

The King Who Fell



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Solomon & the Bride

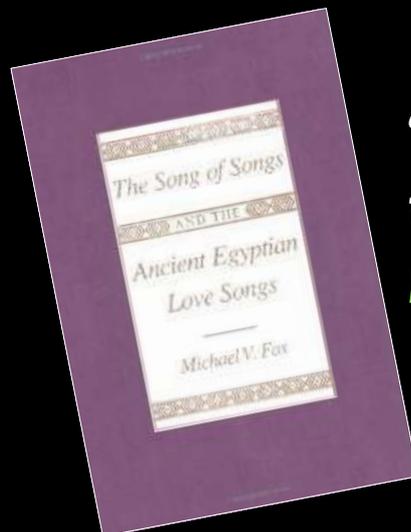
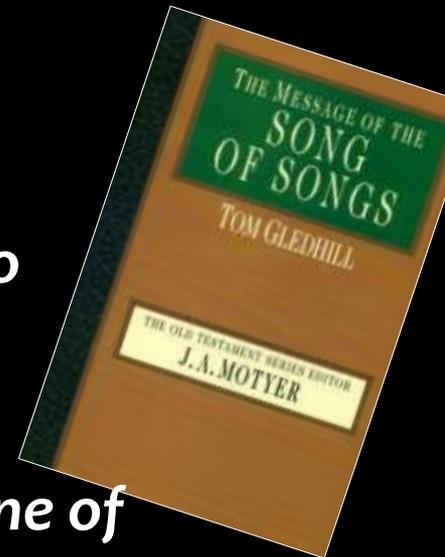
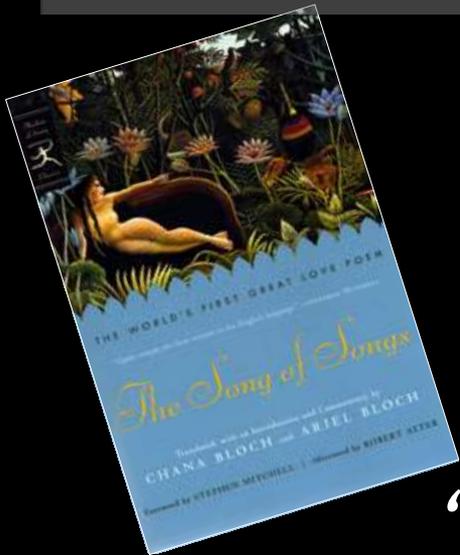
The Male Character

Most modern expositors deny Solomon is a character in the Song despite his mention 7 times

“King Solomon is a central figure in the lovers’ fantasies, not a character in the poem.” **Bloch & Bloch, 1995, p10**

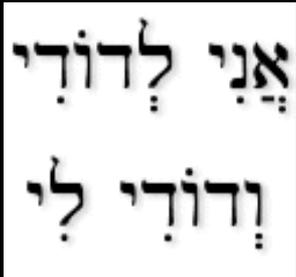
“The two lovers are Everyman and Everywoman and they have nothing to do with Solomon.” **Gledhill, 1994, p23**

“King Solomon is not one of the characters of the Song.” **Fox, 1985, p22**



Hebraic Experts for Translation (not Exposition)

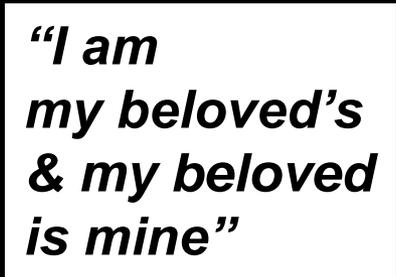
Hebrew



Translation



English



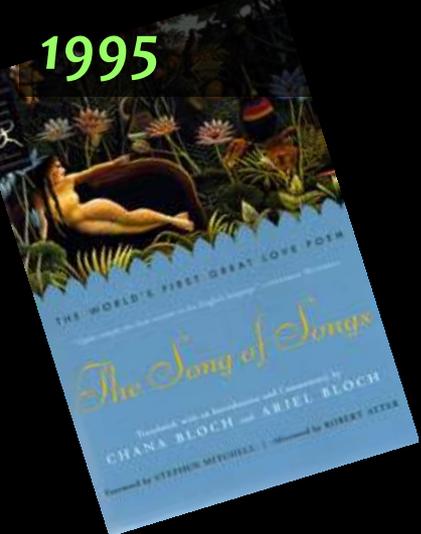
Exposition



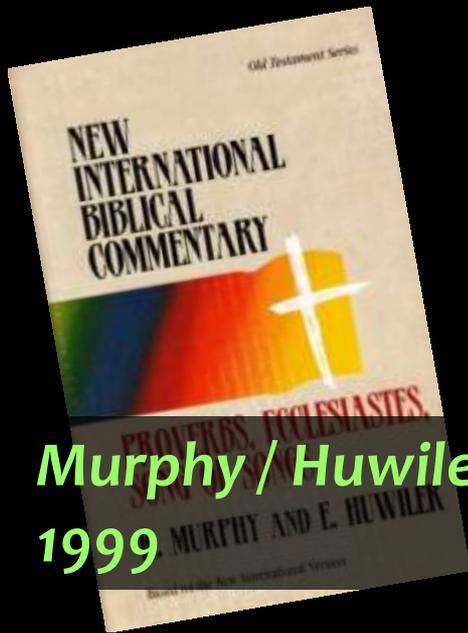
Meaning



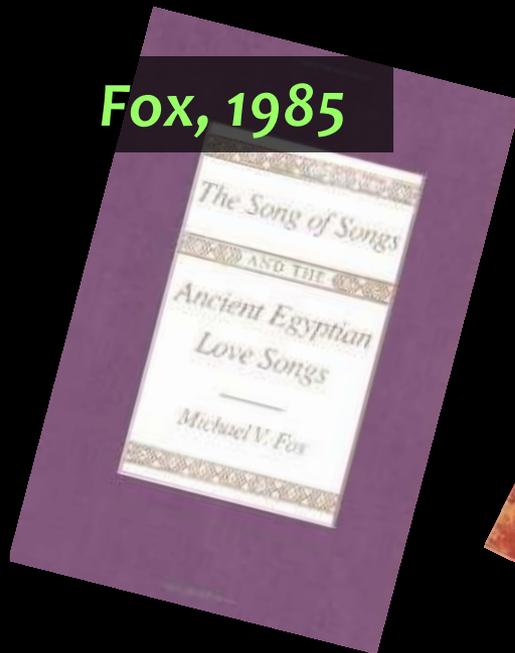
**Bloch & Bloch
1995**



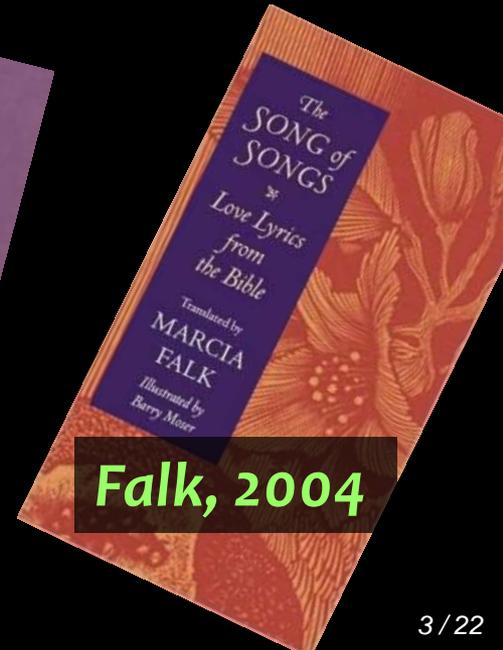
**Murphy / Huwiler
1999**



Fox, 1985



Falk, 2004



Verse of the Song	Assertion (Gledhill 1994)
<i>“Look! It is Solomon’s carriage” 3:7</i>	
<i>“the king” 1:12</i>	
<i>“banquet hall” 2:4</i>	
<i>“look at King Solomon wearing the crown ...with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding” 3:11</i>	
<i>“Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines” 6:8</i>	
<i>“prince’s daughter” 7:1</i>	

If God were referencing Solomon, what language would appear?

The Male Character: The King, Solomon



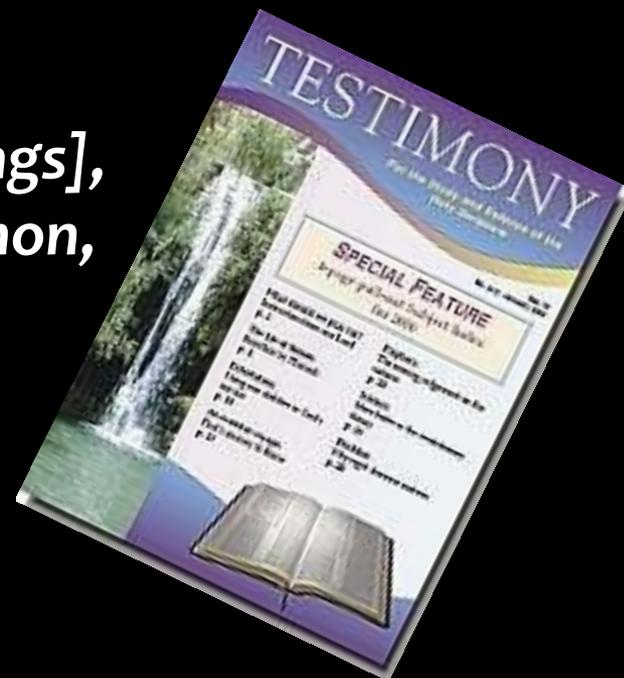
“Look! It is Solomon’s carriage, escorted by sixty warriors, the noblest of Israel”

3:6-7

also 1:1,5; 3:9,11; 8:11,12

“Apart from the title [Solomon’s Song of Songs], six times The King in the story is called Solomon, so it seems absurd to attempt to change his identity.”

E Whittaker, The Testimony, Aug 1967, p271



Making the Metaphors Meaningful



“I liken you, my darling, to a mare among Pharaoh’s chariot horses.”

1:9

“henna... nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with every kind of incense tree, with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices.” **4:13-14**



“Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number; but my dove, my perfect one, is unique.” **6:8-9**

Let the Bible interpret itself

Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. 1 Kgs 11:2-3

Solomon fell deeply in love with multiple queens and concubines: the rest of Israel's citizens did not



“Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number; but my dove, my perfect one, is unique.” 6:8-9

Let the Bible interpret itself

[Solomon] spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. 1 Kgs 4:33

Never again were so many spices brought in as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. 1 Kgs 10:10

“henna... nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with every kind of incense tree, with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices.” 4:13-14



Solomon possessed non-native spices (cinnamon; calamus): the majority of Israel's citizens did not

Let the Bible interpret itself



“I liken you, my darling, to a mare among Pharaoh’s chariot horses.”

1:9

*Solomon’s horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue... They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. **1 Kgs 10:28-29***

Solomon knew about Pharaoh’s chariots and horses: the majority of Israel’s citizens did not

Making the Metaphors Meaningful



1:9

1 Kgs 10:28-29



4:13-14

1 Kgs 4:33; 10:10



6:8-9

1 Kgs 11:2-3

Comments are only meaningful if uttered by one with the relevant experience: Solomon

Solomon is the male character of the Song



The Bride is from Lebanon

*“Come with me from Lebanon, my bride,
come with me from Lebanon.” 4:8*

*“The fragrance of your garments
is like that of Lebanon.” 4:11*

*“You are a garden fountain,
a well of flowing water
streaming down from Lebanon”
4:15*

*“Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon
looking toward Damascus.” 7:4*

The Bride is Lebanese

Female Character: Lebanese Bride

**The Bride is Foreign:
not a Daughter of Jerusalem**

**She is presented in counterpoint
to the “Daughters of Jerusalem”**

**There is tension because of her
different nationality, different God**

***“If only you were to me like a brother...
Then, if I found you outside... I would kiss
you, and no one would despise me” 8:1***

The Shulammitte

*“Come back, come back, O Shulammitte;
come back, come back, that we may gaze on you!
Why would you gaze on the Shulammitte
as on the dance of Mahanaim?” 6:13*



What does 'Shulammit' mean?

Feminine of Solomon

H-Taylor (1893), Bloch (1995),

No: would be 'Shelomit'

Glen (1897), Fox (1985)

LXX: "Σαλωμι" = Salome!

= Herodias' daughter

LXX + Josephus (AD93)

Abishag the Shunammite

Murphy (1999), Glen (1897)

Solomon's Early Reign: Execution of Adonijah

“Please ask King Solomon—he will not refuse you—to give me Abishag the Shunammite as my wife.” 1 Kgs 2:17

*King Solomon swore by the LORD:
“May God deal with me, be it ever
so severely, if Adonijah does not
pay with his life for this request!”*

*King Solomon gave orders
to Benaiah... and he struck
down Adonijah and he
died. 1 Kgs 2:23-25*



Precedent: Royal prince executed for choosing forbidden bride

Hebrew Culture of Word Play

Biblical Hebrew employs irony through similar-sounding words

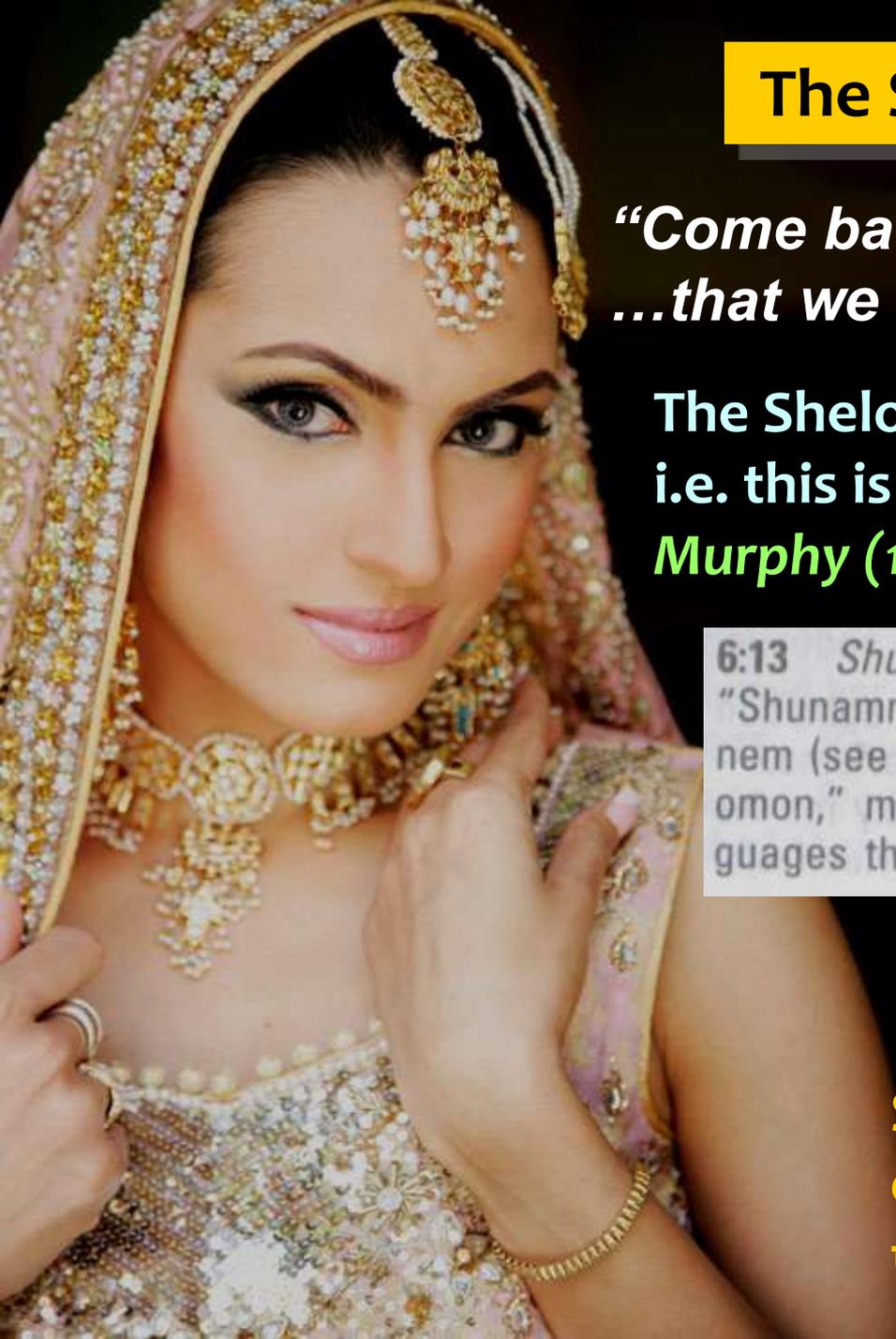
*“What do you see, Jeremiah?”
“I see the branch of an almond tree,”
[shaqed] ... “You have seen correctly,
for I am watching [shaqad] to see
that my word is fulfilled.”*

Jer 1:11-12



*Tell [gad] it not in Gath...
In Beth Ophrah roll in the dust [aphar]
Those who live in Zaanan will not
come out [‘tsa]*

Mic 1:10-11



The Shelomit Shunammite

*“Come back, come back, O Shulammite;
...that we may gaze on you!” 6:13*

The Shelomit Shunammite = Shulammite
i.e. this is Solomon’s Abishag
Murphy (1999), Glen (1897)

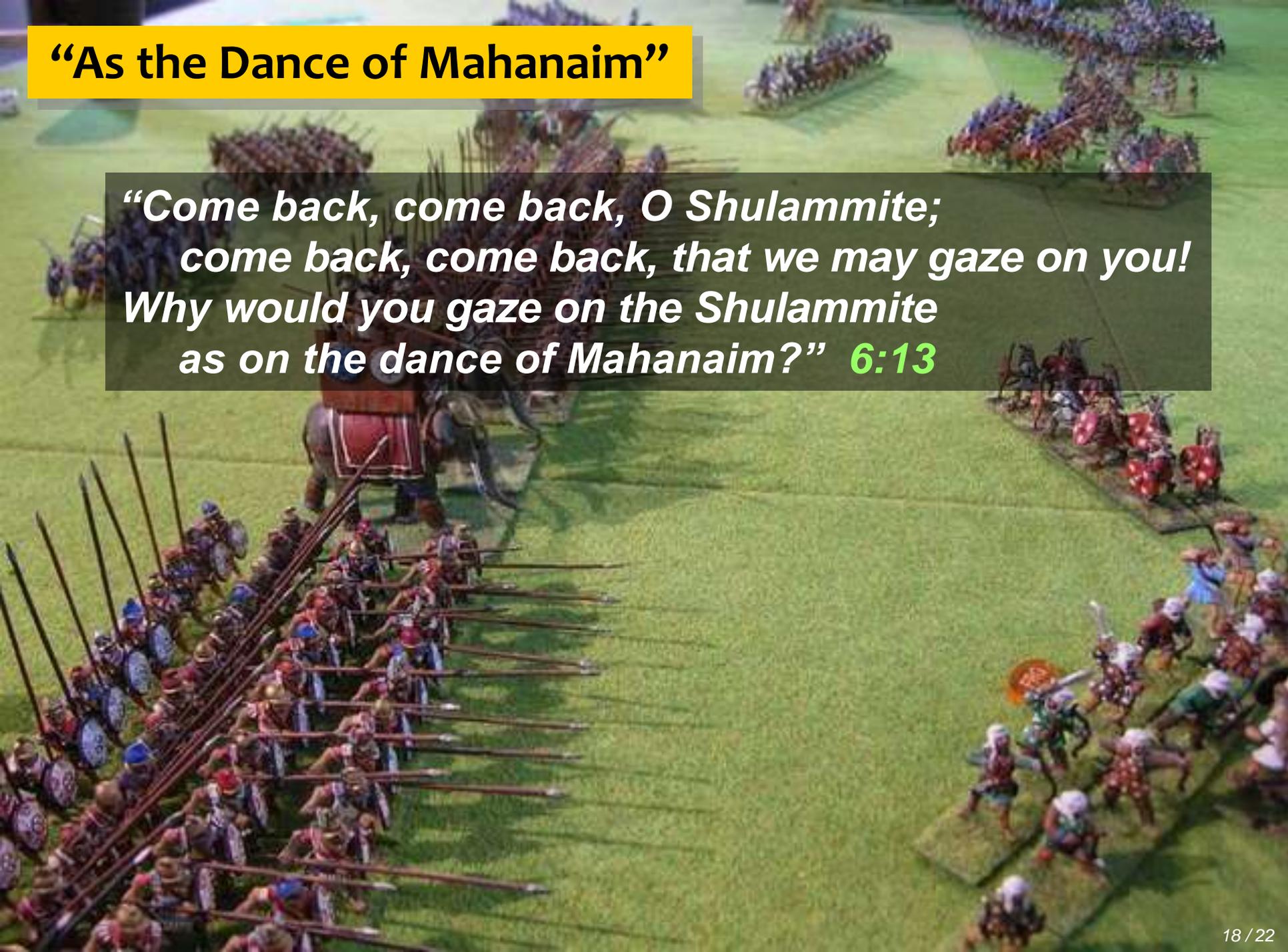
6:13 *Shulammite.* The beloved. It is either a variant of “Shunammite” (see 1Ki 1:3), i.e., a young woman from Shunem (see Jos 19:18), or a feminine form of the word “Solomon,” meaning “Solomon’s girl.” In ancient Semitic languages the letters *l* and *n* were sometimes interchanged.

NIV Study Bible footnote

- **ACCUSATION OF HYPOCRISY**
Solomon executes Adonijah for desiring Abishag the Shunammite; then marries “Shulammite”

“As the Dance of Mahanaim”

***“Come back, come back, O Shulammite;
come back, come back, that we may gaze on you!
Why would you gaze on the Shulammite
as on the dance of Mahanaim?” 6:13***



The Legacy of Mahanaim: A House Divided

Events at Mahanaim:

- Jacob makes two camps to defend from Esau
In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups **Gen 32:7**

- Abner divides the Kingdom of Israel by anointing Ish-bosheth at Mahanaim after Saul dies **2 Sam 2:8**
- David flees first to Mahanaim when Absalom revolts and divides the Kingdom once again **2 Sam 17**

Solomon's Early Reign: Execution of Shimei

David to Solomon: *“And remember, you have with you Shimei ...who called down bitter curses on me the day I went to Mahanaim... you will know what to do to him. Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood.”* **1 Kgs 2:8-9**

Solomon to Shimei: *“You know in your heart all the wrong you did to my father David...”* Then the king gave the order to **Benaiah son of Jehoiada**, and he went out and struck Shimei down and killed him. **1 Kgs 2:45-46**



Mahanaim: Shimei's Death Sentence

[Shimei] pelted David and all the king's officials with stones... So David and his men continued along the road while Shimei was going along the hillside opposite him, cursing as he went and throwing stones at him and showering him with dirt. 2 Sam 16:6,13

David's fleeing retinue dodged the rocks thrown by Shimei: the 'dance' of Mahanaim?

Israel's throne denigrated

Solomon denigrates Israel's throne marrying the Lebanese Shulammite

Mahanaim

Indictment

“Come back, come back, O Shulammite; come back, come back, that we may gaze on you! Why would you gaze on the Shulammite as on the dance of Mahanaim?” 6:13



Shunammite: forbidden bride which Prince Adonijah improperly tried to marry

Solomon executed Adonijah for his crime



Mahanaim: throne abused; kingdom divided by Absalom rebellion; Shimei's attack

Solomon executed Shimei for his crime

Solomon duplicates the crimes of both Adonijah and Shimei

Consider the weight of guilt Solomon bears for his hypocrisy of denigrating David's throne with the Shulammite marriage

The King Who Fell



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Siren Song of Lebanon