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The Connection Between Love and Death in Ancient Egypt and the Book of Canticles (Song of Songs)

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the relationship between love and death in Ancient Egypt and the Bible (Old Testament), a subject that scientific research seems to have overlooked. For the study of the subject, we will use the comparative method, via citation of key elements of the Egyptian and the biblical thought, to better map the worldview of the aforementioned people. The existence of a plethora of ancient Egyptian love poetry texts contributes the most to the formation of a fairly complete view of the subject under examination. To this, it can be added the discovery of frescoes/mural paintings in Egyptian tombs, which reinforce the connection between love and death. As for the Bible, the only source is the Old Testament, and, especially, the book of Canticles (Song of Songs). Although this book consists of only 8 chapters, it conveys rich messages and highlights the connection between love and death, adding the concept of love-sickness as a connecting link between them.

Keywords: death, Egyptian Love Poetry, love, New Kingdom, Old Testament

1. Introduction

As is already known, ancient people engaged in immense interaction, resulting in an exchange of ideas (i.e., through trade and/or population movement) that led to their adoption. The products of this interaction are the ancient texts and the archaeological findings, which shed light on the people's perception of life. Such perceptions include concepts like *love* and *death*, which concern most of people's lives in this era.

Proof of the above concern is the existence of rituals that were related to them. For example, in Mesopotamia, we can see marriage rituals about the fertility and the rebirth of the earth (Heereman, 2021), but also burial banquets in Egyptian tombs for the rebirth of the dead in the afterlife (Allam et al., 2024). The significance of the connection between *love* and *death* has been depicted in murals that were found on many tombs, either royal or not. These murals are full of natural sceneries depictions, proving the above connection via the presence of the mandrake and lotuses, plants that are characteristically connected to the concept of love and pain. For the examination of the above connection – that between love and death – some illustrations from 18th Dynasty tombs will be presented as examples.

Considering the research question, it appears that until today, no study has managed to completely combine the texts with the archaeological findings. However, in our days, research seems to have a lot to offer, as there is a tendency to study emotions in relation to various archaeological findings (McDonald, 2020). Regarding the study of the Egyptian love poetry, more widely known are the works of Miriam Lichtheim (*Ancient Egyptian Literature. A Book of Readings*, vol. I 1973, vol. II 1975, vol. III 1980) and, Michael V. Fox (1980, 1983, 1985), who cited and studied many Egyptian texts, thus helping to the understanding of their literature wealth.

Taking this as an opportunity, this paper aims to combine the Egyptian and the biblical texts with the tomb findings to demonstrate that, although the sharing of common beliefs in the ancient world, the people adopted and shaped them according to their own characteristics, thus creating diversity and a cultural mosaic. For a better understanding of the two concepts under examination, a brief reference will also be made to the concept of *love-sickness*, which is directly linked to those of *love* and *death*.

2. The Subject – Introductory Notes

The subject under consideration is the relationship between the concepts of *love* and *death* in Ancient Egypt and the Bible (Old Testament). The sources to be studied are the Song of Songs (Old Testament) and the following Egyptian texts: Papyrus Harris 500, Cairo Love Songs (Ostracon 25218), Turin Papyrus (1966), Papyrus Chester Beatty I. The examination of Egyptian texts versus the biblical one was preferred as Egyptian love poetry is thematically closer to biblical poetry than that of Mesopotamia or other Ancient Near Eastern texts. For example, in Mesopotamian poetry, the concept of *love* is not clearly secular in nature, but in many cases, it concerns the love relationship between two deities (i.e., Dumuzi and Inanna).

In our case, both Egypt and the Bible possess a plethora of testimonies that demonstrate their interaction. Considering the possibility of the influence of the earlier Egyptian poetry on the biblical one, it is most likely that the first one influenced the second one, as Egyptian dates back to the period between the beginning of the 15th and the end of the 12th century BCE, when Syro-Palestine was under the influence of the Egyptian empire. As a possibility is also considered the import of Egyptian love poetry to the land of Palestine by professional singers (Fox, 1985).

From time to time, many researchers have been dealing with this subject; however, to our days, no study completely covers the research on the presence of the concepts of *love* and *death* in Egyptian love poetry of the 19th-20th Dynasty (c. 1300-1150 BCE) and the Song of Songs from the Hellenistic period (3rd-2nd century BCE) in conjunction with the archaeological findings. More usual is the existence of studies that examine individual issues about Ancient Egypt (i.e., literature, tomb architecture, etc.) or the Song of Songs.

Besides the poor recent bibliography, another impediment to the research may be the fragmentary nature of the sources. Such an example is the Papyrus Harris text, which is exhibited in the British Museum (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Papyrus Harris 500 (Fragment), British Museum.

Source: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/438641001 (Accessed: February 10, 2026)

2.1 The Case of Egypt

Concerning the first case, in Egypt, the period under examination is that of the 19th and 20th Dynasties (c. 1300-1150 BCE) (Walton, 1989). Evidence of the prosperity of love poetry in New Kingdom Egypt (1550-1069 BCE) is the existence of approximately fifty (Cross, 2022) or sixty (Preminger & Brogan, 1993) of such poems. Nevertheless, a more favorable time to lay the foundations of Egyptian love poetry is the period of the 18th Dynasty, which seems to provide the proper atmosphere and the background to support the various images that are portrayed in those poems (White, 1978).

These poems are folk songs that pray to the youth, nature, pleasure, but also the pain of love (Greene & Cushman, 2016). They depict the happiness of the lovers when they meet each other, but also the pain of separation and the wound caused by jealousy. These images and the atmosphere expressed in these lyrics concern issues such as power, danger, and the celebration of love, themes that do not differ significantly from the concerns of modern people (White, 1978). Furthermore, as Fellinger (2013) notes, these poems are based on the personal experiences and the understanding of their authors regarding their contemporary society.

In general, the nature of these poems is romantic, idyllic, comic, occasionally satirical, and sometimes naïve, something that led researchers to compare the Egyptian love poetry to the text of the Song of Songs, which, due to their apparent similarity, was claimed to have originated from it (Preminger & Brogan, 1993).

2.2 The Case of the Bible

Concerning the Bible, the text under examination is that of the book of Canticles, or else the Song of Songs, which is the most famous love poem in the Ancient Near East, as Holm (2005) notes. This text has been dated to various periods, ranging from King Solomon's era (10th century BCE) to the Hellenistic period (3rd-2nd century BCE). Regarding the form of the poem, it cannot be safely characterized as "love poetry", as two hermeneutic versions have been put under research, the first one is the "allegorical" and the second one is the "literal". However, none of the above versions gains ground in the research, as the Song of Songs is not a secular, but a theological text. It is more likely that the text of the Canticles is a symbolic metaphor for the divine nature of love in the human sphere, as Römer notes (Helmer et al., 2019).

3. The Texts from Egypt

The concept of *love* in Egypt is depicted in a plethora of texts, which archaeological research has brought to light. These poems are approximately 50 (fifty), are found in five large poem collections, dated to the period of the 19th and 20th Dynasty (c. 1300-1100 BCE), and are grouped as follows: a) *Papyrus Harris 500* includes 19 poems, b) *Cairo Love Songs* includes 8 poems, c) *Turin Papyrus 1966* consists of one poem, d) Papyrus *Chester Beatty I* includes 17

poems, and e) Texts from *Deir el-Medineh* include excerpts from 7 poems (Johnston, 2009). A brief analysis of the sources follows below.

3.1 Papyrus Harris 500

This is the earliest manuscript of the Egyptian love poems, as it was written in the 19th Dynasty period (c. 1290 BCE), but its initial songs are dated back even to the end of the 18th Dynasty period (Fox, 1985). Its texts deal with the various aspects of love, its influence on the narrator, its frustration and its minor aggravations, but also with its joys and pleasures (Exum 2005).

3.2 Cairo Love Songs (Ostracon 25218)

The text dates back to the 19th or 20th Dynasty or, maybe, to the end of the 18th Dynasty in Egypt (White, 1978). Impediment to the study constitutes its fragmentary nature, as only pieces from a vase in which they were written have been discovered (Fox, 1985).

To these songs is contained a poem named *"Seven Wishes"*, which includes a series of seven wishes that depict the desire of a young man for intimacy with his lover, but also a poem by the title "The Crossing" (Gault, 2019). According to Fox (1985), the two poems of the collection differ in terms of the love they describe. In the first poem, *love* seems to have a more introverted form as the main character speaks only about his emotions, but in the second poem, there is a mutuality between the two lovers, as Fox (1985) notes.

The discovery of love poems on this site proves that the celebration of love was not an exclusive privilege of the Egyptian upper class, but something that concerned all the people (White, 1978).

3.3 Turin Papyrus (1966)

This papyrus contains a poem that dates back to the beginning of the 20th Dynasty era (Fox, 1985). The writer of this poem, by the title *"The Orchard,"* seems to innovate in relation to other love poems and introduces the trees as the main characters, the form of which takes the respective speaker (White, 1978). Here, the lovers' couple remains colorless and takes second place in relation to the real meaning of the poem, which is the virtue of selflessness and not the experience of *love* (Fox, 1985).

3.4 Papyrus Chester Beatty I

Chester Beatty I is an extensive papyrus which contains three poems ("The Stroll", "Three Wishes", "The Nakhtsobek") and dates back to the period of the 20th Dynasty (c. 1160 BCE, Ramesside period), while tracing its origins from the Thebes of Upper Egypt (Fox, 1985). According to Fox, the type of *love* presented here is of only one type, and it can hardly be characterized as the ideal type of love (Fox, 1985). As for the second poem ("Three Wishes"), this expresses a unique wish, which the young boy addresses to his lover[1] (Fox, 1985). Finally, concerning the third poem (The Nakhtsobek), this includes the description and the solution of a riddle, where a woman has a flock, which is difficult to tame[2]. The flock symbolizes a young man who has been seduced by the woman, as Fox notes (Fox, 1985).

[1] 41. (Poet)
(C) *And she'll say to you: "Take me in your embrace,*
and when dawn breaks that's how (we) will be.
[2] 43. (Boy)
(A) *How skilled is she-(my) sister-at casting the lasso,*
yet she'll (draw in) no cattle!
(B) *With her hair she lassos me,*

3.5 The Texts of Deir el-Medineh

Those texts originate from the city sharing the same name, and it is located in the West Bank of today's city of Luxor. In Ancient Egypt, the above city was the residence place of those who were engaged in the construction of the tombs in Kings Valley (Meskell, 1999). According to the researchers, these texts do not constitute a special group of texts, as they include, among others, the Chester Beatty I papyrus.[3]

4. The Connection Between *Love* and *Death* in Ancient Egyptian Tombs

Ancient Egyptian tombs constitute a precious source of information regarding the deceased's life, their accomplishments, and social status, but they also testify about the situation of their era (i.e., religious beliefs, rituals, and deities, as well as the social, economic, and artistic conditions) (Allam et al., 2024).

Among the information that can be inferred from the tomb iconography is the connection between the concepts of *love* and *death*. Research findings, although not extensive, are indicative of the subject under examination. This lack of findings can be said that is based to the fact that most representations were, generally, associated with the afterlife (Day, 2025).

Figure 1: A wife expresses her love by embracing her husband.

Facsimile painted in 1922–23 by Charles K. Wilkinson. Original: Tomb of Qenamun (TT 162), reign of Amenhotep III (ca. 1390–1352 B.C.), 18th Dynasty, Dra Abu el-Naga, Thebes, Egypt.

Source: https://www.metmuseum.org/-/media/files/about-the-met/curatorial-departments/egyptian/facsimiles/2015-16_lovepoetry_web.pdf?sc_lang=en , p. 2.

In 18th Dynasty tombs, have been found significantly vivid and detailed scenes from love poetry depicting, i.e., people that were sitting together with their relatives and friends (Figure 1.), rubbing themselves with perfumes, consuming food and drinks while listening to music, consuming excessive amounts of alcohol, wearing luxurious clothes, offering flowers, and resting in gardens (Fox, 1985). Such an example is a representation of a moment of entertainment found in the Tomb of Nakht (Figure 2) that depicts three women who, accompanied by a musical instrument, entertain the guests of a banquet, a scene commonly found in 18th Dynasty tombs (Allam et al., 2024). According to Carr (2002), the purpose of

with her eye she pulls (me) in,
with her thighs she binds,
with her seal she sets the brand.

[3] A complete catalogue/list of the texts found in Deir el-Medineh, included in the following website: https://www.ancient-egypt.co.uk/deir%20el%20medina/pages/deir_el_medina_documents.htm

the depiction of these scenes was the *renewal of the vitality* of the tomb and the entertainment of the dead.

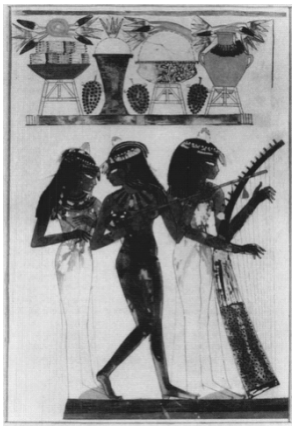

Figure 2. Musicians at banquet. From the tomb of Nakht, mid-fifteenth century B.C.E.
Source: Carr, D. M. (2002). The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 102.

For Ancient Egyptians, *death* was also closely related to *sexuality*, as the rebirth after death was a "literal" process. The dead man's spirit impregnated a woman (usually the wife), with the aim of his rebirth in the afterlife, as attested to the 18th Dynasty non-royal tombs from the Theban necropolis (Kroeter, 2009). As Fox (1985) notes, in Egypt, the funeral rites had the same place that marriage rites had among other people, while love songs did not simultaneously have a mourning nature. However, according to the same researcher, it was also possible that love songs were used at the kind of banquets that were often depicted on the tomb walls (Figure 3).

Figure 3 A Feast for Nebamun, c. 1350 BCE. Wall painting from the tomb-chapel of Nebamun, British Museum.
Source: Kroeter, C. (2009). "The Sensual Banquet Scene: Sex and the Senses in Eighteenth Dynasty Theban Tomb Paintings". St Andrews Journal of Art History and Museum Studies, Vol. 13, p. 55.

Another example that confirms the connection between love and death comes from the Tomb of Akhenaten (TA 26). In this tomb the excavators brought to light an – unfortunately poorly preserved – relief from the Room G that depicts the royal pair (Akhenaten and Nefertiti) mourning the death of their daughter, being surrounded by the sun rays (God Aten) (Figure 4) (Van Dijk, 2009). The uniqueness of this finding lies in the connection among family love, death and the nature, represented in the Aten's sun rays and the depiction of lotus flowers or/and mandrakes, all in the same picture. As Casini notes (2018), the presence of mandrake fruits and bouquets of lotus flowers was something usual in the decorative program of the 18th Dynasty tombs. Such an example comes from an 18th Dynasty tomb at Al-Qurna, where have been found a depiction of a couple (the tomb owners) holding lotus flowers and mandrakes (Figure 5).

As White (1978) notes, during the 18th Dynasty, emphasis was also placed on the nature (i.e., pastoral scenes featuring trees and flowers), a motif that characterized the Amarna period. This type of iconography was present both in royal and non-royal tombs (Arp-Neumann, 2020). In this era's depictions could be added those of the lotus and the mandrake, fruits closely related to *love* and sexual desire, which are also found in tombs (Figure 6) (Kroeter, 2009).

Figure 4: Akhenaten and Nefertiti mourn the death of their daughter, Meketaten.

Source: https://www.facebook.com/groups/119457584880015/permalink/3212969785528764/ (Accessed: February 8, 2026.[4])

[4] The preferred source for the above picture is that of a history webpage on Facebook, because in this photo, we can clearly see the depiction of the lotus flowers or/and the mandrakes, on the left side of the picture. In other depictions, such as the following: https://www.flickr.com/photos/tobeyfootsteps/40548842824, the details concerning the aforementioned flowers cannot be seen.

Figure 5: A couple holding lotus flowers and mandrakes (18th Dynasty tomb at Al-Qurna).

Source: https://www.facebook.com/groups/487928085829929/permalink/680483783241024/ (Accessed: February 10, 2026).

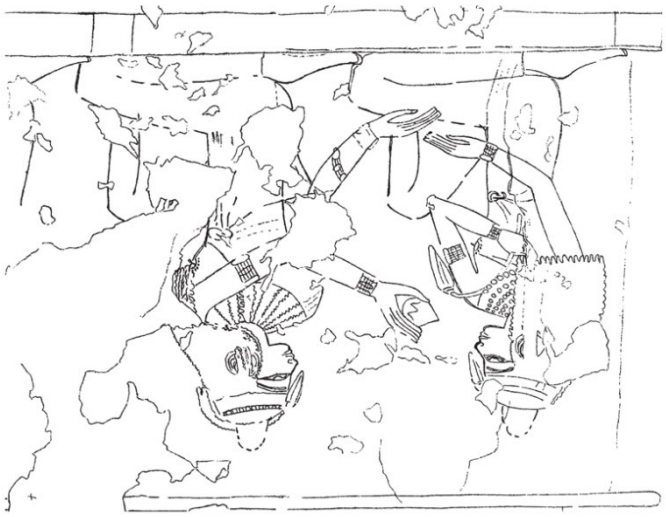

Figure 6: A female banqueter passes a mandrake fruit to another guest. Detail from the Tomb of Nebseny (TT 108), Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, showing a female banqueter passing a mandrake.

Source: Draycott, C. M., & Stamatopoúlou, M. (2016). Dining and death: Interdisciplinary perspectives on the 'Funerary Banquet' in ancient art, burial and belief. Peeters, p. 148.

The above characteristics were typical of the Amarna period, as there was a shift in iconography and a tendency towards extroversion, which is even reflected in the depictions of the royal family members, with this trend continuing under Akhenaten's successors. An example of this change was the fact that the Pharaoh was now depicted in tender moments with his wife and daughters. The art of this period was essentially characterized by the idealization of the present and the depiction of things as people saw them (Fox, 1985).

Concluding the subject about tomb iconography, it is worth noting that *love* was also connected to *fear*, as those concepts are classified in the same category, because they are based on the same understanding or perception (Eicke, 2023). In this way, perhaps the presence of representations related to *love* on tombs can be justified in the scheme: *the fear of death -> love is connected to fear -> love is also connected to death*, a line of reasoning that connects *love* to *fear* and *death*.

5. The Concepts of *Love*, *Death*, and *Love-sickness* in the Bible (Old Testament)

In the Bible, the only book that connects the two concepts of *love* and *death* is the Song of Songs, which is included in the Canonical books of the Old Testament. This book connects the above concepts by incorporating a third one into the framework, that of *love-sickness*. The only verse of the Song in which the concepts of *love* and *death* are inseparably linked and equated is 8:6 (ESV: *for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave.*) (LXX: *ὅτι κραταιὰ ὡς θάνατος ἀγάπη, σκληρὸς ὡς ᾅδης ζῆλος·*).

5.1 Love

The central point of the Song is the concept of *love*, which is best reflected in Song 8:6. This verse describes *love* as an urging, unexpected, and irresistible force of both destruction and life (Linafelt, 2002), while at the same time it is also escalating (Kreeft, 1989). In general, *love* gives meaning to people's lives, which is restricted by death (Helmer et. al. 2019). Interpreting love theologically, LaCocque (1998) understands it as a reflection of the covenant that has been made between the divine and the human element.

However, this *love* is not one-dimensional but, on the contrary, has various characteristics that sometimes can be contradictory. Thus, love is mutual (Song 2:16, 6:3, 1:15-16 etc.), peaceful (i.e. Song 8:10 etc.), equal (i.e. Song 1:13//2:3β), proactive (i.e. Song 1:7-8), devoted/sacrificial (i.e. Song 3:1-5, 5:6-7// Song 2:10-14, 5:2-6), desirous (i.e. Song 5:10-16//4:9, 6:5), sexual/erotic (i.e. Song 1:2, 4:10, 7:10), exclusive (i.e. Song 4:12-15, 5:10, 8:6-7), committed (i.e. Song 4:8-12, 8:2, 6), but also timeless (i.e. Song 2:17, 8:14) (Andruska, 2019).

Love in the Song encompasses pleasure but also the pain·; it has passion, but also fear. *Love* frees but commits·, strengthens but also weakens·, brings disruption but also peace. *Love* is serious but also playful·, has a noble meaning but is expressed in an earthy way. The center of *love* is both oneself and the other. *Love* gives and receives·, craves to give and to receive pleasure. And, finally, *love* is cautious and timid, but at the same time excessive and courageous (Gledhill, 1994).

The affirmation of the great importance of *love* for the young couple is reflected in the desire to place the beloved as a seal on the body (8:6). The placement of the seal constitutes a sign of the need for social acceptance of the couple's relationship (Gledhill, 1994) or, even as a means of protecting their relationship, which is in danger (Konkel & Longman, 2006). Especially, the placement of the seal on the beloved's body (i.e., heart and arm, Song 8:6) symbolizes the wholeness, a person's inner and outer self, their thoughts and actions (Konkel & Longman, 2006).

Bucher understands the concepts of *love* and *jealousy* as an interconnected pair, which, when combined, describe the experience of *love*. The former identifies with the power of desire between two lovers, and the latter characterizes the resistance of the two young people against anyone who might threaten their relationship (Bailey & Bucher, 2015). However, *jealousy*, as

Landy (2011) notes, constitutes, in a way, the ghost or the shadow of love. The *jealousy* outbursts resemble harsh torture, while *jealousy* is self-destructive and killing, serving the other concept, that of *death*.

5.2 Death

The concept of *death* seems to be interconnected with that of love, as evidenced by verse 8:6 of the Song of Songs. Lloyd-Carr (1984), commenting on the power of death, notes that nobody can resist death, as in the case of love, while Landy (2011) adds that *death* dissolves consciousness. Anyone who passes over to its side does not return and cannot be freed from it, as in the case of *love* (Duguid, 2015). Gledhill (1994) interprets the *love-death* parallel similarly, noting that just as *love* permanently binds those who experience it, so does *death*.

On the other hand, Linafelt (2002) claims that every power that is so strong and able to resist *death* is also strong enough to fight time and death, as in the case of *love* of the young couple of the Song (Song 8:6). Whoever has experienced the force of *love* is convinced that it will surely survive *death*, as Crenshaw (2017) adds. The connection between these two concepts could be summarized in LaCocque's (1998) assertion that *love* and *death* are, essentially, the two faces of the same reality.

The above concepts seem to connect a third one, that of *love-sickness*. Exceptionally interesting is the connection between *love* and illness in the book of Song (2:5, 5:8). In a paper of him, Gault (2010) connects the concept of *love* with that of *love-sickness* and, as an example, cites the motif of *love-sickness* from the book of Song (2:5, 3:7, 8:4), arguing that this concept is also present in an ancient Near Eastern text from the Dumuzi and Inanna cycle, by the title *"Bed of Love"*.

The *love-sickness* (see Song 2:4-5, 5:6b) seems to be provoked by the disruption of the balance of the heart when two lovers are away from one another, and they cannot enjoy each other's presence. Love-sickness can be so powerful that it can even lead to *death* (White, 1978). Consequently, *love* is intertwined with suffering, as Kreeft (1989) notes. If someone loves, they will suffer. The only way for someone to protect themselves from it is to protect themselves from *love*. However, this will cause them to suffer even more, but now from loneliness. Eventually, *love* has transforming power against pain, as it can relieve and offer healing to humans (Kreeft, 1989).

6. Discussion: The Similarities and the Differences

The result of the above presentation is the existence of many similarities and differences between the parts under examination (e.g., Ancient Egypt and the Bible) that will be outlined in brief below.

6.1. Similarities

Initially, examining the similarities between the aforementioned texts, it becomes clear that there are common motifs that play a central role in the love stories described. One such example is the reference to love-sickness in the Papyrus Harris 500 text (Group A, no 6), where the boy pretends to be sick from love, and his beloved is the only one who will see his deceit.

I will lie down inside,
and then I will feign illness.
Then my neighbors will enter to see,
and then (my) sister will come with them.

She '11 put the doctors to shamed
(for she) will understand my illness.

Source: Fox, M. V. (1985). *The Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, p. 13.

Another example is the presence in the Chester Beatty I papyrus (Group A, no 37 A-C) of the motif of love-sickness. In this text, the boy is ill from love, and the only medicine that could help him is the presence of his beloved. The symptoms of love-sickness are particularly the weakness and lack of control over the body (Fox, 1985), a situation similar to a real illness.

(A) Seven whole days I have not seen (my) sister.
Illness has invaded me,
my limbs have grown heavy,
and I barely sense my own body,
(B) Should the master physicians come to me,
their medicines could not ease my heart.
The lector-priests have no (good) method,
because my illness cannot be diagnosed.
(C) Telling me, "Here she is!" – that's what will revive me.
Her name-that's what will get me up.
The coming and going of her messengers –
that's what will revive my heart.
More potent than any medicine is my (sister) for me;
she is more powerful for me than The Compendium.
Her coming in from outside is my amulet.

Source: Fox, M. V. (1985). *The Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, p. 55.

In the same manner, love-sickness is described in the Song of Songs, as the young couple is away from each other, provoking emotions of a real illness.

Song 2:5:

στηρίσατέ με ἐν ἀμόραις, (Strengthen me with raisins,)
στοιβάσατέ με ἐν μήλοις, ὅτι τετρωμένη ἀγάπης ἐγώ. (refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love.)

Song 5:8:

ὅτι τετρωμένη ἀγάπης εἰμὶ ἐγώ. (Tell him I am faint with love.)

Taking as an opportunity the above verses from the Song, it can be said the similarity in the use of lotus and mandrakes in the healing of love-sickness in Egypt, due to its use as a drug for provoking unconsciousness to the pain (Mion, 2017), something that finds a counterpart in the raisins/raisin cakes that mentioned in the Song, as a medicine for this special illness. As is already mentioned, lotus flowers and mandrakes are also present in 18th Dynasty tomb iconography, proving the connection between love and death in Ancient Egypt.

Last but not least, the concept of love seems to be interconnected with the concept of heart, an entirely reasonable connection, as the heart is where the pain and the pleasure are experienced by someone (Dien et al., 2024), emotions directly linked to *love* and *death*, thus highlighting a circular connection between all these concepts.

6.2. Differences

Probably the most important difference between the Song and ancient Near Eastern love poetry is the fact that the Song does not exclusively belong to love poetry, as many Old Testament wisdom literature elements traverse its text, making it something more than a simple love poem. On the contrary, the Song is a book that includes advice for *love*, something that distinguishes it from the Egyptian texts, which focus on the celebration of *love* in general (Andruska, 2019). Nevertheless, Egyptian poetry, compared to the Song, seems to depict a wider emotional spectrum of the main characters, even though the protagonists of the biblical text display a greater variety of emotions than any other Egyptian song (Fox, 1985).

Commenting on the archaeological documentation, it can be said that the Song of Songs lacks such implications, as the biblical text is the only source of research. However, the poor information someone can draw from the text, the fact that love-sickness is inseparably linked to love and death, is evident. As for Egyptian love poetry, the discovery of tomb iconography that depicts the connection between the above concepts, as a supplement to the texts, can be considered as an asset.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is obvious that the concepts of *love* and *death* are inseparably linked, as evidenced by Egyptian love poetry, the book of Canticles, but also the various archaeological findings. The abundance of similarities between biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts is based on the universality of the concept of *love*. This emotion is not restricted by place or time, thus enabling different people to express it in their own unique way, and by giving a different character to each of their texts.

Perhaps the only difference between *love*, as depicted in the Song and in Egyptian poems, is the fact that in the former, it is described as a multidimensional concept, while in the latter, the feelings it evokes in people are those depicted with a variety of colors. On the contrary, the concepts of *death* and *love-sickness* do not seem to differ significantly in the texts under consideration.

Obviously, the subject cannot be exhausted within the framework of a scientific conference and requires further research. The discovery of texts or tombs, as well as the re-evaluation of existing findings, can also contribute to the progress of research by shedding light on previously discovered and studied aspects, thereby further enriching our knowledge about the issue under examination.

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