

Studia Biblica Slovaca

Ročník 8

2016

Číslo 1

Offprint



Studia Biblica Slovaca je recenzovaný vedecký časopis zameraný na skúmanie Svätého písma Starého a Nového zákona predovšetkým zo stránky filologickej, historickej, exegetickej a teologickej.

Ročník VIII (2016), číslo 1

Vydáva Rímskokatolícka cyrilometodská bohoslovecká fakulta Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave, Kapitulská 26, 814 58 Bratislava 1, IČO 0039786510.

Vedecké kolégium/Advisor board: Reimund BIERINGER (Leuven, B) – Georg BRAULIK OSB (Wien, A) – Peter DUBOVSKÝ SJ (Roma, I) – Pavol FARKAŠ (Nitra) – Massimo GRILLI (Roma, I) – Leslie HOPPE OFM (Chicago, USA)

Šéfredaktor: Blažej ŠTRBA (Badín)
Zástupca šéfredaktora: Jozef JANČOVIČ (Bratislava)
Redaktor pre recenzie: František TRSTENSKÝ (Spišské Podhradie)
Výkonný redaktor: Martina KORYTIAKOVÁ (Roma, I)

Redakčná rada/Editorial board: Jaroslav BROŽ (Praha, CZ) – Juraj FENÍK (Košice) – Júlia Daniela ISKROVÁ OP (Ružomberok) – Róbert JÁGER (Košice) – Peter JUHÁS (Wien, A) – Branislav KLUSKA (Ružomberok) – Róbert LAPKO (Košice) – Libor MAREK (Detroit, USA) – Jaroslav RINDOŠ (Bratislava) – Milan SOVA (Bratislava) – Jozef TIŇO (Bratislava) – Gabriela Ivana VLKOVÁ OP (Olomouc, CZ)

Za lektorovanie všetkých článkov zodpovedá redakčná rada.

Jazyková úprava: Dušan Rončák
Obálka: Martin Mičko

Na príprave publikácie sa podieľala Lucilla Mária Tongeľová SDR.

Príspevky v slovenčine, češtine a v angličtine (od zahraničných autorov) alebo knihy na recenziu prosíme poslať na adresu redakcie *Studia Biblica Slovaca*, Banská 28, 976 32 Badín (Slovakia), redakcia@biblica.sk.

Príspevky sa požadujú v elektronickej podobe, podľa možnosti v textovom editore Microsoft Word. Ak sú používané iné fonty písma pre hebrejštinu a gréčtinu ako v programe BibleWorks, tak upresniť aké, prípadne preposlať používaný font spolu s príspevkom. Príspevok typu štúdia, poznámka alebo reflexia musí byť doplnený abstraktom a jeho anglickou verziou, anglickým názvom príspevku, max. piatimi kľúčovými slovami v slovenčine/češtine a angličtine, zoznamom bibliografie a kontaktom na autora príspevku. Nevyžiadané rukopisy sa nevracajú. Redakcia si vyhradzuje právo upraviť titulok a vykonať potrebnú jazykovú a štylistickú úpravu prijatých príspevkov. Upresňujúce podmienky pre prispievateľov sú dostupné www.biblica.sk.

Články časopisu sú abstrahované v troch svetových periodikách: *Old Testament Abstracts* ISSN 0364-8591, *New Testament Abstracts* ISSN 0028-6877 a *Elenchus of Biblica*.

S povolením Arcibiskupského úradu v Bratislave zo dňa 3. júna 2014

Prot. N. 2229/2014

Studia Biblica Slovaca

Printed in Slovakia, 6/2016.

Vychádza dvakrát do roka.

Cena: 6 €

ISSN 1338-0141

EV 3744/09

Motif of “the city” in the Song of Songs

Marek I. Baraniak

Motif of ‘the city’ in the Song of Songs¹

The motif of “the city” in the Song of Songs is marginal. However, it should be noted, that the phenomenon of urbanization characterized the historical transformation of the ancient society of Israel and the term *h’yr* “the city” as a toponym for Jerusalem gained a significant place in Hebrew epic and is also present in poetry. The canonization process of the texts of the Hebrew Bible preceded by development of their interpretation has not only revealed and exacted the meaning, but also gave them a new significance by changing their function. Therefore, even the study of marginal plots and small literary topics included in the biblical text may be an important aid in attempting to reconstruct its origin and history of interpretation. This analysis leads to some suggestions concerning the origins of the Hebrew text of the Song of Songs (Song). Could the edition of some of the songs, collected later in the Book, took place in the preexilic period in Judah?

The Book of the Song of Songs is a part of the Jewish and Christian Bible, mainly due to the allegorical interpretation of the love poetry included in it as the history of the relationship between God and Israel (Jewish tradition) or between Christ and the Church (Christian tradition). The motif of “the city” in Song appears only in the background of two love poems (Song 3 and 5). The term “the city” itself – as a toponym for Jerusalem with the central temple – played a key role in the events preceding the Babylonian exile. This is expressed directly by the early Israeli epic as well as by some disperse motives in poetic texts². In this context it should be recalled the phenomenon of

¹ This article is a part of my presentation “The ‘city’ in the Song of Songs” read on *The Fourth International Conference on Song of Songs Shir ha Shirim*, Charles University in Prague, 9-11 June 2015. The targumic interpretation of the word ‘city’ I have described in *Motyw miasta w Księdze Pieśni nad Pieśniami i jego targumiczna interpretacja, Scripta Biblica et Orientalia*, Tom 3, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 2011, 209-234.

² HULST, *yr*, 880-883.

urbanization which characterized historical changes in the Israeli society and marked the end of nomadic tradition and the beginning of monarchy.

‘The City’ in the Song of Songs

Among poems describing the love between the Bridegroom (Salomon/Sheperd) and the Bride (Shulamite) in the form of a dialog accompanied from time to time by the choir (the daughters of Jerusalem), the word “the city” (יְרוּשָׁלַיִם) was used only three times (Song 3:2.3; 5:7). It presents background of the actions, which are described in two poems³: Song 3:1-5 (song II) and 5:2-8 (song IV). They are similar on the level of the plot and the form and are classified as descriptions of dreams⁴. This is suggested at the very beginning of the first poem (“By night on my bed I sought the one I love”⁵; 3:1a) and literally expressed in the second one (“I sleep, but my heart is awake”; 5:2a).

Even after the first reading it is possible to notice at least a few parallel elements in both poems. They begin with the sentences recalling the scene of a dream expressed by the words from the same semantic field: “on my bed” (3:1), “I sleep” (5:2). Then at night, the heroine goes out in to the city (3:1; 5:6) in search of the beloved one. In each instance the woman encounters the guards of the city (the watchmen; 3:3; 5:7). Both poems are closed by the formulas of incantations directed to the “daughters of Jerusalem” (3:5; 5:8)⁶. This

³ The Book of Song of Songs does not show unequivocally established order, so devoted to this text studies divide it differently. Some studies see here five songs, the other six scenes, or seven poems (in extreme running out even for the division into twenty-three songs). Today, most scholars accept the division of work into the prologue (1:1-4), five poems (I: 1:5–2:7; II: 2:8–3:5; III: 3:6–5:1; IV: 5:2–6:3; V: 6:4–8:4), two additions in the form of an epilogue (8:5-7) and the ending (8:8-14). Cf. GORDON, *The Enigmatic Genre* (2), 163-80; GORDON, *The Enigmatic Genre* (3), 289-305.

⁴ One of the hypotheses of interpretation of the Song of Songs, that emerged earlier in the nineteenth century, was the so-called “dream theory”. Suggestion that a large part of the book was only a record of dreams seems reaching too far forward. Nevertheless, it cannot be excluded that some smaller poetry units are in some way a reflection of the state of sleep. Cf. TANNER, *The Message*, 142-161.

⁵ All biblical quotations in this paper are from *The Holy Bible. New King James Version*, Nashville, Tennessee: Nelson, 1982.

⁶ See BARBIERO, *Song of Songs*, 274-279.

parallelism, from the redactional and rhetorical point of view, is not accidental; both poems enclose the episode of the “wedding day” (3:6–5:1; song III).

Song 3:1-5 (song II)

¹ By night **on my bed** I sought the one
I love;
I sought him, but I did not find him.
² “I will rise now,” I said,
“And go about the city;
In the streets and in the squares
I will seek the one I love.”
I sought him, but I did not find him.
³ The **watchmen** who go about the city
found me;
I said, “Have you seen the one I love?”
⁴ Scarcely had I passed by them,
When I found the one I love.
I held him and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him to the house
of my mother,
And into the chamber of her who
conceived me.
⁵ I charge you, O **daughters of Jerusalem**,
By the gazelles or by the does of the field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

Song 5:2-8 (song IV)

² **I sleep**, but my heart is awake;
It is the voice of my beloved!
He knocks, saying,
“Open for me, my sister, my love,
My dove, my perfect one;
For my head is covered with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night.”
³ I have taken off my robe;
How can I put it on again?
I have washed my feet;
How can I defile them?
⁴ My beloved put his hand
By the latch of the door,
And my heart yearned for him.
⁵ I arose to open for my beloved,
And my hands dripped with myrrh,
My fingers with liquid myrrh,
On the handles of the lock.
⁶ I opened for my beloved,
But my beloved had turned away
and was gone.
My heart leaped up when he spoke.
I sought him, but I could not find him;
I called him, but he gave me no answer.
⁷ The **watchmen** who went about the city
found me.
They struck me, they wounded me;
The keepers of the walls
Took my veil away from me.
⁸ I charge you, O **daughters of Jerusalem**,
If you find my beloved,
That you tell him I am lovesick!

The motif of the sunset plays the function of the anaphoric element which introduces and connects the first poem (song III) with the preceding text. It is mentioned for the first time in 2:17ab: “Until the day breaks And the shadows flee away” (עד אֲשִׁיפוּן הַיּוֹם וְנָסוּ הַצִּלְלִים), and next recalled by the word

“by night” (בַּלַּיְלֹת) at the beginning of the following poem in 3:1. In the first poem 3:1-5, the Bride speaks in the first person but the Bridegroom is mentioned in the third person. This fact differentiates this passage from the previous one, where there is a dialog between the lovers. The Bridegroom is now a distant object of desires and longings of the woman in love. Her feelings find a violent outlet in confessions (3:1) and decisions (3:2a-c): “«I will rise now,» I said, «And go about the city; In the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love.» I sought him, but I did not find him” (אָקוּמָה נָא וְאַסּוּבָהּ, אֶבְקֹשָׁהּ וְבָרְחֹבוֹת אֶבְקֹשָׁהּ אֶת שְׂאֵהָבָהּ נִפְשִׁי בְּקוֹשְׁתִּי וְלֹא מָצָאתִיו: 3:2)⁷. The futility of the woman’s efforts is expressed in the meeting with the guards: “The watchmen⁸ who go about the city found me; I said, ‘Have you seen the one I love?’” (מָצְאוּנִי הַשְּׁמָרִים הַסֹּבְבִים בְּעִיר אֶת שְׂאֵהָבָהּ נִפְשִׁי רְאִיתֶם: 3:3).

A similar activity of the Bride is described in the second text 5:2-8. In the previous poem, the passionate woman goes out from the house at night to look for her beloved one and eventually to meet him. This time she behaves like a shy girl who is considering too long whether to open the door and therefore missed an opportunity to meet with her beloved one. Then the desperate woman leaves the house and starts to look for him in the streets like the heroine from the first text. Again she encounters guards, but this time they treat her differently. Taken as a street prostitute, the woman is beaten and stripped off, deprived of a part of her garment: “The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; The keepers of the walls Took my veil away from me.” (מָצְאוּנִי הַשְּׁמָרִים הַסֹּבְבִים בְּעִיר הַכּוֹנֵי פְּצָעוּנִי נָשְׂאוּ אֶת־) (רְדִידִי מֵעַלִּי שְׂמֹרֵי הַחֲמוֹת: 5:7)⁹. In despair she asks the “daughters of Jerusalem” to tell her beloved about the greatness of her feelings for him.

⁷ The three verbs in the *cohortativum* 1 com. sg. (אָקוּמָה נָא, וְאַסּוּבָהּ, אֶבְקֹשָׁהּ) precede the part of the sentence repeating 3:1bc. By means of them, the author expresses the firmness of the woman’s decisions. It is worthy to notice that the particle נָא (cohortative of resolve, cf. JM, 114d) is placed between the first two forms, determining the end of the dream phase from 3:1 and associated with it an ineffective seeking of “the beloved of my soul”.

⁸ According to some scholars, the word הַשְּׁמָרִים “guards (of the city)” would indicate a late period of the book’s composition and refers to the mythological history. However, it should be noted that at the time of Solomon there were appointed guardians of the gates and ordinary guards of the city and the royal palace (cf. 3:6-11).

⁹ The word רְדִידִי is interpreted in different ways: “wide wrapper”, or “large veil” (in list of women’s finery)” (BDB, 921), “shawl, head cloth” (HALOT, 8683; cf. Isa 3:23).

The interpretation of the already described woman's conduct poses many difficulties for exegetes. They have tried to find an explanation referring to allegory, myth or even to depth psychology. It is also worthy to notice that a similar theme of the lover waiting outside the door appears already in ancient Egyptian love songs, e.g. Chester Beatty papyrus¹⁰.

Of course, it cannot be denied that both poems contain lyrical description of the relationship between a man and a woman, expressed by change of emotions and moods – coming in and going out, searching and finding, etc.

Poetry and reality

If we try to see in the poems 3:1-5 and 5:2-8 reflection of the real world or description of dreams, we need to remember that they create their own reality which has its own rules, expressed by certain literary means. Commentators have been wondering for a long time whether woman's activity described in the two poems should be understood as a dream or a real experience. It was noticed that the wandering of a woman around the city at night, searching and bringing her beloved one to her mother's house was impossible in the context of the strict ancient customs¹¹. Therefore, it was assumed that both passages 3:1-5 and in 5:2-8 represent just a dreamy fantasy¹². However, it should be remembered that more severe social laws regarding women have been introduced most likely in early Judaism (i.e. reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah), and that women have had earlier more freedom. An example could be found in the story of Ruth who at night goes alone to the field of Boaz (Ruth 3)¹³. Regardless of the historical context, both poems most likely do not

¹⁰ Cf. GARDINER, *The Chester Beatty Papyri*, tabl. XVIIIA, 6n; "Chester Beatty I is a papyrus containing songs for entertainment. Included on it is a collection of seven love songs each alternating between the voice of a man and the voice of a woman. They all were probably written by a man.", *The Mehy Poem* [accessed 2015-03-30].

¹¹ Sir 42:11 says that the unmarried daughter should be kept away not only from the street, but also from the window. Cf. 2Macc 3:19.

¹² Cf. BARBIERO, *Song of Songs*, 132, incl. n. 137 and the bibliography.

¹³ Badly experienced by fate, Naomi encouraged Ruth, a wife of her dead son, to go at night to the dirt floor where Boaz guarded the grain in order to assert her rightful privileges under the law of levirate. Besides this story, also in the stories of the Patriarchs, Moses and Judges one can read about women who meet men at the well (Gen 24,11n;

present a real picture of the historical event, i.e. the fact that the woman is sleeping in a room with the door facing the street is unreal (an exception is only a public prostitute).

For the interpretation of these texts one verse from the last song of Song (song V) might be useful. There is a continued description of the woman’s desire to encounter the Bridegroom. Conditional form of that verse suggests that previous texts include only the poetical display of yearnings of the Bride, but not a description of her real behavior: “Oh, that you were like my brother, Who nursed at my mother’s breasts! If I should find you outside I would kiss you; I would not be despised” (8:1).

However, the content of 8:1 does not change the fact that the situation described in the song II and IV was very difficult or even unacceptable in that society. This is the reason why the heroine would like to have with her beloved one relationship free of social and moral suspicions as with a brother: to look for him in the streets, to greet him with kisses, and to lead him to her mother’s house without fear of stigmatization by the society¹⁴.

In ancient wisdom literature, a woman who leaves her home to seek lovers in the streets and the squares at nights (cf. Prov 7:15.18) has been pointed as a negative example of behavior¹⁵. By such conduct breaking a sacred social order, a woman could also bring misfortune for the society. Therefore, married and unmarried women subjected to social pressure almost instinctively have had to avoid any form of risky behavior.

On the other hand, these analyzed poems, in contrast to the story of Ruth (3:1-5), do not even try to justify such a strange and risky behavior of a woman. Another question concerns the reason for which the beloved one was wandering through the city in the night. Besides the description of her beloved man given to the guards (“whom my soul loves”; אֵת אֲשֶׁר־אֶהְבֶּה נִפְשִׁי; 3,4) it does not provide any concrete information. But perhaps this sentence repeated four times (3:1b.2c.3c.4b) contained the right key to understand such conduct or

29,10n; Ex 2:16; 1Sam 9:11) while the issue of the so-called voluntary rape is resolved by Deut 22,25n.

¹⁴ In the popular Arabic poetry of the land of Palestine, only a man is looking for his beloved at night. Such activity on the part of women is unacceptable even in a poetic image. Cf. DALMAN, *Palästinischer Diwan*, 76, n. 36.

¹⁵ Cf. Prov 7:15.18: “So I came out to meet you, Diligently to seek your face, And I have found you. (...) Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with love.”

night fantasy of the woman. It appears at the beginning of the book (1:7) and as a refrain it accompanies further descriptions of longings of the Bride for the Bridegroom. The Hebrew word נַפְשׁ usually translated as “a soul”, in the context of the original semitic meaning (“throat, larynx”)¹⁶ indicates not a transcendent spiritual nature of a human being, but rather a vital realm full of needs and desires, longings and passions. Perhaps in this way the author wanted to express the holistic character of the imperative of love between a man and a woman¹⁷.

As it was noticed earlier, in contrast to the shy girl from the beginning of the book (1:7-8), the heroine presented in the further poems behaves in a different way which is described in the wisdom literature by the negative picture of adulteress (cf. Prov 7:7-20).

In her passion, she looks for her beloved one, with little likelihood of meeting, like guards do for criminals (3:3a; 5:7; Isa 21:11; 62:6; Ps 127:1; Neh 4:3)¹⁸. However, her encounter with the guards does not provide any argument for justification of her “indecent” behavior.

According to the Middle Assyrian code of laws from the eleventh century B.C., even during the day women were allowed to go out into the city streets only under certain conditions, e.g. a wife or a daughter had to be veiled, but the slaves and prostitutes could not be covered¹⁹. So women wandering in the streets at night undoubtedly have become the subject of speculation and suspicions. At least they cannot expect a positive response from the guards. However, in the song II the girl behaves like a partner of the guards, almost asking if anything disturbed their service. Perhaps in this way, the author wished to suggest a positive assessment of the behavior of the girl, explaining it by the imperative of love which requires fulfillment analogous to duties imposed on the guards. The tension between social norms, expressed in legal precepts and enforced by the guards, and the law of love, breaking the human order, is a kind of game that ends in the first composition 3:1-5 (in contrast to 5:2-8) happily. The law of love, to which the woman is subordinate, wins and the guards seem to respect this fact. The Bridegroom found by the Bride is not thrown into the prison, but taken into her mother’s house where the Bride was waiting for him with longing on her bed in the night. The figure of a woman in

¹⁶ Cf. NGUN, *Theological Implications*, 14.

¹⁷ Cf. DECKERS, *The Structure*.

¹⁸ Cf. BARBIERO, *Song of Songs*, 133.

¹⁹ Cf. TUAT I/1, 87, n. 40.

love who adopts a role of a mother in relation to her beloved, recalls the goddess Hathor²⁰. She appears frequently in Egyptian love poetry as the patroness of love.

The story in the song IV (5:2-8) is developed in a different way. While earlier the bride could inquire the guards about her beloved without endangering herself, now the scene of her meeting with the guards becomes more realistic. The woman, wandering at night in the city, is treated as an adulteress (cf. Prov 7:11) or a prostitute. Perhaps in this way, the author would warn against indolence in response to the call of love. The woman has not opened the door to her lover, so now she must wander in the streets at night and to be exposed to danger. The expression “guardians of the walls” (שֹׁמְרֵי הַחֲמוֹת) probably relates to the guards of the city because the word “walls” defines the entire city as *pars pro toto*.

The mentioned Middle Assyrian Law Code says that a prostitute has no right to put on a head-veiling and her head has to be uncovered²¹. Anyone that saw a prostitute covered, has to catch her and bring her with witnesses to the gates of the palace. Although no one is allowed to take her ornaments (jewellery), the one who has couched her is entitled to her clothes. Those who illicitly wore a veil could also be given fifty lashes or have pitch poured over their heads²². A similar rigour could also be expanded in Israel under the Assyrian domination. Even if the customs in Judah would be less violent than those in Assyria, the harsh treatment of a woman and her stripping of a part of garment, seems to be in the cultural context of this region fully understood²³.

²⁰ Cf. NIWIŃSKI, *Mity*, 140

²¹ Matthews' suggestion (MATTHEWS, *Manners and Customs*, 5) that the Middle Assyrian law code, which forbade the wearing of veils by prostitutes, indicates a cultural difference between Canaan-dweller Tamar and Rebekah from Mesopotamia is less than convincing. The Middle Assyrian law code would be later than those stories from Genesis and may, in fact, indicate that Mesopotamian prostitutes had worn veils in the earlier time. Since law codex must be regarded as somewhat idealistic, prescribing what ought to be, rather than describing what really is, the Middle Assyrian law code may even indicate that some prostitutes veiled themselves.

²² Cf. TUAT I/1, 87. The Middle Assyrian Law Code, Tablet A: “A harlot is not to be veiled; her head must be uncovered. Any man who sees a veiled harlot is to apprehend her, produce witnesses and bring her to the palace entrance.” Cf. HUMM, *Middle Assyrian Law Code* [accessed 2015-02-20]; See also BARBIERO, *Song of Songs*, 275, incl. n. 112.

²³ Cf. Isa 3:17-23. Ideas about what could the item of clothing, that was taken a woman, look like (תִּטְּן), “shawl”, “head cloth”), is delivered by a bas-relief from the

The city

The word “city” according to the masoretic vocalization appears in the Hebrew text of Song in the determinate state (הָעִיר with the preposition “in” בְּ). It is possible that this determinate state, recorded by masorets, indicates not so much its definiteness, but rather its function as a toponym²⁴. Proper nouns are in themselves determinate since they designate unique beings. Therefore, they do not take any determining element and cannot be followed by a determinate (nor indeterminate) genitive. Likewise, they do not take the article, apart from those whose appellative value is still being felt; thus almost always הַיַּרְדֵּן (the Jordan; cf. Gen 32:11), usually הַלְבָּנוֹן (the Lebanon; cf. Deut 1:7), etc.²⁵

Which city has the author in mind in 3:2.3 and 5:7? Do “the (this) city” הָעִיר (הָעִיר in the text only with preposition) have a character of a proper name and is an alternative toponym for Jerusalem? Positive answer is suggested by the context of these two songs, i.e. Bride addresses her words to the “daughters of Jerusalem” (but it is not sure whether this scene could take place behind the walls of the harem of Solomon).

It should be noted that the very meaning and provenance of the word “city” (עִיר) are unclear. The word appears frequently in the texts of the pre-exilic and exilic prophets (the singular form: Isa 30x; Jer 79x; Ezek 43x). It is also characteristic for the works of the deuteronomistic history (Jos 70x; Judg 49x; 1-2Sam 69x; 1-2Kings 89x), mainly in the texts connected with the Judah’s tradition²⁶. It does not occur in the compound forms with other toponyms, but only occasionally in the phrases describing their characteristics²⁷.

Sennacherib’s palace, representing a family of Judean refugees from Lachish. See http://www.tau.ac.il/humanities/archaeology/projects/proj_past_lachish.html [accessed 2016-03-20].

²⁴ Article of definiteness may give the common nouns meanings of the proper nouns. Cf. JM, 505.

²⁵ הַגִּבְעָה (Gibeah = the Hill); הַרְמָה (Hormah = the Heigh); הָעֵי (Ai = the Hillock of ruins?). Cf. JM, 505b.

²⁶ Cf. HULST, *yr*, 880-883.

²⁷ Cf. the city of David in 2Sam 5:7.

It is significant that the word *’yr* (*’r*) appears only in Hebrew epigraphic documents originating from the south²⁸:

(1) **Kuntillet ‘Ajrûd**²⁹: KAjr 5-8 (XI./VIII. century B.C.). These are inscriptions found on a fragments of storage jars:

lšr’r

“(belonging) to the Governor of [the] City”.

The title “the governor of the city” (שַׂר־הָעִיר) is attested in the Bible: Judg 9:30 (Shechem); 1Kings 22:26 (Samaria); 2Kings 23:8 (Jerusalem); 2Chr 34:8 (Jerusalem); “the rulers of the city” (שָׂרֵי הָעִיר) in 2Chr 29:20 (Jerusalem).

(2) **Arad**³⁰: Arad 24 rev. 6 (VII. century B.C.). The sherd contains an order (a royal command), to send a military contingent to a certain Elisha son of Jeremiah at Ramath-negeb to forestall anticipated Edomite aggression.

(4) (...) ‘l . yd ‘lyš‘ bn yrmy (5) hw brmt ngb . pn . yqrh ‘t h (6) ‘yr . dbr . wdbbr hmlk ‘tkm (7) bnbškm . (...)

²⁸ Cf. DOBBS-ALLSOPP – ROBERTS – SEOW – WHITAKER, *Hebrew Inscriptions*, 282-283.

²⁹ *Kuntillet ‘Ajrûd* [Horvat Teiman] is located on the northwestern Sinai, at the end of Wadi Quraiya (64 km south of Kadesh Barnea). In the rain period many shallow wells at the foot of the hill allowed for the storage of water in this desert environment, which was an important berth of caravans situated at the crossroads of major routes (Gaza-Eliat and Raphia-Gaza). Cf. DOBBS-ALLSOPP – ROBERTS – SEOW – WHITAKER, *Inscriptions*, 282-283.

³⁰ DOBBS-ALLSOPP – ROBERTS – SEOW – WHITAKER, *Inscriptions*, 47-51. Arad (Tel Arad also known as Tell ‘Arad, Arad Rabbah, Iarda, Samra?) is located on the border between the Judean Desert and the Negev, within 25 km to the west of the Dead Sea and 45 km east of Beersheba. The city is mentioned in the Bible at the southern border of Canaan. The tribes of Israel arriving around the twelfth century B.C. destroyed the area and named it Hormah “sacrificing (giving) to destruction” (cf. Num 21:1). However, the Israelites have not settled there immediately. Later, the king of Arad is mentioned among the 31 kings defeated during the campaign led by Joshua (cf. Josh 12:14). In the wilderness to the south of the city of Arad settled later Kenites (cf. Judg 1:16). According to the Bible, the area of the northern Negev was inhabited by the tribe of Judah, while in the south by the generation Simeon. But perhaps the biblical Canaanite Arad does not exactly match the location of Tel Arad since the latter was not inhabited at the time of Exodus. According to Y. Aharoni, the Canaanite Arad is “Arad home of Yeroham” from the list of Shishak [Nos. 107-12] mentioned next to the “Great Arad”. AHARONI, *The Land*, 201.

In addition, it may be observed that *'ry . yhw dh* (the cities of Judah) and *yršlm* (Jerusalem) are common pair in biblical poetry, notably in Jeremiah (4:16; 7:17.34; 9:10; 11:6.12; 17:26; 25:18; 32:44; 33:10; 44:6.17.21) and Deutero-Isaiah (40:9; 44:26); cf. also Zech 1:12 and *'ry . yhw dh // s ywn* in Ps 69:36; Lam 5:11.

On the inscription from Kuntilet 'Ajrūd is mentioned the royal governor of the city. The location of this Israelite city suggests that it could be related to Jerusalem. On the documents from Arad and Lachish, it is more probable that the definite form of noun *h'yr* plays the function of the proper name – toponym for Jerusalem³⁶. In the case of the inscription from Khirbet Beit Lei, *'ry* as the plural form in *status constructus* has the explanatory function³⁷ to the word Judah. So “the cities of Judah” are in apposition to Jerusalem “the City”.

Conclusion

This short analysis of the marginal motif of the “city” in the Song of Songs introduces some questions concerning the dating and origin of this book.

In contrast to the Canaanite urbanization at the initial phase of the Hebrew settlement, some centers of tribal organizations covering much larger areas than the average Canaanite city emerged. From such organisational structures arose the monarchy of Judah, which managed to create confederations of tribes around a single “City” and to centralize political power and cultic authority. At the beginning of this process, Jerusalem – as a cultic and political centre – has been called “the (this) city” *h'yr* – by the common noun in the function of the proper name (toponym) – without any grammatical complements. Even the way in which this word has been used, e.g. in the letter from Lachish (VI. century B.C.), seems to testify this hypothesis. This is also confirmed by a limited range of occurrences of this word in epigraphic documents from the preexilic period, only in the southern kingdom.

Already in the exile and later in the Second Temple period and after Jerusalem's fall, the authority of “the City” was not bound so tightly with the memory of the former monarchy, but rather with the temple which served as

³⁶ Cf. JM, 505.

³⁷ The so-called explicative genitive. Cf. KAUTZSCH, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, §128m.

a national shrine. Thus, in the literature of that time Jerusalem is mentioned primarily as the “City of the sanctuary” (*‘yr hammiqdāš*), as well as the “Holy City” (*‘yr haqqodēš*) in the sense of the place chosen by God.

Taking into consideration the historical and cultural context and the way in which the image of the City emerges in the two poetic episodes of the Song of Songs (3:1-5 and 5:2-8), it has to be noticed that:

- the way of treatment of the wandering woman by the guards of the city in the second poem recalls the Assyrian customs, but in the first fragment seems to illustrate much earlier period;
- the intentional use of the unbound form of the noun “the City” without any complements, in place of the toponym for Jerusalem is characteristic for the First Temple period.

These facts indicate the late preexilic period and the territory of the Kingdom of Judah as the editorial time and environment for at least some poems contained in the Song of Songs.

Bibliography

- AHARONI, Yohanan: *The Land of the Bible. A Historical Geography*. Translated from the Hebrew and Edited by A. F. Rainey, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979.
- BARBIERO, Gianni: *The Song of Songs. A Close Reading* (VTSup 144), Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2011.
- BORGER, Rykle – LUTZMANN, Heiner – RÖMER, Willem H. Ph. – VON SCHULER, Einar (Hrsg.): *Rechts- und Wirtschaftsurkunden. Historisch-chronologische Texte* (TUAT I/1), Mohn: Gütersloh, 1982. (= TUAT I/1)
- CROSS, Frank M.: The Cave Inscription from Khirbet Beit Lei. In: James A. Sanders (ed.): *Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century. Essays in Honor of Nelson Glueck*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970, 299-302.
- DALMAN, Gustaf H.: *Palästinischer Diwan*, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901.
- DECKERS, Martin: The Structure of the Song of Songs and the Centrality of *nepes* (6:12). In: Athalya Brenner (ed.): *A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs* (Feminist Companion to the Bible 1), Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993, 172-196.
- DOBBS-ALLSOPP Frederick William – ROBERTS, Jimmy Jack M. – SEOW, Choon-Leong – WHITAKER, Robert E. (eds.): *Hebrew Inscriptions. Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
- GADECKI, Stanisław: *Archeologia biblijna*. Tom I., Gniezno: Gaudetinum, 1994.
- GARDINER, Alan H.: *The Library of A. Chester Beatty. Description of a Hieratic Papyrus with a Mythological Story, Love-Songs, and Other Miscellaneous Texts, Being “The Chester Beatty Papyri, No. 1”*, London: Oxford University Press, 1931.
- GORDON, Johnston H.: The Enigmatic Genre and Structure of the Song of Songs. Part 2, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166/662 (April-June 2009) 163-180.

- GORDON, Johnston H.: The Enigmatic Genre and Structure of the Song of Songs. Part 3, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166/663 (July-September 2009) 289-305.
The Holy Bible. New King James Version, Nashville, Tennessee: Nelson, 1982.
- HULST, A. H.: *yr*. In: Ernst Jenni – Claus Westermann (eds.): *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Vol. II.: hesed - siyyôn, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997, 880-883.
- HUMM, Alan: *Middle Assyrian Law Code. Tablet A. Based on a comparison of the translations of G. R. Driver & J. C. Miles with that of Theophile Meek* [online]. <http://jewishchristianlit.com/Texts/ANELaws/midAssyrLaws.html#FN35> [accessed 2015-02-20].
- JOÜON, Paul – MURAOKA Takamitsu.: *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993. (= JM)
- KAUTZSCH Emil (ed.): *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.
- LEMAIRE, A.: Prières en temps de crise: les inscriptions de Khirbet Beit Lei, *RB* 83 (1976) 558-568
- MATTHEWS, Victor: *Manners and Customs in the Bible*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988.
- The Mehy Poem in P. Chester Beatty I* [online]. <http://www.egyptology.com/extreme/mehy/> [accessed 2015-03-30].
- NAVEH, J.: Old Hebrew Inscription in a Burial Cave, *IEJ* 13 (1963) 74-92.
- NGUN, Richard: Theological Implications of the Concept of Nephesh in the Pentateuch, *Stulos* 7 (1999) 13-25.
- NIWIŃSKI, Andrzej: *Mity i symbole starożytnego Egiptu*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Iskry, 2001.
- TANNER, Paul J.: The Message of the Song of Songs, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154/613 (1997) 142-161.

Summary

The motif of “the city” in the Song of Songs is marginal. However, it should be noted, that the phenomenon of urbanization characterized the historical transformation of the ancient society of Israel, and the term *h'yr* “the city” as a toponym for Jerusalem – gained a significant place in Hebrew epic and also is present in poetry. Taking into consideration the context and the way in which the image of the City emerges in the two poetic episodes of the Song of Songs (Song 3 and 5) it has to be noticed that: the way of treatment of the wandering woman by the guards of the city in the second poem recalls the Assyrian customs, but in the first fragment seems to illustrate much earlier period; the intentional use only of the unbound form of the noun “the City” without any complements, in place of the toponym for Jerusalem is characteristic for the First Temple period. These facts indicate the late preexilic period and the territory of the Kingdom of Judah as the editorial time and environment for at least part of the songs contained in the Song of Songs.

Keywords: the city, Jerusalem, toponym, Song of Songs, preexilic period.

Zhrnutie

„Mesto“ je v Knihe Pieseň piesní okrajovým motívom. Je však potrebné poznamenať, že fenomén urbanizácie bol charakteristickým pre dejinné premeny spoločnosti Izraela v staroveku a že termín *h'yr* „(to) mesto“, ako toponymum pre Jeruzalem, nadobudlo významné miesto v hebrejskej epickej i poetickej tvorbe. Ak vezmeme do úvahy kontext a spôsob ako sa obraz „mesta“ objavuje v dvoch poetických epizódach Piesni piesní (Pies 3 a 5), možno povedať, že: spôsob, akým hliadka mesta zaobchodila so ženou v IV. piesni pripomína asýrske zvyky, zatiaľčo II. pieseň predstavuje skôr skoršie obdobie; úmyselné použitie neviazanej formy podstatného mena „(to) mesto“ bez akéhokoľvek doplnku ako toponymum pre Jeruzalem je charakteristické pre obdobie prvého chrámu. Uvedené fakty naznačujú, že skoré predexilové obdobie a teritórium Judského kráľovstva môžu byť obdobím a prostredím redakcie prinajmenšom pre niektoré časti Piesne piesní.

Kľúčové slová: mesto, Jeruzalem, toponymum, Pieseň piesní, predexilové obdobie.

Marek I. Baraniak
University of Warsaw
Faculty of Oriental Studies
Department of Hebrew Studies
Ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28
PL 00927 WARSAW, Poland
m.baraniak@uw.edu.pl

Contents

Treaties

Martina KORYTIAKOVÁ

Good or Bad Abram? Critical and Exegetical Observations
on the Interpretations of Gen 13 1-31

Marek I. BARNIAK

Motif of “the city” in the Song of Songs 32-46

Pavel PRIHATNÝ

Authentic Way to the Wisdom According to Ben Sira 47-64

Julius PAVELČÍK

“The Lord is Compassionate and Merciful” (James 5:11).
On One Aspect of God in the Letter of James 65-87

Abstracts and reviews 88-111

Communications and references 112-122

Obsah

Štúdie

Martina KORYTIAKOVÁ

Dobry čí zly Abram? Kritické a exegetické pozorovania
k interpretáciám Gn 13 1- 31

Marek I. BARNIAK

Motív „mesto“ v Piesni piesní 32-46

Pavel PRIHATNÝ

Pravá cesta k múdrosti podľa Siracha 47-64

Julius PAVELČÍK

„Veľmi súcitný a ľútostivý je Pán“ (Jak 5,11). K jednému aspektu
Boha v Jakobovom liste 65-87

Abstrakty a recenzie 88-111

Správy a oznamy 112-122