

SONG 7: 1 How beautiful are your feet in sandals, prince's daughter! Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skilful workman.

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A farther description of the bride, Sol 7:1-9. Her invitation to the bridegroom, Sol 7:10-13.

Verse 1

How beautiful are thy feet with shoes - "How graceful is thy walking." In the sixth chapter the bridegroom praises the Shulamite, as we might express it, from head to foot. Here he begins a new description, taking her from foot to head.

The shoes, sandals, or slippers of the Eastern ladies are most beautifully formed, and richly embroidered. The majestic walk of a beautiful woman in such shoes is peculiarly grand. And to show that such a walk is intended, he calls her a prince's daughter.

The joints of thy thighs - Must refer to the ornaments on the beautiful drawers, which are in general use among ladies of quality in most parts of the East.

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SONG 7: 2 Your body is like a round goblet, no mixed wine is wanting. Your waist is like a heap of wheat, set about with lilies.

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Verse 2

Thy navel is like a round goblet - This may also refer to some ornamental dress about the loins. These suppositions are rendered very probable from hundreds of the best finished and highly decorated drawings of Asiatic ladies in my own collection, where every thing appears in the drawings, as in nature.

A heap of wheat set about with lilies - This is another instance of the same kind. The richly embroidered dresses in the above drawings may amply illustrate this also. Ainsworth supposes the metaphor is taken from a pregnant woman; the child in the womb being nourished by means of the umbilical cord or navel string, till it is brought into the world. After which it is fed by means of the mother's breasts, which are immediately mentioned. Possibly the whole may allude to the bride's pregnancy.

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SONG 7: 3 Your two breasts are like two fawns, that are twins of a roe.

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Verse 3

Thy two breasts - Where the hair and breasts are fine, they are the highest ornaments of the person of a female.

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SONG 7: 4 Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are like the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bathrabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon which looks toward Damascus.

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Verse 4

Thy neck - as a tower of ivory - High, white, and ornamented with jewellery, as the tower of David was with bucklers. See on Sol 4:4 (note).

The fish - pools in Heshbon - Clear, bright, and serene. These must have been very beautiful to have been introduced here in comparison. These two fountains appear to have been situated at the gate that led from Heshbon to Rabba, or Rabboth Ammon. There is a propriety in this metaphor, because fountains are considered to be the eyes of the earth.

Thy nose - as the tower of Lebanon - There was doubtless a propriety in this similitude also, which cannot now be discerned. If we are to understand the similitude as taken from the projecting form of the nose, even here I see nothing striking in the metaphor; for surely the tower of Lebanon did not project from the mountain as the human nose does from the face. It is better to acknowledge that there was undoubtedly some fit resemblances; but in what circumstance we know not. But some commentators are always extolling the correctness of the imagery in those very difficult places, where no soul sees the similitude but themselves.

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SONG 7: 5 Your head on you is like Carmel. The hair of your head like purple. The king is held captive in its tresses.

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Verse 5

Shine head - like Carmel - Rising majestically upon thy neck, and above thy shoulders, as Mount Carmel does in its district. Carmel was the name of the mountain where Elijah had his contest with the prophets of Baal. See 1Kgs 18:19, etc.

The hair of thine head like purple - Ornamented with ribbons and jewellery of this tint.

The king is held in the galleries - Or is detained in the antechamber. His heart is captivated by thy person and conduct. Some understand the ringlets of the bride's hair.

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SONG 7: 6 How beautiful and how pleasant you are, love, for delights!

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Verse 6

How fair and how pleasant - Thou art every way beautiful, and in every respect calculated to inspire pleasure and delight.

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SONG 7: 7 This, your stature, is like a palm tree, your breasts like its fruit.

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Verse 7

Like to a palm tree - Which is remarkably straight, taper, and elegant.

And thy breasts to clusters of grapes - Dates are the fruit of the palm tree; they grow in clusters; and it is these, not grapes, which are intended.

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SONG 7: 8 I said, "I will climb up into the palm tree. I will take hold of its fruit." Let your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the smell of your breath like apples, Beloved.

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Verse 8

I will go up to the palm tree - I will take hold on the boughs of this tree, and climb up by them, in order to gather the clusters of dates at the top. The rubric here in the old MS. interprets this of the cross of Christ.

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SONG 7: 9 Your mouth like the best wine, that goes down smoothly for my beloved, gliding through the lips of those who are asleep.

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Verse 9

The roof of thy mouth like the best wine - The voice or conversation of the spouse is most probably what is meant.

Causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak - As good wine has a tendency to cause the most backward to speak fluently when taken in moderation; so a sight of thee, and hearing the charms of thy conversation, is sufficient to excite the most taciturn to speak, and even to become eloquent in thy praises.

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SONG 7: 10 I am my beloved's. His desire is toward me.

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Verse 10

I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me - It is worthy of remark that the word which we translate his desire is the very same used Gen 3:16 : Thy desire, thy ruling appetite, תשוקתך teshukathech, shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. This was a part of the woman's curse. Now here it seems to be reversed; for the bride says, I am my beloved's, and his desire or ruling appetite and affection, תשוקתו teshukatho, is עלי ali, Upon Me. The old MS. translates this with considerable force: - "I to my leef, and to me the turnynge of him".

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SONG 7: 11 Come, my beloved, let us go out into the field. Let us lodge in the villages.

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Verse 11

Let us go forth into the field - It has been conjectured that the bridegroom arose early every morning, and left the bride's apartment, and withdrew to the country; often leaving her asleep, and commanding her companions not to disturb her till she should awake of herself. Here the bride wishes to accompany her spouse to the country, and spend a night at his country house.

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SONG 7: 12 Let's go early up to the vineyards. Let's see whether the vine has budded, its blossom is open, and the pomegranates are in flower. There I will give you my love.

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Verse 12

Let us get up early to the vineyards - When in the country, we shall have the better opportunity to contemplate the progress of the spring vegetation; and there she promises to be peculiarly affectionate to him.

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SONG 7: 13 The mandrakes produce fragrance. At our doors are all kinds of precious fruits, new and old, which I have stored up for you, my beloved.

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Verse 13

The mandrakes give a smell - See the note on Gen 30:14, where the mandrake is particularly described; from which this passage will receive considerable light. The reader is requested to consult it.

All manner of pleasant fruits - Fruits new and old; flowers and herbs of every kind which the season could yield. The literal sense, allowing for the concealing metaphors, is, I believe, of a widely different nature from what is generally given. But this must be left to the reader's sagacity and prudence.