade-gardening by surrounding small plots with date-palm trees, which would shelter the relatively vulnerable vegetable crops from both intense sun and strong winds. These plots would have produced staples such as peas, beans, and lentils, but also garlic and probably also leeks, cucumbers, lettuces, melons, and a variety of spices.[37] This pattern of gardening in small-scale plots near households for the production of pulses, along with a variety of vegetables and fruits, would have supplied protein and vitamins as crucial supplements to cereal production. While the most famous gardens were large-scale imperial projects, as we shall see, it is likely that small-scale gardening, which leaves minimal archaeological imprint, was closely linked with agricultural production from the earliest times.[38] This

basic utilitarian function of the garden can also intersect with a variety of other cultural meanings. Gardens can model aesthetic pleasure,[39] accommodate mortuary spaces,[40] create religious meanings by hosting and symbolizing sacral and ritual rites of various kinds,[41] and emblemize human sexuality and fertility.[42] Disparate meanings not only diverge among various gardens, but also can converge in a single garden space.

I emphasize this point in order to insist that the garden in the Song is evocative and multiply significant, and to offer a counter-voice to some theories of the garden that focus exclusively on domination and power. Much of our knowledge of gardening in the ancient world comes from royal sources, whose texts and monuments are privileged in the archaeological-historical record. The most famous gardens of the ancient Near East are related to kingship—much of the evidence for gardening in the ancient world has come from the relatively permanent evidence in royally sponsored inscriptions, literature, paintings, and garden sites, which necessarily skews our understanding of gardens toward "official" and royal agendas (including propagating imperial ideologies). For example, the Egyptian pleasure gardens at Amarna, which surrounded the palace in several terraces planted with trees and flower beds, surely were "designed and understood as overt symbols of status and power."[43] This has a corollary with later traditions of gardening in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, Europe, and China. As Tuan emphasizes, such large-scale pleasure gardens function as "symbols of surplus power,"[44] born of the basic human impulse to exert dominance over the natural world. Christopher Meredith, following Tuan and other theorists of the garden as power, argues that gardens in general (and the garden in the Song, in particular) are precisely this, ". . . a product of human domination, a clearing away of the raw in order to impose a theatrical theme-park version of 'creation,' the boundaries of which, ultimately, serve a political reality."[45]

Biblical texts include examples of royal gardens that seemed to be linked to power of this kind. These references suggest a plot of land within or abutting the wall of the city, and they are described as spaces for burial (2 Kgs 21:18; 26) or a sufficiently private path for escaping an attacking army unseen (2 Kgs 25:4; Jer 39:4; 52:7). And the story of Ahab's rapacious—and ultimately deadly—desire to acquire the vineyard of Naboth in order to turn it into a royal vegetable garden suggests that gardens could serve as a locus of kingly arrogation (1 Kgs 21:1–16). The book of Esther—set in the Persian palace—evokes the most famous "pleasure gardens" of the

ancient world as a setting for the royal banquet that engenders the plot of the book (Est 1:5). (I will discuss the gardens of Ramat Raḥel later.) But Tuan also admits that this power need not be sinister; rather, "its anodyne is affection," and one of the hallmarks of gardening is playfulness and care.[46] It is too reductionistic, then, to generalize that gardens function as "a kind of concretized fantasy of a conquered world . . . specifically designed to showcase political control and domination."[47] While the power and propaganda reading is one possible signification of the garden, it is not the only one. As art historian Zainab Bahrani writes,

> Even today, the discipline of Near Eastern studies continues to equate serious theoretical discussion exclusively with the idea of reducing social practices in Near Eastern antiquity to practices in the service of royal power and overt propaganda. On the one hand this seems simply a weak form of scholarship, unnuanced and reductive at best; on the other it might even be pernicious, since it adheres to that old tired trop of Oriental despotism and should surely be re-evaluated.[48]

Meredith himself acknowledges that there is more than possible meaning to the ancient garden. In addition to his reading of the garden as surplus power, he also helpfully highlights the idea of effort in the maintenance of the garden (this is an idea to which I will return). He notes that "while gardens tend to evoke *in us* ideas about rest, relaxation, and escape from toil, they could be more accurately described as sites of some considerable labour." But it is not necessarily the case that this labor is characterized by "its sustained imposition *against* the forces of nature," as he argues.[49] As I have suggested earlier, gardens must equally work along with, not in opposition to, nature. It is possible to conjecture that the garden itself is a site where these two realities intersect—that the garden is a locus of the conjunction of affection and work.

The following analysis will examine the "garden" poem of the Song (4:16–5:1), paying particular attention to how its formal aspects build a synthetic experience of the garden and shape our responses to it. As I will show, the garden situates humans in both aesthetic contemplation and ecstatic experience such that they both work in and lose themselves to the larger landscape. This poem's combination of observation and rapture—contemplation and abandonment—models complex modes of thought about the natural world, which values aesthetic form as well as an excess

of wildness that courses through human life, remaining irreducible to human ends. The ideals conveyed in this garden are threefold: the garden is a landscape in which humans work to establish and promote ongoing order; the garden's order is permeable, it is always circumscribed by wildness; and finally, in the garden the self may be lost in ecstasy.

The poem is composed of two movements. Its first twelve lines (vv. 12–15) describe the garden, and are marked by an absence of verbs. Its tone is one of stasis and observation. The second movement is identifiable by the striking and sudden shift to strong imperative verbs: "awake, north wind, and come, south wind" (v. 16). In these latter ten lines, the voicing becomes urgent and dialogic, as the lovers and their friends rapturously describe the enjoyment of the garden. In what follows, I will treat each of these movements in turn.

The Form of the Garden (Song 4:12–15): Order and Exoticism

The first movement establishes the form of the garden, which is marked by formal order, and by exoticism. The text begins in this way:

> A locked garden, my sister bride,
> A locked garden,[50] a sealed spring.
> Your shoots[51] are a grove:[52]
> Pomegranates with excellent fruits,
> Henna with nard.
> Nard[53] and saffron,[54]
> cane and cinnamon,
> With all the trees of incense:
> Myrrh and eaglewood,
> with all the prime spices.
> A garden[55] spring,
> A well of living water,
> flowing from Lebanon. (Song 4:12–15)

This first movement of the garden poem is marked by a tone of stasis and observation. Within the first seven short lines (vv. 13–14), we are introduced to a list of ten plants found in the enclosed garden. With no active verbs[56] and few syntactical features except for the preposition *ʾim* ("with," 3 x) and the conjunction *wə-* ("and," 3 x), the description simply accumulates

names of flora, like row upon row in the garden plot. The controlling strategy of this poem is the list—but it is not merely an itemization, or a pure list. In this way it differs from the intellectual genre of list-making of the ancient world.[57] While it operates on the additive logic of the list, it signals abundance by these "what's more" words: henna *with* nard; nard *and* saffron. The repetition of key words and sounds links each line of the list with what goes before. The first couplet establishes this pattern of loosely cohering soundplay:

> *šəlāḥayik* ***PaRdēs Rimmônîm***
> *ʿim* ***PəRî*** *məgādîm*
>
> Your shoots are a grove of pomegranates
> with excellent fruits

The second line reiterates the /p/ and /r/ combination of the first, and the line ends are near-rhymes, encouraging the sense that "pomegranates" are but one example of all the "excellent" fruits that are available in the garden. A similar strategy informs the next triplet:

> *kəPā**R**îm ʿim-nə**R**ādîm*
> *nē**R**d wə**K**a**RK**ōm*
> ***Q**āneh wə**Q**innāmôn*
>
> Henna with nard
> Nard and saffron
> Cane and cinnamon

The first line picks up the /p/-/r/ combination; the next line connects the /r/ sound and introduces the hard /k/ sound, echoed by the hard /k/ sound of the *qoph* ("Q") in the final line. These plants are ordered by sound. The effect is of someone remembering a garden, a memory moved by the euphony of words: each plant name triggers the remembrance of the next. As if to reiterate the abundance of the garden, the poem insists on its own incompleteness—*ʿim kol* ("with all") is used twice, resumptively: "with all the trees of incense," "with all the prime spices." Such repetitions serve several purposes: They foreground the aesthetic quality of the garden through the formal features available to the poet—the euphonic soundplay is a signal of the order and beauty of the garden. At the same time, such formal features call attention to the poem itself as an aesthetic product, and raise the tension between the two art forms (the poem and the

garden). The poem's insistence that what it describes is merely a sample of the abundance of the garden itself registers the incommensurability of the two art forms. What we have in this poem is not a garden, per se, but a garden ekphrasis—a description of an object made available through the aesthetic presentation of the poem.[58] The form of the poem, through its lyric strategies, enables us to access and experience the form of the garden. In addition to the features of soundplay I have addressed previously, the first movement of the garden poem uses two additional formal features to create the sense of the garden: order and exoticism. As I will show, this garden ekphrasis promotes an ideal of nature ordered by human care, which is most readily apparent in the garden's enclosure and in the exoticism of its plants.

The garden poem has some elements of structural enclosure, since it is introduced and concluded by parallel statements: "a locked garden, a sealed spring" (v. 12) is echoed by the phrase "a garden spring" (v. 15). The description of the plants in verses 12–15 is in this way contained by the repetition of the word *gan* ("garden"), which subtly distinguishes the description from the text that surrounds it. As the preceding theoretical discussion emphasized, the garden is not identical to nature, but has a body distinct from it. This is a moment in which the poem mimics the experience of the ancient garden, which is closed off from the rest of the world.

While gardening practices differ across the ancient Near East, there is consistency that the garden includes the idea of its enclosure, which is evident as a textual assumption in the barring of Eden (Gen 3:24), and in the story of escaping the Assyrian siege undetected through the (sufficiently private) king's garden (2 Kgs 25:4; Jer 39:4; 52:7). Similarly, the royal garden at the palace at Ras Shamra (Ugarit) was both enclosed by a wall and protected by a guard post.[59] At Ramat Raḥel, south of Jerusalem, a palace garden was dug down into a hillside, utilizing the steep exposed escarpments as a natural wall on at least three sides.[60] Patterns of enclosure are also attested in Egypt, and are particularly prominent in tomb paintings that represent gardens.[61] Such representations emphasize systems of walling and enclosure, which preserve a sense of protection from the elements.[62] Enclosure as an identifying characteristic of the garden is also attested in Mesopotamian iconography of the garden. In a famous Neo-Assyrian wall relief, trees and a wall line the garden on all sides, preserving its waterways, rows of plant life, and the temple atop the hill from the chaos of the battle charge unfolding in the three registers below it.[63] Such examples suggest that the garden's enclosure, which lends it a sense of

tranquil separation, is a form of human intervention that orders the space and preserves the human experience of the natural elements it contains.

Within the tranquil, "still life" of the garden poem, its second feature emerges: its interest in exoticism. The garden is constituted by a minimalistic description—a list—of exotic and native plant species. Of the plants listed, four arguably grew in the region: *rimmônîm* (pomegranate), *kəpārîm* (henna),[64] *karkōm* (saffron),[65] *bəśāmîm* (balsam),[66] and *qāneh* (ginger grass).[67] The pomegranate is a tree not only native, but pervasively grown, and so frequently called upon in literature as to be emblematic of the fruitfulness of Palestine. It, along with the handful of native plants, suggests a local garden—perhaps even an oasis, which is a kind of naturally fruitful "garden." The remainder of the list, however, evokes costly spices that were known predominantly as imports, and it is doubtful that they ever grew locally: *nērd* (spikenard),[68] *qinnāmôn* (cinnamon),[69] *ləbônâ* (frankincense),[70] *mōr* (myrrh),[71] and *ʾăhālôt* (eaglewood).[72]

The logic of the list heads the description with the pomegranate, the fruit most emblematic of the region, and suggests that this garden contains groves in which other high quality fruits (v. 13) are equally as successful. The ability of the native plant to flourish in this garden is the standard by which all other plants flourish. The insistence on the success of both native and exotic species continues in the pairings contained in following lines: henna (native) with nard (exotic); nard (exotic) and saffron (native); cane (native) and cinnamon (exotic; v. 14); myrrh and eaglewood (exotic). The close interweaving of these native and exotic plant names suggests that the poem is interested in how the plants—both native and exotic—flourish together in a single garden.

The scholarly consensus, however, is that this garden, because of the diversity of plants it contains, is a fantasy. J. Cheryl Exum writes that "[n]o garden in the ancient Near East would have contained such a wide variety of spice-bearing plants and trees from such far-away places as Arabia, Africa, and India, growing side by side."[73] Michael Fox writes, "[t]his can only be a fantasy garden of exotic and precious plants."[74] Gianni Barbiero insists further, "in fact, it is impossible to cultivate together in one garden plants so disparate and from such different climates."[75] These analyses largely draw from the observation of Gillis Gerleman, who suggested that the diversity of plants is evoked not because they have any correspondence to reality, but in order to create a rich sensory experience. In his much-echoed assessment, "Es wird ein utopischer Phantasiegarten beschrieben, der mit der Wirklichkeit sehr wenig zu tun hat."[76] These assessments are

right insofar as they point to the nature of the garden as an idealized space that does not exist on its own but that must be created. As Michael Pollan writes, "gardens are simultaneously both real places and representations. They bring together, in one place, nature and our ideas about nature."[77] They exist in reality; yet, at the same time, as an art form they are necessarily representational. But these assessments of the Song's garden as a "fantasy garden" miss the mark slightly, for two reasons. First, as a label, "fantasy garden" implies that a literary garden could be "real," but this is to mistake the poem for an actual garden. As I have already suggested, any ekphrastic poem about a garden will necessarily be a "fantasy garden" (regardless of the plants described in it) insofar as it is a textual representation. Second, the label "fantasy garden" does not take into account how exoticism, the incorporation of foreign elements into the domestic, is a persistent and traditional aspect of gardening in idea and practice. By such standards, most if not all gardens are "fantasy gardens." In what follows, I will focus on the latter point: that exoticism itself is a prominent feature of the gardening culture of the ancient Near East, and that the exoticism evoked in the Song, therefore, takes its place in a particular landscape of encultured garden meaning.

Both textual references and archaeological remains reveal how integral exotic plant elements were to the ancient Near Eastern garden. As Karen Polinger Foster has argued, gardens of every era in the ancient Near East evidence "the controlled coexistence of exotic and indigenous flora and fauna. . . ."[78] Such exoticism is possible through a series of cultural commitments and ideals, including (but not limited to) travel, botanical interest and knowledge, and horticultural skill. As I will suggest in the following, the evocation of exoticism among the plants in the garden points to, fairly revels in, the capability of skillful human intervention to order the natural world.

A couple of examples of such garden exoticism will suffice to illustrate this pervasive practice. In Mesopotamia, Sennacherib (705–681 BCE) claims to have created a great park at Ninevah with "fruit-bearing trees of the hill and all lands, all the aromatics of Syria (Hatti) . . . every type of wild vine and exotic fruit tree, aromatics and olive trees. . . ."[79] This follows an older tradition: In a cylinder inscription, Tiglath-Pileser I (1115–1077 BCE) boasts: "Cedars and urkarinu-trees, and allakanish-trees . . . I took, and in the gardens of my land, I planted them. And rare garden-fruits, which were not found within my land. . . . [I]n the gardens of Assyria I have caused them to flourish."[80] Continuing this tradition of incorporating

foreign elements, Assurnasirpal II's building project at Kalhu (Nimrud, 876 BCE) included gardens filled with exotica that came both from foreign tribute and from military expeditions. He boasts about this interest in cultivating a diverse and exotic horticulture:

> From the lands I travelled and hills I traversed the trees and seeds I noticed and collected: cedar, cypress, box, Juniperus oxycedrus, myrtle, Juniperus dupracea, almond, date palm, ebony, sissoo, olive, tamarind, oak, terebinth, dukdu [nut tree], Pistacia terebinthus, myrrh–type [ash?], mehru-fir, Dead Sea fruit [?], ti'atu, Kaniš-oak, willow, ṣadānu, pomegranate, plum, fir, ingirašu, pear, quince, fig, grapevine, angašu-pear, ṣumlalu, titip [aromatic], ṣarbutu, zanzaliqu [acacia?], "swamp-apple"-tree, ricinus, nuhurtu, tazzinū, kanaktu [frankincense?].[81]

Following this description of the exotic floral elements of the garden, Assurnasirpal's description continues with an affirmation of the aesthetic experience offered thereby:

> The canal-water came flowing down from above to the gardens: the paths [are full] of scent; the waterfalls [glisten] like the stars of heaven in the garden of pleasure. The pomegranate trees, which are clothed with clusters of fruit like vines, enrich the breezes in the garden of [delights. I] Assurnasirpal gather fruit continuously in the garden of joys. . ..[82]

The sensory experiences of the garden, full of its array of exotic and fruiting plants, is here lushly evoked. The description moves away from a catalog of plants, draws the reader along the path, beside the waterfall, to appreciate the sight and the scent of the garden. These rich aesthetic possibilities are simultaneously evoked in the threefold title given to the space: "the garden of pleasure," "the garden of delights," and "the garden of joys." Like the garden passage in the Song of Songs, the list of plants conveys the ordered and encompassing totality of the horticultural exotica, accompanied by an affirmation of their aesthetic value. These examples serve to show that exoticism itself was understood as a cultural achievement in the ancient world, one worth boasting about.

The high cultural value placed on exotic horticulture can also be traced in Egypt. For example, the "Botanical Garden" reliefs of Pharaoh

Thutmosis III (ca. 1479–1425 BCE) at Karnak render in exceptional detail the horticultural and zoological gains from his extensive military campaigns: "Plants which His Majesty found in the Land of Retenu . . . All the plants that grow, all flowers that are in God's Land."[83] There are obstacles to certain identification of the plants represented, since color has disappeared from the walls of this temple, and the plants are not differentiated by relative size but are rendered in like dimensions; however, it is still possible to identify some of the plants depicted. These include date and doum palm, sycomore fig, common fig, pomegranate, vine, waterlily, iris, melon, and lettuce; likely are arum, crown daisy, teasel, bindweed, and myrtle, among many others.[84] Among the plants, twenty-six represent exotic species.[85] The style is somewhat unusual in Egyptian iconography, since it presents the plants in a catalog, as specimens on display, and not in the typical geometric form of the Egyptian garden.[86] The style accomplishes visually what Assurnasirpal's boast accomplishes literarily: it impresses the viewer with the sense of accomplishment. The exoticism is brought into relief by the sheer size of the collection, which is arranged to showcase the variety of specimens, including a large number of exotic and rare species alongside elements chosen to evoke the Egyptian environment. In this way, the paintings depict the integration of the exotic within the familiar.[87] In another Egyptian example, Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian Pharaoh Hatshepsut's (1508–1458 BCE) funerary temple at Deir el-Bahri was decorated with elaborate reliefs depicting her expedition to the land of Punt, including depictions of workers transporting whole trees with their roots in baskets.[88] This venture was echoed later by Pharaoh Ramesses III (1186–1155 BCE), who imported incense and myrrh trees to Memphis.[89]

Archaeological discoveries at Ramat Raḥel provide evidence of just such garden exoticism in Palestine during the Persian period. During the renewed excavations of this hilltop four kilometers south of Jerusalem, researchers discovered an elaborate series of plastered pools, drains, and stone-built channels to the west of a large palace structure.[90] These waterways seem to have channeled and stored rainwater for a lowered garden carved into the hillside.[91] New techniques have allowed the fossilized pollen trapped in the layers of plaster in the waterways themselves to be analyzed.[92] While some of the plaster layers contain largely native plant species, the Persian period layer shows a large number of exotic species, including citron, Persian walnut, cedar, and birch trees. These exotic species appear to have been grown along with native species, including willow

and poplar, which would have required extensive irrigation, ornamental myrtle and water lilies, as well as grapevine, olive, and the common fig.[93] The success of this wide variety of species would have required extensive preparation: the natural flint outcrops were hewn to create the lowered garden, in which the bedrock was overlaid with a layer of rich, imported earth (likely from the valley of Rephaʿim, west of Ramat Raḥel), nearly forty centimeters thick. Such alterations constitute an impressive "transformation" of a once rocky hilltop into an exotic garden.[94]

These examples help to show that exoticism itself was a regularly practiced cultural form in the gardens of the ancient world. While the preceding examples come largely from royal contexts in which exoticism expresses an ideology of imperial prerogative and extent, there are also hints that exoticism—of a more modest type—was also a feature of non-royal gardens. An Egyptian poem from the Cairo Love Songs employs familiarity with the kind of garden exoticism discussed earlier, but removed from an imperial context—the vase fragments containing these poems were discovered at Deir el-Medina, which was a craftsmen's village.[95] It suggests that, as in the Song, knowledge of such botanical exoticism could also be employed for other purposes:

> If only my sister were mine every day,
> like the greenery of a wreath! . . .
> The reeds are dried,
> the safflower has blossomed,
> the mrbb-flowers are [in] a cluster [ʔ].
> The lapis-lazuli plants and the mandragoras have come forth.
> [The blo]ssoms from Hatti have ripened,
> the bsbs-tree bloss[omed], . . .
> the willow tree greened.
> She would be with me every day,
> like (the) greenery of a wreath.
> All the blossoms are flourishing in the meadow,
> . . . entirely.[96]

The safflower (a semiticism) and the "blossoms from Hatti" mark exotic species, whose fleeting abundance in the meadow the young man wishes to preserve in a wreath in order to enjoy them every day (not just when they are blossoming). The speaker makes the metaphor explicit: "She would be with me every day, / like (the) greenery of a wreath."[97] The poet

uses known practices of horticultural exoticism to convey an idea about love. In particular, the poem capitalizes on the fragile ephemerality of the exotic plants. It does so with an eye to "ordinary gardens." While references to royal gardens point to the high art of garden practice, gardens are also, pervasively, universally, a popular craft.[98] In the vernacular garden, the human body is engaged and useful; its requisite labor yields physical pleasure in the enjoyment of the space. As in this Egyptian example, the successful care of fragile exotic plants is not a matter of royal prerogative. Rather, it is a wish for the pleasures of "every day."

In this Egyptian love poem, as well as in the royal boasts about garden accomplishments, there is an underlying recognition that exotic species can be especially susceptible to failure—hence their success alongside native plants is a prized cultural value. The catalogs in particular show proud familiarity with knowledge of the plants themselves (the ability to identify and name them) and thus to bring an array of foreign elements into the ordered domain of the familiar. It is not coincidental that Pharaoh Hatshepsut's reliefs culminate in the depiction of her myrrh trees flourishing outside the temple: Merely bringing back the plants will not suffice.[99] Alongside their imperial agendas, one could say that the appeal to exotica also evidences a mindset of domestication, in which the foreign elements are enveloped within the known, a crucial feature of which is the modification of the native habitat to encourage the adaptation of the foreign elements. The imported species must be received with sufficient horticultural skill (most specifically, intimate knowledge of the native soil) in order for plants to adapt successfully. Karel Čapek, in *The Gardener's Year*, remarks, "I find that a real gardener is not a man who cultivates flowers; he is a man who cultivates the soil. . .. He lives buried in the ground. He builds his monument in a heap of compost."[100] What underlies Čapek's statement is the reality that the plants themselves will flourish in proportion to how attentively and skillfully the soil is cultivated. Such a skill, it should be remembered, would have been of particular interest and importance in the hilly, dry, nutrient-poor terra rossa that comprised much of Israel's thin topsoil (hence the large-scale importing of garden soil at Ramat Raḥel, noted earlier).

The kind and quantity of the labor required for the cultivation of such exotic species imply that exoticism itself was a signal of a highly organized and specialized cultural form—one whose technological achievements broadcast the abilities of the humans charged with creating and maintaining the space. And indeed, the expertise of gardeners

as a specialized profession is well-known throughout the ancient Near East.[101] This passage in the Song plays with the expectation that the space is the result of the presence of a gardener. Whose garden is this? Who is doing the gardening? One place where this play is apparent is in the third line: *šəlāḥayik pardēs rimmônîm*, which I translated earlier as "your shoots are a grove of pomegranates." But what are "your shoots"? The tendency to establish and interpret the metaphor in reference to the young woman's sexuality is once again prevalent here: Interpreters tend to elaborate the metaphor, translating the obscure word *šəlāḥayik* as "your channel" (NRSV), "your limbs" (JPS), or glossing it in reference to the young woman's genitals or pubic hair.[102] The issue is clouded by the style of the lengthy descriptive poems that itemize the lover's body elsewhere in the Song of Songs (4:1–7; 5:10–16; 6:4–7; 7:1–7).[103] But this poem includes no list of the lover's body parts (head, nose, lips, belly, legs, feet), such as those found in the other descriptive poems. In light of the larger gravity of the garden itself, it is probably better to render *šəlāḥayik* according to the related root *š-l-ḥ* ("send out"), referring to a plant's roots or branches that are "sent out" from the body of the plant.[104] There is precedent for a botanical use of this root: in Isaiah 16:8, for example, the plant's branches (*šəluḥôtêhā*) stretch out over the sea (see also Ps 80:12; Jer 17:8; Ezek 31:5 [prob. *bišlāḥāyw*, for *bəšalləḥô*]).[105] "Shoots" is an appropriate rendering of *šəlāḥayik*, the plantings within a garden, hence my translation: "your shoots are a grove." Scholarly attempts to pinpoint a specific body part evoked by the image jump too quickly to an explication of the garden as part of the human body, instead of pausing, as the poem does, with an appreciation of the floral elements of the garden. The Song is happy here to play with the audience's perception of the subject—readers' desire for anatomical specificity is a telltale sign of the Song's ability to tantalize and yet defer its subject. In light of the emphasis on intensification and gardening, "your shoots" might suggest that the young woman is the gardener, and "hers" because she is responsible for their cultivation and care. This idea is picked up later when the young woman calls it "my garden," and then says, "let my lover come to his garden."

The logic of the garden exoticism in the Song, then, persuades the reader not that the garden is a "fantasy garden," but that the space is the result of attention and care—one that presumes the intervention of a skilled gardener. In other words, the evocation of the space itself is capable of representing the order of the garden as an art form: "This attention to different intensities of intervention in the world stems in part from

what visual artists can make especially their own: the celebration of formal effects, whether natural or artificial."[106] Exoticism construed in this way is a formal effect, part of the congeries of artistic and natural qualities that make a garden "third nature." As such, it is hospitable to the varied intensities of intervention. These varied interventions—including also the waterways of which the Song is self-conscious—consistently recall to the viewer not only the abundance of the natural world, but also the ideal of order within it. The formal effects we encounter there are the art and artifice of this "third nature." The ideal of nature is in the ordered domestication of exotic abundance—the incorporation of diverse elements into the order of the known. This order is experienced in a contemplative kind of moment: It is as though the young man, beckoning the lover to the garden, becomes entranced for a moment by the beauty of the garden itself.

Song 4:16: A Glimpse of Wild

The second movement of the poem is characterized quite differently. Once the garden is described in the first twelve lines, there is a sudden energetic transition at verse 16, where the poem takes on an altogether different tone, trajectory, and voice. The young woman summons the winds, turning the attention away from the plant life and the garden's form that occupied the previous section.[107] In two spare, closely parallel couplets, the lyric shifts from description to invocation, which is then followed by a couplet expressing a wish to see her lover draw near:

> Arise, north wind,
> come, south wind,
> make my garden exhale
> to waft its spices.
> Let my lover come to his garden
> to eat its prime fruits.

This section situates the garden in the larger sweep of landscape that includes the elements. But the garden is hardly forgotten. Instead of the previous verbless description of the garden—with its "still life" quality—the verbs here take center stage. This section is composed of two couplets of short, two-word lines, each fronted by verbs (*ʿûrî*, "arise"; *ûbôʾî*, "come"; *hāpîḥî*, "make exhale"; *yizzəlû*, "to waft"). The terse style is

also highly rhythmic. Note the highly regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables: *'**Ûrî ṣāPÔN / ûBÔ'î tēMĀN** // hāPÎḥî gan**NÎ** / yizzə**LÛ** bəśā**MĀYW***; the pattern of these lines, interposing single stressed beats with two unstressed beats—like a dactylic trisyllabic foot of metrical poetic traditions—is so much more regular than the surrounding verses that the juxtaposition creates an almost incantatory quality.[108] The final couplet is somewhat longer (three-word lines) and shifts from the imperative commands to a wish expressed by the jussive (*yābō'*, "let [him] come"; *wəyō'kal*, "to eat"). The garden is both subject and object, and it is a possession shared: *gannî* ("my garden") becomes, through this process of incantation, *gannô* ("his garden").

Instead of the plant life that featured so strongly in the first garden section, it is the winds that now take center stage: *ṣāpôn* and *têmān*, the north and south winds. The incantatory rhythm of these lines and their apostrophe to the winds convey agency, concreteness, and power on the winds.[109] The winds are a natural force quintessentially outside of human agency, and therefore sometimes serve as a cipher for wildness in the biblical imagination. The winds are associated with the four directionals (Zech 2:6; Ezek 37:9), and are used to evoke capriciousness or inscrutability (Hosea in particular uses the wind as an image of volatility, the imagistic opposite of the vine). Wind is sometimes portrayed poetically as an emissary of divine wrath or redemption (Exod 14:21; Isa 27:8; Jer 18:7; Ezek 17:10; 19:12; 27:26; Hos 13:5; Ezek 37:9), and thus signals powers beyond human control.[110] The wind plays a vital role in two biblical creation accounts: a *rûaḥ* sweeps over the expanse of waters before creation (Gen 1:2), is breathed into the nostrils of the human (Gen 2:7), and blows through the garden while God strolls through it (Gen 3:8). In the divine speech from the whirlwind at the end of Job, the wind is included among the list of wild things: the snow, rain, light, darkness, and animals over which people have no knowledge or jurisdiction (Job 38:24; cf. Amos 4:13). Similarly, Qoheleth draws on the tripartite imagery of the rising and setting sun, the cycle of winds, and the coursing of waters to convey the cyclical continuance of natural processes that are indifferent to human intervention:

> The wind blows to the south,
> and goes around to the north;
> round and round goes the wind,
> and on its circuits the wind returns. (Qoh 1:6)

The wind sweeps through landscapes, unbeholden.

In the larger scope of ancient Near Eastern mythology, the winds are often enlisted as powerful forces with which the gods effect their desires: In the Mesopotamian creation epic, Marduk harnesses the four winds and also creates seven threatening new types of winds with which to defeat Tiamat, the primordial sea.[111] In the Standard Babylonian version of the Anzu epic, Ninurta summons the winds in his battle against the Anzu bird: "The warrior Marshaled the seven evil winds, / Who dance in the dust, the seven whirlwinds. . . ."[112] In Ugaritic mythology, Baal fights his battles with weapons of clouds, winds, thunderbolts, and rains.[113] The winds are not only divine weapons, but also divine messengers. In Mesopotamian epics, both the Anzu myth and the creation epic appeal to the wind as a messenger that might convey the news of the death of an enemy: "let the winds bear her blood to us as good news!"[114] Wind as weapon and wind as messenger both appeal to these unconfined aspects of the wind's force for its ability to move quickly and powerfully across a large portion of the landscape. The landscape is rendered small in comparison to a sweeping wind.

While an explicit mythological framework is absent here, the preceding examples suggest that the evocation of the winds is an appeal to a powerful force with the expectation that they will provide agency and efficacy that exceed the scope of normal human ability. The young woman's appeal to the winds evokes a sense of their energy and power as a natural force, dramatically exemplifying their power over the landscape. The wind gusting through the landscape—and into and out of the garden—signals that its dynamism is beyond human control, but is intimately related to human vitality. Like the mythological messengers, the wind will carry the reminder of her presence to her lover. Unlike the carefully tended plants that are protected by walls, the wind is impervious to such interventions. This, I suggest, hints at a wildness that permeates even the most carefully ordered garden.

The wind, though, is not the only dynamic force beyond human control. Even within the first half of the poem, there is another hint at a permeating wildness. Water frames the passage, flowing around and through its boundaries: "a locked garden, a sealed spring . . . a garden spring / a well of living water / flowing from Lebanon" (vv. 12, 15). That the water surrounds the garden suggests its importance in actual horticultural practices in the Levant, which would have relied largely on rain-fed systems, stored and channeled by plastered irrigation cisterns and channels.[115] But the

burbling of water is another signal of the permeability of the garden. Water, with its cycle of precipitation, saturation, and evaporation, is another force that is always moving through the landscape. At the same time, it is also constitutive of the landscape, shaping the contours of the land through which it flows and providing sustenance to its vegetation. While the garden is "locked" and "sealed," it is also a well of "living water," a term that means moving water, a rivulet, or a well that flows and babbles (Gen 26:19; Jer 17:13; Zech 14:8; Lev 14:5–6; 50–52; 15:13; Num 19:17). While the spring is "sealed," it is also fresh and running, like a mountain stream from Lebanon—a mountain region frequently evoked in the Song (3:9; 4:8, 11, 15; 5:15; 7:5). The flowing water, like the evocation of the wind, reminds the reader that the garden is permeated by natural forces on which its existence depends. We see this in the affinity of the two forces, of water and wind, buttressed by the verb *n-z-l*, which is used for both elements. Like the water that flows (*n-z-l*) in and through the garden, the young woman beckons the wind to blow so that the spices may flow out (*n-z-l*).[116] This abundance is beyond the scope of human control—the verb itself conveys an action whose origin is natural or divine: the sky "pours down" (*n-z-l*) rain (Job 36:28; cf. Ps 147:18); Yahweh causes the "floods" (*n-z-l*) to stand (Exod 15:8; cf. Isa 48:21). The repetition of the verb suggests that like wind, water too is a powerful force that circumscribes the garden. The stasis that characterizes this first half of the poem is a formal effect of the garden that is only partially achievable, and belies the garden's ultimate dependence on the wildness that constitutes it.

The garden, as I have suggested earlier, is a uniquely hybrid landscape—constituted as it is by both "nature" and "art"—and its domesticity is intrinsically related to its wild aspects. In this passage, the garden's order can be seen in part against the backdrop of the predatory animals that populate the mountains in the text preceding the garden passage:

> [Come] with me from Lebanon, my bride
> Come with me from Lebanon,
> Travel from the peak of Amanah
> From the peak of Senir and Hermon
> From the dens of lions
> From the mountains of leopards (Song 4:8)

The garden is "locked" to distinguish it from such wild places as the mountains of Lebanon, which are full of wild animals, lions, and leopards.

Wilderness is only occasionally evoked in the Song, though there are glimpses of it: in 3:6, the desert is the space from which the exoticism of merchants is anticipated from a distance; and in 8:5, the young woman comes up from the wilderness leaning on her lover. In the scope of the Song, wildness is a relatively attenuated theme, so it is all the more striking that the verses immediately preceding the garden passage are preoccupied with wildness, with the mountains that harbor threatening, undomesticated creatures. This passage closely precedes the description of the garden, and shares some of the style and strategy of the garden passage, which leads some interpreters to see them as part of a single poetic unit.[117] The walls and boundaries of the garden are thus set to keep out such imagined predators, protecting and distinguishing the garden from wildness, as the images of walled gardens I discussed earlier demonstrate. The wild spaces of the Song form a kind of margin around the known space of the homestead, where love tends to be localized.

These wild spaces, though, are not entirely separable from the domestic spaces. The threefold repetition of "Lebanon" in these closely related lines links three distinct spaces: The mountains of Lebanon (4:8), the scent of the young woman's garments (4:11), and the garden fountain, which flows from Lebanon (4:15). The garden, in this way, is both distinct from, as well as intimately linked with, these high hills of the famous ante-Lebanon range. While the wildness is imagined as distant and predatory, it also invades and helps define the garden. The same root is also used in a soundplay that hooks back into the previous description of the garden: *kol-ʿăṣê ləbônāh* ("all the trees of frankincense," 4:14). This repetition of the consonants *l-b-n* closely links the distant wilderness of Lebanon with the sensory stimulation of the lover and the garden. The imagined proximity of the immediate with the distant, the domestic with the wild, suggests that a pure separation between the two is only an idea. The domestic is permeated by the wild; culture is not finally separable from nature. The water comes "from Lebanon" and, like the wind, it courses through the garden, serving the garden's purposes. To a certain extent, the reader is reminded that natural forces are realistically responsible for the fundamental processes of pollination and decomposition, without which a garden cannot live. Wildness, thus, is complexly a force of death as well as a force of life: On the one hand, the waters sustain the garden. Proverbs includes the truism that "the north wind produces rain" (Prov 25:23), which is just one way in which life is dependent (viz., for water) on wild forces.[118] The wild elements of the garden do not let us forget that the garden is both

natural and artificial. It is a human construction, but it is ultimately (and sometimes woefully) dependent on the forces of nature for its fertility, its sustenance, and its preservation.

When she evokes the north and the south wind, then, the young woman—to use Karel Čapek's phrase—"cultivates the weather": she appeals to the winds to intervene in the garden. Behind this appeal lies the sense that from her vantage in the garden, and in her desire to share it with her lover, such forces will be needful and beneficial. Čapek writes, of this impulse to "cultivate the weather":

> If it were of any use, every day the gardener would fall on his knees and pray somehow like this: "O Lord, grant that in some way it may rain every day, say from about midnight until three o'clock in the morning, but, you see, it must be gentle and warm so that it can soak in; grant that at the same time it would not rain on campion, alyssum, helianthemum, lavender, and the others which you in your infinite wisdom know are drought-loving plants—I will write their names on a bit of paper if you like—and grant that the sun may shine the whole day long, but not everywhere (not, for instance, on spiraea, or on gentian, plantain lily, and rhododendron), and not too much; that there may be plenty of dew and little wind, enough worms, no plant-lice and snails, no mildew, and that once a week thin liquid manure and guano may fall from heaven. Amen."[119]

Such a prayer, not unlike the invocation of the winds, betrays a sense of dependence on the larger sweep of landscape in which the garden is situated, and which is composed not merely of stable features of topography, but the capricious powers of water and wind (and, we might add, the processes of photosynthesis and decomposition, to name only two). While it is enclosed and protected, it is not impervious to the wildness that nevertheless surrounds and partially constitutes it. While the first section of the garden poem is marked by attention to order and aesthetic form, here we see a subtle acknowledgement of an inescapably wild element that persists in the garden.

Eat, Drink, and Be Drunk with Love!

In the poem's final lines, the subject shifts more explicitly from the garden itself to the young man's enjoyment of the garden (specifically, eating and drinking). Lured by the scent of the garden on the breeze, the

young man moves closer to the locus of pleasure, closer to the garden. The winds draw the lover by tantalizing his olfactory senses: "breathe on my garden, waft its spices / Let my lover come to his garden," (v. 16). Smell has an ineluctable directional aspect, namely that its perception becomes increasingly more powerful the closer the perceiver draws to the smell's source. As he catches the scent on the wind, he will move from farther away (the observation of the garden from a greater distance) toward and finally into the garden, where he will become increasingly "enveloped by the power of that [olfactory] force until the point where it is impossible to hold it at a distance."[120] Enveloped by the powerful perfume of the garden, the young man will no longer experience distinction from the garden, but will experience proximity and identity with it. In entering, eating and drinking, a third ideal of the garden emerges, namely, one of identity and absorption.

This identity is most clearly evoked by the image of eating:

> I enter my garden, my sister bride
> I pluck my myrrh with my spice
> I eat my honeycomb with my honey
> I drink my wine with my milk.
> Eat, friends!
> Drink! And be drunk with love. (5:1)

Here, the young man enumerates a series of actions anticipating his enjoyment of the garden, eating, drinking and being satisfied. In stark contrast to the opening description of the garden (which lacked any finite verbs and thus had a sense of timelessness and stasis), these four lines bristle with verbs: *bā'tî . . . 'ārîtî . . . 'ākaltî . . . šātîtî* ("I enter" . . . "I pluck" . . . "I eat" . . . "I drink"). Francis Landy has commented memorably on this passage:

> It is a song of greedy exploitation, of masculine triumph, expressive of satiety. This catalogue of satisfactions is the culmination of the process, the consummation of the enclosed garden. The keynote of the verse is "I" . . . the ego, the possessive, divisive centre of consciousness, can only be selfish. The powerful verbs . . . represent a phallic thrust.[121]

Landy's reading assumes that the ego can only act in selfish and destructive self-interest; it is not clear, though, that the poem fixates on destructive

phallic potential. As Anselm Hagedorn rightly notes, "[t]he careful avoidance of the ravishing of the garden eschews all connotations of sexual force."[122] Instead, the progression of verbs conveys movement: The first two lines indicate the young man's spatial envelopment in the garden. He enters (*bāʾtî*) the garden's enclosure, and gathers (*ʾārîtî*) myrrh and spices. As people enter the garden, they participate in its art, physically joining the features of the space and becoming—for a time—an extension of the landscape. They do this to enact the temporal experience of contemplation, that is, to enjoy the aesthetics of the space, but the other reason people enter the garden is to join in the persistent temporal demands of the garden's ongoing creation and maintenance. As he "gathers" myrrh, the young man takes up one of the fundamental stances in and toward the garden: the stance of gardener. The first two lines, then, embody the young man's absorption into the landscape of the garden with the young woman.

The next two lines suggest an increasingly specified focus on the body of the young man in the garden: "I ate" (*ʾākaltî*) and "I drank" (*šātîtî*). The absorption of the young man into the garden is now matched by the absorption of the garden into the young man—emblemized by eating, through which he takes into himself the "excellent fruits" (4:13) that were previously described by both the lovers (4:13, 16). Fiona Black rightly observes that eating throughout the Song serves as a signal of sexuality. She argues that the themes of "the translation of food onto the body . . . and, in reverse, the description of sexual conduct via food" blend surprising, incongruous, and grotesque elements throughout the Song. Ultimately, for Black, it is the young woman who is the object of male consumption: "She is indeed an incredible, edible woman."[123] But, it should be remembered, food is imagined as shared throughout the Song, and the woman's enjoyment—not just the man's—is also related to consumption: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth / for your love is better than wine" (Song 1:2). Similarly, the friends' acclamation seems to include both the lovers: "Eat, friends! Drink! And be drunk with love" (5:1); "His fruit was sweet to my palate" (2:3; cf. 4:10, 11; 5:16; 7:10). Black's interpretation continues the trend of localizing and over-determining the garden as the young woman's body. In doing so, it is susceptible to what Roland Boer calls reading as a "carnal allegory."[124] There is a connection between eating and the suggestion of sexual consummation—in a previous chapter, I have already discussed how eating as the consummation of agricultural production is an apt symbol of sensual consummation. But eating also says something meaningful about the garden.

Over the course of the whole garden poem, there is an ascending movement toward this absorption: First, the choice fruits are observed and admired by the young man, but at a remove (4:13); then, the young woman offers the fruits to him to eat (4:16); only at this moment, he is not only in the garden, but also eating (5:1). If smell effectively represents desire and the ascending trajectory of proximity, taste is its fulfillment, since it implies touch (first with the hand, and ultimately with the feel of the object on the tongue), and the evocation of taste suggests incorporation: the food is taken into the body and will become part of the body, providing it with pleasure and sustenance. The close symmetry of the triplet uses synonymous parallelism to convey a sense of decisiveness and extravagance: Throughout these lines, the primacy is placed on the more exotic food first. This is the opposite of the traditional tack of parallelism, which tends to employ an ascending logic.[125] The lines emphasize myrrh, honeycomb, and wine over the generalized term "spice," the more common noun "honey," and the less costly and non-intoxicating drink, "milk."[126] As in the list of the garden description, where the exotic is paired with the local, the common and the rarified are once again conjoined. The emphasis here on the exotic, the rarified, evokes a sense of superlative pleasure. As the young man enters the garden, the garden will also enter the young man, in a reciprocity of incorporation.[127] In this way, first by smell and then by taste, the distinction between the garden and its observer begin to dissolve. Eating is a signal of the blurring of boundaries between the garden's art and the human who makes and enjoys it.

Conclusion: Eating and Ecstasy

The garden, as an art form, is a kind of "third nature," an ordered encounter with the natural world that signifies values about human involvement in the landscape. It is quintessentially a "landscape" in the twofold senses of both material and representation—the poem of the garden is a further representation of a representation—an ekphrasis—that suggests aesthetic and ethical dispositions toward the landscape. The foregoing analysis has suggested that gardens are particularly potent manifestations of human desire, most particularly of desires about and for the natural world; as "third nature," they exhibit a formal density—like a poem does. Both the poem, with its density of creative and technical skills, and the garden, with its intensification of natural forms, have a particular capacity to present an abundance in a very small space. The poem and the garden

are microcosms of intensification, in which ideals about the larger world are distilled.

The Song's garden is divided into two distinct sections, marked by very different tones, styles, and qualities. The first section, which is achieved formally by a list, imagines the garden as an ordered, aesthetic space. It is a list that is mobilized as much by memory and euphony as it is a catalog in a strict sense. As the poem progresses, the experience of the garden is reimagined, invigorated by both wild elements that permeate the garden and human subjects who participate bodily in the garden and its effects. Despite the formal efforts to keep the garden a bounded space, the latter portion acknowledges the garden's fundamental permeability; it depends on and yet also contains and is subsumed by the humans who experience it.

Perhaps one way to think about the abrupt stylistic transition that the reader encounters in the garden of the Song is through Nietzsche's aesthetic categories. In his early work *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche challenges the received account of Greek art, which had generally privileged the contemplative mode of sculpture. Nietzsche's account added to this an experiential mode, which is characterized more by participation than by contemplation. He named these two modes after two gods of the Greek pantheon: "Apolline" (which is the mode of sculpture, characterized by contemplation, and represented by the dream-state) and "Dionysiac" (which is the mode of music, characterized by participation and abandonment, and represented by intoxication).[128] What is helpful about these aesthetic categories is that the "Apollonian" and "Dionysian" elements aptly convey the aesthetic experience of the garden: namely, it can be an object of aesthetic appreciation, with a three-dimensional body, features from the plastic arts, and elements of formal fixity. At the same time, though, the garden is always permeable: it is subject to changes through time, through the vagaries of weather, and its aesthetic qualities always must include those features of the environment that extend beyond it (the seasons, the sky, the horizon, etc.).[129] Moreover, upon entering the garden, the viewer is absorbed into its body and is, in a sense, no longer distinct from it. On this reading, the first half of the garden poem is characterized more by Apollonion contemplation, with its recognition of the ordered form of the garden and its measured description of the plants found therein. This latter portion, on the other hand, is characterized by participatory enjoyment—the Dionysian. Here, the reader is invited in as the voices ascend to a tone of ringing celebration: "Eat, friends! / Drink, and be drunk with

love!" (5:1). Intoxication represents not merely satiation, but over-fulfillment, the excesses of sensuality. For Neitzsche, intoxication was precisely the state that best emblemizes the Dionysian aesthetic. Eating and drinking are frequently evoked in the Song, memorably at the beginning: "your love is better than wine" (1:2). The explicit idea that the lover and lovemaking are delectable to the mouth echoes throughout the Song: ("his fruit was sweet to my palate," 2:3; cf. 4:10, 11; 5:16; 7:10). Alongside this, the wish to eat and drink also appears ("sustain me with raisins / refresh me with apples," 2:5; cf. 7:2, 9, 13; 8:2). Intoxication, which is a state related to the satiety of eating, is an intensification of the experience of losing oneself that is already implicit in the act of eating. Landy also perceptively notes the line of danger with which the poem plays. He goes on, "[y]et the assertion of the ego verges on dissolution. Underneath the array of inflections—'bā'tî', 'gannî,' etc.—the verbs evoke sensations of intoxication and confusion. He absorbs the essence of the Beloved, quenching his thirst, consuming sweetness; she comprises his plenitude."[130] The act of consuming evokes the possibility of personal dissolution or loss. Eating and drinking in the garden, that is, are a kind of ecstasy, a loss of the self. The formal construction of the garden creates a place in which the momentary loss of the self is possible. One might see the garden, then, as a site of ecstasy, in the etymological sense, *ek-histanai* ("out of [one's] place").

Being "out-of-[one's]-place," of course, is neither easy nor risk-free. In her famous account of spiritual ecstasy, Teresa of Avila writes of a vision in which an angel plunges a golden dart tipped with fire into her heart: "When he drew it out, I thought he was carrying off with him the deepest part of me; and he left me all on fire with great love of God. The pain was so great that it made me moan, and the sweetness this greatest pain caused me was so superabundant that there is no desire capable of taking it away."[131] Teresa experiences ecstasy that puts her very close to experiences of both pain and death. The ecstasy of the garden, wherein one is absorbed into the larger landscape of nature, is not without its memento mori, the reminder that ecstasy puts one very close to the limits of human life. This sensibility can be seen in the famous "Garden Party" relief from Assurbanipal's North Palace at Ninevah. This famous relief shows the ruler and consort reclining in a lush garden, under a bower of vines. Here, they eat and drink, encircled by servants who play music, fan them, and provide their repast. The rulers drink wine, a sign of luxury, indulgence, and social bonding. Their complete security is indicated by the ease of Assurbanipal, who reclines on a bed with his

feet elevated. Theirs is the quintessential ease of the garden. There is a subtle suggestion of sensual encounter that is conveyed by the reclined position of the ruler and the privacy of their bower: they are elevated, nearly out of the eyeline of the servants, and they are drinking wine, which suggests the promotion of social bonds through the loosening of social inhibitions. And the satisfaction of the various sensory desires (through eating, drinking, reclining, and hearing music) is suggestive of the analogous satisfaction of sexual desire. There are multiple overlapping motifs with this Song of Songs text. But, the relief also includes a sinister memento mori: a polar contrast to the ease of the ruler is the head of a vanquished ruler hanging upside down in a nearby tree (upper left). The relief, as Assyrian palace reliefs often do, portray the royal competency of the ruler, especially through the celebration of military victories, and thus this executed head is usually understood as an ideological signifier for royal power. I suggest, though, that one might see the presence of death in the garden as part of the danger of ecstasy. There is a risk in the encounter with another.[132]

The experience of the garden is a microcosm for the experience of the natural world, in which the human being is only a small part, whose existence—though powerful—is nevertheless precarious or liminal. In this garden one becomes aware, moreover, that the natural world is dependent on forces of death for its ongoing fecundity: decay, destruction, and decomposition are part of the web of forces that are beyond human ken, and out of human control. At the same time, such forces represent the larger nature that—ultimately—will also absorb each human life. On this reading, "love is strong like death" (Song 8:6) might be read as just such a memento mori, the reminder that in the midst of abundance, death is not only present, but the ever-present source of regeneration, of life: "In the garden, death becomes the seedbed of birth."[133] The suggestive quality of death's presence—taken along with the attenuated wild elements of the garden—presses us to imagine the lovers in a landscape that is aware of its finitude. Landy writes, "[i]n the Song, however, the lovers will never grow old; death is excluded from their garden. Whereas for the Egyptian poet both love and death are part of the same necessary cycle, the ambiguous message of the Song is that love is as strong as death, the one thing that is eternal."[134] The Song, though, permits death—gardens are presumed on the reality of death's fundamental role in the processes of life.

A landscape approach to the garden helps us to see that the garden is not exclusively a metaphor for love. It is also a guide for thinking about the human situation in the natural world—as a source of signification and order, for example, and as finally susceptible to the wildness of the world that remains ultimately beyond human control.[135]

4

The Cityscape

[In] . . . the city in which I love you
. . . I never believed that the multitude
of dreams and many words were vain.

LI-YOUNG LEE (1990)

THIS CHAPTER WILL consider the significance of the city in the Song of Songs as a landscape, or a cityscape.[1] Architectural features are evoked to portray the young woman in the descriptive poems: she is like a tower (*migdāl*; 4:4; 5:13; 7:5; 8:10; 8:9–10), and she is described with the magnificence of two great capital cities of Israel and Judah's history: "You are beautiful as Tirzah, my love / comely as Jerusalem" (6:4). But the city (*ʿîr*) is also evoked in two passages where the young woman imagines nighttime walks to seek her lover (3:1–5; 5:2–8); in the second case, she is found by watchmen, who beat her (5:7). I will argue that the Song's use of the motif of the city is highly ambivalent, evoking the twin themes of protection and vulnerability. The Song playfully casts the lovers in a battle of the sexes, in which the young woman is a threatened city, and her lover is the encroaching enemy. This "embattled" motif helps explain a puzzling final section, Song 8:8–10. Ultimately, the Song imagines the city as a body—dependent on and susceptible to its surrounding environment, gendered female according to the conventions of the ancient world, and evocative of desire. This chapter first examines how the city appears in the Song of Songs (looking especially at the two episodes in Chapters 3 and 5 and the descriptive poems of the young woman); then, it will consider how the city is used symbolically for the young woman. Along the way, I will consider how contemporary theorizations of the city can help to illuminate the patterns of poetic use.

The City in Song of Songs Scholarship

Despite the prominence of the city in the Song, its construction and role have yet to be addressed in a significant way in scholarship. When they are addressed, scholars have tended to regard the city as a point of contrast with the natural world; the distinction between "culture" and "nature" is frequently reified. As Francis Landy argues, it is one of several polarities that undergird the symbolic subtexts of the Song: "life and death, city and country, desert and forest;"[2] Sophie Thöne argues that they are a "pair of opposites": "Natur und Kultur bilden folglich ein weiteres Gegensatzpaar."[3] Gianni Barbiero writes, "the nature-city opposition . . . is one of the fundamental poetic axes of the Song."[4] And, strikingly, Fiona Black writes, "the land is . . . a platform on which the efforts of human engineering might be constructed. The imposition of buildings and the cold, impersonal elements of their construction and artifice—ivory, bricks and mortar?—paint an inhuman setting for the body."[5] As this begins to suggest, many scholars assume a strong binary between the land and the city. For Black, the results in seeing the city as a "canvas" or "platform," and, perhaps ironically, as "inhuman."[6]

Two scholars in recent work begin to remedy this situation: first, Ellen Davis has pointed up the centrality of the city to the Song of Songs. She argues that the Song is "altogether the most complex and comprehensive biblical representation of Jerusalem, her people, and her hinterland, although it has received too little attention from that perspective."[7] She reads the Song as a positive reappropriation of the prophetic motif of Jerusalem as an unfaithful lover of Yahweh.[8] Davis's argument is thoroughly allegorical: she proposes that the young woman in the Song is a figure for ("embodiment of") Daughter Zion throughout the Song as a whole.[9] I will take a cue from her observation that the Song picks up on a larger symbolic network that compares women and cities, while maintaining that the Song is first and foremost love poetry. A second reader who has recently emphasized the importance of the city in the Song is Christopher Meredith, who has similarly observed the tendency of Song scholarship to overlook the city, or to reduce it to a foil for other landscapes. He writes, "On those occasions when the Song's city has been discussed, the analysis has invariably served to contrast the city with the garden or the countryside."[10] Meredith begins his analysis with a refreshing stance of ignorance: "What if we begin with a certain degree of uncertainty as to what a city actually is, and with a certain amount of caution

about assuming too quickly that we know what constitutes cityness in the text? How is cityness constituted in the Song, particularly?"[11] The answer he supplies comes by way of the rich modern theorization of the city, drawing, for example, on James Donald's *Imagining the Modern City* and Walter Benjamin's unfinished *The Arcades Project*. For Meredith, the city is not first and foremost a realized place, but rather "an idea-become artifact," characterized by opacity and transparency, and configurations of power. The modern city is a labyrinth:

> There is a certain kind of terror that can come alive only in the maze or in the walled city late at night, where one finds oneself cast adrift between the emotions attached to being lost and those of being imprisoned. The space of the labyrinth mixes the desire of the prize with a fear of the puzzle, endlessly duplicating the familiar until it becomes alien, until it shocks us by means of its familiarity.[12]

Meredith's reading of the labyrinth has explanatory power with respect to the episode in Chapter 5, where the young woman is beaten by the guards, but it is less effective in helping to understand the rest of the positive elements of the city, particularly as it is used metaphorically to describe the young woman. As I will suggest in the following, the Song holds the city in a kind of ambivalent regard, and the poetry itself explores various facets of "cityness," celebrating its aesthetic splendor as well as its potential problems.

The City in Theory

I have used the term "city" up to this point to refer to the built environment. But it should be noted that the term itself is not unproblematic when addressing biblical texts because the material reality of settlements in ancient Palestine during the biblical period are so vastly different from the modern urban experience that undergirds contemporary theorizations of the city.[13] As Michael Patrick O'Connor writes, "[t]here is no Biblical Hebrew word for 'city'; that is, there is no word that can always reasonably be so rendered in modern European languages," because the modern meaning is based in a radically different urban experience.[14] The first and most notable difference, of course, is size, both in physical area and in population. Jerusalem, for example—even after its dramatic growth during the late Iron Age that made it the largest urban center in the Southern

Levant—was only about sixty hectares (0.2 square miles) and housed less than ten thousand inhabitants.[15] This is much smaller than the famous monumental cities of Mespotamia and Egypt, but even Assur and Tanis were tiny by modern standards.[16] I will use the term "city" with some caution; it is the most common translation of Hebrew *ʿîr* and—as I will show in the following—contemporary theorizations of urban spaces can effectively address issues in ancient text and context, as long as care is taken to keep both the textual engagement and the materiality of ancient cities in mind.

There is a wide array of scholarly theories of urban space—too many to address in a comprehensive way. Instead, I will point to two threads of thought that will bear most decisively on the interpretation of the Song. First, there is a pervasive parallel in urban theory between the city and the human body; second, new developments in landscape urbanism emphasize the city as an ecology, situated in the larger environment. Both of these observations are keenly felt in the ancient context, where both the scale and the technology of the urban site would have emphasized human habitation as well as embeddedness in an agricultural context.[17] I will discuss the parallel to the human body first, and return to developments in landscape urbanism at the end of this discussion.

First, as social geographers have emphasized, the city is not merely a material fact, but an experienced, imagined reality. I quoted earlier the work of Edward Soja, an influential geographer and urban theorist, who follows Henri Lefebvre's theory that social reality and relationships are always spatialized.[18] Soja follows Lefebvre's threefold description of space: It is "perceived," a material reality (Soja's "Firstspace"); "conceived," a symbolic or psychological reality, an "imaginary," a mental map of a space (Soja's "Secondspace"); and it is "lived" (Soja's "Thirdspace"), the complex interaction between those two realities in daily experience.[19] I am not so much interested in adopting or reifying the tripartite scheme as in lifting up—as many others have—the distinction between the physical realia of ancient cities and conceptualizations of them.[20] As Mary Mills writes, textual representations of the city can be thought of as displaying and fostering an "urban imaginary," a phrase that conveys that the city is not a reality which the text merely describes; rather, the city is "constructed via imaginative responses to the space that the urban environment offers."[21] The city therefore has a symbolic reality, an "imaginary," that complexly interacts with material reality in lived experience.[22]

As I have already begun to suggest, the materiality of the ancient city would have been far different from our own experiences of the developed

twenty-first-century metropolis.[23] Scale is the first and most striking difference. It would have particularly been the case for the ancient city that there was a direct correlation between the human body and this built environment.[24] It was necessarily the human body that was enlisted to build in the ancient world, and the social configuration of the city was scaled to the human body: it provided avenue and access for human beings to work, to live, and to walk.[25] In the biblical imagination, Jerusalem was the quintessential city, and though it fluctuated in size and population through its history, the cooperative labor of the kin-based agrarian system was primordially evident in the many small, pillared houses of the city.[26] Interwoven with narrow alleyways that served as footpaths, the experience of the city would not have been highly centralized, but would have closely followed the topography.[27] In such ways, the basis of the city was the body's engagement of the landscape. In his discussion of the development of the ancient city, Soja writes that "[t]his process of producing spatiality of 'making geographies' begins with the body, with the construction and performance of the self, the human subject, as a distinctively spatial entity involved in a complex relation with our surroundings."[28] It is the biological experience that first informs the experience of space.[29] One ancient expression of this is found in the work of first-century BCE Roman architect Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, whose *Ten Books of Architecture* describes the geometry of the human body as the fundament on which the principles of classical architecture are derived. His notion was that the human body in full extension, like a geometric square, is perfectly circumscribed by the shape of a circle. This concept was famously rendered by Leonardo da Vinci and provided the philosophical grounding for the humanistic conceptualization of architecture through the Renaissance.[30] "Underlying this view of the city as a product or projection of the body (in all its variations) is a form of humanism. . .. Humans make cities."[31] Twentieth-century architect Rudolf Schwarz has similarly argued that the human body is determinative for architecture. Building is a task completed by the human body, so there is an intrinsic connection between the movements of the body and the living space. He writes,

> What then comes into being is first and foremost circumscribed space—shelter, living space, ceremonial space, a space which replaces the space of the world. We could almost say, and indeed it is true, that building is based on the inner spaciousness of the body, on the knowledge of its extent and the form of its growth, on the

> knowledge of its articulation and of its power to expand. Indeed it is with the body that we experience building, with the outstretched arms and the pacing feet, with the roving glance and with the ear, and above all else in breathing.[32]

The city is built by human bodies, for human bodies, and it is also like a body.[33] In addition to a causal relationship, there is also a representational one: a "parallelism or isomorphism between the body and the city."[34] This is not to suggest that every evocation of the city is intended to symbolize a specific bodily part or attribute[35] (this would too severely reduce the space between the symbol and its signification—as Shira Wolosky helpfully reminds, "[t]here remains a gap, a missing part, which the reader must contemplate, and which is purposely withheld. If the symbol is a sign, what it signifies remains suspended or kept back"[36]). The metaphor is suggestive: a city gathers together diverse members into a single functioning unit, defines and protects its individual identity against the outside, and is often perceived to have an ineffable personality that transcends its individual qualities. T. J. Gorringe talks about this as a "creative spirituality,"[37] and this is perhaps not far from the biblical description of the city as a corporate personality and, most frequently, as a woman: "Here is a gathering of the self, body and city in which symbolism is a key feature."[38] This ancient idea, the personification of the city as a woman, merits a fuller discussion, but first let me describe how the Song conceptualizes the cityscape.

The Cityscape in the Song

In the Song of Songs, the city comes to the fore prominently in two sections, Song 3:1–5 and 5:2–8, and it appears in scattered references in the text, especially in the descriptive poems. In this section, I will develop a concept of the "city" in the Song as a figure of ambivalence. It accommodates both a sense of value (especially aesthetic value) and connection, as well as a keen sense of its potential dangers.[39]

The ambivalence of the city imagery is perhaps most clearly apparent in the poems of Song 3:1–5 and 5:2–8, which describe the young woman's pursuit of her lover "on her bed at night" and her subsequent search for him "in the city" (3:2; 5:7). These poems feel disjunctive with the rest of the Song—for one thing, they have a more narrative quality, in which the young woman tells a sequence of events that hinge on her spatial movement from the bedroom (3:1; 5:2–3) to the city (3:2–3; 5:7).[40] These two

poems share similarities, but my reading will emphasize several key differences; in conflating these two very different accounts of the city, one loses sight of the striking variability in the concept of "cityness." As the following analysis will emphasize, in Song 3, the city does not seem to be configured negatively; in Song 5, however, the potential dangers of the city—which are latent but unrealized in Song 3—take on significance and ultimately control the shape of that latter construal of the city.

In Song 3:1–5, the word "city" appears for the first time in the Song. Like many poems of the Song, this one is cast in the voice of the young woman: "I will rise now and go about in the city, in its streets and in its plazas" (3:2). As we shall see, the city interlocks with the intimacy of the bedroom and chamber and evokes the proximity of the field.

This poem's recursive structure helps define its sense of the city. The poem is structured largely by repetition, and both near and far echoes create a sense of aural coherence. The first of these is a couplet:

> I sought him whom my soul loves
> I sought him but I did not find him (3:1)

The repeated verb *biqqaštî* ("I sought him") at the beginning of each line highlights the urgency and the reiterative quality of her search. This reiterative quality is again expressed by the repetition of a nearly identical couplet three lines later:

> I will seek whom my soul loves
> I sought him but I did not find him (3:2)

The lover is identified as the object of her search by a three-word phrase, *ʾēt šeʾāhăbāh napšî* ("whom my soul/self loves"). He is the object of her search and is conspicuously marked as the grammatical object with the particle *ʾēt*, which is relatively rare in poetry but occurs five times in this section. Over and over again, he is uttered in this way, the phrase "whom my soul/self loves," forming a kind of refrain every few lines of the poem, invoking the lover's presence (vv. 1, 2, 3, 4). Other, more distant repetitions stud this poem as well: "I will go about the city" is echoed five lines later by the watchmen "who go about the city," using the same verb and phrasing (*waʾăsôbəbāh bāʿîr / hassōbəbîm bāʿîr*, vv. 2, 3). The phrase "until" (*ʿad-še-*) is repeated three times: "until they found me," "until I brought him to my mother's house," "until it [love] is ready" (vv. 4, 5). The verb

"to find" (√*m-ṣ-*) occurs four times: twice in the couplets cited earlier ("I did not find him"), which sets us up for the irony that "they found me," prolonging the sense of yearning and the anticipation that is finally realized "when I found him" (vv. 1, 2, 3, 4). In ways such as this, the repetitions cue the audience not only to the binding coherence of the poem, but to its use of subtle distinction. Another distinction involves the same syntax but different words:

> I sought him but I did not find him (v. 1)
> I sought him but I did not find him (v. 2)
> I seized him and I would not let him go (v. 4)

All three of these lines are three words each, hinging on the conjunction *wəlōʾ* (but/and not). This heightens the perceived parallel between searching and holding (between desire, and consummation). The creative use of transformed repetition is also evident, for example, in slight variations in syntax. The repeated phrase *ʾēt šeʾāhăbāh napšî* ("whom my soul/self loves"), usually occurs in the second half of a line—so when it fronts a line, the audience takes note: "whom my soul loves . . . you have seen?" (3:3). Where we expect the phrase to bespeak her search for her lover, the final word instead resituates her in conversation with the watchmen, seeking their help and support. A final transformation of this phrase occurs in the last line, where the phrase *ʾet-hāʾahăbāh* ("love") echoes *ʾēt šeʾāhăbāh napšî*, but is now generalized to refer not just to the sought lover, but to love as a concept or an ideal. There are other repetitions as well, but these examples begin to describe the circular logic of the poem, which does not move forward in a straightforward way, but loops persistently back on itself in an open iterative pattern.

I emphasize this iterative quality because of how it interacts with and constructs the spatial movement of the poem. The poem opens "upon my bed at night," moves into the city ("I will rise, now, and go about the city"), then imagines bringing the lover "to the house of my mother, and to the chamber of she who bore me," and finally evokes the countryside: "I adjure you, Daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and deer of the fields. . .."[41] But this is not a perfectly tidy spatial movement. The repetitions remind us of the fuzzy boundaries between spaces: the same seeking and not-finding happens in the bedroom and in the city, for example, and the holding and not-letting-go happens in the city and, in imaginative projection, when they reach the mother's house. The same "going about"

that the young woman does, the watchmen also do. The linearity implied by the spatial movement (bedroom-city-mother's house) is complicated by the circular aural patterning that returns back to itself time and again, criss-crossing the spatial directiveness at the poem's surface. It conveys the sense of wandering, and perhaps evokes the nonlinear journey that one might take around the circle road that ringed the inside edge of the city-wall in many ancient cities, or the footpaths one travels by heart in a place that is intimately known.[42]

In such ways, the city in this poem is not defined by clean disjunctions like interior/exterior, private/public, female/male, or even dreaming/waking.[43] Indeed, this city has no walls. Whereas Song 5 and other city descriptions in the Song emphasize walls and other architectural features of disjunction (doors, towers, windows, latches, locks, and lattices), such features are absent here. Though the built environment does seem to signal disjunction between the lovers, it is not quite right to say that the city is hostile to the lovers (as scholars tend to do).[44] She enters the public space of the city as a remedy for her private loneliness; the city is the salve, not the wound. Her search begins on her bed, in the home that, too, is part of the cityscape—groupings of homes are the core of many ancient cities.[45] The city here, we might observe, is characterized first by the house and its spaces for sleeping and intimacy, and only secondarily by the relatively more public streets and plazas. The blurring of the intimate with the public is echoed in a different way by the blurring of the city with the countryside in the last lines, where the young woman adjures the other young women "by the gazelles and the deer of the fields," drawing attention to a sense of continuity with the surrounding landscape (an aspect that is missing from the "city" poem in Song 5, a point I will return to later).

That this "city" poem leans toward intimacy is also evident in the terms for the built environment that do occur. While walls and doors are missing, we hear the young woman evoke bed, city, streets and plazas, mother's house, and chamber. In these terms, we see the city imagined as a place of intimacy and conviviality. The intimacy of the bed is self-evident; and so is mother's house and chamber. The latter term itself is opaque, so it should not be taken as evidence for separate women's quarters,[46] but it is evocative of the household and its attendant intimacies: of intergenerational dependence, childlike affection, the sensual bodily experiences of sleeping and eating, and, ultimately, sexuality and fertility.[47] In this way, the city is comprehended by kinship and homeplace.[48] The streets (*šəwāqîm*) and plazas (*rəḥōḇôt*) where the young woman searches are the places between

houses and buildings, which are conducive to the foot traffic of the ancient city. They are a merism for the totality of her search—like searching "high" and "low," she searches "narrow" and "wide." These spaces between houses exemplify the communal aspects of city life, marked by the sharing and exchange of resources. One of the advantages of the city is that its built structures accommodate the movement of people. Walking about in the city is exactly what the city invites; it is something that mourners, worshippers, and prostitutes all do as a matter of course (see Isa 23:16; Qoh 12:5; Ps 48:13). Such walks enable people to meet one another, such that "the city provides the order and organization that automatically links otherwise unrelated bodies."[49] So it is that she is "found" by those who go about (√*s-b-b*) in the city (v. 3), even as she herself "goes about" (√*s-b-b*) in the city (vv. 2, 3).

It is worth emphasizing again that such journeys through ancient cities would have been undertaken on foot: the ancient city would have been very small, and scaled to the movement of the human body. The ancient city would have been known phenomenologically by its inhabitants through the embodied daily motions of walking its streets, going out to work in the fields, gathering water for use in the home, and meeting neighbors who are doing the same. This is especially true for ancient women, many of whose daily tasks would have been performed in a community of shared resources.[50] The features of the city described here in Song 3 move toward the facilitation of this kind of interaction. When the young woman gets up from her bed to go for a walk in the city, she expects to meet other people who are also freely taking the evening air. And this expectation is met: while at first she does not find her lover (v. 2), she encounters others, the watchmen, and asks them whether they have seen her lover (v. 3). The result is that moments later, she finds him:

> In a little while I passed by them,
> Until I found whom my soul loves
> I seized him, I did not let him go
> until I brought him to my mother's house
> to the chamber of she who bore me. (3:4)

The city here is imagined as a place for the gathering and movement of people, and for the pursuit and development of social relationships. This is one of the moments in the Song that comes the closest to a sense of consummation, one of the themes with which the poetry plays (cf. 7:10,

13; 8:5).[51] This section concludes with the imagined enfolding of the lover, bringing him back to the seat of family relationships, the mother's house. So it is not quite right that here "[t]he city at night is eerie, unfamiliar, desolate."[52] Rather, it is a place for wanderers, and for the seeking and consummation of relational intimacies. In this initial presentation, the cityscape is defined by certain features, bed and house, streets and squares, which are spaces that accommodate sociality and intimacy. It facilitates close social encounters and the development of intimate human relationships, which the proximity of urban life makes possible.

There is a link between the shared household and the shared cityscape, an overlap that Soja calls "synekism," derived from *synoikismos*, the conditions arising from sharing one house (*oikos*): such shared spaces connote "the economic and ecological interdependencies and the creative—as well as occasionally destructive—synergisms that arise from the purposeful clustering and collective cohabitation of people in space, in a 'home' habitat."[53] If this poem emphasizes the creative potentialities of such shared space, the next "city" poem in Song 5 emphasizes its destructive potentialities.

In a parallel text, Song 5:2–8, the second and final use of the term "city" appears. As in the first "city" poem, the young woman narrates a nighttime experience of desire:

> I slept, but my heart was awake
> The voice of my lover, knocking!

The tone, though, is markedly different. Instead of a symmetrically organized three-part structure of seeking and finding in the city, this poem opens with a lengthy evocation of a lovers' encounter hindered by architectural features. There is a sense of immediacy and indeterminacy: not only does this poem lack the sense of action that marks Song 3:1–5, but it uses less structuring repetition. The parallels we see are largely distant. With the exception of two couplets in 5:3 whose syntax uses synonymous parallelism and the repeated word *ʾêkākāh* ("how"), repetitions are limited to one-word echoes: *pātaḥ* ("open"; vv. 2, 4, 6), *yād* ("hand"; vv. 4, 5) *šōmərîm / šōmrê* ("watchmen"; v. 7). Even the phrase of seeking and finding that was so prominent in Song 3:1–2 is transformed and interrupted:

> I sought him but I did not find him
> I called him but he did not answer me

Song 5:6 eliminates the invocation of the lover here (*ʾēt šeʾāhăbāh napšî*, "whom my soul loves") and the repetition of the word *bqš* ("seek"), and it redoubles the sense of loneliness and lack: "I called him but he did not answer."[54] The most striking repetition is the word *dôdî* ("lover"), which occurs six times in the poem (in 5:2, 4, 5, 6, 8)—this is a brief, single word, unlike the grounding long phrase that describes the lover in half-lines in Song 3: *ʾēt šeʾāhăbāh napšî* ("whom my soul loves"). Similarly, the word *ănî* ("I") (vv. 2, 5, 6, 8) opens, closes, and stands at the heart of the poem. It, too, is a short word, and provides a glimmer of coherence—what structure there is—drawing our attention back to the young woman and her lover, and to the distance between them. The lack of structural-spatial movement, combined with what seems to be a conscious limitation of the use of repetition, works to give this poem a gauzy, elusive quality. This enacts the lack of resolution toward which the poem ultimately moves: she will not find her lover here, as she did in Song 3.

Other features instead take on heightened significance. The focus is twofold: on architectural features, and on the bodies of the lovers. The first suggestion of an architectural feature is the sound of the lover, who is "knocking" (*dôpēq*, v. 2), implying a door that stands between them; he beckons her "open to me," which, too, suggests a barrier. His speech brings attention to his body: "for my head is full of dew / my locks with the drops of night." She similarly brings her attention to her body, even as she describes the obstacles that stand between them: "I stripped off my garment / how could I dress? / I washed my feet / How could I soil them?" She goes on to describe his hand at the "lock" (*haḥōr*, "socket," "hole"), which suggests both a barrier and a latch or opening. On the other side of the door, her fingers fumble with "the handles of the bolt" (*ʿal kappôt hammanʿûl*)—this word, "bolt," is used elsewhere, along with "doors" and "bars," to indicate the fortifications of a gate (Neh 3:6, 13, 14, 15; cf. Deut 33:25). These images together suggest a built environment construed as an obstacle or barrier, which they are each striving to overcome. This continues as she rises to "open" (*pātaḥ*) to her lover, and the audience is invited to imagine her swinging open a door to admit her lover. This is an encounter at the threshold, a built feature of the city that divides one space from another.[55] These architectural features are also erotically suggestive, especially because of the dual emphasis on the lovers' bodies and the architecture that surrounds them. And, as I will describe more fully later, this is all the more so in light of the broader thematization of the woman-as-city

that we see elsewhere in the Song. And yet, while there is a suggestive quality, there is also a certain reticence; there is not a clear metaphorical one-for-one evocation of body parts here. Instead, the poem stages the (near) encounter in terms of the built environment—instead of fostering the lovers' union, this city comprises obstacles that deter them: "my lover turned, and was gone" (5:6)—and in this way constitutes desire through the prolonged sense of yearning.[56] In short, this "city" passage is far more focused on boundaries.

The boundaries of the city become even clearer in the second half of this poem. In the previous "city" poem, the young woman resolves to go about in the city and to seek her lover (3:2). Here, on the other hand, there is no clear resolution, no identifiable spatial shift, only the orphaned refrain, "I sought him, but I did not find him" (5:6). The familiarity of this line is undermined by its interruption—it lacks the familiar first line, and is followed by a new one: "I called him, but he did not answer" (5:6). The sense of loneliness is compounded by the hint of a cry that echoes, unanswered, through the empty street of the poem. The most crucial differences in this passage come in 5:7:

> They found me, the watchmen going about in the city.
> They struck me, they wounded me
> They lifted up my garment from me
> The watchmen of the walls.

Unlike the tone of consummation in Chapter 3, here we have a jarring image of something gone quite wrong. Again, the poem trades on irony: she cannot find her lover, but she instead is found by some third party. Once again, she is found by those "going about" in the city, *haššōmərîm* ("the watchmen"), whose identity is further articulated at the end of this sequence: They are not just "watchmen," but "the watchmen of the walls" (5:7). This disclosure of identity selectively emphasizes the city's system of fortification, its walls.[57] Walls, which were not mentioned in the previous "city" poem, here seem to evoke control, taking up the sinister potentiality of the figures. In two other biblical texts of nighttime danger, those who "go about" (√*s-b-b*) cities at night are gangs of men bent on sexual violence (Judg 19:22; 20:3; and Gen 19:4). Social control and social disorder are closely linked: both are manifestations of power, are gendered male, and emphasize the walls of public space. The emphasis on boundaries here in the Song—the walls and other features of protection—leads

not to the consummation of the relational space of the mother's house, but rather to a social control that disrupts the young woman's own bodily integrity: "They struck me, they wounded me . . . I am sick with love" (5:8).[58] She is beaten, wounded, shamed. In this second poem, the city at night is clearly configured as a place of danger.[59] Here, the danger and threats that I have been hinting at in the rest of my analysis take center stage, and are concretely realized. If there were any doubt about the vulnerability of love or lovers, this text answers them, crystallizing in a single moment the fragility of the world.

It is this fragility that informs the poem's closing adjuration. Instead of evoking the gazelles and does of the field (as the previous "city" poem did), the young woman here pleads with her friends: "if you find my lover / what will you tell him? / That I am sick with love" (5:8).[60] If the gazelles and does in the previous city poem signal the awareness of the larger landscape and evoke a sense of the city's permeability, their absence here reinforces this poem's awareness of the city's boundaries and walls. The poem, like an encircling wall, ends exactly where it begins. The last word is the same as the first: *ʾănî* ("I"; vv. 2, 8). The city, in Song 5, appears as a more negatively coded space. It is defined largely by built elements of impediment, and it is a place in which power is magnified and corroded.

In these two poems, the built environment of the city is freighted with nearly opposing valuations. On the one hand, the city is a place that fosters relationships and whose built features enhance the pursuit and consummation of love; on the other, the city is a place that is subject to an insidious fixation on its own boundaries, with dangerous consequences for the young woman. Already, the ambivalence at the heart of city imagery is apparent.

The city also appears in each of the descriptive poems of the young woman (Song 4:1–6; 6:4–9; 7:2–7). In each case, elements of the city are used to describe the young woman, and they too show a certain ambivalence, as they evoke both aesthetic affirmation, as well as military confrontation. This ambivalence at the heart of the city symbolism draws on a long tradition in the ancient Near East of personifying women as cities, particularly as cities under siege. The architectural features associated with the young woman in the Song participate in a larger trope of gendering that is specifically related to the twin themes of protection and vulnerability. As I will show, the Song casts the lovers in a battle of the sexes, in which the young woman is a threatened city, and her lover is the encroaching enemy. The descriptive poems have a fragmentary quality, so it is not the case that

she is described from head to toe as a complete image of a city. But as the gaze moves down the face to the throat, the imagery evokes the monumental architecture of a tower:

> Like the tower of David is your neck,
> built in courses
> a thousand shields are hung upon it,
> all the shields of warriors. (4:4)

The image conjured is a neck strung with jewelry (cf. Ezek 16:13), which is an emphatically positive aesthetic evaluation. But this is mobilized by way of architectural imagery whose celebratory tone has a clear military undercurrent. The tower (*migdāl*) was a key fortification feature of a city wall, providing reinforcement and a defensive position often adjacent to the vulnerable city gate.[61] Towers served as vantages for military watches (2 Kgs 9:17; 17:9; cf. Isa 5:2), and places to discharge weapons (2 Chr 26:15), and were part of a city's defense that would have to be overcome by an attacker (Judg 9:52; cf. Ezek 26:9). The military connotation in this text is bolstered in two ways: first, by the "shields of warriors" hung upon it, and second, by its association with the name of David, whose military prowess is celebrated in biblical texts (1 Sam 17; 18:5–7; 1 Chron 18–20; etc.)

This military undertone of the built environment is reiterated in the second descriptive poem:

> You are beautiful, my love, like Tirzah,
> lovely, like Jerusalem
> formidable, like an army procession (6:4)

Both lines place the accent on aesthetic appreciation. But this sense of beauty here is immediately qualified by the third line of the triplet, which employs an adjective of terror: *ʾăyummā* usually translated "dreadful," or "terrible." It refers to a dangerous force, frequently a military enemy (Hab 1:7; Josh 2:9; Isa 33:18; Ezra 3:3). In Job, the fearsome warhorse is described: "Its majestic snorting is terrible (*ʾêmāh*). It paws violently, exults mightily, it goes out to meet the weapons" (Job 39:20–21). This military tone is furthered by the comparand: she is formidable, like an army procession (*kannidgālôt*; cf. 6:10).[62] In this second description, the young woman is not only described in terms of the structural features of the fortified city; she is also geared for battle.

This link between aesthetic preeminence and militarism is again echoed in the third description of the young woman:

> Your neck is like an ivory tower
> Your eyes are like pools in Heshbon
> by the gate of Bath-Rabbim
> Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon
> Overlooking the face of Damascus (Song 7:4)

Here, the city imagery is "the most precise in its architectural details."[63] Meyers notes that the public works noted here—pools in Heshbon, the gate of Bath-Rabbim—evoke the type of construction projects that would support military endeavors (regardless of their actual historicity). The gate is part of the fortification structures of any city.[64] In the Song, then, "cityness" is constituted by a sense of the walled city as a built environment, a human achievement that both fosters relationality and is subject to dangerous permutations of human power. It also evokes a sense of military threat and defense, especially when the city is a figure for the young woman.

These observations comport well with what we know of ancient cities. One central feature of the ancient city was protection. Its system of walls and towers, enclosing a central space, provide first and foremost a place of refuge for citizens as well as for surplus goods. "In many cases, the city in the OT is not so much a place of residence as a fortified place of refuge."[65] Its basic function was protection for its inhabitants and for those living in its vicinity. Indeed, fortifications are the prototypical feature of a "city" in ancient Israel (although not all biblical cities are walled, and in the Iron Age, most were not). Later texts make a distinction between villages (*ḥăṣērîm*) and cities (*ʿîr*) with walls, for example the jubilee laws: "But houses in villages (*ḥăṣērîm*) that do not have a wall around them will be considered open country" (Lev 25:31; cf. Ezek 38:11). The itemization of fortification features is one way that cities are identified and defined. This pattern is in evidence, for example, in the description of the conquered cities of King Og of Bashan in Deuteronomy: "All these were cities fortified with high walls, double doors, and bars" (Deut 3:5); or in Asa's descriptions of city building: "Let us build these cities, and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars" (1 Chron 14:6 Heb [14:7 Eng]). In these enumerations, it is common to indicate the security of the gate, which would have been the place most vulnerable to attack (1 Kgs 4:13; Ezek 38:11). This

significance of fortification structures can also be seen in an example from nearby Moab[66]:

> I have built Karchoh,
> the wall of the woods and the wall of the citadel,
> and I have built its gates,
> and I have built its towers,
> and I have built the house of the king,
> and I have made the double reser[voir for the
> spr]ing(?) in the innermost part of the city.

Mary Mills acknowledges the powerful role that walls play in the self-understanding of cities' inhabitants, and how the prophets play with this self-understanding. In Nahum 3, the prophet inveighs against the sense of Ninevah's unassailability by arguing that its fortresses will fall and its gates will be opened (esp. 3:12). Emphasizing this same idea of the wall as an assurance of protection, in Micah 7, Israel's return to power is expressed through the imagery of the rebuilding of the wall. In such examples, "the imaginary produced is that of city-as-walled space, that is a measure of urban strength and something to be contested when armies march against it."[67]

These ambivalent and military aspects bear on the operative gender norms of the Song. As Carol Meyers has convincingly argued, the Song's descriptive poems of the young woman evoke not just awe or grandeur, as is commonly suggested; they evoke a military context. She goes on to argue that these military associations are "masculine" images that, used of the young woman, are a subversion of gender expectations. She writes, "Since military language is derived from an aspect of ancient life almost exclusively associated with men, its use in the Song in reference to the woman constitutes an unexpected reversal of conventional imagery of stereotypical gender association."[68] It is certainly the case that the architectural imagery for the young woman at every turn assumes a military backdrop. But rather than being a reversal of gendered imagery, the depiction of the young-woman-as-city conforms quite well to a larger pattern of gendered imagery that obtains in biblical texts, as well as in the broader literary context of the ancient world: the idea of the city-as-woman.[69]

City-as-Woman

As has been widely recognized, the Hebrew Bible contains a stream of imagery that personifies capital cities (most frequently Jerusalem) as

women. The imagery is variable, and different elements of the feminine depiction are lifted up in different texts. She is imagined as the wife of the deity (Hos 2:21–22; Ezek 16:8–23; Jer 3:19–20; etc.), as a mother (Isaiah 66:7–11; Hos 4:5; etc.), and as a woman in labor (Isa 26:16–18; Jer 4:31; etc.).[70] Such depictions occur largely in prophetic texts, and generally have a negative valence: she is a wife who has been adulterous (and will be punished); she is a woman who is writhing in travail (often under divine punishment). As Christl Maier has argued, Jerusalem as both daughter and mother are part of the complex mobilization of personification relative to the contexts of war and destruction.[71] The city-as-woman is thus a consistent image for a city beset by military foes. This is related to the phrase "daughter of Jerusalem" (*bat* + geographical name), which especially signifies a beset city.[72] For example, Isaiah prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem: "And daughter Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a shelter in a cucumber field, like a besieged city" (Isaiah 1:8), about which Maier comments, "both the role of daughter and the image of the city as a shaky shelter embody social insecurity and threatened existence."[73] The personification does not apply only to Jerusalem, however: in Isaiah 47, both Babylon and Chaldea are imagined as women who are being humbled (made to sit in the dust, their veils removed), signals of the vengeance of the Lord (Isa 47:1–3; cf. Sidon and Cyprus in Isa 23:12; Egypt and Dibon in Jer 46:11–19 and 48:18; Babylon in Jer 50:42; 51:33). Similarly Jeremiah 4:31: "For I heard a cry as of a woman in labor, anguish as of one bringing forth her first child, the cry of daughter Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands, 'Woe is me! I am fainting before killers!' " Jeremiah makes the military context for the personification of Jerusalem explicit: "[the enemy is] equipped like a warrior for battle, / against you, O daughter Zion!" (Jer 6:22–23). But the military context of the personification of cities is not limited to the prophetic corpus. It becomes the taproot of the poetry of Lamentations, decrying the destruction of Jerusalem:

> The Lord determined to lay in ruins
> the wall of daughter Zion;
> he stretched the line;
> he did not withhold his hand from destroying;
> he caused rampart and wall to lament;
> they languish together. (Lam 2:8)

The examples begin to suggest that frequently the personification of the city is used to indicate a setting of distress—the city is besieged, or under

threat of siege. Brad Kelle has identified this tendency in prophetic literature: "cities are personified as females exclusively in context of destruction, even if that destruction takes the form of a threatened action or present state."[74] The gendering of the metaphor is also persistent in the larger textual milieu of ancient Southwest Asia.[75] One set of examples occurs in the five Sumerian city laments (as well as in the derivative *balag* and *ersh-emma* genres), which depict the goddess wailing for her destroyed city, alongside the personification of the city's architecture. Two passages from the Lament for Ur illustrate these two features. In the first section, the destruction of the city and the lament of the goddess Ningal are described; in the second, the personified city speaks back to her:

> They were wrecking with pickaxes
> the good house
> —the people mourn—
> Were making the city
> a mound of ruins
> —the people mourn—
> Until its mistress was crying: "Alas my city!"
> Until she was crying: "Alas, my house!"
> Until Ningal was crying: "Alas, my house!"
> . . .
> My lady [Ningal], your city weeps for you
> as for its mother,
> Ur, like a child lost in the street,
> searches for you,
> your house, like a man who has lost something,
> stretches out [?] the hand for you,
> the brickwork of your good house,
> as were it human, says of you: "Where is she?"
> My lady, though you may have left the house,
> never leave the city!

The poet is self-conscious about the technique of personification in the latter verses, and makes the stylization absolutely clear: "the brickwork of your good house, / *as it were human*, says . . ." (emphasis added).[76] As Dobbs-Allsopp and others have argued, the gendered personification of Jerusalem (and, in particular, the appellative "daughter Zion") in the Bible draws at least in part from these traditions.[77] I wish to draw attention simply to the context of distress

that attends the image of the weeping goddess, and the personified city, in the Sumerian lament traditions, as well as in the biblical appropriation and transformation of the metaphor. Positive uses of the metaphor are possible, as can be seen in the reclamation of the imagery in second and third Isaiah, which envision Jerusalem as a bride who will be returned to her proper relationship with the deity (esp. Isa 54:4–8, 11–12; see Isa 66:7–11; etc.) These visions invert the expectations of the image—using it to project hope for the restoration of the city—but still presuppose the context of destruction.[78] While the imagery is put to positive use, this seems to be an appropriation and development of an image that, fundamental to its vocabulary, implied vulnerability.[79] From both biblical and extra-biblical evidence, it is clear that the reader's expectations are shaped to regard the conceptual overlaps between the imagery of cities and of women as evocative of military threat.

Why Military Imagery in the Song?

This observed ambivalence of the city-as-woman motif may help to explain its relative absence in the repertoire of ancient Near Eastern love poetry. The city rarely appears in Egyptian love poetry, nor does military imagery. Nor does it occur with any frequency in Mesopotamian love poetry. There is a striking exception: The hostility of the siege encounter is also used in a Old Babylonian text, the Love Lyrics of Hammurabi to Nanaya (ZA 49, 168–169).[80] This text evokes a more overtly hostile relationship between the lovers than we see in the Song. I will quote here selectively:

> . . .
> *She*
> I will catch you, and this very day I shall reconcile your love
> with mine.
> I keep on praying to Nanaya;
> [So that] I shall accept your peace, my lord, forever, as a gift.
> . . .
> *He*
> I shall lay siege upon you,
> I shall gather my clouds upon you. (i. 22–28)
> . . .

The tone of this lyric diverges markedly from the tone of the Song. In the first stanza, the male speaker appears to celebrate male sexual

aggression: "He who lies on his back for a woman is a weevil from the city wall" (i. 6–7). The tone is perhaps appropriate to the imagery of embattlement. She makes an offer of peace, but his reply heightens the sense of conflict: "I shall lay siege upon you, / I shall gather my clouds on you" (i. 27–28). The siege language dramatizes the tension, the "battle of the sexes," between the lovers.[81] While the Song of Songs does not position the lovers with the same hostility that is seen in this Old Babylonian lyric, there is striking congruence in the imagery of the woman as a city who is threatened with the siege of an encroaching lover. The motif of the woman-as-city, that is, implies a kind of "battle of the sexes": When the young man details her beauty in terms of the architecture of the city, the relationship that is presupposed is one of embattlement: She is a wall (how will she be scaled or breached?); she is a gate (how will she be opened?); she is a tower (how will her defenses be brought down?). In other words, he is playfully positioned in terms of an enemy.

Thus far, I have argued that the motif of the city in the Song of Songs draws on a pervasive ancient tradition of comparing cities to women. The general function of the metaphor is to portray the vulnerability of a capital city that is under attack by a foreign enemy. The Song employs this imagery in a surprising way: to cast the lovers in a battle of the sexes. The young woman is depicted as a city (in a reversal of the standard metaphor, wherein a city is depicted as a woman), and the young man, her suitor, is the encroaching enemy. Its use in the descriptive poems emphasizes her beauty and intimidating grandeur, while it also plays on the obverse dimensions of the protective functions of urban architecture, underscoring the young woman's vulnerability in the lovers' encounter. This vulnerability is in view in the descriptive poems of Song 3 and 5, which suggest intimacy and, ultimately, susceptibility to violence. The preceding argument has been informed in part by a metaphor drawn from urban theory, the city-as-body. This metaphor implies boundaries, such as the wall, the "skin" of the city, that serve to define and protect the body from what is beyond it. At the same time, it also implies an organic unit: a body is dependent on and implicated in the environment that surrounds it. On this reading, the Song imagines the lovers as playfully embattled, but ultimately belonging to and dependent on one another. As we shall see, this tempers the hostility of the metaphor—it is not merely an image of sexual conquest, but of reciprocity and incorporation. There is one way that the "military" encounter of the lovers can be realized without violence: through surrender.

And it is exactly surrender that finally resolves the imagery of the young-woman-as-city in Song 8:8–10.

Reading the Cityscape in Song 8:8–10

In Song 8:8–10 the woman-as-city appears in one of its most dramatic instantiations in the Song:

> We have a little sister,
> she has no breasts.
> What shall we do about our sister
> on the day when she is spoken for?
> If she is a wall
> we will build beside her a camp of silver.
> If she is a door
> we will blockade her with cedar planks.
> I am a wall,
> and my breasts are like towers;
> Already, I am in his eyes
> as one who brings peace. (Song 8:8–10)

The imagery here distinctly employs the city-as-woman motif. The "wall" (*ḥômāh*) evokes an architectural barrier signaling protection. The "door" (*delet*) signals both protection and vulnerability.[82] Both play on the image of the walled city.[83] The traditional reading of these is that they refer to male social control over female virginity. As Marvin Pope writes, "Whether the damsel as a door is open or closed, it is the relatives' concern to keep her closed until the proper time for opening . . . the silver buttress and cedar board refer to formidable and valuable devices, real or imaginary, for protection of cherished virginity, a kind of chastity belt."[84] This view reads the metaphor of the city too flatly as a euphemism for intercourse, and understands the "brothers" too literally as kin relations. The terms "brother" and "sister" are used throughout the Song, and are always metaphorical terms for lovers (Song 4:9, 10, 12; 5:1, 2; 8:1), which suggests that we see them as suitors, or potential lovers. The one time that literal "brothers" occur in the Song is in 1:6, where the poem clearly specifies kin-relations using the technical phrase "sons of my mother."[85] Moreover, the speakers here eagerly observe the young woman's coming-of-age, which puts them in

the company of other suitors who show up at various times in the Song, offering competition for the young woman's love (1:7–8; 2:3, 15; 6:1–3).

> If she is a wall
> we will build beside her a camp of silver.

What does it mean that the suitors "will build beside her a camp of silver"? The phrase *ṭîrat kāsep* the NRSV translates as "battlements of silver," having in mind a row of buttressing stones on the top of the wall.[86] But the word *ṭîrat* almost always indicates an encampment, a dwelling place of some kind. It is used synonymously with tents (Ezek 25:4; Ps 69:25), villages (Gen 25:16), or even cities (Num 31:10).[87] In only one other use, the term *ṭîrôt* seems to indicate a row or wall of stones (Ezek 46:23; used in conjunction with *ṭûr*, which is used of courses of stones and beams in the Temple walls, 1 Kgs 6:36; 7:12).[88] This single occurrence has led scholars to associate the *ṭîrat kāsep* with the fortification of the wall itself: it is a decoration or an enhancement of the wall.[89] But I suggest that, taken in light of the larger motif of the sieged city, the reference is to a built encampment, a temporary dwelling outside or beside the wall.

Such temporary dwellings, or "camps," are described in several places: The Sennacharib inscriptions famously describe the conquest of the cities of Judah: "Himself (Hezekiah, king of Judah) I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage. I blocked him *with fortified posts* and made departure via the gate of his city into an unbearable ordeal."[90] Similarly, the annals of Tiglath-pileser III describe his war against Damascus: "For forty-five days I set up *my camp around his city*, and I cooped him up like a bird in a cage" (ITP 78:9'–11').[91] These reflect a type of siege strategy, the blockade, in which the city is fully encircled to prevent travel of people, goods, and food into or out of the besieged city.[92] The blockade tactic was to wait for the besieged city to surrender, enticing it with various offers of peace, remuneration for surrender, ruse tactics, or threats to the surrounding bioregion (water supply, fields, fruit trees, etc.). I suggest that creating "fortified posts" and "camp[s] around the city" is precisely what the suitors in the Song propose to do.

> If she is a door
> we will blockade her with cedar planks.

Taking a cue from the blockade tactics described in the preceding, we can see here that the "blockade" (*nāṣûr*) is "siege" language that evokes a

military confrontation (Deut 20:12, 19; 1 Sam 23:8; 2 Sam 11:1; 1 Kgs 15:27; 16:17; 2 Kgs 6:24–25; 16:5; 17:5; 18:9; 24:11; Jer 21:4, 9; 32:2; 37:5; Dan 1:1; 1 Chr 20:1).[93] It can refer to additional structures of fortification erected by the attacking army, as in Isaiah 29:3, an oracle against Jerusalem:

> *wəṣartî ʿālayik muṣṣāb*
> *wahăqîmōtî ʿālayik məṣurōt*
>
> I will siege upon you a blockade
> I will raise upon you a siegeworks (Isa 29:3)

The grammatical construction in Isaiah is identical to the one here in the Song (finite verb of destruction + *ʿal* + pronominal suffix + military implement):

> *nibneh ʿālêhā ṭîrat kāsep*
> we will build beside her a camp of silver
> . . .
> *nāṣûr ʿālêhā lûaḥ ʾārez*
> we will blockade her with cedar planks. (Song 8:9)

One description of such additional structures of fortification is given in the description of Thutmosis III of Egypt's seven-month siege of Megiddo: "They measured the town, surrounded (it) with a ditch, and walled (it) up with fresh timber from all their fruit trees. His majesty himself was on the fort east of the town, guarding [it day and night] . . . [surrounded] by a thick wall. . .."[94] Similarly, the Zakkur inscription describes the building of both an enclosing wall and a ditch: "All these kings laid siege to Hazrach. They raised a wall higher than the wall of Hazrach, they dug a ditch deeper than its ditch."[95] The walls served to reinforce the enclosure of the city, and also to provide a protection for the "fort" of the attacking army while it waited out the siege, hoping that someone from the city would "knock at the gate of their fortress (in order to surrender)."[96]

Yigael Yadin gives a classic summary of siege warfare: "The lengthy process of siege was resorted to by a hostile army when time was on its side and it could afford to wait, or when it lacked the means of penetration by force, or when the fortifications of the city were too powerful to overcome. Some sieges lasted several years."[97] Such a military tactic would require, more than anything, time. It was a strategy that took months or years. To call to mind only two obvious biblical examples, Samaria was

captured by Shalmaneser V only "at the end of three years" (2 Kgs. 17:5–6; 18:9–10); Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar after eighteen or thirty months (Jer 39:1–2; 52:4–7; 2 Kgs 25:1–4).[98] The siege is not first and foremost a frontal attack; it is a waiting game. If the suitors are imagined as building encampments around the city, they are signaling their intention to wait for her. This understanding of the military stratagem involved with the siege helps to nuance Robert Gordis's reading. He writes of this passage:

> The young maiden is surrounded by suitors who complain that she is not ready for love and marriage. [They are determined] to break down her resistance . . . : If she remains obdurate, like the wall of a city, they will lay siege to her. This is the plan to do in approved military fashion, by building around her another temporary embankment, from which they will launch the "attack."[99]

Gordis here keys in to the same basic idea of the military aspects of the woman-as-city imagery. But he too flatly reads hostility into the encounter by ascribing to the suitors all the tactics of siege warfare. The much more dangerous and less tactically desirable approaches of siege involved techniques of breach: assault ladders, tunneling, and battering rams, for which there is a specialized vocabulary that does not appear here (see 2 Sam 20:15).[100] None of these devices, or more specialized siege vocabulary, is featured in the Song. While Gordis is right that the metaphor implies a siege, he is wrong that it sets into motion all the accoutrements of this latter phase of warfare. The metaphor, while it has a violent undertone, does not fully exploit the possibly violent valences of the metaphor. The intention is not to breach the city, as Gordis implies. The intention is to wait.

For these reasons, this passage should not be understood as an oath to protect the young woman's chastity. Rather, the poetry trades on an underlying tension in the young-woman-as-city motif. The tension presented by her architectural fortifications (walls and doors) is the desire to see them "open," which is exactly what the lover entreats her to do in the other "city" sequences in the Song: "Open to me, my sister, my friend!" (Song 5:2, 5, 6; cf. 7:12). This language of opening evokes the lovers' encounter, and it is also reflected in military texts. For example, an eighth-century Egyptian victory stela includes the following appeal of the enemy attacker to the city: "Look, two ways are before you; choose as you wish. Open [your gates], you live; close, you die."[101] But the sweetness of the imagery in the Song mediates the hostility of the metaphor: "silver," a precious metal, and

"cedar," an expensive, aromatic wood also used in building palaces and temples, both suggest the luxurious quality of this encounter.

For a city under siege, there are two options: shore up defenses to wait out the siege (secure access to water sources, reinforce walls, build an interior counter-ramp, e.g., Isa 22:9–11), or surrender. Here, in the Song's final use of the young-woman-as-city motif, the young woman resolves the tension in the battle of the sexes. She claims that she is ready for love, she is a "wall" and her breasts are like "towers." She will not need to shore her defenses to wait out the siege, so she what she offers instead is willing surrender: "I will be in his eyes as one who makes peace." The root *š-l-m* reflects a peaceful surrender, the preferred goal of a siege. This is prescribed in Deuteronomy: "When you approach a town to attack it, you shall offer it terms of peace (*lašalôm*). If it answers you with peace (*šālôm*), and opens to you, then all the people in it will serve you" (Deut 20:10–12; cf. Josh 9:15; 11:19; 2 Kgs 18:31–32 // Isa 36:15–16). The terminology of "peace" and "opening" reflects the sense of surrender to the lover in the Song.[102] There is a change of voice here in this moment: If the previous lines have been dominated by plural forms (the suitors speaking as "we," a group), the young woman directs her offer of peace to the lover alone: "I will be in *his* eyes." If there is a hypothetical threat to a young woman, conceived as a city under siege, the young woman has a plan to ameliorate the situation. She will offer surrender to her lover alone, on her own terms, and the tension (the "battle of the sexes") between the lovers is dissolved.

I have argued that the motif of the city in the Song of Songs draws on a pervasive ancient tradition of comparing women to cities. The general function of the metaphor is to portray the vulnerability of a capital city that is under attack by a foreign enemy. It may be that the young woman is depicted as "unkonventionell, ungewöhnlich, ja: seltsam" but the poet nevertheless is drawing on a widespread (conventional) motif.[103] The Song employs this imagery, though, in a surprising way: to cast the lovers in a battle of the sexes. That the young woman is depicted as a city emphasizes her vulnerability in the lovers' encounter. At the same time, this vulnerability is in some sense resolved by the young woman's own readiness to welcome her lover in.

Conclusion: Landscape Urbanism

The preceding argument has been informed in part by a metaphor drawn from urban theory: the city as a body. This metaphor implies several

things: boundaries, such as the wall, the "skin" of the city, that serve to define and protect the body from that which surrounds it. That the body is gendered female is also significant. As art historian Sue Best argues,

> . . . feminizing space seems to suggest, on the one hand, the production of a safe, familiar, clearly defined entity, which, because it is female, should be appropriately docile or able to be dominated. But, on the other hand, this very same production also underscores an anxiety about this "entity" and the precariousness of its boundedness.[104]

The anxiety about the boundaries of the city is pronounced in the watchmen who patrol the city's walls (5:7) and in the bantering about the young woman's own walls (8:9). Both the city and the young woman are ambivalent figures that inspire conviviality but contain the possibility of disruption; they are marked by boundaries as well as openings.[105] The precariousness of its boundaries, though, also implies something larger about the city's nature as an organic unit: a body is dependent on and implicated in the environment that surrounds it.

This dependency is helpfully understood in light of landscape urbanism. The term "cityscape" was first coined in 1955 by the architect Victor Gruen, who is most notable for pioneering shopping malls in the United States. He viewed the "cityscape" as a polarity in contrast to the "landscape." In his thought, the cityscape is defined by human interventions that override what is natural in the land—these interventions include buildings, paved surfaces (roads, sidewalks, parking lots, etc.), and other types of infrastructure. The city, in such an understanding, is foremost a built environment. In this understanding, "landscape" is opposed to "cityscape," as the space in which "nature is predominant."[106] As I suggested earlier, exactly this type of thinking has characterized readings of the Song of Songs. But there is a significant movement among contemporary geographers and landscape architects, loosely called "landscape urbanism," which acknowledges that urban sites are deeply embedded in their natural environments. The contours of the built environment are shaped in accordance with a preexisting natural surface, and must respond to that environment appropriately in order to be sustained for any duration of time. At the same time, the built environment is not indifferent to the principles of ecology, namely, that complex interactions between elements within ecological systems are a fundamental characteristic of those systems, which

cannot be understood in isolation of the parts. This is true both for the way that the built environment interacts with the natural environment (and responds to and draws from natural systems such as wind flow, hydrology, vegetal communities), as well as for the social systems within the city. The city is part of a larger ecosystem, but the city itself, with its human and nonhuman members, is also a kind of ecosystem. It is in this sense that James Corner writes, "cities and infrastructures are just as 'ecological' as forests and rivers."[107] The city, that is, must be understood as a continuous network of interrelationships (both visible and invisible).[108] So, to shift the analogy, the city is an ecology. This ecological orientation to the city informs a significant shift in approaches to understanding cities:

> Landscape Urbanism describes a disciplinary realignment currently underway in which landscape replaces architecture as the basic building block of contemporary urbanism. For many, across a range of disciplines, landscape has become both the lens through which the contemporary city is represented and the medium through which it is constructed.[109]

This shift emerges in part from important changes in urban organization in the modern West,[110] and it is geared in a constructive way to the design and planning of contemporary urban spaces.[111] Landscape urbanism is intended to seize on the potential benefits of locating "urban fabrics in their regional and biotic contexts."[112] What I am suggesting here is that this reorientation to urbanism is an apt way to think about ancient, pre-industrial cities, insofar as it enables us to recognize and appreciate features of ancient cities. Such features include especially smallness of scale, orientation to the human body, and, perhaps most important, integration in and dependence on the surrounding environment. Corner writes, "the promise of landscape urbanism is the development of a space-time ecology that treats all forces and agents working in the urban field and considers them as continuous networks of inter-relationships."[113] Such interrelationships, which have not been at the foreground of modern approaches to urban spaces, would have been a de facto part of the experience of the ancient city.

Christopher Meredith, who has gone the furthest in recent Song scholarship to emphasize the importance of the city, emphasizes the city's anonymized, labyrinthine "space." But this is perhaps too heavily indebted to Walter Benjamin's experience of the post-industrial urban

center. The experience of the ancient city would have been more fully knowable by virtue of its scale and the relative lack of mobility—most people in the ancient world would have remained in the cities of their birth, and many would have traversed the boundaries of the city every day. The poetry of the Song relies on an understanding of the city as closely proximate to its surrounding countryside, and intimately connected with it. This reflects a reality of the ancient world: agricultural fields would have abutted the small cities of the ancient world, and its workers would have spent their days out in the agricultural landscape. The pervasive terracing abutting Jerusalem testifies to this, as do myriad biblical texts. According to one narrative, for example, both the crown prince Absalom and the chief military leader Joab were directly dependent on agricultural fields in the vicinity of Jerusalem, such that Absalom could spur Joab to action by burning his fields (2 Sam 14:30). Agriculture was not merely the province of rural farmers; even urban elites experienced the integration of the city with its fields. This shifting focus between the city and the country is indicative of the intimate, proximate relationship between urban centers and their rural outlying areas. This relationship is well-articulated by Ellen Davis:

> The terms "city" and "field" would not have denoted . . . two entirely separate settings and lifestyles, as they do for most contemporary readers. Rather, . . . the Israelite city and its immediately surrounding fields formed a tight economic and defensive unit. Many farmers lived within the city's protective wall and "commuted" with their draft animals to work in fields within walking distance.[114]

The ancient city, that is to say, could only thrive in the context of a healthy and thriving agricultural hinterlands.

Taking a cue from landscape urbanism, I suggest that the city in the Song points fruitfully to a larger argument about the ecology of the city. There is a sense in which, in the Song, the city's military, protective dimensions put forward a particular image of the city (as impregnable, independent, and even fearful) that is actually belied by its very vulnerability.

On the one hand, the importance of the wall in the ancient concept of the "city" implies a stark division between the city and what surrounds it. At the same time, this wall was constantly traversed: For most local inhabitants, daily life would have meant crossing the wall and participating in the larger landscape. It would have meant—necessarily—by virtue of its

limited technologies and agricultural dependence, leaving the city, developing the threads of ecological dependence. We could ask, for example, is the Siloam tunnel an element of the city, or of the land? The answer must be both: It functioned to harness a landscape element for the purposes of the urban center—enabling and preserving the site's impregnability under military assault. At the same time, the Gihon spring is an emblem of dependence on and permeation by the larger landscape. After all, the only times that a city is impregnable is when it is under military assault, when the city is fragile and threatened. The besieged or enclosed city is not in a state of permanent, durative health. A city cannot survive a long-term siege; this is the very premise on which the military siege is presupposed. A hermetic city, whose walls are fixed and whose gates are closed, which is not permeated by the cycle of agricultural productivity of its hinterlands, is a city that is dying.

To speak of the ecology of the city is to acknowledge the symbiotic relationship with its surrounds, between the built environment and the natural environment. One might see the strange poem of Song 5, then, as an ecological commentary of the following type: the fixation on walls and guards does not provide a sustainable vision of connection and flourishing. Instead, it reflects the various ways in which a reified division between the city and its countryside is potentially detrimental.[115] We might see Song 5, with its fixation on architectural features, the abiding sense of enclosure, and the vigilant protection of walls (Song 5:2–8), as embodying a kind of urban disorder. This poem concludes with the young woman's declaration of her own "sickness": *śeḥôlat ʿahăbah ʾānî* ("I am sick with love"), the manifestation of this disorder. The Song seems to operate on the understanding that cities are not self-contained; perhaps it argues specifically against it. The tension—between a walled city and the enemy it confronts—is posed in a different way by the imagery of surrender that comes late in the Song, in Chapter 8. This passage stands to resolve the struggle between city and countryside, in the sense that when the gates are opened (through the willing surrender of the young woman to her lover), a healthy symbiosis between city and country will be restored. Another way of talking about vulnerability is to talk about permeability, reliance, dependence, need, or lack. This vulnerability, this dependence, is what defines the city as a signifier of desire, and it is also the way that the Song imagines a healthy urban ecology.

5

The Map of the Body

Many a man beguiled by her beauty has said:
Describe her!
I said: that is easy and difficult,
All at once.
IBN AL-RŪMĪ, "Waḥīd, The Singing Slave-Girl of ʿAmhamah"

The eye needs to be trained so that it can discern beauty
where it exists.
YI-FU TUAN, *Space and Place*

RUNNING THROUGH THE center of the Song of Songs like a backbone, three major descriptive poems focus on the body of the young woman: 4:1–7; 6:4–7; and 7:1–7.[1] Each one envisions the physical beauty of the beloved by extolling her body parts.[2] These bear some resemblance to the later Arabic literary form, the *waṣf* ("description"—a form of minute description of an object), and so scholars frequently refer to these biblical descriptions as *waṣf*sT, although I will avoid that terminology here.[3] The style of the descriptive poems stands apart from the rest of the Song: "It has the effect of a still life with its complex absence of main verbs; in it each image is paratactically juxtaposed. If the passage is isolated, distinctively bounded from its neighbours, without logical connectives, each sentence within it duplicates this isolation."[4] Although they each stand apart from the rest of the Song, their similarity to each other recommends reading them in light of one another, as emblems of a kind of poetic process. Reading these poems as a reiterative process, so far as I can tell, has not been undertaken with respect to the Song's descriptive poems. Such a reading strategy is suggested, for example, by Roland Greene, who describes the driving phenomenon of the Petrarchan lyric series in precisely such terms, as a "conceit of process."[5] Of these biblical

"descriptions," two (4:1–7; 6:4–7) dwell on the face and head and move down the body, while the final example (7:1–7) moves in the opposite direction, from the feet up the middle of the body to the top of the head. In each case, the young woman is "mapped" visually, and her body is allied topographically with the land of Israel. The geographical references create a map of the land of Israel—not a complete one, of course, but one in which the ineffable totality of the young woman is evoked by the presentation and iteration of select parts. The vision of the lover as a cartography links the aesthetic of the land with the beauty of the lover. This chapter will explore the spatial developments of these lyric descriptions over the course of the three descriptions, taking quite seriously the experience of the landscape that develops temporally for the reader. The vision of the landscape, the visual orientation implied in the representation of a physical topography, is in process, and is specified and refined over time. As J. Cheryl Exum has observed, "the lovers' gazes . . . enumerate details about each other's body that progressively build up a fuller picture."[6] As I will show here, the reiterated attempts to represent the young woman's beauty elaborate the likeness between the beauty of the land and erotic beauty. An analysis of the perspectives implicit in the descriptive poems of the young woman shows a crescendo in the poet's repeated attempts to capture this experience. In each subsequent description, the landscape is increasingly particular and increasingly complete. The repeated attempts suggest that the evocation or encapsulation of this beauty is not sufficiently addressed or comprehended by a single vantage. I will argue that through the sequence of the three descriptions of the young woman, the perception of the beholder is specified and refined. The young woman is seen with increasing clarity in each successive poem. The Song thus models a lover's knowledge: the reiterative process of description suggests that the subject's beauty cannot be adequately comprehended by a single vantage or a single glance. The gaze must be cultivated in order to perceive it.

Landscape and Vision

The portrait of the young woman as a geography can be helpfully explicated by recourse to the idea of landscape. Here, I intentionally invoke the representational aspects of the term, referring to the technical strategy developed in the visual arts. In the descriptive poems of the young

woman's body, the interest in the natural world is evident through the verbal depiction of the young woman's body, which is described in terms of the landscape of ancient Israel. The topographical elements range across the land of Israel, many from northern locales, like Carmel (7:5), Damascus (7:4), and Tirzah (6:4).[7] But other regions are also invoked, including Jerusalem (6:4), the oasis of Ein-Gedi on the western shore of the Dead Sea (1:14), Gilead (6:5), and Heshbon in the Transjordan (7:4). This observation is not new. As I discussed in Chapter 1, Jewish interpretation traditionally took the topographical elements to explicate the identity of the young woman in the Song as the nation of Israel.[8] André Robert and Raymond Jacques Tournay have taken a similar but more elaborated line of argumentation, emphasizing the geographical nature of all the features of the descriptive poems. They stretch the analogy between the young woman and the nation of Israel to make the young woman fit a literal map of Israel, part for part: "[D]ans le contexte subséquent, chaque trait de la description s'inspire d'une particularité géographique de la Terre Sainte. . .."[9] Such sensitivity to the aspects of the landscape in the descriptive poems leads to some far-fetched comparisons; for example, it means that the young woman's feet are located at the Nile, and that her rounded thighs are contoured like the Mediterranean coastline.[10] The reading of the body moves north from there: her navel is plotted at Jerusalem, and her head at Carmel. The strict adherence to the South-North geographical axis in Robert and Tournay's reading runs into trouble as it places her eyes (at Heshbon) quite out of alignment, to the East, as Pope has noted.[11] Nevertheless, more than any modern commentator, Robert and Tournay are bold in detecting elements of the land of Israel in the poem's descriptions, and the view is worth rehabilitating. The problem both for allegorizers (ancient and modern), of course, is that they reduce the young woman to a metaphor that can be discarded when the reader has construed the point of the poems (which is, on this reading, a plea for eschatological peace reminiscent of the Solomonic empire).[12] Both the Rabbis and Robert and Tournay point up the significance of the analogy between the young woman's body and the landscape of Israel. This analogy presses us to take the landscape features of the descriptive poems of the Song as thematically significant both as they pertain to the description of the young woman, and as they reveal an attitude toward the material landscape. What neither the Rabbis nor Robert and Tournay acknowledge is that this "mapping" is not static over the course of the Song, but is located particularly at the three descriptive poems, all of which differ from one another. These

descriptions require a particular mode of viewing, ones that changes over the course of time.

Geographer Denis Cosgrove has been particularly keen to emphasize the integral importance of the viewer to the concept of landscape. He draws on the developing conventions of European landscape painting to show how a representation of a material landscape, especially in the visual arts, presupposes a vantage. The gaze that is implied potently reflects values and assumptions about the relationship between the viewer and the world. That is to say, landscape is a way of seeing that implies a seer, as well as an attitude toward the object that is seen. As Cosgrove writes, "The subject of landscape in art is the spectator or the artist, participating as creator or controller through the medium of perspective."[13] For example, in nineteenth-century American landscape painting (the foremost example is the work of Thomas Cole), the viewer's eye is consistently overwhelmed by the wilderness panorama, with its infinitely receding skyline, and vast swaths of mountain terrain.[14] In the case of Cole, and much of the early American landscape tradition, the viewer strains to take in the grand scope of the yet-untamed frontier—which played a crucial role in the imaginary of early America. The perspective is a medium that conveys the larger ideological point of the insignificance of the human presence (conventionally present in the foreground, as tiny appreciators of the vista), facing the vast task of westward expansion. This representational aspect of the "landscape" concept suggests that it is an aesthetic category that is culturally and ethically laden. While the descriptive poems in the Song of Songs are not exactly about the landscape, but have as their primary subject the beauty of the lover, they also depend on the viewer's gaze as it commands the reader's (mental) gaze in a way that is strongly reminiscent of other landscape traditions. The poet creates a (verbal) artistic description of a (visual) depiction of the young woman-as-landscape.

Since, as I have suggested in a cursory way, this visualization imagines the young woman as a geography, the natural world is not depicted per se, but is summoned via an accumulation of images of the lover—as such, the land must be seen as an image of an image, a tertiary experiential category generated by the poetic voice. When the young man describes the young woman, it is as a kind of "landscape" of the lover's body. Within this landscape, the physical, literal geography that is called to the mind's eye throughout the Song of Songs is explicitly evoked to describe the beauty of the lover's body, part by part. By comparing elements of the lover's body to elements of the landscape, the body is constituted as a beloved geography.

The young woman-as-landscape emerges with greater precision over the course of the three descriptive poems, which suggests that the gaze of the lover is heightened, specified, refined, by the act of seeing.

The Gaze

Seeing is all the more significant to the Song because the poetry is self-conscious about its visual aspects. That is, the visual perspective is not just an implicit aspect of the Song of Songs, but one trope that serves as a building block for the poetry. The Song is studded with verbs of seeing. The general verb *rāʾāh* ("see") is used eight times. Of these, three are directed toward the woman: once, she is seen by her friends, who bless her (6:9); once, she expresses a wish not to be seen (1:6); and once, the young man pleas with her, "let me see your face," and what is implied, of course, is that he cannot (2:14). Three times, it is the land and its plants that are seen (2:12; 6:11; 7:13); and twice, men are the objects of looking, once by the watchmen (3:3), and once by the young women (3:11). At two points, the vision of the lover is expressed in other vocabulary of sight, particularly when the young woman imagines or describes her lover on the other side of a wall, trying to catch a glimpse of her: He is *mašgîaḥ* ("gazing") and *mēṣîṣ* ("peering") through the windows and lattices. And, finally, in a cryptic passage late in the Song, unindentified speakers express a wish to look at the Shulammite: "Return, return, O Shulammite, return, return, that we may look (*ḥ-z-h*) upon you. Why should you look (*ḥ-z-h*) upon the Shulammite, like a dance of two armies?" (6:13). In addition, each of the lovers' bodies—both the young woman's and the young man's—are perceived as beautiful, especially in the descriptive poems that are predicated on the appreciation of the lover's body (the young woman, in 4:1–7; 6:4–7; and 7:1–5; the young man in 5:10–16). As I will suggest in what follows, though, this appreciation is visual but not limited exclusively to visuality; instead, it is a progressive and multisensory appreciation.

The visual nature of the Song is also apparent in the frequent use of the presentative particle *hinnēh*. As I will suggest, though, *hinnēh* is not strictly visual, but rather layers visuality with the evocation of the lovers' presence. The lovers are beautiful to one another—both male and female: "Here you are (*hinnāk*, fem.), you are beautiful, my friend . . . Here you are (*hinnəkā*, masc.), you are beautiful, my dear" 1:15, 16). The presentative particle *hinnēh* is classically translated as "Behold!" or "Look!" (e.g.,

KVJ). So Exum suggests that its use "invites its addressee to look, along with the speaker, and see what he sees from his point of view . . . with *hinnēh*, the poet directs the reader's gaze as well, creating the illusion of immediacy by bringing what the lovers see immediately before our eyes."[15] Exum's core insight about the sense of immediacy wonderfully describes the poem's ability to create a lover's experience for the reader. But this is not exclusively a visual experience, since *hinnēh* has no essential reference to vision.[16] Instead, it is a deictic marker for interiority—specifically, the awareness of the other that "flashes across a character's consciousness" as internal speech.[17] Not merely an invitation *to view* the lover's body, *hinnēh* throughout the Song enacts the lovers' awareness of one another's presence (so the translation "Here!" is perhaps more fitting).[18] This point is particularly important because it helps create a more complex understanding of the gaze in the Song, in conversation with feminist discourse.

The relation between this pervasive gaze in the Song and power, gender, and the erotic has been a site of contention. The problem of the gaze for feminist interpretation was largely spurred by Laura Mulvey's influential 1975 article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in which she uses psychoanalysis to identify the passivity of women in film as objects of the active gaze of men.[19] In her view, women have two options: either to identify as objects of the male gaze, or to appropriate the distant, objectifying male gaze (thereby alienating themselves). Following such a view, David J. A. Clines writes of the Song of Songs, "The woman, for her part, is offered the subject position as the focus of the male gaze, and not unwillingly (for she knows no alternative) she adopts that subject and subjected position, misrecognizing herself."[20] This essentializing of the gaze assumes a rigidly dichotomized "masculine" and "feminine" perspective, as well as a set of assumptions about the universality of what constitutes male and female psychological development and identity formation—thus explicating the gaze will be more contingent than Mulvey's original formulation allows.[21] That the gaze can be oppressive and exploitative is no doubt true, and that it has been used in the Song's interpretation in oppressive and exploitative ways is no doubt also true; however, it would be short-sighted to assume that the gaze *must* therefore be oppressive and exploitative. Moreover, the Song itself raises problems for such readings. To wit, the woman's gaze is also thematized, both in her own pleasurable viewing of the male body (5:10–16),[22] and in the clear account of the woman's eyes, which gaze out (4:1), destabilize (4:9), and terrify (6:5). These features undermine the hegemony of the male gaze. As Catherine

Nash writes, "Asserting women's visual pleasure resists both the idea of women as passive objects of the male gaze and hegemonic versions of what is an appropriate feminine viewing position and objects of view."[23] Indeed, as Exum has aptly noted, it is precisely the lovers' consistent participation in their own descriptions that entails an erotic, not a voyeuristic, gaze.[24] It should be added that the kind of objectifying gaze made possible by film media is only partially analogous to that of ancient lyric visual description. There is a wide cultural gap between our heavily saturated visual media culture (in which it is normal to view hundreds of bodies otherwise unknown to us in a day) and ancient cultures, in which the visual would necessarily be constituted by some degree of physical presence and the personal knowledge and multisensory experience that such presence implies. So when the reader encounters *hinnēk* ("Here you are!" fem.), this is not exactly an invitation to the audience to look at the woman; it is, rather, a moment when the young woman's presence strikes the awareness of the young man. His consciousness registers the profound impact of the lover's presence. This is the underlying tension of an Egyptian love poem, which expresses the wish simply to see the lover, a luxury her mirror always enjoys: "If only I had a morning of seeing . . . / Joyful is her mirror, / [into] which she gazes" (Cairo Love Songs, Group B: no. 21D).[25] This is not to suggest that visual exploitation was not possible before the technological invention of photography and the economies of production that accompanied it; rather, film is an imperfect analogy to begin with. The gaze here in the Song mixes proximity and distance as it elaborates a more complete, multisensory "view" of the lover and the landscape, progressively unfolding in time.

How the woman is in view in the descriptive poems is related to the question of her beauty. Scholars have been at odds about whether and how the strange imagery should be understood. For instance, Athalya Brenner writes, "her belly is fat and jumpy like her breasts (3c, 4), her neck is (disproportionately?) long, her eyes by now turbid, her nose outsize (5). In terms of slang, she is a 'mixed bag' " and the poems are teasing or ridiculing her.[26] Fiona Black has been most vocal in emphasizing the "grotesque" nature of the descriptive poems, locating her analysis at the provocative seam revealed by the Song's puzzled history of interpretation of the descriptive poems.[27] She writes that the body is "a site of confusion" in the descriptive poems: "they ridicule, or worse, are repulsive, and as such they indicate something about the lover's unease about his lover's body, and her sexuality."[28] Using the idea of the grotesque, Black argues against the

dominant "hermeneutics of compliment" that has governed the Song's interpretation:

> Most troubling, from my perspective, is that to mandate that the statements about beauty in the text are meant to be explicated by what follows them is something of a terminal option for interpretation: it provides for no other alternative in reading than that these perplexing images are aesthetically complete, or, that they explicate (perfect) beauty. It is precisely the perplexing nature of the imagery, however, that demands that readers at least consider other alternatives.[29]

Black rightly notes that the texts do not explicate beauty in any straightforward way; the omissions in the description alone pose a problem for such a view. But that they do not explicate beauty does not mean that they cannot convey an experience of beauty. It is not the particular cultural aesthetic preferences that are the subject; rather, "the emotive content of desire is paramount."[30] The descriptions are not ambivalent or negative toward their subject, and the acclamations of beauty affirm the overall positive nature of the descriptive poems.[31] The celebratory tone is most clearly in view in these acclamations, which frame each of the descriptive poems of the young woman. The first descriptive poem (Song 4:1–7), for instance, begins, *hinnāk yāpāh* ("Here you are! You are beautiful"; 4:1) and ends similarly, *kullāk yāpāh* ("all of you is beautiful"; 4:7).[32] The body of the descriptive poem between these two framing acclamations enacts the search for metaphors commensurate to her beauty. The poem traverses the lover's body, beginning with the top of the head, and moves downward to end at the breasts, lingering with the intimate details of the lover's body. The other two descriptive poems of the young woman are also structured by the admiration of her physical form. The second poem similarly begins, *yāpāh ʾat* ("you are beautiful"; 6:4), and ends with a summary of her incommensurability,*ʾaḥat hîʾ yônātî tammātî* ("she is one, my dove, my perfection"; 6:9). Similarly, the final descriptive poem starts with a proclamation of her beauty, *mah-yāpû pəʿāmayēk* ("how beautiful are your feet"; 7:2), and ends *mah-yāpît ûmah-nāʿamt* ("how beautiful, and how lovely"; 7:7). These exclamations serve as literary signals that draw the reader in to see with the eyes of one who is entranced by beauty. This emphasis on the young woman's beauty suggests that the intervening description will express

the speaker's experience of her aesthetic distinction, and it will do so in terms of landscape, as we shall see.

The First Description (Song 4:1–7)

Here you are! You are beautiful, my love.
Here you are! You are beautiful.
Your eyes are doves
Behind your veil.[33]
Your hair is like a flock of goats
Moving down[34] from Gilead.
Your teeth are like a flock of shearlings[35]
Coming up from the wash
All of them twins
No blemish is in them.
Your lips are like a scarlet thread
And your speech[36] is lovely.
Your cheek is like a slice of pomegranate
Behind your veil.
Your neck like the tower of David
Built in courses[37]
A thousand shields are hung upon it
All the shields[38] of warriors.
Your two breasts are like two fawns
Twins of a gazelle
Which pastures among the lilies.
Until the day breaks
And the shadows flee
I will go to the mount of myrrh
And the hill of frankincense.
All of you is beautiful, my love;
There is no flaw in you. (Song 4:1–7)

The description begins with her face, with first the eyes, which are concealed like doves "behind your veil" (v. 1), then her hair, her teeth, her lips, and finally her cheek, which is also "behind your veil" (v. 3). These two occurrences of "behind your veil" form an inclusio, a literary curtain that is drawn around the description of the young woman's face, creating the sense of symmetry, as well as distance.

What the veil actually represents is a complex and perhaps finally indecipherable matter. To begin, the issue is clouded with modern symbolic associations, from the eroticized veil of the nineteenth-century Orientalist imagination,[39] to contemporary discourse about the *ḥijāb* and issues of women's liberation.[40] Added to this, the Hebrew *ṣammāh* (customarily translated as "veil") is a rare word, used only here, in a parallel passage in Song 6:7, and in Isaiah 47:2. In Isaiah, the *ṣammâ* is among the garments (it parallels *šōbel*, "skirt") that the personified city of Babylon is commanded to remove in an act of exposure that subjects her to reproach (47:3). The term *ṣāʿîp* (also translated as "veil") occurs in Genesis 24:65; 38:14, 19. In the former passage, Rebekah covers herself when she finally meets Isaac, who will become her husband, although the text does not explain why she does so. It should probably not be interpreted as a sign of wedding custom, since the wedding does not follow within any specified time frame in the narrative (nor is it clearly the context the Song of Songs has in mind).[41] And since Rebekah puts it on when she greets Isaac, she was not wearing it as a matter of course. In Genesis 38:14, 19, Tamar covers herself with a *ṣāʿîp* not as her regular costume, but to disguise her identity so that she can trick her father-in-law Judah. Indeed, there's no evidence that Judean women wore customary veils during any period. The only evidence of veiling practices in Mesopotamia come from the Middle Assyrian Laws, which stipulate that married women out in public must wear a veil, while unmarried women and prostitutes must be uncovered.[42] An incantation also dating to the Middle Assyrian period includes the line "she wears no veil and has no shame."[43] The limited nature of these references and the lack of corroborating visual evidence reinforce the problem of how to interpret the veil here.

Moreover, since so few examples of visual and plastic arts from ancient Israel are extant, and since textiles do not survive in the archaeological record, the nature of such a garment is all the more speculative. Would it have been diaphanous, such that the eyes and cheeks could be perceived through the fabric?[44] Or was the veil a more substantial piece of fabric drawn across the face, leaving the eyes exposed?[45] An Assyrian relief portrays women from the Judean city of Lachish wearing some kind of a shawl over their heads—a large piece of fabric framing the face on either side.[46] This suggests a piece of fabric worn over the head that could be drawn across the face to obscure the identity (as the stories of Leah and Tamar both highlight). The "veil" may thus have been a piece of fabric that was part of the accoutrement of the young woman's beauty, which

could be used to conceal, or not. Clothing is certainly one of the marks of adornment that the young man identifies, hence his praise: "the scent of your garment is like Lebanon" (4:11). Her jewelry is another such marker of adornment (evoked in 1:10; 4:4, 9; and 7:1). As Irene Winter has argued for Mesopotamian art, such adornments are essential to an understanding of aesthetic value.[47] For these reasons, we might see this garment as a literary evocation of allure. In the narratives of Leah and Tamar, the garment symbolizes the women's access to and use of sexual power to effect an outcome; similarly, while Rebekah does not cover herself as an act of trickery, it signals her erotic forwardness, through which she seeks out her husband. In "The Descent of Ishtar to the Netherworld," Ishtar elaborately attires herself before she begins her journey (in the Sumerian version), then upon her arrival at the entrance to the Netherworld, must systematically remove her adornment—first her crown, then jewelry, then her garments.[48] In so doing, she is symbolically divesting herself of one famous aspect of her power—her sexual allure.[49] The young woman here in this descriptive poem is both visible, and yet behind a piece of fabric, which "arouses the viewer's desire to see what lies behind it."[50] That she is behind a veil is a problem for description because it closes off visual access;[51] the veil is also a possibility because it prompts the imagination to probe the beauty that is inaccessible to the lover. As the veil symbolically reinforces, describing the young woman is both a problem and a possibility for the poem.

Within the inclusio of the veil, the hair flows like a flock of goats down a mountainside. This metaphor is no doubt prompted by an actual similarity: the black hair of the goats, running individually but flocking together, creating a bouyant, dark surface that moves downhill, offers a simulacrum for a mane of thick, dark hair flowing loosely over a young woman's head and shoulders. But, it should be emphasized, this view is only possible from a distance.[52] The gaze presupposed by this description is one from far away, in which the whole visual impact of the flock can be comprehended in a single glance. From the midst of the herd of goats, the viewer would see a noisy clutter of hooves, tails, and dust. The perspective taken by the poem—taking in the sight of the young woman from a distance—reinforces the literary distance created by the inclusio of the veil: the young woman is seen or imagined from far away, and is only imaginatively attainable. Elsewhere in the Song, this sense of distance is evoked by images that feature the young woman out of reach: in the window (2:9), behind the wall (2:9), in the clefts of the rock (2:14), in the Lebanon mountains

(4:8), even in a palm tree (7:7–8). Her distance is thus one crucial feature of her portraiture.

What emerges is a perception of the young woman's face, neck, and torso, and while the initial metaphors rely on a distant view, there is a simultaneous closeness of perspective implied by the ability to see the body as a body, the face as a face with its details: The eyes are like doves (4:1); the hair is like a flock of goats streaming down from Gilead (4:1 and 6:5); the teeth are like a shorn flock coming up from the wash (4:2 and 6:6), and the breasts are like fawns that feed among the lilies (4:5 and 7:4). These closely viewed parts, moreover, are described not merely as elements of the natural world, but as the animal life that animates the landscape of the young woman's body.[53] The doves flicker against the water of the bath and the goats stream down the hilly mountainside. Their presence suggests not merely a static depiction, but a living, breathing quality. She is a landscape within which moving creatures suggest the perpetually glimmering, inspirited quality of her beauty. That her teeth are like a shorn flock suggests not only their purity and completeness, but also that the mouth is a locus of energy, vibrancy, and movement. Similarly, the breasts are gazelles that graze "among the lilies," which throughout the Song is used as a cipher for the young woman's body and beauty (2:1, 2, 16; 4:5; 6:2, 3; 7:2).[54] The formal structure of the catalog of her beauty in this way effects a mild astigmatism for the viewer, which blends different perspectives required by the different images in order to convey the competing senses that her total body is writ large like the landscape, and, at the same time, is minutely and vibrantly detailed.

There is coherence to the landscape of her body, insofar as the poem identifies her with particular local regions. Her hair flows like goats not on any mountain, but in Gilead. This mountainous region rises rapidly from the plains of Bashan to a height of over 3,300 feet in the Gilead Dome. The height, seen from the valley of the Jabbok, which runs through its center, or from the plains of Bashan that mark its northern border, is a striking and rapid elevation gain (so it is remembered as the *har haggilʿād*; Gen 31:21, 23, 25; Deut 3:12; cf. Jer 22:6; 50:19).[55] As a well-watered region, it is characterized by forest cover; even after centuries of deforestation, the highest hills are still covered by scrub oak, carob, and pine, and its beauty seems to have been comparable to the famous cedar forests of Lebanon (Jer 22:6; Zech 10:10).[56] The region also supports some important vineyards and olive orchards, its hilliness accommodating such forms of cultivation, as well as hosting a pastoral economy, being well suited to

grazing livestock such as sheep and goats (cf. Num 32:1; Josh 21:38; Mic 7:14; 1 Chron 6:66 (MT, 6:80, Eng)).[57] The image of goats streaming down from the hillside in Gilead thus elaborates an image based in pastoral life in that particular locale. The beauty of the young woman is like the particular landscape known to the speaker (and, presumably, the audience)—from that admixture of personal familiarity and oral history that constitutes local knowledge.

The coherence of the young woman-as-landscape is brought into relief by the Old Babylonian poem, "The Message of Lu-dingira to His Mother." This work includes a lengthy description of a woman based on a conceit of helping a third party identify Lu-dingira's "mother": "If you do not know my mother, I shall give you some signs." (The conceit is playfully undermined in the fourth description, when the poet comes teasingly close to revealing the true identity of his "mother": "She is a lover, a loving heart who never becomes sated with pleasure," lines 40–46[58]). The descriptions progress from comments on qualities of her character and gracefulness ("she is the fair goddess . . . she is loving, gentle, and lively," lines 9–20), to specific comparisons ("she is an alabaster statuette of a protective goddess standing on a pedestal of lapis lazuli," lines 21–31). The descriptions, like the Song, use elements drawn from the local landscape: "My mother is like a doe on the hillsides" (line 22); she is "a bountiful harvest of full-grown barley," "a garden," and "a well-irrigated pine tree." The depiction is characterized by general references that draw from the same basic analogy between the young woman and the land.[59] This descriptive poem places a similar emphasis on natural comparands, but they are more eclectic and more autonomous: instead of building a image of the lover based on a sequential view of the lover's body, it has the effect of creating a cache of general metaphors that can be flexibly applied to various attributes, whether physical or those of character.[60] A similar strategy can be seen in the Neo-Assyrian composition, "Love Lyrics of Nabû and Tašmetu" (eighth century BCE)—which has a great deal in common with the Song in theme, imagery, and style[61]—includes the following description of the goddess Tašmetu:

* [ša šapū]lāki ṣabītu ina ṣēri [xxxx]	* [whose thi]ghs are a gazelle in the plain! [*]
* [ša ki]ṣallāki šaḫšūru ša simā[ni xxxx]	* [whose an]kle bones are an apple of Siman! [*]
* ša asīdāki ṣurrumma [xxxx]	* whose heels are obsidian! [*]
* ša mimmūki ṭuppi iqnî [xxxx]	* whose whole being is a tablet of lapis lazuli! [*][62]

Here, the catalog form is clearly employed, as is the palette of natural imagery. But the form is not overlaid with the repetitions we see in this descriptive poem in Song 4 (with the exception of the determinative pronoun *ša*, "whose," at the head of each line). Instead, the images here are distinctly more discrete. And although there are landscape elements employed (gazelle, apple, obsidian, lapis lazuli), they do not seem to build a single, coherent picture. The individual comparands perhaps are employed for their symbolic function—as Martti Nissinen points out, "the outward shape of [the tablet of lapis lazuli] can hardly be equated with any part of the body, least of all with the 'whole being' of Tašmetu" and the reference more likely symbolically associates her with the tablet-bearing god Nabû.[63] The parallels with the Song of Songs are striking here, but the differences in their descriptive technique helps bring the coherency of the Song's description into relief.

A stronger priority in the Song is given to particular place-names, which help to build the overall sense of the topography of the region. Some of these place-names, though, do not appear to be real references; instead of evoking concrete historical realities, they draw on local knowledge, memory, and imagination in equal parts. The landscape is vividly evoked by the poetic strategy of interweaving the intimately known with the imagined. Perhaps the strongest example of this effect is the use of the proper name in the phrase *migdal dāwîd* ("tower of David," v. 4). Such a tower has not been identified, and may never have existed, although commentators have tried to link it to the stronghold of Zion (by way of 2 Sam 5:7, 9; Neh 3:25–27).[64] Whether or not an actual tower was known to the poet, the evocation of David's name mobilizes a memory associated with a golden age in the land of Israel.[65] The name evokes a trace of human history and presence in the landscape, affecting its contours. Features in a landscape—as geographers have noted—can operate like a palimpsest, remaining visible in the topography, "until there is a force or process that is strong enough to remove it. . .. Furthermore, if a feature is heavily etched into the landscape, it may well be perpetuated through long periods of subsequent use. . .."[66] We might add that if a feature is etched heavily enough into the memories or social systems or ideals of a people, it may persist in memory, language, and text long after its physical presence is gone. Had such a tower ever existed, this text may be evidence of its lingering significance. But even if it never existed, the image evokes persistent legendary memories of David, employing broad cultural resources to compel the audience to associate the young woman with the specificity of the land, its

history, and its traditions. The landscape is thus known not only through physical familiarity, but through the re-creation of its history in the minds and experiences of its inhabitants—a different kind of cultural knowledge.

The poem employs some features that lend formal coherence to the structure of the catalog—repetitions that are sonic (the alliterated initial *š*-sound in the four lines of v. 2: ***Š**innayik, **Š**eʿālû, **Š**ekkullām, wə**Š**akkulāh*, and which re-emerges in v. 5: ***Š**ənê **Š**ādayik ki**Š**nê ʿopārîm/ . . . / ba**ŠŠ**ô**Š**annîm*), thematic (the repeated images of *ʿeder,* "flocks," in vv. 1–2; the significance of "twins" and "two-ness" in v. 3, which is reiterated in v. 7 in the description of her breasts), and verbal (the phrase *mibbaʿad ləṣammātēk*, "behind your veil," which I have already discussed, in vv. 1, 3; and *ʾēn b-* to represent wholeness, vv. 2, 7). These repetitions intersect at various points in the poem, not in a strict pattern but with a loose consistency that heightens the sense that the description of the young woman is meant to cohere, that the parts bear resemblance to one another even though the imagery draws on diverse select features. The loose structure of Song 4 works, along with the underlying analogy of the young woman-as-landscape, in order to bolster the latent sense that the young woman somehow resembles the whole of the land of Israel, even though she is only partially visible.

The Second Description (Song 6:4–7)

The Song's second descriptive poem takes many of the motifs of the first poem, but heightens their particularity:

> You are beautiful, my love, as Tirzah[67]
> Lovely as Jerusalem
> Awesome as an army procession.[68]
> Turn your eyes from before me
> For they terrify me.
> Your hair is like a flock of goats
> Streaming down from Gilead.
> Your teeth are like a flock of ewes
> Which come up from the wash
> All of them bear twins
> None of them is bereaved.[69]
> Like a slice of pomegranate is your cheek
> Behind your veil.
> Sixty they are queens

And eighty concubines
And maidens without number.
One is she my dove, my perfect one
One is she to her mother
Pure is she to the one who bore her.
Who is this who looks out like the dawn
Beautiful as the moon
Pure as the sun
Awesome as an army procession?[70] (Song 6:4–7)

The poem reiterates language from the previous description in exact or nearly exact repetition.[71] Her hair is like a flock of goats (6:5; cf. 4:1); her teeth like a flock coming up from the wash, all of them bearing twins (6:6; cf. 4:2), and her cheek is a slice of pomegranate behind the veil (6:7; cf. 4:3). As in the last poem (4:1), the second description also begins with an acclamation of beauty: ("you are beautiful, my friend," (*yāpāh ʾat raʿyātî*, 6:4). Both poems break off abruptly below the young woman's face (at the breasts, 4:5; at the cheeks, 6:2). These overlaps suggest that the descriptive poems should be read together as further iterations of the same quest for an adequate account of the young woman's beauty.

The repetition of the animal imagery reinforces its impact: the flocks evoke the local economy of the ancient Levant. As I discussed in Chapter 2, this imagery is most appropriate not to a wild landscape, but to a domestic one. The poet, by repeating the flocks of goats and the flock of ewes, draws on the familiar elements of subsistence agriculture. While the young woman is writ large as the whole land of Israel, she is also uniquely small—seen through the elements of the individual farm, which would have been recognizable to hearers and readers throughout Israel over the course of a long period of time. The poems, through the repeated elements of minute description, thus develop a sense of individuality alongside the sense of the whole of the landscape—the concluding lines of the second descriptive poem emphasize precisely this individuality:

One is she my dove, my perfect one
One is she to her mother
Pure is she to the one who bore her. (Song 6:9)

If there are strong similarities between the two descriptions, there are also significant differences: the poet is not merely repeating verbatim, but is

selecting and developing the presentation of her beauty. In the second poem, for instance, there is an "intensification in the way the Song speaks of the Shulamite's eyes," since they are described first as "like doves" (4:1; cf. 1:15), then as powerful enough to threaten the lover ("turn your eyes . . . for they terrify me," 6:5).[72] This ability to inspire awe is evoked in framing lines, at the beginning and end of this description: *ʾăyummâ kannidgālôt* ("awesome in splendor," 6:4; and in closing, 6:10). In this way, the second descriptive poem has upped the rhetorical ante, framing the second descriptive attempt with a far stronger claim about her beauty. Moreover, unlike in the first description, the second does not immediately dive into the enumeration of parts, but lingers for an extra moment, expressing the sense of the overall impact of the lover's beauty:

> You are beautiful, my love, as Tirzah,
> Lovely as Jerusalem,
> Awesome as an army procession. (v. 4)

What is implicit in the first descriptive poem—that the young woman is the landscape—is more fully articulated here. Her beauty is allied with two particular topographical locales—Tirzah and Jerusalem. In this way, the second descriptive poem takes the problem of how to describe the young woman's beauty, and more explicitly states the analogy of the young woman with the landscape of Israel. She is as lovely as two of its cities.

The evocation of Tirzah has perplexed interpreters: ancient versions did not recognize it as a city-name, translating it instead according to the root *r-ṣ-y* ("to be pleasing").[73] Robert and Tournay call attention to its unclear political significance: If the poet intended to draw a parallel with the southern capital, Jerusalem, then the northern capital, Samaria, would be the clearer choice. The combined histories of Judah and Israel suggest, on Robert and Tournay's view, that an idealized vision of "Grand Israël" is implied.[74] While Robert and Tournay are right to seek a geopolitical significance to Tirzah, they seems to overlook that while the significance of the site of Tirzah is only obscurely known to us, its significance is clear to the poet, who confidently evokes it in direct parallel to Jerusalem. Edmée Kingsmill sees a theological problem with reading "Tirzah": "in the eyes of the poet a parallel to Jerusalem is unthinkable. Jerusalem stands alone, and if it has a parallel it can only be the heavenly Jerusalem."[75] The problem with this approach is that the poet has put the two words in parallelism, and *tirṣāh* never means "beauty itself," as Kingsmill translates it; rather,

it is always a proper name (in the case of the daughters of Zelophehad, Num 26:33; 27:1; 36:11; Josh 17:3). The idea of "heavenly Jerusalem" is a much later development—alluded to only in sketchy form in the New Testament (Heb 12:22–23; Rev 21:2–22:5)—and only makes sense as part of her allegorical program. Based on a number of references in Joshua and 1–2 Kings, it appears to have been the early capital of Israel, from the time of Baasha through Omri, and is usually understood as Tell el Farah (North; Josh 12:24; 1 Kgs 14:17; 15:6, 16; 16:17–18, 23).[76] The relative obscurity of the reference serves as a reminder to the contemporary reader that what is known to the poet is not fully knowable to the audience, and lyrically evokes the intimacy of lovers.[77]

If details about Tirzah remain obscure, the references to both cities nevertheless play into the pervasive ancient trope of the city personified as a woman, which serves as background to this ideation of the young woman as a city (Isa. 37:22; 52:1–2; Isa 47:1–2; Lam 1:1).[78] That the city is gendered as a woman helps underscore that the comparisons to both Jerusalem and Tirzah evoke the young woman's beauty and pleasure. Tirzah's derivation from the root *r-ṣ-h* ("pleasure") serves as a verbal evocation of the sense of aesthetic esteem. Jerusalem's association with beauty can be traced through literary emphasis: its heights are beautiful (*yəpēh nôp*; Ps. 48:3); it is lovely (*hannāwāh wəhammaʿunnāgāh dāmîtî bat-ṣiyyôn*, "I have likened daughter Zion to the loveliest pasture," Jer 6:2; cf. Lam 2:15; Ezek 16). By the exilic period, each of these cities would have suffered some destruction; in a sense, their beauty is recalling a past time of vitality. Like the tower of David, they are powerful signifiers, evocative of history and particularity in a place. The emphasis on their beauty encourages the reader's sense that affection depends not on the objective reality of their superiority, but on loyalty and memory. The perspective implied in the initial two descriptive poems of the young woman is thus progressively localized in the landscape.

This localization, though, is still fragmentary. Like a landscape, the descriptions of the young woman have the effect of creating a vision (illusion?) of wholeness. At the end of the description in Chapter 4, the poem affirms: "all of you is beautiful, my friend, and there is no flaw in you" (4:7). This affirmation, *kullāk yāpāh* ("all of you is beautiful") is a verbal claim that is in tension with the undeniably fragmentary nature of the first two descriptions. The same problem is echoed in 6:8–10, following the second description of the young woman. Here, the poet suggests that there are many other women, regal ones and innumerable young

maidens, but there is only one lover: *ʾaḥat hîʾ yônātî tammātî* ("one is she, my dove, my perfect one," 6:9). While the descriptions claim a sense of wholeness, they are not only selective in the parts they describe (the eyes, nose, breasts, etc.), but the gaze also breaks off at the chest. The young woman's body is never fully known to the young man (or the audience) in the first two descriptive poems. The claim that "all of you" is beautiful is thus in tension with content of the poem—as though the beauty that has provoked the poetic response cannot be fully captured by the poet, whose descriptions come up short, falter, and resign. Both of these descriptions of the young woman self-consciously evoke the wholeness of the young woman's beauty while describing only a portion of the young woman—her face and bust.

The partialness of the young woman in these initial two descriptions resembles the artistic convention of the "woman at the window," which localizes the woman's presence as a distant face or bust as looking out from within a building. The rectangular frame of the window, often marked with architectural details, limits the viewer's access to the woman's body. This is a common motif in early first-millennium ivory carvings from the Near East.[79] In these carvings, the woman's face is framed—as through a window—and decorative balustrades, with colonettes topped with volute capitals, appear where we would otherwise expect to see the young woman's body. Because she is looking out from a closed architectural space, these details emphasize that the young woman is seen only in part, and that she is physically separated from the viewer. The effect clearly situates the viewer as distant from the young woman—she is accessible only via this small portal. The additional detailing of the courses of architectural framing in three stages around the young woman reinforces the sense that she is set off from and not easily available to the viewer. This convention is used literarily in the Song of Deborah, in which Sisera's mother, ignorant of her son's death in war at the hands of Jael, looks out of her window:

> Out of the window she looked.
> The mother of Sisera gazed
> Out of the lattice (Judg 5:28)

The distance between the mother of Sisera and the action of the story is emphasized by her position behind the window, whence she is unable to see her son's death and defeat.[80] In the Song, this distancing effect is

evoked by the truncation of the young woman's body in the first two verbal depictions of the young woman. This motif is also clearly evoked in 2:8–9, when the young woman envisions the young man as a gazelle on the mountains, who arrives behind the wall, and gazes in (at her) through the interposing architectural features of the wall and windows. Similarly, in the "dream sequences" of 3:1–5 and 5:2–8, the young woman is located spatially inside, on her bed. In the latter scene, her lover knocks from behind a door. As I have already mentioned, the veil appears twice in the first description, literarily "framing" the description of the face with a visual (not architectural, but textile) barrier (4:1, 3). Like the graduated visual frames of the window in the Neo-Assyrian plaque, the poem verbally "frames" the young woman, limiting the access available to the speaker (and the reader). She is not ignorant, as in the case of Sisera's mother. But she is not available. She is visible only in part, as glimpsed from behind a veil or a window. The partiality of the description points to the larger sense of wholeness by a technique of inclusion and omission. Her wholeness, or totality, then, must be supplied by the imagination. When the speaker exclaims, *kullāk yāpāh raʿyātî ûmûm ʾên bāk* ("all of you is beautiful, my dear, there is no flaw in you," 4:7), he evokes a reality that is a fundamental problem for the artist: the seeing "eye" cannot comprehend the whole, and the artist's medium cannot fully express the quality of beauty perceived by the person who is in love. The eye of the lover sees that the beauty of the beloved one exceeds the ability to depict it.

The sense conveyed in the first two descriptive poems, in the tension between the partiality of the descriptions and the claims to wholeness, is that her beauty can be conveyed by "mapping" her as the particular landscape of Israel. It will remain to the final descriptive poem to understand what that might mean. In the final descriptive poem of the young woman, these conventions get turned upside down. The poet will, in this third attempt to capture her beauty, break out of the "woman at the window" frame, overcoming some of the limits of description, revealing greater intimacy, as well as a greater sense of totality as he considers her beauty from the ground up.

The Third Description (Song 7:2–7 [MT; 7:1–6, Eng.])

Building on the vision that begins to take shape in Chapters 4 and 6, in the final descriptive poem, the gaze of the poet reiterates and revisits the

young woman's beauty. The gaze here is far more intimate, and it is also more panoramic:[81]

> How beautiful are your feet in sandals,
> Daughter of a noble,
> The rounding[82] of your thighs is like jewelry[83]
> The work of a mastercraftsman's[84] hands.
> Your navel[85] is a rounded bowl[86]
> It does not lack for mixed wine.[87]
> Your belly is a heap of wheat
> Fenced with lilies.
> Your two breasts are like two fawns
> Twins of a gazelle.
> Your neck is like an ivory tower.
> Your eyes are pools of Heshbon
> Upon the gate of Bath-Rabbim.[88]
> Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon
> Overlooking the face of Damascus.
> Your head upon you is like Carmel.
> The loom[89] of your head is like purple
> A king is captured in its tresses.[90]
> How beautiful, and how lovely
> Oh love, in delight. (Song 7:2–7)

Intervening between these latter two descriptions is the descriptive poem of the young man (5:10–16). This poem, uttered from the perspective of the young woman, is an appreciation of the young man's beauty that proceeds downward from the top of the head to the legs. Its metaphors have some overlap with the young woman's (eyes like doves, v. 12; cheeks like beds of spices, v. 13), but the overall cast of the imagery seems to be drawn more from statuary than from local landscape: "His arms are rounded gold, set with jewels. His body is ivory work, encrusted with sapphires" (5:14).[91] The final description of the young woman seems to benefit from the previous two iterations, as well as dialogically from her description of the young man's beauty—her speech prompts and perhaps models yet another—and more complete—answering glance. In this final description of the young woman, the gaze glides upward from the ground, and the total view includes descriptions of parts of her body not normally accessible to the

viewing eye. That the poem begins with the feet shows that the perspective has shifted drastically. The vision of the feet implies, at the outset, that the viewer sees a more total picture—we have access here to a part of the young woman that was entirely occluded in the previous two descriptions. The description moves up to the thighs, then the navel, then the belly. The view is directed toward parts of the body that were not previously disclosed—and that would not normally be on display, but would be concealed by clothing.[92] In this way, the third description assumes a new level of intimacy between the speaker and the lover's body. It is unsurprising, then, that the veil, which had such a prominent role in the first two poems, does not appear in this final description. The boundaries that had previously enacted the distance between the speaker and the lover have dropped, creating the sense of a new, private proximity to the lover's body.

In this section, the perspective doesn't focus immediately on the landscape, but rather lingers momentarily with finely wrought objects. The thighs, under the gaze of the viewer, have a created and manufactured quality: "the rounding of your thighs is like jewelry / the work of a master craftsman's hands" (7:2). The viewer, perhaps influenced by the description of the young man, evokes the aesthetics of adornment to represent the young woman's value.[93] Jeremiah 10:3–4, 9 describes the tasks and skills of fabrication:

> A tree from the forest is cut down
> And worked with an axe by the hands of an artisan
> With silver and with gold they beautify it . . .
> Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish
> And gold from Uphaz
> The work of an artisan and the hands of a goldsmith
> Their clothing is blue and purple,
> They are all the product of skilled workers. (Jer 10:3–4, 9)

The skill of the workers lies in their ability to work wood, or to use specific metallurgical technologies to form something beautiful from raw natural materials. The NRSV renders verse 4: "they deck it with silver and gold," but there is more positive, aesthetic evaluation being made: *yəyappêhû* ("they make it beautiful," v. 4). Adornment, that is, the work of skilled workers, has the power to seduce the eye of the viewer with its beauty. The conjunction of this intimate view with the aesthetically charged images of fabrication and adornment suggest that part of intimacy is seeing precious

valuability that is not normally in view. In the intimacy of the parts that are described, as well as in the emphasis on fine crafting, the young woman is more fully visible, and her value more fully appreciated, in this description than in the previous poems.

This fuller visibility makes the abdomen available as well, as the gaze rests on the navel, which is also crafted, "turned." Here, the poem evokes agricultural elements in addition to fabricated ones, specifically *hammāzeg* ("mixed wine") and *ʿărēmat ḥiṭṭîm* ("a heap of wheat"). Each of these images invokes the productive farmstead, and plays on the locally productive landscape to embody the beauty of the young woman. There is a moment of concrete visual landscape here, when the belly is visualized as a heap of wheat, encircled with lilies. Landy describes the image of lilies as having the effect of "a pointillist painting,"[94] which nicely captures how individual blossoms could help build a cumulative picture of the young woman. One could say further: this is to a certain extent not unlike the way the descriptions gather up disparate imagery in order to summon the young woman as a whole. If the previous poems, in their more limited attempts at description, draw together images from the local agrarian landscape, this description takes such imagery and adds to it elements of fine craftsmanship, then specifies elements of produce (wheat and wine) that emphasize the delicious fertility of the land. To the visuality of the previous poems, this poem adds a gustatory element that plays more fully on the experience of the local farmstead. A fuller picture of life in an ancient landscape is evoked. As geographer Yi-Fu Tuan notes, in addition to the visual aspect, "the world is known through the senses of hearing, smell, taste, and touch. These senses, unlike the visual, require close contact and long association with the environment. . . ."[95] The sense of sight operates over the greatest distances, and also therefore implies less proximity and less intimacy than the other senses. Tuan also emphasizes that the kind of intimacy possible through the other senses emerges more slowly, the familiarity accruing over a length of time. He writes, "[T]o know the town's characteristic odours and sounds, the textures of its pavements and walls, requires a far longer period of contact."[96] The multisensory characteristics of the landscape become increasingly available in subsequent descriptive poems, evoking close association over time. This is a developing perspective, still related to the other descriptions through the reiteration of the previous poem's image of the breasts: *šənê šādayik kišnê ʿŏpārîm / toʾŏmê ṣəbîāh* ("Your two breasts are like two fawns / twins of a gazelle," 4:5; 7:4).

As the description continues to move up the young woman's body, it is evident that the perspective in the third description is not merely more intimate; it is also more panoramic. If in the previous descriptions there were hints of topographical comparisons, here the greatest cluster of toponyms in the entire book occurs:

> Your neck is like an ivory tower
> Your eyes are pools of Heshbon
> Upon the gate of Bath-Rabbim.
> Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon
> Watching the face of Damascus (v. 5)

As the gaze is cultivated, the comparisons with the landscape are increased (there are more of them), and they also take on a more sweeping tone. First, the eyes are *bərēkôt bəḥešbôn* ("pools of Heshbon," 7:5). Heshbon, on the far side of the Jordan, lies outside of the geography of Israel during most periods, but was remembered as part of Israel at its widest reach: When the Israelites defeated Sihon (Num 21:21–25) it became the boundary between Reuben and Gad (Josh 13:15–23, 24–28), and was eventually designated as a Levitical city (Josh 21:39; 1 Chron 6:81).[97] This reference is not necessarily a sign of the poet's preference for exotic, non-Israelite locales, as Zakovitch argues,[98] but may suggest an idealization of the broadest possible "map" of Israel, drawing on the most expansive literary formulations of Israel's traditional land claim (Gen 15:18; Deut 1:7; 11:24; Josh 1:4). Maps, like landscapes, are imaginative and artistic representations of space (indebted though modern mapmaking is to science).[99] The "pools" may refer to the thermal hot springs very near the city of Madaba in modern-day Jordan, near where the ancient city was located, north of the Dead Sea where the Nahr Ḥesbān flows into the Jordan.[100] Elsewhere, the Song likens the lover to the oasis at Ein-Gedi (1:14) at the western edge of the Dead Sea, and presumably could have done so here; in other words, the image of these more distant pools at Heshbon emphasizes a broader conceptualization of the young woman-as-landscape. "Eye" and "spring" are homonyms in Hebrew; the shared word *ʿayin* perhaps suggests their shared liquidity and sparkle. It is the watery surface of the pools that are evoked here, seen from above or afar, glinting and reflecting the light.[101] These dual elements—the distant toponyms and the phenomenologically rich descriptions—charge the audience to imagine the utmost reaches of the

conceptualized landscape of Israel, a view made possible by an imagined stance high above the ground.

Bath-Rabbim is another example of a term best understood, along with Heshbon, as a topographical reference, although the location has not been identified. The pools of Heshbon are "near" the gate (cf. *ʿal*, Gen 41:1), which suggests that Bath-Rabbim is intended to further specify the pools, pointing the reader to an even more particular place. Even if the location is opaque to the reader, the reference is made in a way that suggests the speaker's familiarity. We are simultaneously invited to see with intimacy, and yet we are excluded from it. The cryptic intimacy that characterizes this description is reinforced by the catalog of rare terms used. No less than five *hapax legomena* occur in this passage (see notes 82–90), heightening the sense that the vision of the young woman here is rarified; even the vocabulary reflects the speaker's attempt to more adequately account for the young woman's elusive totality, and for the intimacy of the lovers' experience. Anselm Hagedorn has nicely observed, "Die Sprache der Liebenden ist auch immer eine Geheimsprache, deren vollständige Dekodierung unmöglich ist."[102] As the gaze becomes increasingly panoramic—we can see more, farther, and at greater distance—the reader simultaneously understands less of the vocabulary of the description. The speaker describes her in greater detail, but she remains undisclosed to the reader.

The gaze continues to move upward, taking in her nose and then the top of the head. Just as the young man turns the gaze upside down (from toe to head) in this description, he also images the young woman's grandeur in broadening strokes, taking on larger proportions: Her nose is compared to the tower of Lebanon.[103] Delitzsch believes that the meaning of this description lies in the physical characteristics of the nose, which ". . . without being blunt or flat, formed a straight line from the brow downward, without bending to the right or left . . . a mark of symmetrical beauty combined with awe-inspiring dignity."[104] Pope suggests that its "mountainous" quality is a fitting hyperbole for the extremes of the young woman's "superhuman" beauty.[105] Rather than creating a mimetic description of the young woman, though, the images reinforce the governing metaphor, which links the young woman with topography. Her nose is seen as part of the ante-Lebanon range, looking out over the city of Damascus, to the North and East of Israelite territory in present-day Syria.[106] The phrasing here subtly plays with the developing idea of the young woman as a landscape: *ṣôpeh pənê dammāśeq* ("overlooking the face of Damascus,"

7:5). The phrase is not unique, and can idiomatically refer to the surface of the ground.[107] The phrase is thus rightly translated simply as "overlooking Damascus," (NRSV, similarly KJV, ASV, JPS). But this rendering loses some of the richness: the poem plays with the image of the young woman as the land, calling our attention to the deep metaphor for the face of the land as a trope for open space. The nose looks over "the face of Damascus" because this is a typical way of saying that the nose is a high point overlooking open land. But it takes on special significance here because the nose also overlooks the face of the young woman. The topography of the young woman's facial features is like the open face of the land, on which the nose is a stately feature. In this way, the poem seems to self-consciously put the resources of the language to play with the governing analogy of the young woman as a landscape. The landscape panorama is completed by the final image of this description: *rōʾšēk ʿālayik kakkarmel* ("your head upon you is like Carmel," 7:6). One can only take in the abrupt rise of Carmel from the valley floor from a certain distance. The headland of Carmel is a ridge on the northwestern end of the range, rising steeply nearly two thousand feet near the Mediterranean Sea close to modern-day Haifa. If standing on a slope of Carmel, the viewer would be absorbed by vegetation—oaks, pines, olives, and laurels. Taken at close perspective, that is, the striking visual effect of the promontory would not be perceivable. In the same way, the scale of the young woman's beauty implies that the perspective of the viewer is taken from an appreciable distance, from which angle the total is perceivable. The perspective taken by the lover, and conferred upon the reader, then, is one with a particularly panoramic quality.[108] It is the distant viewer who can take in the whole.

The vision assumed by this poetic description is at once more intimate and more panoramic in its depiction of the young woman than the previous two descriptions. As the poem works toward the impossible task of describing the young woman's wholeness, it accumulates a greater fund of resources. While the first two attempts break off at the torso, this final poem marshals greater detail, conveying intimate details of the young woman's body, and encompassing the totality of her body, from her foot to the crown of the head. And yet, once again, the complex multiplicity of the poem's perspective is immediately apparent: *wəḏallat rōʾšēk kāʾargāmān / melek ʾāsûr bārhāṭîm* ("the loom of your head is like purple / a king is captured in its tresses"). Here, the description returns to elements of fabrication—specifically, textile arts—reminding the reader of the detailed, heavily encultured aesthetic qualities of beauty with which

this description began. The density of topographical referents suggests both the familiarity of the poem's locale, as well as its vastness, which can only be apprehended at an appreciative, imaginary distance. The bird's-eye view implied by the descriptive poems was technologically impossible at the time of composition. The inability to literally "see" the land in this way at this point in history (without aerial photography, for instance) means that the poet is relying on a mental map to develop the perspective of the young woman. The imagination of the lover is forced to convey totality by a unique perspective that soars over the landscape, attempting to convey its totality by the selective appreciation of its parts.

This panorama is in apparent conflict with the minute attention to the intimate details of the young woman's body, which are by no means in view from a distance; they are best seen (and the quality of their craftsmanship appreciated) from close up. The catalog itself is a form that relies on just such a technique of juxtaposition, since its conceit is that by listing images of individual parts together, an appreciation of her total aspects may come into view. This juxtaposition of apparently conflicting perspectives has the effect of conveying a stronger sense of totality, since we are seeing all aspects of the young woman from an array of angles. An analogy from the visual arts helps to clarify what I mean by this conflict in perspectives. In a famous painting from the unlocated Egyptian tomb of Neb-Amun, the conflation of viewing angles enables the viewer to appreciate the myriad elements of the garden simultaneously. The landscape includes verdant plant life, including several varieties of fruiting trees seen from a distance at ground level. At the same time, the rectangular pond is viewed from above; as we look down into the water, the trees can be seen to be planted in rows surrounding the edges of the pool. The fish swimming in the water are seen in profile, as if from underwater, while the ducks float on top of the water and yet are also viewed in profile in the same plane as the fish. The conflation of viewing angles helps the viewer to appreciate the beauty of each individual part simultaneously.[109] This is, of course, at least partially a necessity of working before the invention of the artistic technique of fixed perspective. At the same time, the poet employs these techniques of inclusion, employing intimate and panoramic views that simultaneously bring us very close to the young woman's beauty while we soar high above it, appreciating it from a distance. This conflation of perspectives is a technical strategy that conveys a sense of totality.

The depiction that is envisioned by the young man's utterances is not intended to mimetically reproduce the young woman's actual essence.

Rather, it assumes that the young woman's beauty is related to her wholeness, which is not literally created by the imagery, but which lies behind and beyond it. This increasingly full visibility might be understood as a result of the poetic process itself—the perceived limitations of the medium (embodied in the breaking off and the partial viewpoints of the first two attempts) prompt the viewer to return to the subject. The poem is part of an intensely focused, creative attempt to recapitulate, to be commensurate to, its object, such that the gaze is honed, trained, by the poetic process.

Conclusion: The Landscape, Picasso's Women, and the Gaze (Again)

This chapter has lifted up two significant themes in the descriptive poems of the young woman: first, the gaze is related to the task of description, which is both a problem and a possibility; second, there is a significant analogy between the young woman's body and the land. The perspective assumed throughout these descriptive poems requires both distance, in order to see the young woman as a landscape, and closeness, in order to appreciate her body as a body. Throughout the Song—especially in these poems, but throughout the Song as well—the land is eroticized. This eroticization extends beyond the descriptive poems and pervades the Song: the hills, for instance, are "cleft," as round and deliciously scented, spicy, as the breasts of a lover (4:6; 8:14; cf. 2:14).[110] This intimate and erotic vision of the young woman-as-land confronts a problem; these descriptive poems convey the sense that the task of description is impossible—for how could one take in, let alone represent, the total and complex aspects of a person with one glance? The lover's return to the young woman's beauty is a conceit of process, which suggests the impossibility of conveying the "wholeness" that is perceived and desired. Even the fullest description in 7:1–7—while the view moves from the foot to the top of the head, and thus in one sense portrays her "whole" body—is still characterized by omission: It can only selectively describe her in parts. Like the landscape that serves as her primary analog, the young woman's wholeness is elusive; it can't be taken in at a single glance, "mastered" by the eye of the viewer, or accounted for in every detail. The perceiver's capacity to apprehend the complexity of the whole always falls short. This insurmountable complexity, I suggest, is intrinsic to an understanding of beauty. Her dynamism is the dynamism of a living organism, whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The liveliness of the images cuts against Black's suggestion that the description of parts is an act of literary violence. The descriptive poem, in her view, "plots the woman's body across the topography of Israel, in effect merging her not only with certain features of geography, but mapping her body, as one might tread from place to place, as if on a journey."[111] She goes on to say that, in light of the priority of topographical elements, "the body is cut up and spread across the land, a little like the victimized woman of Judges 19, and reassembled, Picasso-like, as the pieces are gathered into a geographical portrait."[112] Black's invocation of Pablo Picasso's art is striking and perceptive. Like Picasso's later works (especially during his analytic and synthetic cubist periods), the Song portrays the lover not in any kind of realist mode, but highly selectively, developing a style of representation that is not strictly mimetic of portraiture or person, but that uses elemental forms to build a cumulative image of the lover. A parallel might be noted, for example, in Picasso's *Girl with Mandolin (Fanny Tellier)* (1910). Here, as much as one sees the contours of the young woman, the two-dimensional plane of the painting is highlighted with the foregrounding of elemental shapes—rectangles, squares, triangles, circles comprise the background, as well as the body of the young woman. But while Black is right that the strategy of paintings like this is a kind of "reassembly," it is not, therefore, necessarily marked by satire, or violence. The young woman in the Song is not "victimized," nor is the subject of *Girl with a Mandolin (Fanny Tellier)*. Despite its resistance to realism, this is a painting of great tenderness and sensitivity—its muted tones, the gentle angle of the neck that echoes the neck of the mandolin, the soft waves of the subject's hair, the way the body of the woman advances subtly from the shared geometry of the background—suggesting not a disposition of mockery on the part of the painter or viewer, but one of affection. Such a disposition is also evident in the great 1913 painting *Woman in an Armchair (Eva)*, which is rendered in even greater distortion. Indeed, over the course of his long career, Picasso chose to work not with professional models, but preferred to paint people who were his intimates—wives, lovers, friends.[113] He painted series of the young Marie-Therèse Walter, and later of Dora Maar. In each case, the lover is repeatedly painted or drawn, and each rendering is different, though it shares characteristics with the previous renderings of the subject. The sequence reveals the artist's intense interest in the subject, and the style of the painting—especially the surreal use of color and rendering of form into blocks of shape and parts that represent the body in a two-dimensional plane—does not necessarily reveal an underlying

dismantling of the lover's form, but rather a steady and passionate artistic response to it. As Arthur Danto writes, "Picasso did not develop Cubism to disclose an outer structure in the world but to project an inner structure of feelings and attitudes toward that in the world which claimed his emotions."[114] Black's comparison to Picasso is apt: each of these very disparate arts (Picasso's modernist painting; the lyrics of ancient Israel) employs non-realist strategies to render the subject of the lover. More than this, though, Picasso's sequential and repeated paintings of the lover are also curiously parallel to that of the Song—each sequence suggests that one representation is not enough to be commensurate to the inner experience of being in the lover's presence.

What I have attempted to show here is that the non-realistic assembly of the descriptive poems is not fundamentally violent or oppressive, but rather recognizes the inherent problem of description, and works within this problem to create a progressively more encompassing perspective on the lover. Neither the landscape nor the young woman is subject to an exploitative gaze that would dismember the young woman or reduce the landscape to an anonymous resource: the specificity of the face and the particularity of the named landscape render the subject not anonymous, but known, seen, and loved. These poems, taken this way, do not "explicate" beauty. Rather, the partialness of the descriptions recognizes the inevitable hermeneutical circle of lovers: the appreciation of the lover is not objective, but affective. Like the affection for one's particular landscape, it is not constituted first and foremost by objective evaluations, but proceeds out of intimacy and experience. What comes first is love—for one's lover, as for one's place—and the attempt to convey the rationale for that love, for example, by presenting an experience of the presence of beauty, is only secondary. It is an ongoing attempt over time to offer an accounting of the affective commitment. The process of poeticizing this affection—by attempting to describe the apparent beauty of the lover—enables the poet to see the complexity of the whole of the lover's being more clearly, more fully, and with greater totality. The progressive descriptions of the young woman model a kind of cultivation of the gaze, in which people and land are perceived with ever increasing fullness and complexity.

At the same time, the perspective of the other, the lover, shapes the self-perception of the subject. As Susan Stewart writes,

> The beloved's voice is untouchable. It is that which touches me and which I cannot touch. Yet the one who "owns" it—that is, the

> one who belongs to it—cannot touch it either. I cannot see my eyes when I see; they are invisible to me. And I cannot hear my own voice when I speak: I hear only its echo or resonance and when it comes to me on a recording it comes as a stranger's voice, as horrid and uncanny as a glimpse of my own corpse. The voice and the eyes take part in the more general truth that I cannot witness my own motion as a whole: I cannot see what is alive about myself and so depend on the view of others. It is the viewpoint of the beloved that gives witness to what is alive in our being.[115]

I began this exploration of landscape with mapping and painting as points of reference, admitting that the European landscape tradition is an imperfect analogy for these ancient lyrical descriptions. The Western (modern) mindset is quite different from what we see in the Song. Barbara Bender writes that there is a particular "Western Gaze" that motivates landscape and cartographical traditions. It is one that "skims the surface; surveys the land from an ego-centered viewpoint; and invokes the active viewer (the subject) and a passive land (object). This active viewer is equated with 'culture' and the land with 'nature'; and viewer/culture are gendered male, land/nature are gendered female. Finally, the Western Gaze is about control."[116] She is perhaps correct to note that this gaze can exploitatively serve imperial and hegemonic interests. I raise this issue because I believe it points to the limitations of the cartographical approach taken by Robert and Tournay, who wish to map the young woman point by point, and to the approach of Black, who assumes precisely this type of objectifying view. The experience of landscape here is a quite personal process that takes place through time. It evokes a layered, multisensory experience that conflates an imaginary bird's-eye view with the close proximity of land experienced by someone who knows it intimately. In this way, the lover experiences the lover and the landscape as an embedded member, alive to multiple senses, traveling through a known place, savoring its multiple associations, and developing a clearer appreciation over time. These depictions explore the complexity of a dynamic and affective human experience in a beloved landscape. The map that is summoned in this landscape view, then, is something closer to an "indigenous map." Bender remarks on the conflict in the 1970s and 1980s between the Peruvian government and the local peasant communities of a governmental project to create a nature preserve at Lake Titicaca that would have disrupted the centuries-inhabited settlements and lifeways of the

indigenous people. The government drew up an official map to help make their case, de-emphasizing the size and number of settlements, and emphasizing the lakeside sites that would become tourist attractions. The peasant communities responded by creating their own maps—these exaggerated the proximity and size of settlements, emphasizing their significance. Their maps were not to scale, and did not include towns. Rather, "[t]heir maps moved between the conventional over-view and a ground view: houses and mountains were shown vertically. The maps, faithful to indigenous perceptions, showed the natural features that cradled and protected the settlements. Each settlement was crowned with a small Peruvian flag, thus coopting the official insignia of power."[117] Similarly, Barry Lopez remarks on the perceptions of the Inuit people in Arctic, whose knowledge of the landscape is intimate and multifaceted, and while they are capable of creating maps, they navigate large swaths of ocean and land without them, relying instead on mental maps. He writes of the distinction between this indigenous mapmaking and Western cartographic approaches: "[i]n the face of a rational, scientific approach to the land, which is more widely sanctioned, esoteric insights and speculations are frequently overshadowed, and what is lost is profound. The land is like poetry: it is inexplicably coherent, it is transcendent in its meaning, and it has the power to elevate a consideration of human life."[118]

The gaze of the lover in the Song employs the power of an intimately experienced landscape to elevate the human lover. The gaze required is an imaginary one, one that travels over a landscape and experiences it, progressively unfolding in time. The attempt to reassemble the depictions is not therefore de-humanizing, it is re-humanizing, a response of love to the perceived wholeness that is yet technologically impossible. The consideration of the female body in the descriptive poems develops and models a practice of attentive empathy,[119] one shaped by physical presence and the resources of memory. Lopez writes, "[i]f one can take the phrase 'a country of the mind' to mean the landscape evident to the senses, as it is retained in human memory and arises in the oral tradition of a people, as a repository of both mythological and 'real-time' history, then perhaps this phrase will suffice."[120] Such a "country of the mind" becomes available through the ancient practice of walking through a known landscape, slowly, at the pace of the human gait. The landscape thus makes itself available to the senses, through the sights, scents, and sounds that are familiar or anomalous, and which corroborate or challenge the accretive stories and songs of its inhabitants, and which finally become part of the long-term understanding of

a particular topography.[121] The kind and quality of vision that draws the young woman's beauty in terms of the land of Israel is a vision of affection, of memory, and is reminiscent of a long-term experience in a particular topography. This landscape is experienced over time, through several reiterations. It conveys the sense of the magnitude of the landscape's beauty, and the excesses of its possibilities.

6

Conclusion

THROUGHOUT THIS INQUIRY I have sought to describe the poetic conceptualization of the natural world that is so pervasive in the Song of Songs, and that provides the basic components of its vocabulary and imagination. What I have hoped to show is the Song's consistent enmeshing of human flourishing within a flourishing cultivated landscape. One way—perhaps the most significant way—that this is accomplished is through the underlying analogy between the lovers themselves and the eroticized landscape, particularly between the young woman's body and the body of the land. Such an analogy is pervasive in the ancient world, as I have indicated from time to time in each of the previous chapters, but it is not altogether fixed: there is enough fluidity and variability in the analogy that it is too simple to say, as Lévi-Strauss does, that "woman is everywhere synonymous with nature."[1] What the conceptual overlaps do accomplish is to eroticize the landscape. Sensuality and desire are "powerful motivating aspects of imagination, mobilised in complex ways in relation to the vision which they often direct, and cannot be ignored as responses to landscapes,"[2] an assumption that the Song employs to great effect. In a sense, the Song elaborates a vision of what it might mean to love one's land, which is to see it with affection and to intervene in it with care.

In the secondary literature on the Song, I found that scholars have largely not explored the Song's conceptualization of the natural world, and those who do tend to reify "nature" and "culture" as opposing forces, and to romanticize nature over against culture. On my reading of the Song, the medial spaces—such as the farm and the garden—are especially prominent, and they are spaces that are defined largely by complex

interactions between human cultures and the land. It may be that the interest in celebrating a landed, agricultural existence emerged from a particular historical moment in Persian Yehud—one can imagine the ideals of long-term agrarian resettlement converging with imperial programs in a number of hypothetical configurations[3]—but it is equally plausible that such values emerged from and would have been intelligible to people across a wide swath of political and historical contexts. Certainly, the genre of pastoral, with which the Song has strong similarities, tends to emerge at times of cultural transition, when traditional patterns of settled agriculture are challenged by forces like urbanization, political upset, or technological innovation. But given our historical ignorance and lyric's characteristic capacity to transcend time and place, we might simply note that the Song offers a hopeful vision of the human situation in a landscape that is as available now as it was to any number of imagined ancient audiences. There is a sense of belonging of each to the other that is circumscribed by an ethical awareness that values cultivation and long-term durability, and one that privileges affective commitments and emotional experiences.

I have taken some pains to show, though, that the generally optimistic sensibility of the Song is tempered throughout by an awareness of labor practices, the vulnerability of plants and other elements of the landscape, and the possibility of death or harm that lingers at the edges of the poetry. The celebration of flourishing in light of fragility creates a fuller sense of goodness as a precious, even threatened possibility, and heightens the need for human responsibility and care. In speaking of "care" throughout this project, I have kept in mind the growing philosophical conversation around ethics of care, largely developed in feminist theory and psychology. I point to them as a fruitful place for further inquiry.[4] However, I have refrained from explicitly engaging this corpus, in part because it is my intention to highlight the aesthetics of this ancient literary body, which is not itself an ethic, although it has ethical implications. Rather, as my final chapter has especially attempted to highlight, what the poetry of the Song does so effectively is to recommend a way of seeing, in both literal and metaphorical senses. "Nature" in the Song of Songs is a landscape, and like the human body, we can learn to care for it as we learn to see it with a quality of vision that is shaped by affection.

Notes

CHAPTER 1

1. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Man and Nature* (Resource paper 10; Washington, DC: Association of American Geographers, Commission on College Geography, 1971), 1.
2. Tuan, *Man and Nature*, 1.
3. Gerhard von Rad, "The Theological Problem of the Doctrine of Creation," in *From Genesis to Chronicles: Explorations in Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 177–86; Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (trans. J. A. Baker; Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1933), 100–101; Von Rad came to question his own position in later works: Gerhard von Rad, "Some Aspects of the Old Testament Worldview," in *From Genesis to Chronicles: Explorations in Old Testament Theology* (ed. K. C. Hanson; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 205–22. Cf. Ronald Simkins, *Creator and Creation: Nature in the Worldview of Ancient Israel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 7–11.
4. George Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament against Its Environment* (SBT 2; London: SCM Press, 1950), 28.
5. There are many examples; I cite here Ellen Davis, whose *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) anticipates some of my concerns. Inquiries into the biblical perspectives on the natural world largely proceed almost exclusively through the theological concept of "creation." Jacques Trublet, "Peut-on parler de nature dans l'Ancien Testament?" *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 98 (2010): 193–215.
6. Simkins notes three important aspects to considering ancient Israel's relationship to its environment: the impact of the Israelites on their environment; the influence of the environment on the development of Israelite religion and culture; and Israelite attitudes toward nature; this study is of the third type (Simkins, *Creator and Creation*, 3, 19).

7. Ellen Bernstein, "The Natural Intelligence of the Song of Songs," in *The Gift of Creation: Images from Scripture and Earth* (ed. Norman Wirzba and Thomas G. Barnes; Morley, MO: Acclaim Press, 2009), 94–103; Yehuda Feliks, *Song of Songs: Nature Epic and Allegory* (Jerusalem: Israel Society for Biblical Research, 1983).
8. Daniel Grossberg, "Nature, Humanity, and Love in Song of Songs," *Interpretation* 59 (2005): 233.
9. Numerous good studies exist; especially Harold Henry Rowley, "The Interpretation of the Song of Songs," in *The Servant of the Lord, and Other Essays on the Old Testament* (London: Lutterworth, 1952), 189; J. Paul Tanner, "The History of Interpretation of the Song of Songs," *BSac* 154 (1997): 23–46; Marvin H. Pope, *Song of Songs* (AB 7C; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 89–229; Duane A. Garrett, *Song of Songs* (WBC 23B; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004), 59–91.
10. Although not exclusively. Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia, advocated an erotic interpretation, which was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 550; Jovinian's marital interpretation was condemned by a papal synod in 393, although his marital reading also complemented his ecclesial interpretation. See Karl Shuve, *The Song of Songs and the Fashioning of Identity in Early Latin Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). Later advocates include Sebastian Castellio (reprobated by Calvin), and Grotius (Rowley, "The Interpretation of the Song of Songs," 206–9).
11. Ann W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 8. For a survey of diverse Jewish approaches to allegory, see Lipinski et al., "Allegory," *EncJud* 1 (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007): 665–67.
12. Philip S. Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible: the Targums 17A; Wilmington, DE: M. Glazier; T&T Clark International, 2003), 45–51. See, for example, Ellen Davis, "Romance of the Land in the Song of Songs," *AThR* 80 (1998): 533–46.
13. Harry Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds., *Midrash Rabbah, Translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices* (London: Soncino Press, 1939), 92. For brief discussion, see Jacob Neusner, *Song of Songs Rabbah: An Analytical Translation* (BJS 197–198; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 183–85.
14. This strategy becomes clearer in a Midrash on 7:5 (*ʾappēk kəmigdal halləbanôn ṣôpeh pənê dammāśeq*, "your nose is like a tower of Lebanon looking out over Damascus") as referring to the city of Jerusalem and its eventual expansion northward to Damascus (Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 152).
15. A. J. Rosenberg, *The Five Megilloth: A New English Translation* (Judaica Books of the Hagiographa: The Holy Writings; New York: Judaica Press, 1992); cf. Richard Frederick Littledale, *A Commentary on the Song of Songs: From Ancient and Medieval Sources* (London: J. Masters, 1869), 59; http://www.archive.org/details/commentaryonsongoolitt.

16. Jacob Neusner, *Song of Songs Rabbah*, 1:2. The Targum Song of Songs is less atomized than other Targumim and Midrashim, but its theological unity is still quite restricted; see Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, xi.
17. See the excellent articles on "Allegory," in *EBR*, ed. Hans-Josef Klauck et al. (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages*, esp. 1–24; E. Anne Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvannia, 1990); Rowley, "The Interpretation of the Song of Songs," 194–202; Karl Shuve, *The Song of Songs and the Fashioning of Identity in Early Latin Christianity*.
18. Origen, *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies*, trans. R. P. Lawson, ACW 26 (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1957), 176.
19. Cf. Ambrose, De Spir. Sanct. ii.5; Littledale, *A Commentary on the Song of Songs*, 58.
20. Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* III, trans. Killian Walsh and Irene Edmonds (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1979), 6. Cf. William E. Phipps, "The Plight of the Song of Songs," in *The Song of Songs*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1988), 5–23.
21. Cited in Littledale, *A Commentary on the Song of Songs*, 315.
22. More recent allegorical approaches emphasize the politics of the Song. See Paul Joüon, *Le Cantique des Cantiques: Commentaire Philologique et Exégétique* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1909), 9–11; André Robert and Raymond Jacques Tournay, *Le Cantique Des Cantiques: Traduction Et Commentaire* (*EBib*; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1963); Luis I. J. Stadelmann, *Love and Politics: A New Commentary on the Song of Songs* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), ix; Scott B. Noegel and Gary A. Rendsburg, *Solomon's Vineyard: Literary and Linguistic Studies in the Song of Songs* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Jacques Cazeaux, *Le Cantique des Cantiques: des Pourpres de Salomon à l'Anémone des Champs* (LD 222; Paris: Cerf, 2008). A more traditional religious allegory is traced by Edmée Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God: A Study in Biblical Intertextuality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
23. These developments are conveniently traced in Martti Nissinen, "Song of Songs and Sacred Marriage," in *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*, ed. Martti Nissinen and Risto Uro (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), esp. 174–78; for a critique of the idea of "literal" interpretation, see Roland Boer, *Knockin' on Heaven's Door: The Bible and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), 53–70; "Making It, Literally: Metaphor, Economy, and the Sensuality of Nature," in *The Earthy Nature of the Bible: Fleshly Readings of Sex, Masculinity, and Carnality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 35–46.
24. Drawing on the observations of J. G. Wetzstein, "Dei syrische Dreschtafel," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 5 (1873): 270–302.
25. Karl Budde, "The Song of Solomon," *New World* 3 (1894): 72.
26. Budde, "The Song of Solomon," 64.

27. Budde, "The Song of Solomon," 72–74; for critique, Samuel Krauss, "Die 'Landscaft' im bliblischen Hohenliede," *MGWJ* 78 (1934): 81–97. This may be a result of the influence of Greek bucolic poetry; see Heinrich Graetz, *Schir Ha-Schirim, oder, Das salomonische Hohelied übersetzt und kritisch erläutert* (Wien: W. Braumüller, 1871), 67–73; Pope, *Song of Songs*, 36–37; Anselm C. Hagedorn, "Of Foxes and Vineyards: Greek Perspectives on the Song of Songs," *VT* 53 (2003): 337–52; Richard Hunter, "'Sweet Talk': Song of Songs and the Traditions of Greek Poetry," in *Perspectives on the Song of Songs = Perspektiven der Hoheliedauslegung*, ed. Anselm C. Hagedorn (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 228–44.
28. Francis Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* (BLS 7; Sheffield, UK: Almond Press, 1983), 31.
29. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 110. A similar distinction between "nature" and "culture" is a fundamental theme elaborated by Gianni Barbiero, *Song of Songs: A Close Reading* (VTSup 144; Boston: Brill, 2011), 92–93, 369, etc.
30. J. Cheryl Exum, *Song of Songs* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 45–47.
31. Jill M. Munro, *Spikenard and Saffron: The Imagery of the Song of Songs* (JSOTSup 203; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 96.
32. Exceptions include Marcia Falk, who treats "settings" for the pursuit of love in *Love Lyrics from the Bible: A Translation and Literary Study of The Song of Songs* (Sheffield, UK: The Almond Press, 1982), esp. 88–91; cf. Munro, who studies the symbolism of "nature imagery," *Spikenard and Saffron*; Brian P. Gault, "Body Concealed, Body Revealed: Shedding Comparative Light on the Body in the Song of Songs" (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, 2012). These latter studies have treated "natural" elements atomistically among a wider catalog of discrete types of images.
33. I am inclined to see the genre term "lyric" as useful, even while the account of lyric—especially for ancient, non-Western poetry such as the Song—should be historicized and adapted to describe empirical features of particular bodies of poetry. See, e.g., Ralph Cohen, "History and Genre," *New Literary History* 17 (1986): 203–18.
34. Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 328.
35. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Idea of Lyric Poetry in the Bible," in *On Biblical Poetry* (New York: Oxford, 2015), 178–81; Jonathan Culler, "Genre: Lyric," in *The Work of Genre: Selected Essays from the English Institute*, ed. Robyn Warhol (Cambridge, MA: The English Institute, 2011), par 35. For a critique of the transhistorical existence of lyric, see esp. Gérard Genette, *The Architext*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992 [1979]); Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).
36. Jonathan Culler, "Genre: Lyric," par. 46.

37. Cleanth Brooks, "The Heresy of Paraphrase," in *The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1947), 192–214; cf. Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry*, 220.
38. J. Cheryl Exum, *Song of Songs*, 3.
39. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 12.
40. Tod Linafelt, "The Arithmetic of Eros," *Interpretation* 59 (2005): 251. Linafelt's view of lyric draws especially on the work of Barbara Hardy (*The Advantage of Lyric: Essays on Feeling in Poetry* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977]), W. R. Johnson (*The Idea of Lyric: Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry* [Berkeley: California University Press, 1982]), and Helen Vendler (*Poems, Poets, Poetry*, 2nd ed. [New York: Bedford; St. Martins, 2002]); cf. Linafelt, "Lyrical Theology: The Song of Songs and the Advantage of Poetry," in *Toward a Theology of Eros: Transfiguring Passion at the Limits of the Discipline*, ed. Virginia Burrus, Catherine Keller (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2007), esp. 292–93; and "On Biblical Style," *The St. John's Review* 54 (2012), esp. 39–40.
41. Linafelt, "On Biblical Style," 39; cf. F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "A Feeling through Language," in *On Biblical Poetry*, 210–12.
42. Tod Linafelt, "The Arithmetic of Eros," 253; cf. Munro, *Spikenard and Saffron*, 96; Falk, *Love Lyrics from the Bible*, 88–91.
43. Anne W. Stewart, *Poetic Ethics in Proverbs: Wisdom Literature and the Shaping of the Moral Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
44. Stephen Geller suggests that there are few instances of "nature poetry" in the Hebrew Bible, where nature is celebrated for its own sake. He includes the Song; Job 38–42; Ps 104; Ps 19; Prov 3:3–18, 19–20 ("Wisdom, Nature, and Piety in Some Biblical Psalms," in *Riches Hidden in Secret Places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen*, ed. I. Tzvi Abusch [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002]), 105.
45. Linafelt, "On Biblical Style," 39. Cf. F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry*, 211.
46. Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*, 47. For a study of the Song's ethical orientation toward the other, see Sarah Zhang, *I, You, and the Word "God": Finding Meaning in the Song of Songs* (Siphrut 20; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016).
47. Martti Nissinen writes, "the distinction between sacred and secular texts is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain. Even Egyptian love songs demonstrably borrow from religious and magical literature. Many Mesopotamian poems have an indisputably cultic context, yet in many cases—including some Sumerian love poetry—drawing a distinction between entertainment and cultic is impossible and, indeed, irrelevant." "Song of Songs and Sacred Marriage," 196. Other scholars who have resisted strictly secular approaches include Marvin Pope, *Song of Songs*, esp. 210; and Hans-Peter Müller, "Die lyrische Reproduktion des Mythischen im Hohelied," *ZTK* 73 (1976): 23–41; Linafelt argues for a theological-erotic reading of the Song in "Biblical Love Poetry (. . . and God),"

JAAR 70 (2002), esp. 336; David Carr, *The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible* (New York: Oxford University, 2005).

48. "Allowing multiple readings of the Song of Songs, including religious, is necessary by virtue of its very nature as a characteristic representative of the ancient Near Eastern poetic tradition," Nissinen, "The Song of Songs and Sacred Marriage," 214; cf. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*, 172. Such an orientation is something like the "religion *and* literature" approach advocated by Lesleigh Cushing Stahlberg, "Time, Memory, and Recital: Religion and Literature in Exodus 12," *Religion & Literature* 46 (2014): 75–94.
49. Kenneth R. Olwig, "Recovering the Substantive Nature of Landscape," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86 (1996): 630–53.
50. German *Landschaft*, "land-shape." Sauer, "Morphology of Landscape," in *Land and Life: A Selection from the Writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer*, ed. John Leighly (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 315–50; Paul Groth and Chris Wilson, "The Polyphony of Cultural Landscape Study," in *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies after J. B. Jackson*, ed. Paul Groth and Chris Wilson (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 2.
51. Emphasis added. Cited in Corner, *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press), 5.
52. Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry*, 191.
53. Susan Stewart writes, "This deep analogy between the turning that opens the earth to the sky and the turning that inscribes the page with a record of human movement is carried forward in the notion of verse as a series of turns and in the circling recursivity of all lyric forms," *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*, 85.
54. Augustin Berque, "Beyond the Modern Landscape," Architectural Association Files 25 (1993): 33.
55. Carl Ortwin Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape," 19–54.
56. Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape," 345. Similar concerns were formulated in Germany under the title *Kulturlandschaft*, and in France, with Paul Vidal de la Blanch and the ideas of the *genre de vie* and *paysage*.
57. J. B. Jackson advocated that an accounting for the history of the American landscape must include "talking about fields and fences and roads and crossroads and schoolhouses, and eventually it means talking about the grid in towns and cities," "How to Study Landscape," in *The Necessity for Ruins, and Other Topics* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 113–26.
58. Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998).
59. These two streams converged in aesthetics, where "landscape" became closely allied with a picturesque aesthetic of nature, specifically referring to representation of a pleasing panorama as in estate gardens (see Groth and Wilson, "The Polyphony of Cultural Landscape Study," 3). Concern over this double meaning is the central tension of Richard Hartshorne (*The Nature of Geography: A Critical*

Survey of Current Thought in the Light of the Past [Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976]); cf. Olwig, "Recovering the Substantive Nature of Landscape," 630.

60. Berque, "Beyond the Modern Landscape," 33.
61. Berque, "Beyond the Modern Landscape," 33; cf. Corner, *Recovering Landscape*, 4; Barbara Bender and Margot Winer, eds., *Contested Landscapes: Movement, Exile and Place* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2001); for an overview of approaches, see Jeremy Michael Hutton, *The Transjordanian Palimpsest: The Overwritten Texts of Personal Exile and Transformation in the Deuteronomistic History* (*BZAW* 396; Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 31–35.
62. T. J. Wilkinson, *Archaeological Landscapes of the Near East* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), 7. Wilkinson follows the work of Preucel and Hodder, who outline four potential approaches to landscape that range from defining landscape as nature to defining landscape as a phenomenon of culture. These are (1) landscape as environment (which is occupied with analyzing and reconstructing paleo-economies); (2) landscape as system (which attempts to take a settlement-based approach); (3) landscape as power (which treats ideological manipulation of landscapes); and (4) landscape as experience. Robert Preucel and Ian Hodder, *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory: A Reader* (Social Archaeology; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 32–34; See also Aren M. Maeir, Shim'on Dar, and Zeev Safrai, eds., *The Rural Landscape of Ancient Israel* (BAR International Series 1121; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2003).
63. Helene J. Kantor has argued that landscape becomes a subject in its own right in the visual arts of the Akkadian period: "Landscape in Akkadian Art," *JNES* 25 (1966): 145–52. See also Irene Winter, "Tree(s) on the Mountain: Landscape and Territory on the Victory Stele of Naram-Sîn of Agade," in *On Art in the Ancient Near East* (CHANE 2; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 109–31.
64. Cf. Hutton: "[L]andscape is the total perceived and conceptualized set of relationships existing between humans and named locales." My definition nuances the understanding of "total," and "named"—landscapes will always be partial, and though many locales will be known, not all will be named (*The Transjordanian Palimpsest*, 35).
65. See, e.g., the diverse uses in two volumes of essays presented to the XLIV Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (1997), published under the title *Landscapes: Territories, Frontiers, and Horizons in the Ancient Near East: Papers Presented to the XLIV Rencontre assyriologique internationale, Venezia, 7–11 July 1997*, ed. Lucio Milano, et al. (Padua: Sargon, 1999).
66. "Human ideas mould the landscape, human intentions create and maintain spaces, but our experiences of space and place itself moulds human ideas," Denis Cosgrove, "Place, Landscape, and the Dialectics of Cultural Geography," *The Canadian Geographer* 22 (1978): 66.
67. Jon Berquist, "Introduction: Critical Spatiality and the Uses of Theory," in *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative*, ed. Jon L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 3.

68. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991 [1974]); Edward Soja, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000). On the development of this discourse in Biblical Studies, especially the work of James Flanagan and the Constructions of Ancient Space Seminar, Jon Berquist, "Preface," and "Introduction: Critical Spatiality and the Uses of Theory," in *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative*, ed. Jon L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp (London: T&T Clark, 2007), ix–x; 1–12. For a critique of the wide application of Lefebvre's tripartite model of space (*le perçu*, *le conçu*, *le vécu*), see Christopher Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape: Space and the Song of Songs* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), esp. 9–15.
69. Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1977), 6.
70. Tuan, *Space and Place*, 73.
71. Wesley A. Kort, "Sacred/Profane and an Adequate Theory of Human Place-Relations," *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative*, ed. Jon L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp (LHBOTS 481; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 34.
72. Berquist, "Critical Spatiality," *'Imagining' Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social and Historical Constructs in Honor of James W. Flanagan*, ed. David M. Gunn and Paula M. McNutt (JSOTSupp 359; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 29.
73. Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, 3.
74. Sophie Thöne, *Liebe zwischen Stadt und Feld: Raum und Geschlecht im Hohelied* (Exegesis in unserer Zeit 22; Berlin: LIT, 2012). Thöne follows and critiques, esp. Stefan Fischer, *Das Hohelied Salomos zwischen Poesie und Erzählung: Erzähltextanalyse eines poetischen Textes* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).
75. James Corner, "The Hermeneutic Landscape," *Theory in Landscape Architecture: A Reader* (Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 130–31.
76. Cf. Tuan, *Space and Place*, 138.
77. Tuan, *Space and Place*, 162.
78. Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, 185.
79. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 188–89; cf. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 140; Landy, "The Literary Unity of the Canticle," *Biblica* 72 (1991): 571.
80. "[T]erms for 'garden,' 'orchard' and 'vineyard' denote the literary as well as perhaps the circumstantial background of the SoS . . . [and] are primarily cultured (cultivated) rather than uncultured nature spots, places designated for food production and the growing of other produce (such as herbs) . . .," Athalya Brenner, "The Food of Love: Gendered Food and Food Imagery in the Song of Songs," *Semeia* 86 (1999): 107.
81. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 101.

82. Probably the European turtledove (*streptopelia turtur*, מצוי תור in modern Hebrew). Also Jer 8:7 lists several species of migratory birds including *hattôr* (along with the stork, the swallow, and the crane), which "observe the time of their arrival." Its migratory pattern is perhaps echoed by the overlap with the verb √*t-w-r*, meaning to range, travel through, or explore a landscape (Num 10:33; 13:2, etc.; 1 Kgs 10:15). There is a clear distinction maintained between *hattôr* ("turtledove") and *hayyônâ* ("pigeon," "dove,"); sacrificial codes repeatedly specify that turtledoves and pigeons are equivalent sacrifices (Gen 15:9; Lev 1:14; 5:7, etc.); *yônâ* probably refers to one or two closely related birds, the rock dove (*columba livia*) or feral pigeon (*columba livia forma domestica*). Both are non-migratory birds widespread throughout the Near East—the former inhabiting cliffs or mountains, the latter in rural and urban areas, feeding on weeds, seeds, and human scraps, living closely among humans.
83. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 123.
84. Pace Exum, "Song 2:8–17 presents a somewhat conventional picture of gender relations," *Song of Songs*, 125.
85. Pace Meredith, "The action is all his. This dynamic male is placed outside as an almost elemental force and by virtue of his considerable descriptive powers, in fact, he becomes the cervine harbinger of the springtime itself," *Journeys in the Songscape*, 122.
86. Preucel and Hodder, *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory*.
87. See, e.g., Kort, "Sacred/Profane," e.g., 45–46.
88. This is the widely followed argument of Phyllis Trible, "Love's Lyrics Redeemed," in *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 144–65.
89. Bernstein, "The Natural Intelligence of the Song of Songs," 103; cf. Anselm Hagedorn, "Sie stehe damit in der Nähe der Bukolik und repräsentieren eher eine idealisierte pastorale Welt," ("Die Frau des Hohenlieds zwischen babylonisch-assyrischer Morphoskopie und Jacques Lacan [Teil I]," *ZAW* 122 [2010]: 417–30).
90. Grossberg, "Nature, Humanity, and Love in Song of Songs," 234.
91. Davis begins to suggest a more complex picture (*Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*).
92. Corner, *Recovering Landscape*, 3.
93. Philosopher Chris J. Cuomo writes, "[s]ince nonhuman communities and entities are necessarily, intrinsically bound up with human life and interests, the well-being of nature is implied, at least in a minimal degree, in human flourishing. . . . Ethics that begin with flourishing capture the sense in which instrumental and noninstrumental values are often enmeshed." *Feminism and Ecological Communities: An Ethic of Flourishing* (London: Routledge, 1998), 63.
94. Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, 5. He addresses specifically the work of Sophie Thöne, but the same observation can be applied to other readers.
95. Emphasis original. Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, 188.

96. Bernstein, "The Natural Intelligence of the Song of Songs"; Grossberg, "Nature, Humanity, and Love in Song of Songs"; also Carole Fontaine, "'Go Forth into the Fields': An Earth-centered Reading of the Song of Songs," in *The Earth Story in the Wisdom Traditions*, ed. Norman Habel and Shirley Wurst (Earth Bible 3; Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 126–42; cf. Hendrik Viviers, "Eco-Delight in the Song of Songs," in *The Earth Story in Wisdom Traditions* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 152.
97. Discussion in Exum, *Song of Songs*, 128–30.
98. Stefan Fischer, "The Foxes That Ruin the Vineyards: A Literal Interpretation of Song of Songs 2:15," *AcT* 23 (2003): 76.
99. *Səmādar* is only here and 2:15; 7:12 [13 H]; the latter instance connects *səmādar* with "opening," suggesting early buds.
100. Falk, *Love Lyrics from the Bible*, 178.
101. Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry*, 154.
102. Lisa Sideris has been particularly eloquent on natural selection in ecological theology (*Environmental Ethics, Ecological Theology, and Natural Selection* [Columbia Series in Science and Religion; New York: Columbia University Press, 2003]).
103. "Possession" need not imply "ownership" in a legal sense.
104. Pace the Earth Bible Project; Norman C. Habel, ed., *Readings from the Perspective of Earth* (Earth Bible 1; Cleveland: Pilgrim Press; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 24.
105. Corner, *Recovering Landscape*, 5.

CHAPTER 2

1. Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (1st ed., San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977), 97.
2. *Nostris denique manibus in rerum natura quasi alteram naturam efficere conamur*; emphasis added, translation slightly modified. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De natura deorum: Academica* trans. Harris Rackham (LCL 268; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 271; John Dixon Hunt, *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory* (Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 33.
3. Gustav Dalman, *Arbeit Und Sitte in Pälastina*, 7 vols. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1964), IV; David C. Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan: Agricultural Life in the Early Iron Age* (Sheffield, UK: Almond Press, 1985), esp. 241–45; Oded Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 87–99; Jane Renfrew, "Vegetables in the Ancient Near Eastern Diet," in *CANE* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 1:191–202; Eyre, "The Agricultural Cycle," *CANE*, 1:175–89.
4. Oded Borowski, *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1998), 39–85; Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life*

in Biblical Israel (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 113–14; 147–48; Jill Munro, *Spikenard and Saffron: The Imagery of the Song of Songs* (JSOTSupp 203; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 92–98.

5. For descriptions of agriculture in ancient Israel, see, e.g. Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*; Eyre, "The Agricultural Cycle, Farming, and Water Management in the Ancient Near East," 1:175–89; Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan*; cf. Gustaf Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Pälastina*, esp. vols. 1, 4.
6. Carey Ellen Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (HSM 60; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 12–15; W. G. E. Watson, "Fixed Pairs in Ugaritic and Isaiah," *VT* 22 (1972): 460–68.
7. Familial terms are used metaphorically, so the young man refers to the young woman as his "sister," in 4:9, 10, 12; 5:1, 2. Egyptian love poetry also places a high premium on familial relationships, with particular prominence given to the mother. See especially "The Stroll," P. Chester Beatty I, Group A: Nos. 31–37 in Michael V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). See also Carol L. Meyers, "'To Her Mother's House': Considering a Counterpart to the Israelite *bêt ʾāb*," in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis*, ed. David Jobling, Gerald T. Sheppard, Peggy L. Day (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 39–51.
8. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*, 108; Daniel Hillel, *The Natural History of the Bible: An Environmental Exploration of the Hebrew Scriptures* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 154.
9. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Man and Nature* (Commission on College Geography, Resource Paper 10; Washington, DC: Association of American Geographers, 1971), 25.
10. Forces of urbanization could impact kinship structures (e.g., predatory credit could alienate a family's access to land, as in the case of Nuzi); Ryan Byrne, "Statecraft in Early Israel" (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2002), 118.
11. Kenneth Hoglund, "The Achaemenid Imperial Context," in *Second Temple Studies*, ed. Philip R. Davies et al. (JSOTSup 117; Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1991), 57–60; Oded Lipschits, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E.," *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006). The phenomena described by the Song are to some extent invisible archaeologically (Byrne, *Statecraft in Early Israel*, 98).
12. This delimitation is supported by *BHS* and *BHQ,* which indicate vv. 5–8 as a unit with a *sətûmāʾ*. Scholars tend to treat these sections are separate units, e.g., Robert Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations; A Study, Modern Translation and Commentary* (rev. ed.; New York: Ktav, 1974), 46–47; on the other hand, Exum regards 1:2–2:7 as a coherent poem (*Song of Songs*, 97–119).
13. The address *hayyāpāh bannāšîm* ("beautiful among women") is always spoken by the daughters of Jerusalem (5:9 and in 6:1) and in each case they provoke her

response, as they do here. Occasionally, these verses are assigned to the young man (the Greek manuscripts with identifying rubrics identify the young man as the speaker here).

14. The *waw* (*wənā'wâ*, "but") can be construed as either conjunctive ("dark *and* lovely") or adversative ("dark *but* lovely," KJV, ASV, NJPS); the context suggests the adversative sense, hence the Vulgate's *Nigra sum sed formosa* ("Black I am, but comely"), which has been mostly followed in the tradition (see discussion in Pope, *Song of Songs*, 307–18). Issues of race do not seem to be in view here. Renita Weems argues that the tone need not be apologetic; rather, she is defending her sense of her own beauty (Renita J. Weems, "Song of Songs" [NIB; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2001] 5:382–84); pace, e.g., Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 101. Cf. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "'I Am Black and Beautiful': The Song, Cixous, and Écriture Féminine," in *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World*, ed. Linda Day and Carol Pressler (London: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 128–40; cf. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 103–4.
15. The reading *šlmh* is certain, attested in all witnesses. MT vocalizes as *šəlōmōh* ("Solomon"), which the versions support. Welhausen et al. suggest construing *śalmâ* ("Salmah"), a tribal name that parallels Qedar (Ru 4:20; cf. 1 Chron 2:11), an ancient Arabian tribe mentioned in the Targumim (Targum Onqelos Gen 15:19; Num 24:21; Judg 4:17) as well as in Assyrian and South Arabic sources and in the Jerusalem Talmud (Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena Zur Geschichte Israels* [Berlin: G. Reimer, 1905]). MT no doubt assimilates toward other mentions of Solomon in the Song, which are concentrated in two sections (3:7, 9, 11; 8:11–12) and the superscription (1:1).
16. Ernst Axel Knauf, "Kedar," *ABD* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:9–11.
17. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), e.g., 110–14; 212. She is concerned with the ends of poems, but such revisions of hypotheses of readings are ongoing in the midst of a reading.
18. A *hapax* derived from *šāhōr*, black.
19. *n-ṭ-r* is a less common parallel of *n-ṣ-r* "keep, guard," and a likely Aramaism. See Roland Murphy, *The Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or the Song of Songs* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 4, fn. 10; F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Late Linguistic Features in the Song of Songs," in *Perspectives on the Song of Songs = Perspektiven der Hoheliedauslegung*, ed. Anselm Hagedorn (BZAW 346; Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2005), 57.
20. Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 11, 62.
21. Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 52, 137.
22. Denis Baly, *The Geography of the Bible* (new and rev. ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 156–57; Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan*, 228–29; Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 100–101.

23. Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 20, 120; Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan*, 227–28.
24. Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 59–63; 170–71.
25. Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 187–93.
26. Baly, *The Geography of the Bible*, 43; Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 119–22.
27. Carl Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape," 337.
28. Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 38.
29. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp et al., eds., *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 156–65. Bibliography, ad loc.
30. L. Turkowski, "Peasant Agriculture in the Judean Hills," *PEQ* 101 (1969): 21–33; 101–12.
31. On heat conjoined with wind, Ps 103:16; Job 37:16–17; Hos 12:1; 13:15; Ezek 17:10; 27:26; Jer 4:11; Isa 27:8; 40:6–8; Jonah 4:8; Luke 12:55; James 1:11; cf. Baly, *The Geography of the Bible*, 67–70.
32. "Aqhat," trans. Simon B. Parker, *UNP* (ed. Simon B. Parker; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 68–69.
33. Jacob L. Wright, "Warfare and Wanton Destruction: A Reexamination of Deuteronomy 20:19–20 in Relation to Ancient Siegecraft," *JBL* 127 (2008): 423–58.
34. Yitzhak Sefati, *Love Songs in Sumerian Literature: Critical Edition of the Dumuzi-Inanna Songs* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1998), 324–43. The two subsistence modes could be symbiotic: flocks grazing on stubble or weeds would leave behind dung for fertilizer (Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 40; 46–47; cf. Naomi Frances Miller, "Down the Garden Path: How Plant and Animal Husbandry Came Together in the Ancient Near East," *NEA* 64 [2001]: 4–7).
35. Pope, *Song of Songs*, 329.
36. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 106.
37. Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 67; George Soper Cansdale, *Animals of Bible Lands* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1970), 41–56.
38. Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 61–62; Brian Hesse, "Animal Husbandry and Human Diet in the Ancient Near East," *CANE* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 1:203–23.
39. Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 52–71; Baly, *The Geography of the Bible*, 105; Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, VI:180–96.
40. Hillel, *The Natural History of the Bible*, 56.
41. Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (3rd ed.; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2005), 1025; on the gendering of shepherd imagery, see Gwendolyn Leick, *Sex and Eroticisim in Mesopotamian Literature* (London: Routledge, 2003), 87.
42. Christopher Tilley, *Metaphor and Material Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 182.
43. E.g. Murphy, *The Song of Songs*, 78–79. Pope correlates the vineyard to the woman's sexual organs, but it is not clear that there is a genital focus here (Pope, *Song of Songs*, 326; cf. Fox, *The Song of Songs*, 102).

44. Wine would have been an important trade commodity and occasionally was produced on a large scale (e.g., Gibeon; James Bennett Pritchard, *Gibeon, Where the Sun Stood Still: The Discovery of the Biblical City* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962]); nevertheless it would have mostly served the household, as in situ wine presses suggest.
45. Usually animals are the direct object (Gen 30:31, 36; 37:12; Exod 3:1; 1 Sam 17:15; in a figurative usage, Gen 48:15; Hos 4:16; Isa 40:11, etc). Intransitive instances are also well attested, in which case the meaning is closer to "feed," or "graze" (Isa 30:23; Gen 41:2, 18; 1 Chr 27:29; Isa 5:17; 11:7, etc.). The same ambiguity exists with the following line in the Song: "Where do you cause to lie down" (1:7) also appears without an object, which is unusual for the verb √*r-b-ṣ*, especially in the hiphil (Ps 23:2; Ezek 34:15; Jer 33:12). Isaiah 13:20 provides a parallel in which the object is implicit.
46. *The šôšannâ* is a type of water lily or lotus, clearly a loanword from Egyptian *sššn*, "lotus" (Immanuel Löw, *Die Flora der Juden* [Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1967], 2:165), and this identification is corroborated not only by that flower's presence in Israel today, but also by frequent iconographic depictions on scarabs (for instance, from Beth-shan, ca. 1400 BCE, and Beth-shemesh, ca. 1000–800 BCE, etc.), Othmar Keel, *The Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary*, trans. Frederick J. Gaieser (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 78–80; 112–13; cf. Cairo Love Songs, group A, no. 20C; Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 3; Harold Norman Möldenke, *Plants of the Bible* (Waltham, MA: Chronica Botanica, 1952), 154–55.
47. Modern Bedouin shepherds are frequently girls, ages eight to fifteen, and biblical stories sometimes employ the figure of the marriageable young woman watching or watering the flocks (Gen 24:63–64; 29:6; Ex 2:16; see Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 48; Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte*, VI: 258–64).
48. Hebrew *'ayyal* can refer to three species of deer that inhabited Palestine: the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), which was driven to near extinction by deforestation throughout Europe, Southwest Asia, and Africa; the fallow deer (*Dama dama* or *Dama mesopotamica*), a small species (only ca. 3 feet in height). These first two species were the most commonly represented in art (e.g., the black basalt obelisk of Shalmaneser III of Assyria depicts a lion hunting a red deer stag, clearly identified by prominent antlers). The third is the roe deer (L. *Cervus capreolus*; Cansdale, *Animals of Bible Lands*, 89–94). The imagery is flexible in terms of gender: the young woman's breasts are "twins of a gazelle" (4:5; 7:3; cf. Prov 5:18–19, a woman who is "a deer of love, a graceful doe, may her breasts satisfy you all the time").
49. Pope translates *ṣəbî*, "buck," and *'ayyal*, "stag" (*Song of Songs*, 390).
50. On swiftness (2 Sam 2:18; 1 Chron 12:9; Sir 27:20; Isa 35:6; Hab 3:19); secrecy (Job 39:1–4). Gazelles and deer are commonly associated with love in the ancient Near East; see Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 92; 96–98. The trope of the male lover as gazelle becomes standard in later Hebrew poetry; see, e.g., *Wine, Women, and*

Death: Medieval Hebrew Poems on the Good Life, trans. Raymond P. Scheindlin (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1986), 114–17; 81–82.

51. Papyrus Chester Beatty I, group B, no. 40; Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 66–67.
52. Meir Malul, "The Woman-Earth Homology in Biblical *Weltanschauung*," *UF* 32 (2000): 339–63; *Knowledge, Control, and Sex: Studies in Biblical Thought, Culture, and Worldview* (Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publication, 2002).
53. P. Dumuzi-Inanna, "Inanna, The Watered Field Who Will Plow Her?" Sefati, *Love Songs in Sumerian Literature*, 224–25. Cf. "The Bridal Sheets"; "My 'Wool' Being Lettuce"; the Dumuzi text, "Vigorously He Sprouted," see Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once . . . : Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987); Leick, *Sex and Eroticism*, 90–97; Pirjo Lapinkivi, "The Sumerian Sacred Marriage and Its Aftermath," in *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*, eds. Martti Nissinen and Risto Uro (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 3–15.
54. Jerrold S. Cooper, "Enki's Member: Eros and Irrigation in Sumerian Literature," in *DUMU-E2-DUB-BA-A: Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1989), 87–89.
55. "Enki and Ninsikila/Ninhursaga," Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once . . .*, 191–200.
56. Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature*, 21–29.
57. Siegfried Schott, *Altägyptische Festdaten* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner Verlag, 1950), 56.
58. Shalom M. Paul, "A Lover's Garden of Verse: Literal and Metaphorical Imagery in Ancient Near Eastern Love Poetry," in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg*, ed. Mordechai Cogan, Barry L. Eichler, and Jeffrey Tigay (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 99–110; Gillis Gerleman, *Ruth. Das Hohelied* (BKAT 18; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965), 222; Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 49; Pope, *Song of Songs*, 324.
59. Pace Athalya Brenner, who writes that the garden offers "a reassuring reference to and reminder of easily obtainable birth control facilities" ("Plants, Aromatics, and Perfumes," in *The Intercourse of Knowledge: on Gendering Desire and Sexuality in the Hebrew Bible* [BibInt; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997], 87–89).
60. On the term itself, see James A. Montmarquet, *The Idea of Agrarianism: From Hunter-Gatherer to Agrarian Radical in Western Culture* (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1989); on literary agrarianism in America, Eric T. Freyfogle, ed., *The New Agrarianism: Land, Culture, and the Community of Life* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2001); Norman Wirzba, ed., *The Essential Agrarian Reader* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003).
61. Berry, in Ronald Jager, *The Fate of Family Farming: Variations on an American Idea* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2004), 82.
62. Hillel, *Natural History of the Bible*, 22–23; Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan*, 115–23.
63. Wes Jackson and Jon Piper, "The Necessary Marriage between Ecology and Agriculture," *Ecology* 70 (1989): 1591–93.

64. See Walter Ebeling, *The Fruited Plain: The Story of American Agriculture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); cf. Jager, *The Fate of Family Farming*, 3–28, 55–84.
65. *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (Repr. New York: Harper & Row, 1962).
66. See Freyfogle, ed., *The New Agrarianism;* cf. "New Agrarian Writers," in Gene Logsdon, *The Mother of All Arts: Agrarianism and the Creative Impulse* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 175–211.
67. Louis D. Rubin, Jr., "Introduction: A Statement of Principles," *I'll Take My Stand*, xlvii.
68. Wendell Berry, *What Are People For?* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), 145.
69. Ellen F. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*: *An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1.
70. Cf. Theodore Hiebert, *The Yahwist's Landscape: Nature and Religion in Early Israel* (New York: Oxford, 1996).
71. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*, 170–72.
72. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*, 174.
73. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*, 70.
74. See, e.g., Kenneth Hoglund, "The Achaemenid Imperial Context"; Oded Lipschits, "Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E." in *Judah and Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003); Israel Finkelstein, "Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah," *JSOT* 32 (2008): 501–20; David Ussishkin, "The Borders and De Facto Size of Jerusalem in the Persian Period," *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 147–66; Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods, 732–332 BCE* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 360; Diana Vikander Edelman, *The Origins of the "Second" Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London: Equinox, 2005); Oded Lipschits and Oren Tal, "The Settlement Archaeology of the Province of Judah: A Case Study," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century BCE*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers, Rainer Albertz, and Oded Lipschits (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 33–52; S. Applebaum, "Economic Life In Palestine," in *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*, ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 2:633; Daniel David Pioske, *David's Jerusalem: Between Memory and History* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 135–45.
75. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*, 174.
76. J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001, 143–47); Lawrence E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (Fall 1985): 1–35.

77. Norman Wirzba, "The Challenge of Berry's Agrarian Vision," in *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2002), xiii–xv.
78. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 204; cf., e.g., Norman Habel, "Introducing Ecological Hermeneutics," *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman Habel and Peter Trudinger (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 1–8.
79. Berry, "Two Economies," *Home Economics* (San Francisco: North Point, 1987), 73.
80. Berry, "From the Crest," *Collected Poems* (San Francisco: North Point, 1984 [1977]), 189–95.
81. Berry, *Remembering* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2008 [1988]), 102.
82. Berry, *Hannah Coulter* (New York: Counterpoint, 2004), 97.
83. Berry, "Two Economies," *Home Economics* (San Francisco: North Point, 1987), 73.
84. See Fiona Black, *The Artifice of Love: Grotesque Bodies in the Song of Songs* (LHBOTS 392 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), esp. 62–64.
85. Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (3rd ed., San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1997), 124.
86. Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 97.
87. Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 124.
88. Berry, "From the Crest," 191.
89. Cf. the nearly identical refrain, Song 6:11.
90. Hendrik Viviers, "Eco-Delight in the Song of Songs," *The Earth Story in Wisdom Traditions* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 147.
91. Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 92, cf. 413. Cf. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 190; André LaCocque, *Romance, She Wrote: A Hermeneutical Essay on Song of Songs* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 108; Stefan Fischer, *Das Hohelied Salomos zwischen Poesie und Erzählung: Erzähltextanalyse eines poetischen Textes* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 173–209; Yvonne Sophie Thöne, *Liebe zwischen Stadt und Feld: Raum und Geschlecht im Hohelied*. (*Exegesis in unserer Zeit 22*; Berlin: LIT, 2012), e.g., 419.
92. Deer and other grazing mammals can exist in symbiosis with heavily modified environments, living in or at the edges of developed land (Cansdale, *Animals of Bible Lands*, 93). Deer are extinct in Palestine, although their ancient presence is signified by zooarchaeological remains and they are attested in artwork (Vilhelm Møller-Christensen, *Encyclopedia of Bible Creatures* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965]).
93. Athalya Brenner, "The Food of Love: Gendered Food and Food Imagery in the Song of Songs," *Semeia* 86 (1999): 101–12.
94. Both of the most common types of wine press found in archaeological surveys are located in the vineyards themselves. The first is the simple rock-cut treading installation, which includes a flat upper surface cut into the bedrock of a slope for treading, and a lower collection vat (Shimon Dar, *Landscape and*

Pattern: An Archaeological Survey of Samaria 800 BCE–636 CE, 2 vols. [BARIS 308; Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1986], 2: fig. 48; Rafael Frankel, *Wine and Oil Production in Antiquity in Israel and Other Mediterranean Countries* [JSOT/ASOR Monographs10; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 51). The second type is composed of three principal parts, with an additional rectangular vat cut above and leading into the treading floor by an additional small channel, which may represent "a more elaborate process of winemaking" (Gösta Ahlström, "Wine Presses and Cup-Marks of the Jenin-Megiddo Survey," *BASOR* 213 [1978]: 41; cf. Dar, *Landscape and Pattern*, 2: fig. 88). This vineyard locale for the wine press is reflected in biblical texts (e.g., Isa 5:2) and suggests a close association between small-scale farmsteads and their on-site wine production (Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 153).

95. Dalman, *Arbeit Und Sitte in Pälastina*, 2:301; Michael Zohary, *Plants of the Bible: A Complete Handbook to All the Plants with 200 Full-Color Plates Taken in the Natural Habitat* (London; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 190.
96. Dalman, *Arbeit Und Sitte in Pälastina*, 4:303. Löw, *Die Flora Der Juden*, 1:77.
97. Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 12–21.
98. Zohary, *Plants of the Bible*, 62; Oded Borowski, *Daily Life in Biblical Times* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).
99. Gen 30, esp. vv. 14–17. The identification as mandrake (L. *Mandragora autumnalis*) is based on the Aramaic translation of *dûddāîm* in Gen 30:14–15, and the Mishnaic rendering of it as *yavruḥim*, which is still used in some Mediterranean countries for wild mandrakes (Zohary, *Plants of the Bible*, 188). Mandrakes are poisonous, and their bifurcated root is sometimes shaped strikingly like a human form—their value is not as food but in their magical, aphrodisiac uses (Dalman, *Arbeit Und Sitte in Pälastina*, 1:251).
100. They are looking for blossoms, which are an indication of a plant's readiness for fertilization, the stage prior to the ripening of grapes (Cf. Gen 40:10; Num 17:23; Isa 18:5).
101. Berry, *A World Lost* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2008), 95.
102. Berry, *A World Lost*, 96.
103. Berry, "Family Work," *The Gift of Good Land*, 155.
104. Berry, "A Jonquil for Mary Penn," *Fidelity: Five Stories* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 79.
105. Hans-Peter Müller, *Vergleich und Metapher im Hohenlied* (OBO 56; Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984); and especially "Travestien und geistige Landschaften Zum Hintergrund einiger Motive bei Kohelet und im Hohenlied," *ZAW* 109 (1997): 557–74.
106. Berry, "Poetry and Place," *Standing by Words: Essays* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1983), 195.
107. The term "cultivation" has a problematic history, related to imperialistic uses of the term "culture," and I wish to acknowledge this problem while insisting the

term can be usefully recuperated to signify attentive land care and attentive and responsible human relationships. Adam Kuper, *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 23–46.

108. Berry, "Renewing Husbandry," in *The Way of Ignorance: And Other Essays* (Emeryville, CA: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005), 97.
109. Berry, "Work Song," *Collected Poems*, 188.

CHAPTER 3

1. Karel Čapek, *The Gardener's Year* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 13. The delimitation of the poem is based principally on the thematic of the garden, and is traditionally understood as a unit, marked by the *səṯûmā'* at 4:11 and 5:2 in the Leningrad Codex, and generally followed in the commentaries of Budde, Gordis, Rudolph, Gerleman, Falk, Keel, Müller, et al. In a detailed study, D. Philip Roberts reviews the proposals and sets this segment within the larger unit of 4:8–5:1 (*Let Me See Your Form: Seeking Poetic Structure in the Song of Songs* [Studies in Judaism; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007], 178–98).
2. Philip S. Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible: The Targums 17A; Wilmington, DE: M. Glazier/T&T Clark International, 2003), 141.
3. Richard Frederick Littledale, *A Commentary on the Song of Songs: From Ancient and Medieval Sources* (London: J. Masters, 1869), 187.
4. Northrup Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 152.
5. Duane Garrett, *Song of Songs* (WBC 23B; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 196; Gianni Barbiero, *Song of Songs: A Close Reading*, trans. Michael Tate (VTSup 144; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 220; Tremper Longman, *Song of Songs* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 155.
6. Othmar Keel, *The Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary*, trans. Frederick J. Gaiser (Continental Commentaries; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 174.
7. J. Cheryl Exum, *Song of Songs: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 175; cf. Edwin M. Good, "Ezekiel's Ship: Some Extended Metaphors in the Old Testament," *Semitics* 1 (1970): 79–103.
8. Fiona C. Black, *The Artifice of Love: Grotesque Bodies in the Song of Songs* (LHBOTS 392; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 144.
9. Joan Goodnick Westenholz and Aage Westenholz, "The Old Akkadian Love Incantation MAD V 8," *Or* 46 (1977): 213.
10. Bendt Alster, "The Manchester Tammuz," *Acta Sumerologica* 14 (1992); Gwendolyn Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature* (London: Routledge, 1994), 73.
11. Jerrold S. Cooper, "New Cuneiform Parallels to the Song of Songs," *JBL* 90 (1971): 157–62. These motifs are pervasive in the Dumuzi-Inanna texts, e.g., "Inanna the Watered Field Who Will Plow Her?" (Yitzhak Sefati, *Love*

Songs in Sumerian Literature: Critical Edition of the Dumuzi-Inanna Songs [Bar-Ilan Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Culture; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1998], 218–35). Note, though, that in DI B, the garden seems to refer to the male: "My blossoming one, my blossoming one, / sweet is your allure! / My blossoming garden of apples trees, / sweet is your allure! / My fruitful garden of celtis-trees, / sweet is your allure! My "Dumuzi-abzu by his own virtue," / sweet is your allure!" Sefati goes on to comment that "prince" is widely attested for "princess" in line 12. Disagreement about the gender occurs in other poems of this corpus as well (cf. 128–31; 165–70). See also Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once . . . : Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 94; Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature*, 153–56.

12. Martti Nissinen, "Love Lyrics of Nabû and Tašmetu: An Assyrian Song of Songs?" in *"Und Mose schreib dieses Lied auf": Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient: Festschrift für Oswald Loretz zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres mit Beiträgen von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen*, ed. Oswald Loretz, Manfred Dietrich, and Ingo Kottsieper (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), 590–91.
13. Johannes C. de Moor, *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Nisaba 16; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), 141–45.
14. Michael V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1985), 15, see esp. fn. m; 28, fn. b. The river figures more prominently in Egyptian love poetry: Papyrus Harris 500, Group A: no. 5; See also nos. 3, 4, 8; Cairo Love Songs, Group A: no. 20C, D, E; Papyrus Chester Beatty I, Group A: no. 3; Group C: no. 45; Miscellanea: no 52. The garden is predominantly a mortuary space in ancient Egypt; see Alix Wilkinson, *The Garden in Ancient Egypt* (London: The Rubicon Press, 1998).
15. Shalom Paul, "A Lover's Garden of Verse: Literal and Metaphorical Imagery in Ancient Near Eastern Love Poetry," in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg*, ed. Modechai Cogan, Barry L. Eichler, and Jeffrey H. Tigay (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 100.
16. Roland Boer, *The Earthy Nature of the Bible: Fleshly Readings of Sex, Masculinity, and Carnality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 35.
17. Roland Murphy is one contemporary commentator who follows LXX and Vulgate in preserving the syntactical openness: "A garden enclosed, my sister, bride." Murphy, *The Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or the Song of Songs* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 154, 157.
18. Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 619.
19. Murphy, *Song of Songs*, 161.
20. E.g., Kyung-Jin Zoh, "Re-Inventing Gardens: A Study in Garden Theory" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1994); John Dixon Hunt, *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2000).

21. Pace Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature*, 73–74; cf. Christopher Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape: Space in the Song of Songs* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013), esp. 108–9.
22. "Epistle to Burlington," *Alexander Pope, Poems: A One-Volume Edition of the Twickenham Text*, ed. John Butt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963).
23. Marc Treib, "Must Landscapes Mean?" in *Theory in Landscape Architecture: A Reader*, ed. Simon Swaffield (Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania), 92.
24. Mara Miller, *The Garden as an Art* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 76.
25. David E. Cooper, "Garden, Art, Nature," in *Vista: The Culture and Politics of Gardens*, ed. Noël Kingsbury and Tim Richardson (London: Frances Lincoln, 2005), 7; cf. Malcolm Budd, *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature: Essays on the Aesthetics of Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002).
26. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 21.
27. Tuan, *Dominance and Affection*, 19.
28. E.g., Naomi Miller, "The Theater in the Garden," *Theatergarden Bestiarium*, ed. Chris Dercon (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).
29. Zoh, "Re-inventing Gardens," 30.
30. Hunt, *Greater Perfections*, 33.
31. Likely derived from the West Semitic root *ʿ-d-n*. A. R. Millard, "The Etymology of Eden," *VT* 34 (1984): 103–6. The root may also relate to fertility (Gen 18:12; cf. Isa 47:8).
32. Hunt, *Greater Perfections*, 62.
33. Robert Pogue Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 7.
34. Nicholas Purcell, "Gardens," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (3rd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 624.
35. Zoh, "Re-inventing Gardens," 16; 114–56.
36. Christopher Taylor, *The Archaeology of Gardens* (Aylesbury Bucks: Shire Publications, 1983), 5; cf. Maureen Carroll, *Earthly Paradises: Ancient Gardens in History and Archaeology* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003); Wilkinson, *The Garden in Ancient Egypt*, 6; Alison Burford, *Land and Labor in the Greek World* (ASH; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), e.g., 135–39.
37. Jane Renfrew, "Vegetables in the Ancient Near Eastern Diet," *CANE* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 1:192.
38. Carroll, *Earthly Paradises*, esp. 21–39.
39. Taylor, *The Archaeology of Gardens*, 5.
40. Egypt is most famous for its mortuary gardens, although it is not alone this practice. See, e.g., Carroll, *Earthly Paradises*, 72–79; Wilkinson, *The Garden in Ancient Egypt*, 63–118; Pope, *Song of Songs*, 210–29.

41. The temple garden is the archetypal sacred garden. For example, the temple gardens in Egypt (Wilkinson, *The Garden in Ancient Egypt*, 119–44); and at Ugarit (Jean Margueron, "A Stroll through The Palace," *NEA* 63 [2000]: 205–7); Carroll, *Earthly Paradises*, 60–71; Susan Lau, "Garden as a Symbol of Sacred Space" (Ph.D. diss., Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1981).
42. For an overview of and current essays on the "Sacred Marriage," see *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*, ed. Martti Nissinen and Risto Uro (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008).
43. Carroll, *Earthly Paradises*, 26; Karen Polinger Foster, "Gardens of Eden: Exotic Flora and Fauna in the Ancient Near East," *Yale Forestry and Environmental Studies Bulletin* 103 (1998): 320. Cf. Ecc 2:4–6; P. T. Crocker, "I Made Gardens and Parks . . . ," *Buried History: Quarterly Journal of the Australian Institute of Archaeology* 26 (1990): passim. In the Ammonite Tell Sīrān Bottle, the produce of King ʿAmmīnadab includes "the vineyard and the gardens and the hollow" (F. Zayadine, "Recent Excavations on the Citadel of Amman," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities* 18 [1973]: 17–35; Walter Emanuel Aufrecht, *A Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions* [Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 4, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989], 203). For a unique take on the link between Persian pleasure gardens and violent imperial ideology, see Bruce Lincoln, *Religion, Empire, and Torture: The Case of Achaemenian Persia, with a Postscript on Abu Ghraib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), esp. 78–96.
44. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and Affection*, 19; Christopher Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, 74.
45. Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, 72. Cf. Yuval Gadot, "Water Installations in the Garden and the 'Conspicuous Consumption' of Water," *NEA* 74 (2011): 26–29.
46. Tuan, *Dominance and Affection*, 1; 29.
47. Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, 76.
48. *The Infinite Image: Art, Time, and the Aesthetic Dimension in Antiquity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 34.
49. Emphasis added. He also cites the work of George McKay, who identifies the garden as a site of subversion and even revolution (*Radical Gardening: Politics, Idealism and Rebellion in the Garden* [London: Frances Lincoln, 2011]; Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, 74–75).
50. LXX, Peshitta, and Vulgate read *gan* for MT gal; but such exact repetitions are common in the Song: 1:15; 4:1, 8, 9, 10; 5:9; 6:1, 9; 7:1. *Gal* ("spring," usually a heap of stones, or waves of the sea) parallels *maʿyān*, as in *gullōt māyîm*, Josh 15:19; Judg 1:15). Pope cites a parallel with Ugaritic *gl* ("cup," cf. Ecc 12:6) to mean a cup-shaped pool (Song of Songs, 488).
51. See discussion, p. 74.
52. The meaning of "park, enclosure" is clear from its Old Persian derivation *pairadaēza* and the Greek translation *paradeisos* (cf. only Ecc 2:5; Neh 2:8; the Greek uses the term *paradeisos* also in Gen 2–3 and Ezek 28, 31). See Dobbs-Allsopp,

"Late Linguistic Features," 65. I follow Fox in placing the line pause after *pardes*, against the Masoretic accents, because the orchard described is full of all the plants and spices that follow (Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 138).

53. Some interpreters take this repetition of *n-r-d* to be dittography, e.g., André Robert and Raymond Jacques Tournay, *Le Cantique Des Cantiques: Traduction et Commentaire* (*EBib;* Paris: Gabalda, 1963), 182; some emend to *wrdym* ("and roses"), e.g., Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 224, fn. 253. But exact repetitions are common in the Song and link lines in other biblical poetry (*ʿezrî/ʿezrî*, Ps 121; *hazzāqān/zəqan*, Ps 133, etc.)
54. *Karkôm* is a *hapax*, but is found in post-biblical literature. The Arabic term *kurkum* can refer to either the crocus (L. *crocus sativus*, a Mediterranean plant from which is derived saffron for eating and coloration), or turmeric (L. *curcuma longa*, an exotic radish imported from Southeast Asia). Discussion in Immanuel Löw, *Die Flora Der Juden* (4 vols; Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1967), 7–25.
55. I take the plural *ganîm* to be generalizing ("garden spring"); Murphy, *The Song of Songs*, 157.
56. The only verbal forms are passive participles *naʿûl* ("locked," v. 12 x 2); *ḥatûm* ("sealed," v. 12); and *nōzəlîm* ("flowing," v. 15).
57. The genre and meaning(s) of Mesopotamian *Listenwissenschaft* is contended; see, e.g., A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 246–49; A. Cavigneaux, "Lexicalische Listen," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie: unter Mitwirkung zahlreicher Fachgelehrter*, ed. Erich Ebeling, et al. (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1932), 609–41; Wolfram von Soden, *Sprache, Denken und Begriffsbildung im alten Orient* (Mainz: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaft und der Literatur: 1974); Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Gonzalo Rubio, "Early Sumerian Literature: Enumerating the Whole," in *De la Tablilla a la Inteligencia Artificial: Homenaje al Prof. Jesús-Luis Cunchillos en su 65 Aniversario*, ed. Antonio González Blanco, Juan Pablo Vita Barra, and José Ángel Zamora Lopez (Zaragoza: Instituto de Estudios Islámicos y del Oriente Próximo, 2003), 1:197–208; Dietz Otto Edzard, "Sumerisch-akkadische Listenwissenschaft und andere Aspekte altmesopotamischer Rationalität," in Rationalitätstypen, ed. Karen Groy (Freiburg: Alber-Reihe Philosophie, 1999), 246–67. Lists also appear elsewhere in the Ancient Near East: among the alphabetic cuneiform "Scribal Exercises" is a list of personal names beginning with *ỿ-* (*CTU* 5.1); and in Egyptian Onomastica (Alan Henderson Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* [London: Oxford University Press, 1947]). Several fragmentary Aramaic name lists have been found, Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, eds., *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* (Texts and Studies for Students; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1986), 4:206–12. Cf. Peter W. Coxon, "The 'List' Genre and Narrative Style in the Court Tales of Daniel,"

JSOT 35 (1986): 96. But lists did develop some aesthetic appeal as a literary form, so, e.g., Job 4:10 (Jürgen Ebach, "Naturerfahrung," *Sozialgeschichtliches Wörterbuch zur Bibel*, eds., Frank Crüsemann et al. [Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009], 422).

58. Anselm Hagedorn, "Space and Place in the Song of Songs," *ZAW* 127 (2015): 213.
59. Margueron, "A Stroll through the Palace," 206.
60. Oded Lipschits et al., "The 2006 and 2007 Excavation Seasons at Ramat Raḥel: Preliminary Report," *IEJ* 59 (2009): 9–10.
61. Such patterns figure prominently in New Kingdom tomb paintings; see Wilkinson, *The Garden in Ancient Egypt*, 6–7; Cf. Jean-Claude Hugonot, *Le jardin dans l'Egypte ancienne* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 9–20.
62. Wilkinson, *The Garden in Ancient Egypt*, 9, Plate XVI.
63. Gypsum wall relief from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal (Room H, nos. 7–9); Ninevah (ca. 645–635 BCE). British Museum no. 124939, a.
64. *Lawsonia inermis*, a member of the willow herb family, still grows wild today in the Jordan Valley and the coastal plain (Zohary, *Plants of the Bible*), 190.
65. *Karkōm* appears to be a homonym for two different plants: LXX translates as *krokos*, the saffron crocus (*Crocus sativus*, Arb. *kurkam*), which could be grown easily in Israel; Given its listing here with exotic spices, Löw takes it to be Indian turmeric (*Curcuma longa*, Arabic *kurkum*; Löw, *Die Flora Der Juden*, 4:30). As we have already seen, though, there is a mix of native and exotic species here. Alternatively, Zohary proposes the native safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius*), an aromatic, high-oil-producing native flower used for oil and for orange dye (Zohary, *Plants of the Bible*, 207).
66. Also a general term "spice" (Sarah Malena, "Spice Roots in the Song of Songs," in *Milk and Honey* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007], 166, fn. 1). *Commiphora gileadensis*, the balm tree of Judea, grew in fragrant groves remarked on by ancient writers like Josephus, Pliny, Tacitus, and Dioscorides. Balsam grows today in the Rift Valley (Zohary, *Plants of the Bible*, 198–99).
67. The word can refer to any number of aromatic grasses of the species Cymbopogon, including palmerosa oil grass, camel grass, and lemon grass, one of which grows wild in Israel (Zohary, *Plants of the Bible*, 196). It can also refer to an import, e.g., Jer 6:20 identifies *qaneh* "from a far-away land" (cf. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham [LCL 370; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press], 4:48, 104, 106; Malena, "Spice Roots in the Song of Songs," 167).
68. *Nardostachys jatamansi* is known in the Hebrew Bible only in Song 1:12; 4:13; 14. Originally from Himalayas, cultivated in India, it may have come into Hebrew via Mesopotamia (Athalya Brenner, "Aromatics and Perfumes in the Song of Songs," *JSOT* 25 [1983]: 77). The root and plant yield essential oils, used in combination with others in salves (cf. Mark 14:3; John 12:3; Zohary, *Plants of the Bible*, 205).
69. *Cinnamomun zeylanicum* is a tropical laurel tree whose bark yields the spice "cinnamon," imported originally from the island of Ceylon and the coasts of India (Zohary, *Plants of the Bible*, 202).

70. Resin exudations of *Boswellia sacra* were imported from Arabia and Africa, and are mentioned in temple offerings (Neh 13:5; Zohary, *Plants of the Bible*, 197).
71. *Commiphora abyssinica* is a thorny shrub or small tree native to Arabia, Ethiopia, and Somalia. Its fragrant branches exude oily resin.
72. *Aquillaria agallocha* (also known as "agarwood"; Sanskrit *aghal*) was imported from East Africa and Northern India for perfume (Malena, "Spice Roots in the Song of Songs," 167; Zohary, *Plants of the Bible*, 204).
73. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 177.
74. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 138.
75. Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 226.
76. ["A utopian fantasy garden is described, which has very little to do with reality."] Gillis Gerleman, *Ruth. Das Hohelied* (BKAT 18; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965), 159; Cf. Black, *Artifice of Love*, 150; Yehuda Feliks, *Song of Songs: Nature Epic and Allegory* (Jerusalem: Israel Society for Biblical Research, 1983), 26; Garrett, *Song of Songs*, 198; Löw, *Die Flora Der Juden*, 4: 261; Murphy, *The Song of Songs*, 161; Patrick Hunt, *Poetry in the Song of Songs: A Literary Analysis* (StBibLit 96; New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 129; Anselm Hagedorn, "Place and Space in the Song of Songs," 214; Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, esp. 108–9.
77. Michael Pollan, *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education* (New York: Dell, 1991), 286.
78. Karen Polinger Foster, "Gardens of Eden: Exotic Flora and Fauna in the Ancient Near East," *Yale Forestry and Environmental Studies Bulletin* 103 (1998): 321; cf. "A Taste for the Exotic," *Dais: The Aegean Feast*, ed. Louise H. Hitchcock, Robert Laffineur, and Janice Crowley (Liège: Aegaeum, 2008); "The Earliest Zoos and Gardens," *Scientific American* (July 1999): 48–55.
79. D. J. Wiseman, "Mesopotamian Gardens," *Anatolian Studies* 33 (1983): 138.
80. *Annals of the Kings of Assyria* (London: British Museum, 1902), 91. Oppenheim suggests that while the interest in gardens stems from Tiglath Pileser I, it shifts to a more fully aestheticized practice under the Sardonids ("On Royal Gardens in Mesopotamia," *JNES* 24 [1965]: 331). Several Sumerian texts describe gods journeying to admire rare features of temple gardens (Foster, "Gardens of Eden: Exotic Flora and Fauna in the Ancient Near East," 322). Cf. *The Babylonian Laws*, ed. G. R. Driver and John C. Miles (Ancient Codes and Laws of the Near East; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 2:9; *ANET*, 592–93.
81. Wiseman, "Mesopotamian Gardens," 142.
82. Wiseman, "Mesopotamian Gardens," 142.
83. Nathalie Beaux, *Le cabinet de curiosités de Thoutmosis III: plantes et animaux du "Jardin botanique" de Karnak* (Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta 36; Leuven: Dép. Oriëntalistiek: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1990), 39–40; cf. Wilkinson, *The Garden in Ancient Egypt*, 138.
84. Wilkinson, *The Garden in Ancient Egypt*, 138.
85. Beaux, *Le cabinet de curiosités de Thoutmosis III*, 213.
86. See images in Hugonot, *Le jardin dans l'Egypte ancienne*.

87. Beaux, *Le cabinet de curiosités de Thoutmosis III*, 315.
88. Carroll, *Earthly Paradises*, 42–43; Wilkinson, *The Garden in Ancient Egypt*, 76; Foster, "Gardens of Eden: Exotic Flora and Fauna in the Ancient Near East," 327.
89. *ARE* 4:333; Carroll, *Earthly Paradises*, 43. In the Turin Love Song, the self-description of the fig-sycamore includes the determinative for "foreign lands" (*ARE* 4:333).
90. Overview in Oded Lipschits et al., "Palace and Village, Paradise and Oblivion: Unraveling the Riddles of Ramat Raḥel," *NEA* 74 (2011): 2–49; esp. Gadot, "Water Installations," 26–29; Oded Lipschits et al., "Ramat Raḥel 2005," *IEJ* 56 (2006): 227–35.
91. Boaz Gross, Yuval Gadot, and Oded Lipschits, "The Ancient Garden at Ramat Raḥel and its Water Installation," in *Cura Aquarum in Israel II: Water In Antiquity*, ed. Christoph Ohlig and Tsvika Tsuk (Schriften der Deutschen Wasserhistorischen Gessellschaft 21; Siegburg: Papierflieger, 2014), 93–114.
92. Dafna Langgut et al., "Fossil Pollen Reveals the Secrets of the Royal Persian Garden at Ramat Rahel, Jerusalem," *Palynology* 37 (2013): 115–29.
93. Langgut, "Fossil Pollen," 120, 123–26.
94. Langgut, "Fossil Pollen," 117; Lipschits, "Ramat Raḥel," 59:12; Gross, "The Ancient Garden at Ramat Raḥel," 99.
95. Joan Goodnick Westenholz, "Love Lyrics from the Ancient Near East," in *CANE* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995), 4:2480.
96. Cairo Love Songs Group B, no. 21E (Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 40).
97. Clear identification of all of the plants is impeded by our ignorance of botanical terminology (Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 40, fn. e). My reading takes a cue from "every day."
98. Zoh, *Reinventing Gardens*, 56.
99. Beaux emphasizes the importance of acclimation to Egypt (Beaux, *Le cabinet de curiosités de Thoutmosis III*, 296–97).
100. Čapek, *The Gardener's Year*, 34.
101. Wiseman, "Mesopotamian Gardens," 33:143; Carroll, *Earthly Paradises*, 11; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 1:187; Hugonot, *Le jardin dans l'Egypte ancienne*, 249–50.
102. Pope, 490; Keel, 174–78; Boer appeals to the Vulgate (*emissiones tuae*) and Septuagint (*apostololai sou*) for his rendering "ejaculation," "Night Sprinkle(s): Pornography and the Song of Songs," in *Knockin' on Heaven's Door: The Bible and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1991), 53–70. For an excellent overview of genital interpretations, see Black, *The Artifice of Love*, 147–49.
103. Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 221. The same logic informs the proposed reading *šənê ləḥāyaik* ("your two cheeks," NEB), which presumably reads with 4:3 and 6:7, where the temple (*raqqātēk*) is likened to the pomegranate (Pope, *Song of Songs*, 490).

104. Manfred Görg, "'Kanäle' oder 'Zweige' in Hld 4,13?" *Biblische Notizen* 72 (1993): 20–23; cf. Robert and Tournay, *Le Cantique Des Cantiques*, 181.
105. The reading "channels" (e.g., NRSV) is somewhat strained (only in Neh 3:15; Ezek 31:4; Isa 8:6 is a proper name, *šəlōaḥ*). Keel has been most forceful in defending "canals," although the only pertinent example from his list is Job 33:18, where *s-l-ḥ* parallels *s-ḥ-ṭ* "pit." The legal texts cited refer not to "female genitalia," but to the flow of menstrual blood (Lev 12:7; 20:18). The parallel with Prov 5:15–19 ("Drink water from your own cistern") is not insignificant, but the metaphor is not localized at the woman's vagina. One might add, at the level of sense, how are "canals" (plural) like a "grove of pomegranates"? Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 176; Paul Joüon, *Le Cantique des Cantiques: Commentaire Philologique et Exégétique* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1909), 220–21; Pope, *Song of Songs*, 490.
106. Hunt, *Greater Perfections*, 153.
107. The speaker is grammatically ambiguous. The rubrics in Codex Sinaiticus ascribe the first lines to the man, the latter to the woman. This is followed by Exum, Murphy, Pope, et al.; Roberts argues for the structural cohesion of a single speech (*Let Me See Your Form*, 190).
108. Günter Krinetzki sees the wind as a fertility charm (*Kommentar Zum Hohenlied: Bildsprache Und Theologische Botschaft* [BBET 16; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1981], 153–54).
109. Apostrophe is closely related to personification; see Luis Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics* (SubBi 11; Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1988), 154–55; Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 570–73.
110. Following the trajectory, the Psalmist imagines that the winds are the breath of God's nostrils (Ps 18:15), one of the forces (like the sea and the storm) that enact divine intervention by natural means, as at the Exodus (Ps 78:26; Cf. Exod 10:19; Jonah 1:4; Zech 9:14). But the desiccating sirocco, the East wind (Gen 41:6, 23, 27; Jonah 4:8) that brings destruction (Exod 10:13; Ps 48:8; cf. Job 27:21), is not in view here.
111. "Epic of Creation IV," (Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989], 251).
112. "Anzu II" (Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 217).
113. *CTU* 1.5, col. 5, lines 6–7 (trans. Mark S. Smith; *UNP*, ed. Simon Parker [Atlanta: SBL Scholars Press, 1997], 147).
114. "Epic of Creation," (Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 185, cf. 212, 251).
115. On gardens and waterways, see Gen 2:10; 13:10; as a figure of blessing, see Num 24:6; Isa 61:11; Isa 51:3; Jer 31:12; cf. Isa 1:30; Amos 4:9; Joel 2:3; Lam 2:6.
116. The word *n-z-l* ("flow") occurs principally in poetic contexts to indicate streaming or flooding water (Jer 18:4; also heavy dew, Deut 32:2; Isa 45:8; and floods, Exod 15:8; Isa 44:3; 48:21; Ps 78:16, 44).
117. Roberts, *Let Me See Your Form*, 194–97.

118. On the waters and myth, Jill Munro, *Spikenard and Saffron: The Imagery of the Song of Songs* (JSOTSup 203; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 110–12; cf. Aren M. Wilson-Wright, "Love Conquers All: Song of Songs 8:6b–7a as a Reflex of the Northwest Semitic Combat Myth," *JBL* 134 (2015), 333–45.
119. Čapek, *The Gardener's Year*, 82–83.
120. Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 32.
121. Francis Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* (BLS 7; Sheffield, UK: Almond Press, 1983), 108.
122. Hagedorn, "Place and Space in the Song of Songs," 214.
123. Black, *Artifice of Love*, 150.
124. Roland Boer, *The Earthy Nature of the Bible*, 9; cf. *Knockin' on Heaven's Door*, 53–70.
125. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981).
126. On the conjunction of honey and eroticism, Foster, *Before the Muses*, 160–61; Sefati, *Love Songs in Sumerian Literature*, 165–70.
127. Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*, 32.
128. While Nietzsche sees lyric poetry as a generally Apolline art form, he permits that it also has a peculiar relationship to music, as poetic language is included with music in song, and so poetry can both participate with and imitate music and therefore the Dionysiac spirit (Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music*, ed. Michael Tanner; trans. Shaun Whiteside; [London; New York: Penguin, 1993], 32–35).
129. Budd, *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature*, 7; Cooper, "Garden, Art, Nature," 5–10.
130. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 108.
131. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, eds., *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila* (Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1976), 252. Cf. Discussion in Black, *Artifice of Love*, 175–80.
132. Black, *Artifice of Love*, 235–36.
133. Susan Stewart, "Garden Agon," *Representations* 62 (1998): 111.
134. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 24; cf., e.g., Exum, *Song of Songs*, 2–3; Hagedorn, *Space and Place in the Song of Songs*, 215; on funerary rituals, Pope, *Song of Songs*, 210–29.
135. Michael Pollan, *Second Nature*, esp. "The Idea of a Garden," 209–38.

CHAPTER 4

1. "The City in Which I Love You," in *The City in Which I Love You: Poems by Li-Young Lee* (Rochester, NY: BOA Editions, 1990), 51.
2. Francis Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* (Sheffied, UK: The Almond Press, 1983), 121; cf. 1441–1145. Cf. Jill M.

Munro, *Spikenard and Saffron: A Study in the Poetic Language of the Song of Songs* (JSOTSup 203; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 133.

3. Sophie Thöne, *Liebe Zwischen Stadt und Feld: Raum und Geschlecht im Hohelied* (Exegesis in unserer Zeit 22; Berlin: LIT, 2012), 419; cf. Stefan Fischer, *Das Hohelied Salomos zwischen Poesie und Erzählung: Erzähltextanalyse eines poetischen Textes* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), esp. 190–94.
4. Gianni Barbiero, *Song of Songs: A Close Reading* (VTSup 144; Boston: Brill, 2011), 275.
5. Fiona Black, *The Artifice of Love: Grotesque Bodies in the Song of Songs* (LBHOTS 392; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 158.
6. Geographer Edward Soja notes how scholars have typically viewed cityspace in just this way, as "fixed, dead, socially and politically ineffectual, little more than a constructed stage-set for dynamic social and historical processes that are not themselves inherently urban." He argues instead that the city is a spatialization of social relations, a "vibrantly alive, complexly dialectical . . . focus of human action, collective consciousness, social will, and critical interpretation," *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 9.
7. Ellen F. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 170.
8. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*, 171.
9. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*, 171.
10. Christopher Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape: Space in the Song of Songs* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013), 90.
11. Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, 92.
12. Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, 105.
13. Berquist, "Spaces of Jerusalem," in *Constructions of Space II: The Biblical City and Other Imagined Spaces*, eds., John L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp (LHBOTS 490; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 47. Both Spiro Kostof and Gordon Childe offer (influential but much criticized) criteria for defining urban life (Kostof, *The City Shaped*: *Urban Patterns and Meanings through History* [London: Thames & Hudson, 1991]; Childe, "The Urban Revolution," *Town Planning Review* 21 [1950], 3–17).
14. Michael Patrick O'Connor, "The Biblical Notion of the City," *Constructions of Space II: The Biblical City and Other Imagined Spaces*, eds. John L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp (LHBOTS 490; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 25; Avi Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II*, trans. Ruth Ludlum (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 39.
15. For even more modest population estimates, Hillel Geva, "Jerusalem's Population in Antiquity: A Minimalist View," *Tel Aviv* 41 (2014): 131–60. Cf. Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society*, esp. 39–117.
16. Tanis, ca. 177 hectares; Assur, ca. 120 hectares. Daniel David Pioske, *David's Jerusalem: Between Memory and History* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 197.

17. Not all ancient settlements prioritized housing (bureaucratic, industrial, and ceremonial cities would have privileged different uses of space), although human habitation was a persistent and significant feature (O'Connor, "The Biblical Notion of the City," 31–32).
18. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).
19. Soja, *Postmetropolis*, 11. See James Flanagan, "Ancient Perceptions of Space/Perceptions of Ancient Space," *Semeia* 87 (1999): esp. 27–31; Jon L. Berquist, "Critical Spatiality and the Construction of the Ancient World," in *'Imagining' Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social, and Historical Constructs in Honor of James W. Flanagan*, eds. David M. Gunn and Paula M. McNutt (JSOTSup 359; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 202), 14–38.
20. Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape*, 9.
21. Mary E. Mills, *Urban Imagination in Biblical Prophecy* (New York; London: T&T Clark International, 2012), x, 8. Mills draws heavily on the psycho-geographical work of Steven Pile, which seeks to uncover the collective conscious of urban experience. While not dealing with literary texts, sociologist Martina Löw addresses the "specific stocks of knowledge" that derive from communal experience of the daily habits specific to particular cities. She calls this process of relating the "intrinsic logic of cities," ("The City as Experiential Space: The Production of Shared Meaning," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37 [2013]: 894–908).
22. Soja, *Postmetropolis*, 11; Claudia V. Camp, "Introduction," *Constructions of Space II: The Biblical City and Other Imagined Spaces*, eds. Jon L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp (LHBOTS 490; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 3.
23. Mill, *Urban Imagination in Biblical Prophecy*, x.
24. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 170.
25. T. J. Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, Redemption* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3.
26. Pioske, *David's Jerusalem*, 206; but other established patterns of city use are attested, e.g., Berquist, "Spaces of Jerusalem," 47.
27. Philip King and Lawrence Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (LAI; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 34; Pioske, *David's Jerusalem*, 204–6; Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Studies in Archaeology and History of the Levant 2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 136–40.
28. Edward W. Soja, *Postmetropolis*, 6.
29. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1977), 19–50; Jon Berquist, "Critical Spatiality," 28.
30. Vitruvius, *The Ten Books of Architecture*, trans. M. Morgan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 73.

31. Elizabeth Grosz, "Bodies-Cities," *The Blackwell City Reader*, edited by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Malden; Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 299.
32. Schwarz, *The Church Incarnate*, trans. Cynthia Harris (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958), 27.
33. Soja, *Postmetropolis*, 65; Mills, *Urban Imagination in Biblical Prophecy*, 9.
34. Grosz, "Bodies-Cities," 300–301.
35. Brian P. Gault, "Body Concealed, Body Revealed: Shedding Comparative Light on the Body in the Song of Songs," Ph.D. diss., Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (2012).
36. Shira Wolosky, *The Art of Poetry: How to Read a Poem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 182–83.
37. Gorringe, *Theology of the Built Environment*, 140.
38. Mills, *Urban Imagination in Biblical Prophecy*, 9. Cf. Soja, *Postmetropolis*, 324.
39. Meredith uses Freud's concept of *Unheimlich* to explain the way that the city embodies both safety and danger; both home and threat (*Journeys in the Songscape*, 106).
40. On narrative quality, esp. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 123; Tod Linafelt, "The Arithmetic of Eros," *Interpretation* 59 (2005): 244–58, esp. 251–52.
41. Munro, *Spikenard and Saffron*, 134–35; Exum, *Song of Songs*, 137.
42. On city plans, Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society*, 109–10; cf. Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol*, 110.
43. Anselm Hagedorn, "Place and Space in the Song of Songs," *ZAW* 127 (2015): 209.
44. Landy writes, the city is an "oppressive weight" (*Paradoxes of Paradise*, 209); Stefan Fischer writes, "Draussen ist Gefährdung, drinner ist Sicherheit" (*Das Hohelied Salomos zwischen Poesie und Erzählung* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010], 194). Marcia Falk is more diplomatic: "Of all the context of the Song, the public domain of the city is the one least sympathetic to the lovers" (*The Song of Songs: A New Translation and Interpretation* [HarperSanFrancisco, 1990], 142).
45. E.g., the city plans at Arad, Mizpah, and Tell Beit Misrim (Volkmar Fritz [*The City in Ancient Israel*, Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1995], 117); Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society*, e.g., 49.
46. See, e.g., C. H. J. de Geus, "The City of Women: Women's Places in Ancient Israelite Cities," in *Congress Volume: Paris 1991* (VTSup 61; Ledien; Boston: Brill, 1995), 83; on the divisions of space in multi-family households, Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol*, 112–13.
47. Carol Meyers, "'To Her Mother's House': Considering a Counterpart to the Israelite *bêt ʾāb*," *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis*, ed. David Jobling, Peggy Day, Gerald Shepherd (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 39–51; on women's contributions to the household, Meyers, "Material Remains and Social Relations: Women's Culture in Agrarian Households of the Iron Age," *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors*

from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina, ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Giltin (Winona Lake, IN: Eisebrauns, 2003), 425–44.

48. Terms proposed by O'Connor, "The Biblical Notion of the City," 23–25.
49. Grosz, "Bodies-Cities," 298.
50. Carol Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), esp. 103–24.
51. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 116; cf. Elie Assis, *Flashes of Fire: A Literary Analysis of the Song of Songs* (LHBOTS 503; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 99.
52. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 208.
53. Soja, *Postmetropolis*, 12.
54. The LXX notices this lack, and adds the same line to conform with 5:6.
55. Meredith helpfully describes the threshold as the boundary (*Journeys in the Songscape*, 131–34). It is not necessary, however, to read this as a concretization of sex itself, what he calls "Doorstep Sex"; rather, the threshold seems to signify desire.
56. Tod Linafelt, "The Arithmetic of Eros," 244–58.
57. This may refer to a military force that would have doubled as an urban police (Soja *Postmetropolis*, 58).
58. Middle Assyrian laws about the treatment of prostitutes are often adduced here as an explanation for why she is beaten. Rashbam; Gordis, *Song of Songs* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1954), 89; Pope, *Song of Songs*, 527; Fox, *Song of Songs*, 142; Keel, *Song of Songs*, 195. Pace Tremper Longman, *Song of Songs* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 169; Murphy, *Song of Songs*, 171. Others describe her lack of modesty, for going out in the street at night: Yair Zakovitch, *Das Hohelied* (trans. Dafna Mach; HThKAT; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2004), 218. Exum calls this the woman's willingness to suffer for love (*Song of Songs*, 199). Ilana Pardes explains that this is the woman punishing herself for forbidden desires (*Countertraditions in the Bible* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992], 136–39); see also Günter Krinetzki, *Kommentar zum Hohenlied: Bildsprache und Theologische Botschaft* (BBET 16; Frankfurt Am Main: Lang, 1981), 183; Donald Polaski, "What Will Ye See in the Shulammite? Women, Power, and Panopticism in the Song of Songs," *BibInt* 5 (1997): 78–79. According to the Azatiwada Inscription, the safety of a lone woman is a signal of social order: ". . . a man feared to walk the road. / But in my days, (especially) mine, / a woman can walk alone with her spindles" ("The Azatiwada Inscription" [trans. K. Lawson Younger, Jr.; *COS* 2.31:148–50]). Going out at night can be construed as risky, and a time for sexual encounter (Prov. 7.7–23; Ruth 3.6–14).
59. Perhaps evoking the larger biblical motif of the "terror of the night," e.g., Ps 91:5.
60. The LXX notices this lack, adding "by the powers and forces of the field," in keeping with 2:7; 3:5.
61. Pioske, *David's Jerusalem*, 79–80; Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands: In the Light of Archaeological Study*, trans. M. Pearlman

(New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 20. Freestanding towers are also evidenced (Isa 5.2; 1 Chron 27.25; 2 Chron 26.10); Kyle Keimer, "Fortifications in the Bronze and Iron Age," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Archaeology*, ed. Daniel M. Master (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref:obso/9780199846535.001.0001/acref-9780199846535-e-48?rskey=FLrjuY&result=5; cf. Carol Meyers, "Gender Imagery in the Song of Songs," in *The Song of Songs: A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 202.

62. The root *d-g-l* appears four times in the Song (2:4; 5:10; 6:4, 10). Numbers describes the Israelites camping and marching under *dəgālîm* ("banners"; Num 1:52; 2:2, 3, 10, 17, 18, 25, 31, 34; 10:14, 18, 22, 25; cf. Ps 20:6 [20:5 Eng])—Song 2:4 evokes this military context by declaring "love is his banner over me." The Niphal participle, *nidgālôt* (here in 6:4 and in the identical phrase in 6:10), seems to draw on this military sense as well (so LXX *tetagmenai*, "drawn up in order," and Vulgate *Castrorum acies ordinate*, "ordered line of battle camps"). Akkadian *dagâlu*, "look, behold," suggests visual distinction or conspicuousness, hence Exum, "splendor," *Song of Songs*, 212.
63. Munro, *Spikenard and Saffron*, 66–67.
64. Meyers, "Gender Imagery in the Song of Songs," 204.
65. Frank S. Frick, *The City in Ancient Israel* (SBLDS 36; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 11.
66. "The Inscription of King Mesha," trans. K. A. D. Smelik (*COS* 2.23; 21b–25). Cf. Urnanshe of Lagash: "The king built the temple and the walls, erected statues, dug a canal, and filled the storehouse with grain" (Wolf Schneider, *Überall ist Babylon: die Stadt als Schicksal des Menschen von Ur bis Utopia* [Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1960]), 35.
67. Mills, *Urban Imaginary in Biblical Prophecy*, 39–40.
68. Meyers, "Gender Imagery in the Song of Songs," 204.
69. Fiona Black has also (rightly) critiqued Meyers for her "heavy reliance on what seem to be modern stereotypes about masculinity and femininity" (*Artifice of Love*, 51).
70. The literature on this motif is extensive. Christl Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space, and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), esp. 60–140; Aloysius Fitzgerald, "The Mythological Background for the Presentation of Jerusalem as a Queen and False Worship as Adultery in the OT," *CBQ* 34 (1972), 403–16; Carleen Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (SemeiaSt; Atlanta: SBL, 2007); Mark J. Boda et al., eds., *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Flesher, LeAnn Snow; AIL 13; Atlanta: SBL, 2012); Edith McEwan Humphrey, *The Ladies and the Cities: Transformation and Apocalyptic Identity in Joseph and Aseneth, 4 Ezra, the Apocalypse and The Shepherd of Hermas* (JSPSup 17; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1995); Mark E. Biddle, "The Figure of

Lady Jerusalem: Identification, Deification and Personification of Cities in the Ancient Near East," *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective: Scripture in Context* IV (Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 11; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1991). For a good overview, see Brad E. Kelle, "Wartime Rhetoric: Prophetic Metaphorization of Cities as Female," *Writing and Reading War: Rhetoric, Gender, and Ethics in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brad E. Kelle and Frank Ritchel Ames (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 95.

71. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion*, e.g., 217; cf. "Daughter Zion as a Gendered Space in the Book of Isaiah," *Constructions of Space II: The Biblical City and Other Imagined Spaces*, ed. John L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp (LHBOTS 490; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 112.
72. Christl Maier, "Daughter Zion as a Gendered Space," 108. See, e.g., Isa 1:8; 22:4; 23:10, 12; 47:1, 5; 52:2; Jer 4:11, 31; 6:2, 23, 26; 8:11, 19, 21, 22, 23; 14:17; 31:22; 46:11, 19, 24; 48:18; 49:4; 50:42; 51:33; Mic 1:13; 4:10; Zeph 3:14; Ps 137:8; Lam 1:6, 15; 2:1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 13, 15, 18; 3:48; 4:3, 6, 10, 21, 22. Definitive exceptions are few: Zech 2:11; Pss 9:15; 45:13 (F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Syntagma of *bat* Followed by a Geographical Name in the Hebrew Bible: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning and Grammar," *CBQ* 57 [1995], 545).
73. Maier, "Daughter Zion as a Gendered Space," 112.
74. Kelle, "Wartime Rhetoric," 99–100.
75. Cynthia Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter* (HSM 62; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004); Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion*, 61–73.
76. Lament for Ur, 240–50; 369–73 (*The Harps That Once . . . : Sumerian Poetry in Translation*, trans. Thorkild Jacobsen [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987], 447–74).
77. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep O Daughter Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993); cf. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion*, esp. pp. 61–72; Elaine R. Follis, "The Holy City as Daughter," *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, ed. Elaine Follis (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987).
78. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion*, 161–86; Pace Biddle, "The Figure of Lady Jerusalem," 173. The imagery of the city as the beloved woman is taken up in later texts like Aseneth, 4 Ezra, the Apocalypse of John, and the Shepherd of Hermas; see Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, esp. 171.
79. Maier, "Daughter Zion as a Gendered Space," 108.
80. Reading and translation follow B. Groneberg, "The 'Faithful Lover' Reconsidered: Towards Establishing a New Genre," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*, ed. S. Parpola, R. M. Whiting (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 165–83; Moshe Held, "A Faithful Lover in an Old Babylonian Dialogue," *JCS* 15:1 (1961): 1–26; Nathan Wasserman, *Style and Form in Old Babylonian Literary Texts* (Leiden; Boston: Brill; Styx, 2003) 265, www.seal.uni-leipzi.de.

81. Such an idea may also be in view in the Ugaritic epic of Kirta, where Kirta marches his army on the city of Udum but discharges no weapons as he seeks marriage with Lady Huraya ("Kirta," translated by Edward L. Greenstein; *UNP* [WAW 9; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997] 16–18).
82. The door would be part of the gate structure (Judg 16:3; Neh 3:3, 6, 13); doors can be a metonym for the gate itself (Deut 3:5; Josh 6:26; Jer 49:31; Ezek 38:11).
83. A debate over parallelism has characterized much discussion of this passage, namely, whether "if she is a wall" and "if she is a door" are meant to be synonymous (requiring the same kind of action), or whether they are meant to be antithetical (for example, the first is an image of fortification, the second is an image of breach). See discussion in R. Lansing Hicks, "The Door of Love," in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope*, ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good (Guilford, CT: Four Quarters, 1987), 153–58.
84. Pope, *Song of Songs*, 680–81. Cf. Longman, *The Song of Songs*, 217.
85. Gordis and Tur-Sinai argue that these are suitors (Gordis, *The Song of Songs*, 97).
86. Pope, *Song of Songs*, 680; Keel, *Song of Songs*, 279; Fox, *Song of Songs*, 173.
87. Cf. Duane Garrett, *Song of Songs* (WBC 23B; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 260.
88. It is likely that they have in common the use of stones to delimit the camp: either an actual wall, or a simple stone marker (Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Pälastina* [Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1987], 6:41).
89. Hayim Tawil has argued from cuneiform sources that decorating parapets and battlements with precious metals was a practice in the ancient Near East. So, for example, Sennacherib recounts that "I decorated their corbels, friezes, and all their battlemented merlons with bricks glazed (the color of) obsidian and lapis lazuli" (CAD N_2:144a 2). Tawil, "Two Biblical Architectural Images in Light of Cuneiform Sources (Lexicographical Note X)," *BASOR* 341 (2006): 42.
90. OIP II iii 27–30 (Israel Ephʿal, *The City Besieged: Siege and Its Manifestations in the Ancient Near East* [Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009], 37).
91. Ephʿal, *City Besieged*, 52.
92. A "hermetic" approach to the siege; Ephʿal, *City Besieged*, 35–36.
93. Gordis, *Song of Songs*, 98.
94. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (Berkeley: University of California, 1973), 2:33; Ephʿal, *City Besieged*, 36.
95. "The Inscription of Zakkur, King of Hamath," trans. Alan Millard (*COS* 2.35.1–17).
96. Ephʿal, *City Besieged*, 36. The Assyrian annals of Adad-nirari II describe two types of siege walls: "I confined Nur-Adad the Temmanu in the city of Nisibis (and) established several redoubts (ālānī) around it . . . I encircled his moat with my warriors like a flame . . . (and) deprived him of grain" (Ephʿal, *The City Besieged*, 38). Such a wall is described with the root *b-n-h* (to build/construct)—the verb we have here in the Song—as opposed to ramps intended to breach the walls, which are described with the verb *š-p-k* (2 Sam 20:15; Ezek 4:2; 17:17; 21:27).

97. Yadin, *Art of Warfare*, 18.
98. Nippur resisted Nabopolassar for at least four months; Babylon was captured after a fifteen-month siege by Sennacherib and a twenty-two-month siege by Ashurbanpial; Barca by Amasis after nine months; Samos by the Athenians after nine months; Megiddo by Thutmosis III after seven months; Tyre by Alexander after seven months; Sanahuitta by Hattusili I after five months; and Soloi by Persia after five months (Ephʿal, *The City Besieged*, 111–12).
99. Gordis, *The Song of Songs*, 75. Cf. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 162.
100. The significant terms are "erecting a siege ramp" (*wayyišpəkû sōləlāh*), "rampart" (*baḥēl*), and "battering (*mašḥîtim*) the wall to make it fall (*ləhapîl*)" (2 Sam 20:15). Such use of battering rams and ramparts would have been a last resort, as they were the most difficult of all methods of breakthrough; Ephʾal, esp. 68–96; cf. Erika Bleibtreu, "Five Ways to Conquer a City," *BAR* 16 (1990): 52–61, 75. Such techniques of frontal assault were more effective and prevalent strategies of larger professionalized armies such as Assyria, who had the time and resources for constructing labor- and resource-intensive siege ramps. See Wright, "Warfare and Wanton Destruction," 431.
101. *AEL*, 3:74; Pnina Galpaz-Feller, "The Victory Stela of King Piye: The Biblical Perspective on War and Peace," *RB* 100 (1993): 399–414.
102. Cf. Pi(ankh)y's appeal to Memphis: "Do not close (your gates), do not fight . . . and I shall sail north in peace!" (*AEL*, 3:75); cf. 2 Sam 20:19–21; see Ephʿal, *City Besieged*, 44–48.
103. Thöne, *Liebe Zwischen Stadt und Feld*, 241.
104. Sue Best, "Sexualizing Space," in *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*, ed. E. Grosz and E. Probyn (London: Routledge, 1995), 183; cf. Maier, "Daughter Zion as a Gendered Space," 104.
105. On permeability, Black, *The Artifice of Love*, esp. 145–53.
106. James Corner, "Terra Fluxus," in *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, ed. Charles Waldheim (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006).
107. Corner, "Terra Fluxus," 29.
108. Corner, "Terra Fluxus," 30.
109. Charles Waldheim, "A Reference Manifesto," *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, 11.
110. Waldheim, "A Reference Manifesto," 15.
111. Corner, "Terra Fluxus," 24.
112. Corner, "Terra Fluxus," 24.
113. Corner, "Terra Fluxus," 30.
114. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*, 159; cf. Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society*, 39; Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol*, esp. 101; 139–40.
115. On the symbiosis of urban and "natural," see Mills *Urban Imagination in Biblical Prophecy*, 41.

CHAPTER 5

1. Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi, *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry: Wasf, Ekphrasis, and Interarts Theory* (Brill Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures 5; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 127; Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1977), 481.
2. The young man is also the subject of a descriptive poem in 5:10–16.
3. Günter Krinetzki identifies eleven *Gattungen* in the Song, one of which is the *Beschreibungslieder* ("Songs of Description"), which, as he articulates it, is inclusive of, but broader than, the narrower genre of the Arabic-style *wasf*: 3:6–8, 9–10; 4:1–7, 8–9; 6:5c–7; 7:1–6; 8:5a–b (cf. 5:10–16; Krinetzki, *Kommentar Zum Hohenlied: Bildsprache und Theologische Botschaft* [Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie 16; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1981], 3–4). As with all delimitation of units in the Song of Songs, there is no clear consensus (see, e.g., Friedrich Horst, "Die Formen des althebräischen Liebesliedes," in *Gottes Recht*, ed. Hans Walter Wolff [München: Kaiser Verlag, 1961], 176–202). For a definition of the *wasf*, see Sumi, *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry*, 4–6.
4. Francis Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* (BLS 7; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1983), 76.
5. Roland Arthur Greene, *Post-Petrarchism: Origins and Innovations of the Western Lyric Sequence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 62.
6. J. Cheryl Exum, *Song of Songs: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 24.
7. S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (The Meridian library; New York: Meridian Books, 1956), 448–49.
8. See pp. 3–4.
9. [In the following context, each feature of the description is based on a geographical particularity of the Holy Land . . .] André Robert and Raymond Jacques Tournay, *Le Cantique des cantiques: Traduction et commentaire* (*Ebib*; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1963), 257.
10. Robert and Tournay, *Le Cantique des cantiques*, 257.
11. Marvin H. Pope, *Song of Songs* (AB 7c; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 626.
12. Robert and Tournay, *Le Cantique des cantiques*, 234; 333–35.
13. Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 19.
14. Joseph S. Czestochowski, *The American Landscape Tradition: A Study and Gallery of Paintings* (1st ed.; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1982), 12–18; cf. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, 161–88.
15. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 112.
16. Bruce K. Waltke and Mark O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 40.2.1, 675.

17. I follow Robert Kawashima's description of represented consciousness, although he, too, presumes an inherently visual aspect (*Biblical Narrative and the Death of the Rhapsode* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004], 93).
18. *Hinnēh* is repeated throughout the Song: 1:15, 16; 2:8, 9, 11; 3:7; 4:1. The NRSV translates *hinnēh* as "Ah!" perhaps to reflect the emphatic sense underscored by T. Muraoka (*Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* [Boston: Brill, 1997]), but "Here," maintains the deictic sense.
19. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," (*Screen* 16 [1975]: 6–18), following John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London; Harmondsworth: British Broadcasting Corporation; Penguin, 1972). The critical literature on the subject is vast. See Elizabeth Grosz, "Voyeurism/Exhibitionism/The Gaze," in *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, ed. Elizabeth Wright (Oxford; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 447–50.
20. David J. A. Clines, "Why Is There a Song of Songs and What Does It Do to You if You Read It?" *Jian Dao* 1 (1994): 24; Donald C. Polaski, "What Will Ye See in the Shulammite? Women, Power and Panopticism in the Song of Songs," *BibInt* 5 (1997): 64–81; Virginia Burrus and Stephen D. Moore, "Unsafe Sex: Feminism, Pornography, and the Song of Songs," *BibInt* 11 (2003): 24–52; Athalya Brenner, "Gazing Back at the Shulammite, Yet Again," *BibInt* 11 (2003): 295–300. On the "grotesque, perverse, erotic," see Fiona C. Black, *The Artifice of Love: Grotesque Bodies in the Song of Songs* (LHBOTS 392; London: T&T Clark, 2009), esp. 195–204; and Roland Boer, "The Second Coming: Repetition and Insatiable Desire in the Song of Songs," *The Earthy Nature of the Bible: Fleshly Readings of Sex, Masculinity, and Carnality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), esp. 24–25; on space and the gaze, see Christopher Meredith, *Journeys in the Songscape: Space and the Song of Songs* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 53; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 119–29. For a similar view to my own, see "Erotic Look or Voyeuristic Gaze?" in Exum, *Song of Songs*, 22–24.
21. Catherine Nash, "Reclaiming Vision: Looking at Landscape and the Body," *Gender, Place & Culture* 3 (1996): 149–70.
22. The Gilgamesh Epic includes an invitation for the audience to view Gilgamesh to see and confirm his physical beauty. Irene Winter, "Aesthetics in Ancient Mesopotamian Art," in *CANE* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 4:2578.
23. Nash, "Reclaiming Vision," 3.
24. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 23.
25. Michael V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 38.
26. Athalya Brenner, "'Come Back, Come Back the Shulammite' (Song of Songs 7.1–10): A Parody of the *wasf* Genre," in *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs*, ed. Athalya Brenner (The Feminist Companion to the Bible; Sheffield, UK: JSOT, 1993), 250. Cf. Carey Ellen Walsh, *Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Erotic, and the Song of Songs* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 61; As invective, Scott

B. Noegel and Gary A. Rendsburg, *Solomon's Vineyard: Literary and Linguistic Studies in the Song of Songs* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 129–69.

27. For an excellent overview of the history of interpretation from this perspective, see Black, *Artifice of Love*, especially 24–62.
28. Black, *Artifice of Love*, 196.
29. Black, *Artifice of Love*, 124.
30. Brenner, "Gazing Back at the Shulammite, Yet Again," 11:296. I do not take the descriptive poems to be justifying the content of aesthetic value, but presenting an experience of it. Cf. Winter, "Aesthetics in Ancient Mesopotamian Art," 4; F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Beauty," in *NIDB* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006).
31. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Delight of Beauty and Song of Songs 4:1–7," *Interpretation* 59 (2005): 260–77; Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).
32. Comparative examples of descriptive poetry also seem to be predicated largely on appreciation. The description of Sarai in the Genesis Aprocryphon, for example, is set in a narrative context in which hearing the description of her beauty prompts the king's desire for her (column 20.2–9; Nahman Avigad and Yigael Yadin, *A Genesis Apocryphon: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea*, trans. Sulamith Schwartz Nardi [Jerusalem: Magnes Press of the Hebrew University, 1956], 43; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave 1 [1Q20]: A Commentary* [3rd ed.; BibOr 18B; Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2004], 193–216). The tenor of appreciation seems to characterize Egyptian love poetry: "One alone is (my) sister, having no peer: / More gracious than all other women . . . Shining, precious, white of skin, / Lovely of eyes when gazing. / Long of neck, white of breast, / Her hair true lapis lazuli . . . She has captured my heart in her embrace . . ." (Chester Beatty I, group A, no. 31; Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 52). The same seems to be true of the Arabic *waṣf* tradition (Sumi, *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry*, *passim*); as much is suggested by the fact that Brenner must interpret the Song as a parody of the *waṣf*. In order to find a generic parallel in which ugliness and invective are apropos, Noegel and Rendsburg reach forward to the ninth century CE to the satirical Arabic Tašbīb and Hijāʾ forms (Noegel and Rendsburg, *Solomon's Vineyard*, 129–60).
33. Earlier interpreters took *ṣammāh* ("veil") to mean "silence" (LXX, Arabic), or locks of hair (Qimḥi, Rashi, LXX Codex Venetus). The word occurs also in Song 4:3, 6:7, and Isa 47:2 (Pope, *Song of Songs*, 457).
34. *Šeggāləšû mêhar gilʿād*. The meaning of the root *g-l-š* is opaque; it appears only here and in Song 6:5. The verbal use of Ugaritic *glṯ* in *PRU* V (2001.1.5) in connection with the cosmic waters (*wtglt thmt*) suggests the waving or flowing motion of water (Exum, *Song of Songs*, 153).
35. I have translated *haqqəṣûbôt* as "shearling" to reflect the passive participle feminine plural form, "shorn ones" (feminine). Murphy and others suggest that

lambs were washed before being shorn, this verb thus suggesting the sense of being "ready to be shorn" (Murphy, *The Song of Songs*, 155).

36. *Ûmidbārêk* is a *hapax* from the root for speech, √*d-b-r*. Keel notes, "In the figurative sense, 'lips' in Hebrew can also mean 'language' (Gen. 11:1, 6–7)," (Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 143). Cf. Chester Beatty I, group A, no. 31, where the young man praises the young woman's speech as part of her catalog of physical attributes (Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 52). To focus on the organ, not the speech itself, wrongly assumes that there is not a synesthetic, or multisensory quality to the description (pace Exum, *Song of Songs*, 153; Murphy, *The Song of Songs*, 155).
37. *Lətalpîôt* is a *hapax* (discussion in Pope, *Song of Songs*, 465–68).
38. That *'elep hammāgēn* ("a thousand shields") parallels *kōl šilṭê* ("all the *šilṭê*") suggests that *šelet* is another form of armament, although its exact nature is unknown. Yigael Yadin suggests that it may have been a general term (*The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* [trans. Batya Rabin and Chaim Rabin; London: Oxford University Press, 1962], 133–34).
39. See, e.g., Edwin Long's 1875 painting, *The Babylonian Marriage Market* (The Bridgeman Art Library International Ltd.; discussion in Zainab Bahrani, *Women of Babylon: Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia* [London: Routledge, 2001], 173).
40. E.g., Fadwa El Guindi, *Veil: Modesty, Privacy, and Resistance* (Oxford: Berg, 1999); Jennifer Heath, ed., *The Veil: Women Writers on Its History, Lore, and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).
41. Pace Karel van der Toorn, "The Significance of the Veil in the Ancient Near East," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 327–39. Interpreters argue that the bride must have been veiled, or else how could the switch between Leah and Rachel have taken place (Gen 29:21–25)? However, the narrative selectively emphasizes the nighttime setting (vv. 23, 25), suggesting that the cover of darkness had an instrumental role, while remaining altogether silent about clothing (Pace Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 177).
42. M. Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia," *JESHO* 38 (1995): 124.
43. Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia," 124.
44. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 161.
45. Toorn, "The Significance of the Veil in the Ancient Near East."
46. Ca. 700 BCE. British Museum 124907. See Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 191; cf., e.g., the later Greek statue *Veil of Despoina*, which features elaborate textile drapery; Alan J. B. Wace, "The Veil of Despoina," *AJA* 38 (1934): 107–11.
47. Winter, "Aesthetics in Ancient Mesopotamian Art"; Winter, *On Art in the Ancient Near East: Of the First Millennium* B.C.E. (CHANE 34; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 2:272–90.
48. Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once . . .* , 205–32.
49. Bahrani, *Women of Babylon*, 158. Cf. Pirjo Lapinkivi, *The Neo-Assyrian Myth of Ištar's Descent and Resurrection* (The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project; SAA VI;

Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns), 55–57. Lapinkivi considers several theories and decides the reason for Inanna/Ishtar's undressing is unclear, although it does function to leave her powerless.

50. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 161.
51. The same effect obtains if the interpreter reads *ləṣammātēk* as "hair," since it still draws an obstruction between the viewer and the young woman's face.
52. Falk, *Love Lyrics from the Bible*, 84.
53. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 235.
54. The exception is 5:13, in which the young man's lips are like lilies (*śiṗṭôṯāyw šôšannîm*).
55. Denis Baly, *The Geography of the Bible* (rev. ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 226.
56. Baly, *The Geography of the Bible*, 227; John D. Currid, "The Deforestation of the Foothills of Palestine," *PEQ* 116 (1984): 1–11.
57. Baly, *The Geography of the Bible*, 228.
58. The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian literature, http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section5/tr551.htm. Cf. Gwendolyn Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature* (London: Routledge, 2003), 153–56.
59. The natural imagery used is appropriate to a Mesopotamian landscape (Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature*, esp. 11–20; cf. Leick, "The Erotisation of Landscape," in *Landscapes: Territories, Frontiers, and Horizons in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Lucio Milano [3 vols.; HANE/M; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999], 3:79–82).
60. The tendency inheres in other descriptive poems, including the description of Sarai (see n. 32); the Sumerian Dumuzi-Inanna texts (Yitzhak Sefati, *Love Songs in Sumerian Literature: Critical Edition of the Dumuzi-Inanna Songs* [Bar-Ilan studies in Near Eastern Languages and Culture. Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1998], 224–25); an Egyptian descriptive text (Chester Beatty I, group A, no. 31, [Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 52]). Other descriptive texts include the Babylonian Göttertypentext (Köcher, F., "Der babylonische Göttertypentext," in *Mitteilungen Des Instituts Für Orientforschung; Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953]); cf. Alasdair Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007], 95). In the "Underworld Vision" (*ANET* 109), an Assyrian prince in a dream descends into the underworld and sees Nergal with the members of his court, described as theriomorphic monsters (F. A. M. Wiggermann, "Scenes from the Shadow Side," in *Mesopotamian Poetic Language*, ed. H. L. J. Vanstiphout [Groningen, Netherlands: Styx, 1996], 219). From Ugarit, there is the brief description from the Kirta epic: "give me maid Ḥurraya / the best young woman of your firstborn offspring; . . . whose eyes are like alabaster bowls, / who is girded with ruby; / that I might repose in the gaze of her eyes" (*ANET* 144, lines 144–49).

61. Martti Nissinen, "Love Lyrics of Nabû and Tašmetu: An Assyrian Song of Songs?" in *"Und Mose schreib dieses Lied auf": Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient: Festschrift für Oswald Loretz zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres mit Beiträgen von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen*, ed. Oswald Loretz, Manfried Dietrich, Ingo Kottsieper (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), 613.
62. Nissinen, "Love Lyrics of Nabû and Tašmetu," 589.
63. Nissinen, "Love lyrics of Nabû and Tašmetu," 614.
64. E.g., Robert and Tournay, *Le Cantique des cantiques*, 163.
65. Yair Zakovitch, *Das Hohelied*, trans. Dafna Mach (HThKAT; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2004), 187.
66. Stoddart and Zubrow (1999), cited in T. J. Wilkinson, *Archaeological Landscapes of the Near East* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 2003), 7.
67. Various ancient versions did not understand this to be a place-name, so *eudokia* (LXX), *ṣebyānā* (Syriac), *suavis* (Vulgate). There is no textual problem with *tirṣâ*, and various ancient and modern emendations seem to stem from a discomfort with the metaphor: "It is hard enough to explain the comparison of a beautiful female, human or divine, to a city, even Jerusalem, but the city Tirzah is a tougher problem" (Pope, *Song of Songs*, 558).
68. This form, *kannidgālôt* (the Niphal feminine plural participle of *d-g-l*) only occurs here and in the identical phrase in the last line of this poem, at 6:10 (the root √*d-g-l* also appears in Song 2:4; 5:10). Numbers describes the Israelites camping and marching under degel ("banner"; Num 1:52; 2:2, 3, 10, 17, 18, 25, 31, 34; 10:14, 18, 22, 25; cf. Ps 20:6 [20:5 Eng])—Song 2:4 evokes this military context by declaring "love is his banner over me." The word seems to draw on this military sense as well (so LXX *tetagmenai*, "drawn up in order," and Vulgate *Castrorum acies ordinate*, "ordered line of battle camps"). Akkadian *dagâlu*, "look, behold," suggests visual distinction or conspicuousness, hence Exum, "splendor" (*Song of Songs*, 212).
69. Following the parallel passage (4:3), ancient interpreters, including LXX, Syriac, Symmachus, Aquila, OL, the Syro-Hexapla, all include an additional line: "Like a scarlet thread, your lips, / and your mouth is lovely," assuming the copyist has omitted the phrase (Exum, *Song of Songs*, 212). As I will note, however, the poem is not fixated on exact repetition, but both adds and omits aspects from the previous description.
70. See note 68.
71. Repetitions are diagrammed by Hagedorn, "Die Frau des Hohenlieds zwischen babylonisch-assyrischer Morphoskopie und Jacques Lacan (Teil I)," *ZAW* 122 (2010): 420–21.
72. Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch, *The Song of Songs: A New Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Random House, 1995), 189.
73. See note 67.

74. Robert and Tournay, *Le Cantique des cantiques*, 232. There is no need to see the reference to Tirzah as fixing a date for composition, except as a terminus a quo. Pace Noegel and Rendsburg, *Solomon's Vineyard*, 174.
75. Edmée Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God: A Study in Biblical Intertextuality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 268.
76. Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 213.
77. Tod Linafelt, "The Arithmetic of Eros," *Interpretation* 59 (2005), 59.
78. For further discussion, see Chapter 4.
79. This convention is well attested from finds at Khorsabad and Nimrud. Winter notes parallels with ivory plaques from Samaria and Arslan Tash (Irene Winter, "Is There a South Syrian Style of Ivory Carving?" in *On Art in the Ancient Near East*, 1:300–303).
80. Other instances of this motif include: Michal looked out of the window and saw David dancing (1 Chr 15:29); when Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out of her window (2 Kgs 9:20). An Akkadian love song includes the following line: "Do take your place at the window, / Go on, catch up to my love!" (Benjamin Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* [3rd ed.; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2005], 158); cf. Pirjo Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage in the Light of Comparative Evidence* (SAAS 15; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2004), 232–40.
81. The relation to 7:1 is problematic ("Turn, turn, the Shulammite / turn, turn and we will look upon you / what do you see in the Shulammite / like a dance of Mahanaim?") These lines are among the most opaque in the Song, along with the immediately preceding verse, 6:12. See discussion, Roland Murphy, "Dance and Death in the Song of Songs," in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope*, ed. John H. Marks and Robert McClive Good (Guilford, CT: Four Quarters, 1987), 117–19.
82. *Ḥammûqê* is a *hapax legomenon*, although it seems clearly related to *ḥāmaq*, "turn," which occurs in 5:6.
83. *Ḥălāʾîm* is a *hapax legomenon*. The singular *ḥălî* occurs in Prov 25:12, parallel to "ring of gold"; and in Hos 2:15, it is another item of adornment. Both suggest a meaning "jewelry."
84. The form here, *ʾāmmān ʾommân*, is a *hapax legomenon*. The meaning is made by way of the Akkadian *ummânu* and Aramaic *ʾummân*, meaning "artisan." A variant form, *ʾāmôn*, occurs in Jer 52:15 and Prov 8:30. In Jeremiah, it refers to the craftsmen as a group; in Proverbs, to God's creative power.
85. The translation of "umbilical cord" for *šārərēk* is early (LXX, Vulgate, Syriac), following Ezek 16:4. Pope and others connect *šōr* to Arabic *sirr*, meaning "secret," suggestive of "vulva" (Murphy, *The Song of Songs*, 182). Keel notes a visual overlap between navel and vulva in Syrian clay figurines of the female form (Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 232).

86. *Hassahar* is also a *hapax legomenon*, likely specifying the kind or quality of the bowl. LXX and Vulgate understood it to refer to artisanal crafting; they render it as a "turned" bowl, translating it with the same word as for the young man's hands in 5:14, which are "turned gold." Pope, *Song of Songs*, 618.
87. *Mezeg* is also a *hapax legomenon*. This is an Aramaism (*mzîg, mzāgā'*) for Heb. *mesek* (Ps 75:9). It refers to mixed or diluted wine, the root becoming common in Rabbinic Hebrew (F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Late Linguistic Features of the Song of Songs," in *Perspectives on the Song of Songs*, ed. Anselm Hagedorn [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005], 57).
88. Taken as a geographical name, in keeping with the succession of final words in these lines, although it was translated "daughter of many" by LXX (*thygatros pollon*) and Vulgate (*filiae multitudinis*).
89. *Wədallat*; elsewhere only in Isa 38:12, *dalāh* refers to the loom. The noun derives from *d-l-l*, "hang."
90. *Bārhāṭîm*; the root *r-h-ṭ* in Aramaic and Syriac means "to run," and in Gen 30:38, 41; Exod 2:16, the word refers to a course of flowing water, reflected by the LXX *en paradromais* ("in courses") and the Vulgate *canalibus* ("in canals"). The quality of her flowing hair seems to be in view (Exum, *Song of Songs*, 214).
91. Parallels have been drawn to statuary veneration in Sumer and in Egypt (Hallo, "The Cultic Setting of Sumerian Poetry," 120; Köcher, "Der babylonische Göttertypentext"; Gerleman, *Ruth. Das Hohelied*, 63–72; 174–78; Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 273–74; Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 202). Cf. Gilgamesh VIII.ii (Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 93).
92. "Whether or not the speaker pictures the beloved as naked or clothed or partially clothed is a question that also arises in the woman's description of the man in 5:10–16. It is a moot question to ask of the poem (which is a text, not a public spectacle), since the body is clothed in metaphors that obscure as much as they promise to reveal" (Exum, *Song of Songs*, 232).
93. Winter, "Aesthetics in Ancient Mesopotamian Art," *CANE*. The work of hands is an idiomatic way of speaking about fabrication (e.g., Lam 4:2; Deut 27:15; 2 Kgs 19:18). In the prophets, the distinction between the abhorrent idols that are made by human hands is contrasted with the proper, good work of God's hands: Isa 2:8; 15:12. Also in the general sense of "daily work," or "undertakings": Gen 5:29; Deut 2:7; 15:10; etc.
94. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 77.
95. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*, 471.
96. Tuan, *Space and Place*, 471.
97. The city was eventually retaken by Moab, since Isaiah and Jeremiah both include it in oracles against Moab (Isa 15:1–4; Jer 48).
98. Zakovitch, *Das Hohelied*, 247.
99. Denis Cosgrove, *Geography and Vision: Seeing, Imagining and Representing the World* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2008), 155.

100. Jens Eichner and Andreas Georg Scherer, "'Die "Teiche" von Hesbon': eine exegetisch-archäologische Glosse zu Cant 7,5ba," *Biblische Notizen* 109 (2001): 10–14; Carol L. Meyers, "Gender Imagery in the Song of Songs," in *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 203.
101. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 88; Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 104. The liquidity of the eyes is frequently invoked in Western literature: "O lovely eyes of azure, / Clear as the waters of a brook that run / Limpid and laughing in the summer sun!" Henry Longfellow, cited in Frank Jenners Wilstach, *A Dictionary of Similes* (new ed., rev. and enl.; Boston: Little, Brown, 1924).
102. ["The language of lovers is always a secret language, of which complete decoding is impossible,"] Hagedorn, "Die Frau des Hohenlieds zwischen babylonisch-assyrischer Morphoskopie und Jacques Lacan (Teil I)," 425.
103. Either a mountain itself, or a structure on a mountain; either reading is possible (Pope, *Song of Songs*, 626–27).
104. Cited in Pope, *Song of Songs*, 627.
105. This fits into his larger conceptualization of the young woman as a goddess (Pope, *Song of Songs*, 627).
106. It may have briefly come under Israelite control (2 Sam 8:5–6; Wayne Pitard, "Damascus," *ABD* [New York: Doubleday, 1992], 2:5–7; cf. Meyers, "Gender Imagery in the Song of Songs," 203).
107. Examples include *pənê -hā'ădāmāh*, Gen 2:6; 4:14; 7:4; Ps 104:30; *pənê kol-hā'āreṣ*, Gen 1:29; 7:3; 8:9; 11:4, 8, 9; 19:28; Isa 24:1.
108. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 159.
109. Seton Lloyd, *The Art of the Ancient Near East* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1961), 165.
110. The Peshitta understands *beter* to be a type of spice (cf. JPS "hills of spices"; Exum, *Song of Songs*, 132).
111. Black, *The Artifice of Love*, 155.
112. Black, *The Artifice of Love*, 156.
113. Arthur Coleman Danto, "Picasso and the Portrait," *The Nation* (1996): *31–. Educators Reference Complete* (accessed September 26, 2016).
114. Danto, "Picasso and the Portrait."
115. Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 108.
116. Barbara Bender, "Subverting the Western Gaze: Mapping Alternative Worlds," in *The Archaeology and Anthropology of Landscape: Shaping your Landscape*, ed. Peter J. Ucko and Robert Layton (One World Archaeology 30; London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 31.
117. Bender, "Subverting the Western Gaze," 37.
118. Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape* (New York: Scribner, 1986), 274.

119. A phrase I have borrowed from Diane Kelsey McColley, *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell* (Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity; Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007).
120. Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*, 295.
121. Lopez, Arctic Dreams, 254.

CHAPTER 6

1. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (Introduction to a Science of Mythology 1; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 270.
2. Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), xvii.
3. For one example, see Kennth Hoglund, "The Achaemenid Imperial Context," *Second Temple Studies 1*, ed. Philip R. Davies et al. (JSOTSup 117; Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1991).
4. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Selma Sevenhuijsen, *Citizenship and the Ethics of Care: Feminist Considerations on Justice, Morality, and Politics* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998); Ruth E. Groenhout, *Connected Lives: Human Nature and an Ethics of Care* (Feminist Constructions; Lanham, MD; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004); Sherilyn MacGregor, *Beyond Mothering Earth: Ecological Citizenship and the Politics of Care* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006); Robert C. Fuller, *Ecology of Care: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of the Self and Moral Obligation* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1992).

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