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The Song of Solomon



John Cunyus, Translator
Scripture from The Latin Vulgate

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Solomon and *The Vulgate*

Solomon, King of Israel

in Jerusalem,
son of David.

Reigned: 971 B.C.E. (Before the Common Era, formerly B.C.) and 931 B.C.E.¹

Tradition teaches that Solomon, king of Israel, wrote the Biblical books of “Proverbs,” “Ecclesiastes,” and “Song of Solomon.”

- He wrote “Song of Solomon” as a young man.
- “Proverbs” was the work of his middle age, as he governed his kingdom and labored to raise his family.
- “Ecclesiastes” was the work of his old age, as he reflected on his earthly life.²

The Vulgate,

translated by St. Jerome.

Date of Translation: 382-405 C.E.³ (Common Era, formerly A.D.).

The Vulgate, or *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, is a carefully-restored version of the official Bible translation, into Latin, of the Roman Catholic Church. The version I use in my translation came through BibleWorks, an excellent software tool for serious students of scripture. The German Bible Society holds the copyright to this particular version, and has graciously allowed me to use it in these translations.

Eusebius Hieronymus, known to history as Saint Jerome, was born 347 C.E., died 419/420 C.E. A “biblical translator and monastic leader, traditionally regarded as the most learned of the Latin Fathers,”⁴ Jerome combined a love of scripture with a vast knowledge of Classical learning. His translation grew out of his own longing for holiness and a Christian vocation. His life, mired as it was in controversy and struggle, set the stage for the preservation of scripture through the dark centuries following the collapse of Rome’s Empire in the West.

In 382 [C.E.], Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome, the leading biblical scholar of his day, to produce an acceptable Latin version of the Bible from the various translations then being used. His revised Latin translation of the Gospels appeared about 383. Using the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament, he produced new Latin translations of the Psalms (the so-called Gallican Psalter), the Book of Job, and some

¹ The Ryrie Study Bible, New International Version, Charles Ryrie, ed, Moody Press, Chicago, 1986, pg. 891.

² Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, E-J, George Buttrick, ed, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1962, pg. 7.

³ <http://www.bible-researcher.com/vulgate1.html>.

⁴ The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume 6, Micropaedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, Chicago, 1998, pg. 535.

other books. Later, he decided that the Septuagint was unsatisfactory and began translating the entire Old Testament from the original Hebrew versions, a process that he completed about 405.⁵

Rather than translating the Bible into the literary Latin of his day, he translated it into so-called Vulgar Latin, the language of ordinary people, intending that the Bible be read and understood as widely as possible. The translation draws its English name, “The Vulgate,” from this.⁶ By the 6th Century after Christ, the Vulgate had become the official translation of the Roman Catholic Church. By means of the Vulgate, scholars transmitted the biblical tradition to the West⁷. In 1455, Johannes Gutenberg printed a version of Jerome’s work, making it “the first complete book extant in the West and the earliest printed from movable type.”⁸

Jerome’s translation is remarkable for both its faithfulness to the originals and the simplicity of its presentation. More than a mere translation, The Vulgate is one of the world’s great works of literature and a monument of the world’s religions. I offer this translation of the combined works of Solomon and Jerome, convinced of the surpassing value of the Wisdom tradition in the Bible. May others find the same joy reading it as I have found translating it.

To see translations of the following books, please click on the links below.

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Including an extended Introduction.

Song of Solomon

Including an extended Introduction

⁵ The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume 12, Micropaedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, Chicago, 1998, pg. 438

⁶ Ibid, pg. 438.

⁷ Ibid, pg. 438.

⁸ The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume 5, Micropaedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, Chicago, 1998, Pg. 582

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Introduction

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“The Song of Solomon” was written originally in Hebrew, centuries before the birth of Christ. In an age before computers or printing presses, this book, like all others, survived only by being copied manually by generations of scholars. This process took place for centuries among the Jews, the work’s first custodians, who considered the book divinely inspired⁹.

Its first known translation took place in the 3rd Century B.C.E. (Before the Common Era), in Alexandria, Egypt. At the behest of Ptolemy II Philadelphus,¹⁰ Jewish scholars translated the Hebrew scriptures into Greek, the common language of the day. This translation, known as the Septuagint,¹¹ became the Bible of Greek-speaking Jewish synagogues scattered throughout the Greco-Roman world. As such, it became the Bible both of the first Gentile converts to Christianity, and of the writers of the New Testament.

The Song of Solomon was translated from Hebrew into Latin by Jerome some four centuries after Christ.¹² Jerome translated the work into the common Latin of his day, so-called “Vulgar Latin,” rather into the more refined literary Latin. This made his translation accessible to ordinary hearers of the period, allowing it pass on from Jerome’s translation into the canon of Western faith and culture. As with the Hebrew original, translations of the Song of Solomon had to be copied down by hand, until the invention of the printing press stabilized its form in the 15th Century C.E.¹³

The title of the book derives from the Hebrew inscription above the first line of poetry: “The Song of Songs, Which is Solomon’s.” In the Septuagint as well as most English translations, the phrase appears as Song of Solomon 1:1. The inscription is not found in the text of the Vulgate, and so does not appear in the text of this translation. Jerome begins the Vulgate translation with the first line of the first poem, rather than the inscription.

The doubled phrasing of the first phrase, “Song of Songs,” reflects a Hebrew idiom which stresses that the thing in question is the supreme example of its type. Thus, the “Song of Songs” is the best of songs, even as the Holy of Holies is the most holy of all places.¹⁴ Whether the

⁹ [The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible: R-Z](#), George Buttrick, editor, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1962, pgs. 420-426. (Hereafter cited as “[Interpreter’s](#)”)

¹⁰ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptolemy_II_Philadelphus.

¹¹ “[Interpreter’s](#)”, pgs. 273-278

¹² See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerome>.

¹³ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printing_press.

¹⁴ See Hebrews 9:3.

inscription intends to tell us that Solomon composed the song, or merely that it was his favorite, is unclear from the language itself. Both Jewish and Christian traditions assert that Solomon wrote the poem as a young man, though many modern scholars dismiss the idea out of hand.

The book's date of composition is also disputed. Its association with Solomon makes it unlikely that the book was written earlier than his reign, which ended in the year 931 B.C.E.¹⁵ Its inclusion in the Septuagint means it could not have been written later than the 3rd Century B.C.E. Given the length of time it must have taken for a work to have been accepted as canonical, one could argue logically for a date closer to the 9th than to the 3rd Centuries before Christ. The fact is that we know for sure neither the author's name nor the date of the work's composition.

The work is a series of passionate love poems, reflecting the courtship and marriage of a man and a woman. Because of the way the English language deals with gender, it is often difficult to follow who is speaking to whom in an English translation. Latin, like the Romance languages derived from it, handles gender differently. This makes it easier to follow the back-and-forth of the speakers.

In all, there seem to be four speakers:

The Man, also referred to as the King and the Groom.

The Woman, also referred to as the Wife, the Shulamite.

The Daughters of Jerusalem, young women who are contemporaries of the Woman.

The Friends, associates of the Man and Woman.

Scholars have debated through the centuries the meaning of the book. On an obvious level, it is about love between a woman and a man. That fact troubled later interpreters, shaped by the disdain for human sexuality that long shaped Jewish and Christian traditions. Jewish interpreters tended to see the book as an allegory for the relationship between God and Israel.¹⁶ For Christians, the Man came to represent Christ or God, and the Woman the Church or the individual soul.¹⁷

It is not surprising that many interpreters refused to accept the literal interpretation of the book. The Song of Solomon is sexually graphic in ways that even jaded, modern readers are reluctant to discuss. It contains overt references to the woman's breasts (4:10), as well as "the joints of [her] thighs" (7:1). It mentions the location of her mother's first experience of intercourse (8:5). There are subtler allusions as well, which the reader will have to discover for herself. Yet the love between the characters is as chaste and monogamous as it is passionate and graphic. "*All my fruits, old and new, I saved for you,*" the Woman assures the Man in 7:14.

¹⁵ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon>.

¹⁶ The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Michael Coogan, editor, Oxford Press, Oxford, 2001, pg. 959.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 959.

Given its vivid content, why is the book in the Bible? In A. S. Herbert's words:

*It is part of the glory of Israel's faith that it saw human life in all its aspects as having a full and rightful place in the divine purpose. Human love and marriage are part of God's will for man; through love's fulfillment in marriage human nature reaches the greatest heights of earthly experience. The horrors of man's perversion of love must be continually challenged by its true expression as God gave it to man, and as it is celebrated in [the Song of Solomon].*¹⁸

The book is one of the most striking and brilliant literary works in the Old Testament canon. Whether it describes love physically or allegorically, few readers doubt the passion and inspiration of its composition. Rabbi Akiba, whose life and work helped provide the model for rabbinical Judaism after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 C.E., said,

“ . . . all the ages are not worth the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel; for all the writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies.”^{19 20}

Beginning of Introduction

¹⁸ Peake's Commentary on the Bible, Matthew Black, editor, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1962, pg. 469.

¹⁹ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbi_Akiva.

²⁰ Peake's Commentary on the Bible, Matthew Black, editor, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1962, pg.468.

The Song of Songs, Which Is Solomon

Chapter 1

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The Woman

1:1²¹ *osculetur me osculo oris sui quia meliora sunt ubera²² tua vino*

Let him kiss me
with *the*²³ kiss
of his mouth,
because your body
is better than wine.²⁴

1:2 *fragrantia²⁵ unguentis optimis oleum effusum nomen tuum ideo adolescentulae dilexerunt te*

The passion
of your scents
is *the* best;
your name
is squeezed oil;
therefore young women
loved you.

1:3 *trahe me post te curremus introduxit me rex in cellaria sua exultabimus et laetabimur in te memores uberum²⁶ tuorum super vinum recti diligunt te*

Take me!

²¹ Nova Vulgata begins with 1:1: *Canticum Canticorum Salomonis*. Resulting numbering is different from *Deutschebibelgesellschaft* text. See http://www.vatican.va/archive/bible/nova_vulgata/documents/nova-vulgata_vt_canticum-canticorum_lt.html. Hereafter cited as Nova Vulgata.

²² Nova Vulgata, *amores*.

²³ Use of italic case in the English translation indicates a word added in the translation that is not in the original. The English verb “is” often must be added to make grammatical sense of the Latin. Latin, like Hebrew and Greek before it, often phrased sentences without a verb, where a simple “to be” form is needed in English. The original Latin, translated literally, is “All vanity.” Latin, unlike Greek and Hebrew, has neither definite nor indefinite articles (a, an, the). Where these are found in the translations, they are always words that have been added to make better sense of the translation.

²⁴ Note the ambiguity of “Let him kiss me . . . because your body . . .” She doesn’t seem to be addressing the one she is actually kissing.

²⁵ Nova Vulgata, *fragrantiam*.

²⁶ Nova Vulgata, *amorem*,

We will run
after you!

The king
brought me
into his cellar.

We will exult
and be happy in you,
remembering your body
more than wine!

The upright love you!

1:4 *nigra sum sed formosa filiae Hierusalem sicut tabernacula Cedar sicut pelles Salomonis*

I am black
but beautiful!

*The daughters of Jerusalem
are like the tabernacle
of Cedar,
like the pelts of Solomon.*

1:5 *nolite me considerare quod fusca sim quia decoloravit me sol filii matris meae pugnaverunt contra me²⁷ posuerunt me custodem in vineis vineam meam non custodivi*

Don't judge me
because I am darkened,
because *the* sun
discolored me.

My mother's sons
fought against me
and made me
keeper of *a* vineyard.

I have not tended
my vine.²⁸

²⁷ *Nova Vulgata, irati sunt mihi.*

²⁸ She has been out in the sun working, rather than indoors putting on makeup.

1:6 *indica mihi quem diligit anima mea ubi pascas ubi cubes in meridie ne vagari incipiam per greges sodalium tuorum*

Tell me,
you who delight
my soul,
where do you feed *your* flock?

Where do you eat
at midday,
so I do not begin
to wander
after *the* flocks
of your companions?

The Man

1:7 *si ignoras te²⁹ o pulchra inter mulieres egredere et abi post vestigia gregum et pasce hedos tuos iuxta tabernacula pastorum*

If you don't know yourself,
O beautiful among women,
go out
and pass beyond
the steps of *the* flock,
and graze your young goats
beside *the* shepherds' tabernacle.

1:8 *equitatu meo in curribus Pharaonis adsimilavi³⁰ te amica mea*

I compared you
to my horsemen,
in Pharaoh's chariots,
my love.³¹

1:9 *pulchrae sunt genae tuae sicut turturis collum tuum sicut monilia³²*

Your cheeks

²⁹ Nova Vulgata lacks *te*.

³⁰ Nova Vulgata, *Equae in curribus pharaonis assimilavi te*.

³¹ Physical prowess and grace are beautiful to him, not mere adornment.

³² Nova Vulgata, *Pulchrae sunt genae tuae inter innaures, collum tuum inter monilia*.

are lovely,
like turtle-doves,
your neck
like *a* necklace

1:10 *murenulas³³ aureas faciemus tibi vermiculatas argento*

We will make
golden bridles
for you,
studded with silver.

The Woman

1:11 *dum esset rex in accubitu suo nardus mea dedit odorem suum*

While the king
reclined to eat,
my scented oil
gave its odor.

1:12 *fasciculus murrae dilectus meus mihi inter ubera mea commorabitur*

My lover to me *is*
like a little bundle
of myrrh;
he will linger
between my breasts.

1:13 *botrus cypri dilectus meus mihi in vineis Engaddi*

A cluster of grapes
from Cyprus
is my lover to me,
in *the* vines
of En-geddi.

The Man

1:14 *ecce tu pulchra es amica mea ecce tu pulchra oculi tui columbarum*

How beautiful
you are,

³³ Nova Vulgata, *Inaures*.

my love!

How beautiful
you are!

Your eyes
are like doves!

The Woman

1:15 *ecce tu pulcher es dilecte mi et decorus lectulus noster floridus*

How handsome
you are,
my love!

Our bed
is blossoming!

1:16 *tigna domorum nostrarum cedrina laquearia nostra cypressina*

The beams
of our house
are cedar,
our rafters
of cypress.

Chapter 2

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The Woman

2:1 *ego flos campi et lilium convallium*

I am *a* flower
of *the* field,
and *a* lily
of *the* valley.

The Man

2:2 *sicut lilium inter spinas sic amica mea inter filias*

Like *a* lily
among thorns,
so *is* my love
among young women.

The Woman

2:3 *sicut malum³⁴ inter ligna silvarum sic dilectus meus inter filios sub umbra illius quam desideraveram sedi et fructus eius dulcis gutturi meo*

Like an apple
among *the* trees
of *the* forest,
so is my lover
among young men.

I sat under his shadow,
whom I desired,
and his fruit
was sweet
to my throat.

2:4 *introduxit me in cellam vinariam ordinavit in me caritatem³⁵*

He brought me
into *the* wine cellar.

³⁴ Nova Vulgata, *malus*.

³⁵ Nova Vulgata, *et vexillum eius super me est caritas*.

He commanded love
in me.

2:5 *fulcite me floribus³⁶ stipate me malis quia amore languo*

Prop me up
with flowers!

Press me
with apples,
because I am sick
with love!

2:6 *leva³⁷ eius sub capite meo et dextera illius amplexabitur³⁸ me*

His left *hand*
is under my head
and his right
will caress me

The Man

2:7 *adiuro vos filiae Hierusalem per capreas cervosque camporum ne suscitatis neque evigilare
faciatis dilectam quoadusque ipsa velit*

I adjure you,
daughters of Jerusalem,
by *the* roes and stags
of *the* field:
do not arouse
or work to awaken
delight
until she chooses.³⁹

The Woman

2:8 *vox dilecti mei ecce iste venit saliens in montibus transiliens colles*

The voice

³⁶ Nova Vulgata, *uvarum placentis*.

³⁷ Nova Vulgata, *Laeva*.

³⁸ Nova Vulgata, *amplexatur*.

³⁹ To adjure is to urge another to swear a legally binding oath. Compare this passage to 3:5, 5:8, and 8:4.

of my lover!

Look!

He comes,
leaping in *the* mountains,
crossing *the* hills!

2:9 *similis est dilectus meus capreae hinnuloque⁴⁰ cervorum en ipse stat post parietem nostrum despiciens⁴¹ per fenestras prospiciens per cancellos*

My lover is
like *a* roe
or *a* young deer.

He himself stands
behind our wall,
looking through
the windows,
glancing through
the shutters,

2:10 *et dilectus meus loquitur mihi surge propera amica mea formosa mea et veni*

and my lover
speaks to me.

The Man

Rise up quickly,
my love,
my beauty,
and come!

2:11 *iam enim hiemps transiit imber abiit et recessit*

For winter
is already past,
the storm
has passed
and ebbed away.

⁴⁰ Nova Vulgata, *hinnuloque*.

⁴¹ Nova Vulgata, *respiciens*.

2:12 *flores apparuerunt in terra tempus putationis advenit vox turturis audita est in terra nostra*

Flowers have appeared
in *the* land.

The time of pruning
has come.

The voice
of *the* turtle-dove
is heard
in our land.

2:13 *figus protulit grossos suos vineae florent⁴² dederunt odorem⁴³ surge amica mea speciosa
mea et veni*

The fig tree
has put forth
its green figs,
vines flower,
giving their odor!

Rise up,
my love,
my spectacular *one*,
and come!

2:14 *columba mea in foraminibus petrae in caverna maceriae⁴⁴ ostende mihi faciem tuam sonet
vox tua in auribus meis vox enim tua dulcis et facies tua decora*

My dove *is* in
the rooms of stone
in *the* hollows
of *the* wall.

Show me your face!

Let your voice

⁴² Nova Vulgata, *florentes*.

⁴³ Nova Vulgata adds *suum*.

⁴⁴ Nova Vulgata, *caverna abrupta*.

sound in my ear,
for your voice
is sweet
and your face
lovely!

2:15 *capite nobis vulpes vulpes parvulas quae demoliuntur vineas nam vinea nostra floruit*⁴⁵

Capture for us
the foxes,
the young foxes
who destroy our vines,
now that our vine
has flowered.

The Woman

2:16 *dilectus meus mihi et ego illi qui pascitur inter lilia*

My lover
is mine
and I *am* his,
who feeds
among *the* lilies,

2:17 *donec adspiret dies et inclinentur*⁴⁶ *umbrae revertere similis esto dilecte mi capreae aut hinulo cervorum super montes Bether*

until *the* day breathes
and *the* shadows incline.

Return!

My lover is like
a roe or *a* young deer
on *the* mountains
of Bether.

Beginning of Chapter

⁴⁵ Nova Vulgata, *florescunt*.

⁴⁶ Nova Vulgata, *festinent*.

Chapter 3

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The Woman

3:1 *in lectulo meo per noctes quaesivi quem diligit anima mea quaesivi illum et non inveni*

In my bed at night
I sought him
whom my soul loves.

I sought him,
but I did not find him!⁴⁷

3:2 *surgam et circuibo civitatem per vicos et plateas quaeram quem diligit anima mea quaesivi illum et non inveni*

I rose
and walked
through *the* city,
down rows of houses
and streets,
seeking him
whom my soul loves.

I sought him
but I did not find him!

3:3 *invenerunt me vigiles qui custodiunt⁴⁸ civitatem num quem dilexit anima mea vidistis*

The watchmen
who keep *the* city
found me.

Haven't you see
one whom
my soul loves?

3:4 *paululum cum pertransissem eos inveni quem diligit anima mea tenui eum nec dimittam donec introducam illum in domum matris meae et in cubiculum genetricis meae*

⁴⁷ She searches for her Lover. Is she awake or asleep as this takes place? She will search for Him again, beginning at 5:3.

⁴⁸ Nova Vulgata, *circumeunt*.

A little while
after passing them,
I found him
whom my soul loves.

I took him
and did not let go
until I brought him
to my mother's house⁴⁹
and into *the* bed
of she who
gave birth to me.⁵⁰

The Man

3:5 *adiuro vos filiae Hierusalem per capreas cervosque camporum ne suscitetis neque evigilare faciatis dilectam donec ipsa velit*

I adjure you,
daughters of Jerusalem,
by *the* roes and stags
of *the* field:
do not arouse
or work to awaken
delight
until she chooses.⁵¹

3:6 *quae est ista quae⁵² ascendit per desertum sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus murrae et turis⁵³
et universi pulveris pigmentarii*

Who is she
who rises up
in *the* desert,
like *a* pillar
of smoke

⁴⁹ This time the lovemaking is in her home, rather than his.

⁵⁰ Her mother's house is in Jerusalem. She is not a foreigner or stranger.

⁵¹ This is the King's second formal adjurement. Compare to 2:7, 5:8, and 8:4.

⁵² Nova Vulgata, *Quid hoc, quod ascendit.*

⁵³ Nova Vulgata, *fumi, aromatizans tus et myrrham.*

from aromatic myrrh,
and incense,
and all *the* powders
of *the* fragrance sellers?⁵⁴

The Friends

3:7 *en lectulum Salomonis sexaginta fortes ambiunt⁵⁵ ex fortissimis Israhel*

Around Solomon's bed,
sixty strong men walk,
from *the* mightiest of Israel,

3:8 *omnes tenentes gladios et ad bella doctissimi uniuscuiusque ensis super femur suum propter timores nocturnos*

all having swords
and highly trained
for war,

a weapon strapped
to each one's leg,
because of night's dangers.

3:9 *ferculum fecit sibi rex Salomon de lignis Libani*

King Solomon made
a carriage for himself
of *the* wood of Lebanon.⁵⁶

3:10 *columnas eius fecit argenteas reclinatorium aureum ascensum purpureum media caritate constravit propter filias Hierusalem⁵⁷*

He made
its columns of silver,
its seat of gold,

⁵⁴ The language describes a Procession, like that at a wedding. The description of her rising up in the desert echoes Israel's journey through the Wilderness, by which the Lord brought them into the Land of Canaan as His chosen nation. See the books of Exodus and Numbers.

⁵⁵ Nova Vulgata, *ambiunt illum*.

⁵⁶ This describes Solomon's royal carriage.

⁵⁷ Nova Vulgata, *sedile purpureum:medium eius stratum ebeneum., Filiae Ierusalem.,*

its frame of purple,
which he spread out,
full of love,
on account of
the daughters of Jerusalem.

3:11 *egredimini et videte filiae Sion regem Salomonem in diademate quo coronavit eum⁵⁸ mater sua in die desponsionis⁵⁹ illius et in die laetitiae cordis eius*

Go and see,
daughters of Zion,
King Solomon
in *the* diadem
with which his mother
crowned him,
on *the* day
of his coronation
and on *the* day
of joy
of her heart.

Beginning of Chapter

⁵⁸ Nova Vulgata, *illum*.

⁵⁹ Nova Vulgata, *desponsationis*.

Chapter 4

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The Man

4:1 *quam pulchra es amica mea quam pulchra es oculi tui columbarum absque eo quod intrinsecus latet⁶⁰ capilli tui sicut greges⁶¹ caprarum quae ascenderunt⁶² de monte Galaad*

How beautiful you are,
my love!

How beautiful you are!

Your eyes
are like doves,
apart from that
which lies hidden
within!

Your hair is like
a flock of goats,
which climb up
from Mount Gilead!

4:2 *dentes tui sicut greges⁶³ tonsarum quae ascenderunt de lavacro omnes gemellis fetibus et sterilis non est inter eas*

Your teeth are like
flocks of shorn sheep,
who climb up
from *the* washing,
all with twin lambs,
and none
among them
is sterile.

4:3 *sicut vitta coccinea labia tua et eloquium tuum dulce sicut fragmen mali punici ita genae*

⁶⁰ [Nova Vulgata](#) lacks *absque eo quod intrinsecus latet*. Adds *pervalemen tuum*.

⁶¹ [Nova Vulgata](#), *greges*.

⁶² [Nova Vulgata](#), *descenderunt*.

⁶³ [Nova Vulgata](#), *greges*.

*tuae absque eo quod intrinsecus latet*⁶⁴

Your lips *are*
like *a* scarlet band,
and your speech sweet!

Your cheeks
are like *a* piece
of pomegranate,
apart from that
which lies hidden
within!

4:4 *sicut turris David collum tuum quae aedificata est cum propugnaculis mille clypei pendent ex ea omnis armatura fortium*

Your neck
is like *the* tower
of David,
which is built
with bulwarks.

A thousands shields
hang from it,
each one
weapons of *the* mighty.

4:5 *duo ubera tua sicut duo hirculi capreae gemelli qui pascuntur in liliis*

Your two breasts
like two young deer,
twins who graze
among *the* lilies.

4:6 *donec*⁶⁵ *adspiret dies et inclinentur*⁶⁶ *umbrae vadum ad montem murrae et ad collem turis*

Let me go
to *the* mountain of myrrh

⁶⁴ Nova Vulgata lacks *absque eo quod intrinsecus latet*. Adds *pervalemen tuum*.

⁶⁵ Nova Vulgata *antequam*.

⁶⁶ Nova Vulgata, *festinant*.

and to *the* hill of incense
until *the* day breathes
and shadows incline!

4:7 *tota pulchra es amica mea et macula non est in te*

You are
totally beautiful,
my love!

There is
no flaw in you!

4:8 *veni de Libano sponsa veni de Libano veni coronaberis⁶⁷ de capite Amana de vertice Sanir
et Hermon de cubilibus leonum de montibus pardorum*

Come from Lebanon,
my bride!

Come from Lebanon!

Come!

You will be crowned
from *the* top of Amana,
from *the* heights
of Sanir and Hermon,
from *the* lion's dens,
from *the* leopards' mountains!

4:9 *vulnerasti cor meum soror mea sponsa vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum et in
uno crine colli⁶⁸ tui*

You wounded my heart,
my sister, *my* wife!

You wounded my heart,
by one of your eyes alone,
by one lock
from your neck!

⁶⁷ Nova Vulgata *ingredere; respice.*

⁶⁸ Nova Vulgata, *monili torques.*

4:10 *quam pulchrae sunt mammae⁶⁹ tuae soror mea sponsa pulchrora ubera⁷⁰ tua vino et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata*

How beautiful
are your nipples,
my sister, *my* wife!

Your breasts
are more beautiful
than wine,
and *the* odor
of your perfume
surpasses all aromas!

4:11 *favus distillans labia tua sponsa mel et lac sub lingua tua et odor vestimentorum tuorum sicut odor turis⁷¹*

Your lips
are *a* dripping honeycomb,
my wife!

Honey and milk
are under your tongue,
the odor
of your garments
like *the* odor
of incense!

4:12 *hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa hortus conclusus fons signatus*

An enclosed garden,
is my sister, my wife,
an enclosed garden,
a sealed spring!

⁶⁹ Nova Vulgata, *amores*.

⁷⁰ Nova Vulgata, *amores*.

⁷¹ Nova Vulgata, *Libani*.

4:13 *emissiones⁷² tuae paradisus malorum punicorum cum pomorum⁷³ fructibus cypri cum nardo*

Your emissions
are *a* paradise
of pomegranates,
with *the* fruits
of *an* orchard,
of *the* henna-tree,
with scented oil,

4:14 *nardus et crocus fistula et cinnamomum cum universis lignis Libani⁷⁴ murra et aloe cum omnibus primis unguentis*

scented oil
and saffron flower
and cinnamon,
with all *the* woods
of Lebanon,
myrrh and aloes,
with all
the finest perfumes,

4:15 *fons hortorum puteus aquarum viventium quae fluunt impetu de Libano*

a garden spring,
a well of living waters,
which flow
from *the* heights
of Lebanon,

4:16 *surge aquilo et veni auster perfla hortum meum et fluant aromata illius*

Rise,
North Wind,
and come,
South Wind!

⁷² Nova Vulgata, *propagines*.

⁷³ Nova Vulgata, *optimis*.

⁷⁴ Nova Vulgata, *turiferis*.

Blow through
my garden,
that its aromas
might flow!

Beginning of Chapter

Chapter 5

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The Woman

5:1 *veniat dilectus meus in hortum suum et comedat fructum pomorum suorum⁷⁵ veni in hortum meum soror mea sponsa messui murrum meam cum aromatibus meis comedi favum cum melle meo bibi vinum meum cum lacte meo comedite amici bibite et inebriamini carissimi*

Let my love come
into his garden
and eat *the* fruit
of his apple trees!

The Man

Come to my garden,
my sister, my wife!

I have trimmed
my myrrh,
with all my aromatic spices,
I have eaten honeycomb
with my honey,
I have drunk my wine
with my milk!

Eat, friends!
Drink
and be drunk,
my dearly loved!⁷⁶

The Woman

5:2 *ego dormio et cor meum vigilat vox dilecti mei pulsantis aperi mihi soror mea amica mea columba mea immaculata mea quia caput meum plenum est rore et cincinni mei guttis noctium*

I sleep
and my heart awaits
the voice of my love

⁷⁵ [Nova Vulgata](#), *fructus eius optimos*.

⁷⁶ The groom/king invites all to the joy of the Wedding celebration.

calling.⁷⁷

The Man

Open to me,
my sister,
my lover,
my flawless dove!

My head
is covered *with* dew,
my locks
with *the* drops
of night!

The Woman

5:3 *expoliavi*⁷⁸ *me tunica mea quomodo induar illa lavi pedes meos quomodo inquinabo illos*

I have taken off
my tunic!
How will I
put it *back* on?

I have washed
my feet!
How will I
dirty them *again*?

5:4 *dilectus meus misit manum suam per foramen et venter meus intremuit ad tactum eius*⁷⁹

My lover
put his hand
through *the* opening
and my womb
trembled at his touch.

5:5 *surrexi ut aperirem dilecto meo manus meae stillaverunt murra*⁸⁰ *digiti mei pleni murra probatissima*

⁷⁷ The passages marks the beginning of her second search for the Beloved. Is she dreaming? Compare with her search beginning at 3:1.

⁷⁸ Nova Vulgata, *expoliavi*.

⁷⁹ Nova Vulgata, *et venter meus ilico intremuit*.

⁸⁰ Nova Vulgata, *myrrham, et digiti mei pleni myrrha probatissima super ansam pessuli*.

I raised up
that I might open
to my lover!

My hands dripped
with myrrh,
my fingers
full of costliest myrrh.

5:6 *pessulum ostii aperui dilecto meo at ille declinaverat atque transierat anima mea liquefacta est ut locutus est⁸¹ quaesivi et non inveni illum vocavi et non respondit mihi*

I opened the latch-key
to my beloved,
but he had turned aside
and gone.

My soul melted,
remembering his word.

I looked,
but did not find him.

I called him,
but he didn't
call back.

5:7 *invenerunt me custodes qui circumeunt civitatem percusserunt me vulneraverunt me tulerunt pallium meum mihi custodes murorum*

The guards who walk
around the city
found me.

They beat
and wounded me.

The keepers
of *the* wall
took my veil

⁸¹ Nova Vulgata, *quia discesserat*.

from me.⁸²

5:8 *adiuro vos filiae Hierusalem si inveneritis dilectum meum ut⁸³ nuntietis ei quia amore langueo*

I adjure you,
daughters of Jerusalem,
if you find my lover,
that you tell it,
because I am sick
with love!⁸⁴

The Daughters of Jerusalem

5:9 *qualis est dilectus tuus ex dilecto⁸⁵ o pulcherrima mulierum qualis est dilectus tuus ex dilecto⁸⁶ quia sic adiurasti nos*

What is your lover like,
among *the* loved,
O most beautiful
of women?

What is your lover like
among *the* loved,
because you
made us swear thus?

The Woman

5:10 *dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus electus⁸⁷ ex milibus*

My lover is radiant
and ruddy,
chosen from *a* thousand.

⁸² Her second search is costly and painful to her.

⁸³ Nova Vulgata, *quid*.

⁸⁴ This time, the woman/bride is the one adjuring. Compare to 2:7, 3:5, and 8:4. She adjures them not to avoid arousing delight prematurely, but to tell her where her Delight has gone.

⁸⁵ Nova Vulgata, *Quid est dilecto tuo prae ceteris*.

⁸⁶ Nova Vulgata, *Quid est dilecto tuo prae ceteris*.

⁸⁷ Nova Vulgata, *dignoscitur*.

5:11 *caput eius aurum optimum comae eius sicut elatae⁸⁸ palmarum nigrae quasi corvus*

His head
is finest gold;
his hair
like *the* branches
of *the* palm tree,
black like *a* crow.

5:12 *oculi eius sicut columbae super rivulos aquarum quae lacte sunt lotae et resident iuxta fluentia plenissima*

His eyes *are*
like milk-washed doves
over streams of water,
who live beside
plentiful rivers.

5:13 *genae illius sicut areolae aromatum consitae a pigmentariis⁸⁹ labia eius lilia distillantia murrā⁹⁰ primam*

His cheeks are like
courtyards of aromatic spice,
sown by *the* fragrance sellers;
his lips *like* lilies
dripping finest myrrh.

5:14 *manus illius tornatiles aureae plenae hyacinthis venter eius⁹¹ eburneus distinctus sapphyris*

His hands are
like lathed gold,
full of hyacinths;
his stomach *like*
ivory inlaid with sapphires.

5:15 *crura illius columnae marmoreae quae fundatae sunt super bases aureas species eius ut*

⁸⁸ Nova Vulgata, *cincinnati eius sicut racemi palmarum*.

⁸⁹ Nova Vulgata, *turriculae unguentorum*.

⁹⁰ Nova Vulgata, *myrrham*,

⁹¹ Nova Vulgata adds *opus* after *eius*.

Libani electus ut cedri

His legs are like
marble columns
which are built on
bases of gold;
his appearance
like Lebanon,
choice like cedars.

5:16 *guttur illius suavissimum et totus desiderabilis talis est dilectus meus et iste est amicus
meus filiae Hierusalem*

His throat is
most smooth
and totally desirable.

My lover is like this,
and this *one* is my friend,
daughters of Jerusalem!

The Daughters of Jerusalem

5:17 *quo abiit dilectus tuus o pulcherrima mulierum quo declinavit dilectus tuus et quaeremus
eum tecum*

Where did your lover go,
O most beautiful
of women?

Where did your lover
turn aside to,
and we will seek him
with you?

Beginning of Chapter

Chapter 6

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The Woman

6:1 *dilectus meus descendit in hortum suum ad areolam aromatis⁹² ut pascatur in hortis et lilia colligat*

My lover
came down
into his garden,
to *the* courtyard
of aromatic spices,
that he might dine
in *the* garden
and gather lilies.

6:2 *ego dilecto meo et dilectus meus mihi qui pascitur inter lilia*

I *am* my lover's
and my lover is mine,
who feeds
among the lilies!

The Man

6:3 *pulchra es amica mea suavis et⁹³ decora sicut Hierusalem terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata*

My love is beautiful,
soft and elegant
like Jerusalem,
overwhelming like
the battle line of an army.

6:4 *averte oculos tuos a me quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt⁹⁴ capilli tui sicut grex caprarum quae apparuerunt⁹⁵ de Galaad*

⁹² [Nova Vulgata](#), *aromantum*.

⁹³ [Nova Vulgata](#) adds *sicut Thersa*.

⁹⁴ [Nova Vulgata](#) substitutes *turbarant* for *avolare fecerunt*.

⁹⁵ [Nova Vulgata](#), *descenderunt*.

Turn your eyes
away from me,
because they
made me run away!

Your hair is like
a herd of deer,
which appeared from Gilead.

6:5 *dentes tui sicut grex ovium quae ascenderunt de lavacro omnes gemellis fetibus et sterilis non est in eis*

Your teeth *are* like
a herd of sheep,
who climb up
from *the* washing,
all with twin kids,
and no sterile one
is among them.

6:6 *sicut cortex⁹⁶ mali punici genae tuae absque occultis tuis⁹⁷*

Like *the* skin
of a pomegranate
are her cheeks,
apart from
your hidden *charms*.

6:7 *sexaginta sunt reginae et octoginta concubinae et adulescentularum non est numerus*

There are sixty queens
and eighty concubines
and numberless young women,

6:8 *una est columba mea perfecta mea una est matris⁹⁸ suae electa genetrici suae viderunt illam⁹⁹ filiae et beatissimam praedicaverunt reginae et concubinae et laudaverunt eam*

⁹⁶ Nova Vulgata, *fragmen*.

⁹⁷ Nova Vulgata lacks *absque occultis tuis*. Adds *per velamen tuum*.

⁹⁸ Nova Vulgata, *matri*.

⁹⁹ Nova Vulgata, *eam*.

yet my dove
my perfect *one*
is unique *among them*,
only child
of her mother
chosen of *the one*
who bore her.

The daughters saw her
and proclaimed her
most blessed.

Even queens
and concubines
praised her!

6:9 *quae est ista quae progreditur quasi aurora consurgens pulchra ut luna electa ut sol
terribilis ut acies ordinata*

Who is she who comes
like *the dawn* arising,
beautiful like *the moon*,
chosen like *the sun*,
fierce like *the battle line of an army*?¹⁰⁰

6:10 *descendi ad hortum nucum ut viderem poma convallis¹⁰¹ ut inspicerem si floruisset vinea et
germinassent mala punica*

I came down
to my nut garden,
to see *the apples*
of *the valley*,
to find out
if *the vine* flourished
and *the pomegranate* budded.

6:11 *nescivi anima mea conturbavit me propter quadrigas Aminadab¹⁰²*

¹⁰⁰ Again the language describes a Processional. Compare to 3:6.

¹⁰¹ Nova Vulgata, *convallium*.

¹⁰² Nova Vulgata, *Non advertit animus meus, cum posuit me in quadrigas principis populi mei.*

I did not know.

My soul troubled me,
because of *the* chariots
of Aminadab.^{103 104}

The Friends

6:12 *revertere revertere Sulamitis revertere revertere*¹⁰⁵ *ut intueamur te*

Come back, come back,
daughter of the Shulamites!

Come back, come back,
that we may admire you!

Beginning of Chapter

¹⁰³ Passage is unclear. Compare to RSV: "Before I was aware, my fancy set me in a chariot beside my prince." Aminadab was one of Solomon's ancestors. See Matthew 1:4.

¹⁰⁴ Now it is the man who is troubled by the woman's absence.

¹⁰⁵ Nova Vulgata, *Convertere, convertere, Sula mitis: convertere, convertere.*

Chapter 7

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The Man

7:1 *quid videbis¹⁰⁶ in Sulamiten nisi choros castrorum quam pulchri sunt gressus tui in calciamentis filia principis iunctura¹⁰⁷ feminum tuorum sicut monilia quae fabricata sunt manu artificis*

Why would you
stare at *the* Shulamite,
if not like *a* dance
of armies?¹⁰⁸

How beautiful
are your steps,
daughter of *a* prince!

The joints of your thighs
are like *a* necklace,
which was made
by *the* hands
of *an* artisan!

7:2 *umbilicus tuus crater tornatilis numquam indigens poculis¹⁰⁹ venter tuus sicut acervus tritici vallatus liliis*

Your navel is like
a beautifully-crafted bowl,
never lacking cups!

Your stomach is like
a pile of wheat,
surrounded by lilies!

7:3 *duo ubera tua sicut duo hinuli gemelli capreae*

¹⁰⁶ [Nova Vulgata](#), *aspicitis*.

¹⁰⁷ [Nova Vulgata](#), . . . *cum saltat inter binos choros?* ² *Quam pulchri sunt pedes tui in calceamentis, filia principis! Flexurae . . .*

¹⁰⁸ The passage refers to the spectacle of ancient armies marching out to face each other in battle.

¹⁰⁹ [Nova Vulgata](#), *Gremium tuum crater tornatilis: numquam indigeat vino mixto;*

Your two breasts
are like two fawns,
twins of *a* deer.

7:4 *collum tuum sicut turris eburnea oculi tui sicut piscinae in Esebon¹¹⁰ quae sunt in porta filiae multitudinis¹¹¹ nasus tuus sicut turris Libani quae respicit contra Damascus*

Your neck
is like *a* dove
of ivory!

Your eyes are
like pools in Heshbon,¹¹²
which are in *the* gate
of *the* daughter
of *a* multitude.

Your nose *is*
like *the* towers
of Lebanon,
which watch
toward Damascus!¹¹³

7:5 *caput tuum ut Carmelus et comae capitis tui sicut purpura regis vincta canalibus¹¹⁴*

Your head
is like Carmel,
and *the* hair
of your head
like *the* purple cloth
of kings,
bound in channels.

7:6 *quam pulchra es et quam decora carissima in deliciis*

¹¹⁰ Nova Vulgata, *Hesebon*.

¹¹¹ Nova Vulgata, *ad portam Bathrabbim*.

¹¹² The city of Heshbon, on the far side of the Jordan River from Jerusalem, played an important part in Israel's history. It is first mentioned in scripture in Numbers 21:25.

¹¹³ He compares his lover to the great fortifications that protected the kingdom from its enemies.

¹¹⁴ Nova Vulgata, . . . *sicut purpura; rex vincitur cincinnis*.

How beautiful your are,
and how lovely
is my most beloved
in delights!

7:7 *statura tua adsimilata est palmae et ubera tua botris*

Your height is
like palm trees,
and your breasts
like grape clusters.

7:8 *dixi ascendam in palmam adprehendam fructus eius et erunt ubera tua sicut botri vineae et odor oris tui sicut malorum*

I said,
I will climb up
into *my* palm tree!

I will pick its fruit,
and your breasts
will be like
clusters of grapes
from *the* vine,
and *the* fragrance
of your mouth
like apples!

The Woman

7:9 *guttur tuum sicut vinum optimum dignum dilecto meo ad potandum labiisque et dentibus illius ruminandum*

Your throat *is*
like *the* finest wine,
worthy for my lover
to drink,
and for his lips
and teeth to taste!

7:10 *ego dilecto meo et ad me conversio¹¹⁵ eius*

¹¹⁵ Nova Vulgata, *appetitus*.

I go to my lover,
and his turning
is to me!

7:11 *veni dilecte mi egrediamur in agrum commoremur in villis*

Come, my love!

Let us go
into the field!

Let us stay
in *the* villages!

7:12 *mane surgamus¹¹⁶ ad vineas videamus¹¹⁷ si floruit vinea si flores fructus parturiunt¹¹⁸ si
floruerunt mala punica ibi dabo tibi ubera¹¹⁹ mea*

Let us rise up early
and go to *the* vineyards!

Let us see
if *the* vine blossoms,
if *the* flowers
give forth fruit,
if *the* pomegranate blooms!

There, I will give
my breasts to you!

7:14 *mandragorae dederunt odorem in portis nostris omnia poma¹²⁰ nova et vetera dilecte mi
servavi tibi*

The mandrakes
gave their scent

¹¹⁶ Nova Vulgata, *properabimus*.

¹¹⁷ Nova Vulgata, *videbimus*.

¹¹⁸ Nova Vulgata, *aperiuntur*.

¹¹⁹ Nova Vulgata, *amores*.

¹²⁰ Nova Vulgata adds *optima*.

Song of Solomon, 42

in our doorways!

All *my* fruits,
old and new,
I saved for you!¹²¹

Beginning of Chapter

¹²¹ Her love is chaste, reserved for him alone.

Chapter 8

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The Woman

8:1 *quis mihi det te fratrem meum sugentem ubera matris meae ut inveniam te foris et deosculer et iam me nemo despiciat*

Who will give you
to me as my brother,
sucking *the* breasts
of my mother,
so that if I
find you outside
and kiss you,
and now no one
will despise me?

8:2 *adprehendam¹²² te et ducam in domum matris meae ibi me docebis¹²³ et dabo¹²⁴ tibi poculum ex vino condito et mustum malorum granatorum meorum*

I will take you
and lead you
to my mother's house!

There you will teach me
and I will give you
a cup of aged wine,
and new wine
from my pomegranates.

8:3 *leva¹²⁵ eius sub capite meo et dextera illius amplexabitur¹²⁶ me*

His left hand *will be*
under my head

¹²² Nova Vulgata, *apprehenderem*.

¹²³ Nova Vulgata, *doceres*.

¹²⁴ Nova Vulgata, *darem*.

¹²⁵ Nova Vulgata, *Laeva*.

¹²⁶ Nova Vulgata, *amplexatur*.

and his right
will caress me

The Man

8:4 *adiuro vos filiae Hierusalem ne suscitetis et¹²⁷ evigilare faciatis dilectam donec ipsa velit*

I adjure you,
daughters of Jerusalem,
do not arouse
or work to awaken
delight
until she chooses.¹²⁸

8:5 *quae est ista quae ascendit de deserto deliciis affluens et nixa super dilectum suum sub
arbore malo suscitavi te ibi corrupta est mater tua ibi violata est genetrix tua¹²⁹*

Who is she
who comes up
from *the* desert,
flowing with delights
and leaning on her lover?¹³⁰

Under *an* apple tree
I aroused you.

There your mother
was corrupted;
there she who bore you
was entered sexually.

8:6 *pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum ut signaculum super brachium tuum quia fortis est ut
mors dilectio dura sicut inferus aemulatio lampades eius lampades ignis atque flammaram¹³¹*

¹²⁷ Nova Vulgata, *neque*.

¹²⁸ This is the third time he adjures them. Three repetitions emphasize the supreme importance of what he asks of them. Compare to 2:7 and 3:5.

¹²⁹ Nova Vulgata, *Quae est ista, quae ascendit de deserto in nixa super dilectum suum? Sub arbore malo suscitavi te; ibi parturivit te mater tua, ibi parturivit te genetrix tua.*

¹³⁰ For the third time, he uses the language of Processional to describe her coming. This time she comes up as a married woman, leaning on her lover.

¹³¹ Nova Vulgata, *flammae divinae*.

Place me
as *a* seal
over your heart,
and *a* seal
over your arm,
because delight
is as strong as death,
envy as hard
as destruction.

Its lamps *are*
lamps of flame
and even fire.

8:7 *aquae multae non poterunt extinguere¹³² caritatem nec flumina obruent illam si dederit homo omnem substantiam domus suae pro dilectione quasi nihil despicient eum*

Many waters
cannot extinguish love,
nor *can* rivers
overwhelm it.

If *a* man¹³³ were to give
all *the* substance
of his house for delight,
they will despise it
as nothing.

The Friends

8:8 *soror nostra parva et ubera non habet quid faciemus sorori nostrae in die quando adloquenda est*

Our sister is little
and has no breasts.

What shall we do
for our sister
on *the* day when

¹³² Nova Vulgata, *extinguere*.

¹³³ The English word “man” translates the Latin *homo*. Many scholars prefer “humanity,” to clarify that the word refers to humanity as a whole, not simply to the masculine gender. This is, however, a mistranslation of the number of the original noun. We must take care in introducing an intentional mistranslation into an ancient work, for reasons having to do with contemporary issues. “Man” may be anachronistic in our culture, yet it more closely reflects the Latin *homo* than the plural, generic, English noun, “humanity.”

she is spoken for?

8:9 *si murus est aedificemus super eum propugnacula argentea si ostium est conpingamus illud tabulis cedrinis*

If she is *a* wall,
let us build
a bulwark of silver
over her.

If she is *a* doorway
let us join it
with cedar boards.

The Woman

8:10 *ego murus et ubera mea sicut turris ex quo facta sum coram eo quasi pacem repperiens*¹³⁴

I am *a* wall
and my breasts
like *a* tower,
from which fact
I am before him
like one finding peace.

The Friends

8:11 *vinea fuit Pacifico*¹³⁵ *in ea quae habet populos tradidit eam custodibus vir adfert*¹³⁶ *pro fructu eius mille argenteos*

The Peaceful One
had *a* vineyard
in that *land*
which has people.

He handed it over
to the keepers.

A man brings
a thousand pieces of silver

¹³⁴ Nova Vulgata, *reperiens*.

¹³⁵ Nova Vulgata, *Salomoni en Baalhamon*. Lacks *in ea quae habet populos*.

¹³⁶ Nova Vulgata, *affert*.

for its fruit.

The Man

8:12 *vinea mea coram me est mille tui Pacifice¹³⁷ et ducenti his qui custodiunt fructus eius*

My vineyard is before me.
A thousand to you,
Peaceful One,
and two hundred
to those who
keep its fruit.

8:13 *quae habitas in hortis amici auscultant fac me audire vocem tuam*

You who live
in *the* garden,
friends are listening!

Make me hear
your voice!

The Woman

8:14 *fuge dilecte mi et adsimilare¹³⁸ capreae hinuloque cervorum super montes aromatum*

Flee, my lover,
and be like
the roe and *the* young deer
over *the* mountains
of spices.

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¹³⁷ [Nova Vulgata](#) reads *mille tibi, Salomon*.

¹³⁸ [Nova Vulgata](#), *assimilare*.

A Note on Using Wikipedia

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Some reviewers have raised a skeptical eyebrow at my references to Wikipedia, the online, cooperative encyclopedia. Certainly, there are better, more rigorous sources of information today. Yet, in my opinion, the advantages of using Wikipedia outweigh the disadvantages, at least when it comes to introductory references.

A July 2, 2008 story on CTV.ca, the online arm of Canadian National Television, explains the utility.¹³⁹ Jon Beasley-Murray, Professor of Latin American Studies at the University of British Columbia, gave students in his class an assignment of writing well-researched Wikipedia articles on topics relevant to his course.

According to the story, “Beasley-Murray still plans to tell students not to cite Wikipedia in work they hand in, but he says the site can provide valuable starting points if articles are properly cited.”

Monica Freudenreich, one of Beasley-Murray’s students, summed up how she came to see Wikipedia in the process: “Maybe you don’t quote right off Wikipedia, but it’s a great . . . list of academic sources that you can go and see. It cuts down the search process,” she says.

Wikipedia is a handy springboard to more in-depth research. It is becoming increasingly a primary source for millions of internet users, who value its convenience and breadth. While it is far from perfect, it is improving steadily. These factors alone argue for its use, not to document specific information but as a starting point for further study. This is the sense in which I have cited it in my footnotes.

I value Wikipedia also for the democratization of knowledge it represents. As a living, self-correcting, collective, public-spirited effort to concentrate knowledge in accessible ways, it represents the best instincts of human scholarship. The same spirit that birthed libraries, schools, and all the public institutions of learning, has birthed Wikipedia also.

My advice to readers is, use Wikipedia, work to make it better, and pass on this invaluable resource to others.

¹³⁹See http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20080702/wikipedia_abc_080702/20080702.