

A BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY
(slightly annotated)

SONG OF SONGS

Prepared by
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IN PROGRESS

The bibliography is limited, mainly, to publications in English and German. For an extensive bibliography see, e.g., Murphy's commentary in *Hermeneia*, 1990.

Most scholars (and all persons who have ever loved) agree that the statement in Song of Songs 8:6 is an excellent description of the emotion which human lovers (throughout the ages and in all places) experience:

SONG OF SONGS 8:6

ישמני כחותם עִלְלוֹךָ	<i>śîmēnî kaḥôtām 'al-libbekā</i>	a Set me as a seal(signet) upon your heart,
כחותם עִלְלוֹזְעָךָ	<i>kaḥôtām 'al-zērô 'ekā</i>	b as a seal(signet) upon your arm,
כִּי־עֲזָהוּ כַמְתוֹ אֶהְיֶה	<i>kî-'azzāh kammāwet</i>	c because, strong as Death(Mot) is Love(Eros),
קָהַשׁ כְּאֶשְׁלוֹ קִנְיָהּ	<i>'ahābāh</i>	d fierce as Sheol(Place of Death) is Passion(Zeal),
רִשְׁפֵיָהּ רִשְׁפֵי אֵשׁ	<i>qašāh kišē 'ōl qin āh</i>	e Its (raging,divine) sparks are sparks of Fire(Death),
שֶׁלֶהֶבֶת-יָהּ	<i>rěšāpēhā rišpē 'ēš</i>	f a raging (divine) flame. (Michel)
	<i>šalhebet-yāh</i>	

TERMINOLOGY

HEBREW:	רִישׁ הַיְשִׁירִים, <i>ŠĪR HAŠŠĪRĪM</i> , "The Most Magnificent Song." The "literal" translation is, "Song of Songs." The Hebrew construction is a superlative. The intended meaning, therefore is something like, "The Greatest Song," "The Sublime Song."
Greek:	<i>ΑΣΜΑ ΑΣΜΑΤΩΝ</i> , "Song of Songs"
Latin:	<i>CANTICUM CANTICORUM</i> , "Song of Songs"
English:	CANTICLES, SONG OF SONGS, SONG OF SOLOMON

A NOTE TO READERS

When I decide to study a particular topic (or want to review it) I turn to some of the standard dictionaries and encyclopaedias. I always read, at least, three or four (or more) articles on the same topic in the various dictionaries. After such an exercise I have gained quite a good understanding of the topic and of the various views which are held among scholars.

I continue by checking the bibliographies (which are, usually, included in such an article) and then select the most often quoted books and articles in order to gain more information and insight.

Then I check the bibliographies in the various books and articles and begin typing my own bibliography. I then go to the library (or libraries) and check out the most interesting books.

I also check all of the issues of *Old Testament Abstracts* and read the abstracts of all of the articles published on the topic and then I enter the appropriate articles in my bibliography.

Then I check other bibliographic sources and add to my bibliography.

Quite often I enter the publications (in my bibliographies) according to the date of publication in order to be able to gain a quick overview over the history of interpretation of a particular topic.

DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS*

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- 1992 *ABD*
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Murphy, R. E.,
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HIGLY RECOMMENDED BOOKS*

After reading two or three (or all) of the above articles I suggest the reading of the following books, first, before the floodgates are opened and you may want to read all of the other books on this list as a *beginning* of your studies of this important biblical book.

- Lehrman, S. M.,
1946 "The Song of Songs: Introduction and Commentary," in *The Megilloth: Hebrew Text, English Translation and Commentary*. Ed. A. Cohen. Pp. 1-32. London/New York: The Soncino Press, 1946. - a Jewish commentary. Very important for Christians as a brief introduction to rabbinic thinking.

Pope, Marvin H.,
1977 *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible 7C. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland: Doubleday, 1977.

Falk, Marcia Lee,
1982 *Love Lyrics from the Bible*. Sheffield: Almond, 1982. - a very fine work by a Jewish feminist. This is the 'scholarly' edition.

Fox, Michael V.,
1985 *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985. - an excellent commentary by a Jewish scholar. In my opinion it is one of the best commentaries on the Songs (together with Pope's book).

NOW YOU MAY ALSO TURN TO THE FOLLOWING BOOKS*

Murphy, Roland, E., O.Carm.,
1990 *The Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or The Song of Songs*. Hermeneia--A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990.

Garrett, Duane A.,
1995 *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture. NIV Text. The New American Commentary 14. Pp 448. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993 (Cloth, \$27.99). - a so-called evangelical commentary.

Bloch, Ariel and Chana Bloch,
1995 *The Song of Songs: A New Translation with an Introduction and Commentary*. Afterword by Robert Alter. New York: Random House, 1995. - on the book jacket it says: "Quite simply the best version in the English language." Stephen Mitchell. This may be so, but I still prefer the commentary by Fox. But, there is no doubt that this is a fine commentary.

I would not dare to say anything about human sexuality in the Bible unless I would have read, at least, the above literature. Of course, there also excellent articles on the specific subject of sex, eros, marriage, etc., in the dictionaries.

COMMENTARIES AND BOOKS RELATED TO THE TOPIC*

Now you are properly prepared to read and study the following books. Of course there are many more. This is *only* a selection. The bibliography is arranged according to the date of publication in order as a quick overview over the history of publication

There are also many wonderful articles on this book. See the *Old Testament Abstracts*.

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Die Fünf Megillot. Ed. Karl Budde, Alfred Bertholoet, and D. G. Wildeboer. Pp. 1-48. Kurzer Han-Commentar zum Alten Testament 17. Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1898.

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Cannon, William W.,

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Schoff, Wilfred H., ed.,

1924 *The Song of Songs: A Symposium*. Philadelphia: Commercial Museum, 1924.

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Margolis, Max L.,

"How the Song of Songs Entered the Canon," 9-17

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"The Song of Songs and the Fertility Cult," 48-79

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Lehrman, S. M.,

1946 "The Song of Songs: Introduction and Commentary," in
The Megilloth: Hebrew Text, English Translation and Commentary. Ed. A. Cohen. Pp. 1-32.
London/New York: The Soncino Press, 1946.

- a Jewish commentary. Very important for Christians as a brief introduction to rabbinic thinking.

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1948 *The Song of Songs*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1948

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1954 *The Song of Songs and Lamentations: A Study, Modern Translation and Commentary*. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1954.

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The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament. Pp. 195-245. 2nd rev. ed.
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- Cohen, Gerson D.,
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- Ginsberg, H. L.,
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- Kramer, Samuel Noah.,
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1969 *Sie fünf Megilloth: Ruth, das Hohelied, Esther*. HAT, 18. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1969.
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BS 1483,G5 1970
"Song of Songs," VII-XLVI, 1-191.
"Coheleth," I-VIII, 1-528
- Feldman, Leon A.,
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BS 1485.A5 1970
- Bernard of Clairvaux,
1971-80 *On the Song of Songs*. 4 vols. Trans. Kilian Walsh and Irene Edmonds. In *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*. Cistercian Fathers Series, nos. 4, 7, 40. Spencer, Mass. / Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1971-80.
- Loretz, Oswald,
1971 *Das althebräische Liebeslied: Untersuchungen zur Stichometrie und Redaktionsgeschichte des Hohenliedes und des 45. Psalms*. Studien zur althebräischen Poesie 1. Alter Orient und Altes Testament--Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments, 14, 1. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins and Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer, 1971.
- excellent, detailed, scholarly study by a German scholar who is an expert in Hebrew and other Semitic languages and literatures (Ugaritic, etc.),

BS 1405.2.L57

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Schneekloth, Larry G.,

1977 *The Targum of the Song of Songs: A Study in Rabbinic Interpretation*. Ph. D. dissertation. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1977.

Pope, Marvin,

1977 *Song of Songs. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible 7c. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1977.

- "Preface," ix-x
- "The Song of Songs,"
Pope's translation I cut up and adjusted it to Falk's list of poems.
- "Humanizing the Sublime Song," 192-199
- "Catholic Views of Canticles as Songs of Human Love," 199-201
- "A French Protestant View: Sacred and Sexual," 201-205
- "The Song of Songs and Women's Liberation," 205-210
- "Love and Death," 210-229
- ... a few Plates

This is the ONLY commentary which takes some of the insights from Northwest Semitic studies seriously and also adds an extensive discussion of the possible mythological themes. It also includes a discussion of some of the history of interpretation. I recommend this commentary *very* highly. If you want to take time to read only two commentaries then I suggest that you read this commentary and the one by Fox. The book also includes very informative pictures.

Pope's views are controversial because of his insistence on underlying mythological strands. I happen to be very partial to Pope's views. In 1972 Pope invited me to work with him on his third edition of his Job commentary which was then published in the Anchor Bible series in 1973. This edition was revised on the basis of my own work on Job in 1970.

The book is dedicated to Pope's wife Helen. I met her before she died. After her death I helped prepare a memorial place for her at the Pope's cabin in the Thousand Island region.

REVIEWS:

Maccoby, Hyam,

"Sex According to the Song of Songs."
Review of *The Song of Songs*, by Marvin H. Pope.
Commentary 67 (June 1979) 53-59.

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BS 1485.W43 1978

White, John B.,

1978 *Study of the Language of Love in the Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Poetry*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, no. 38. Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978.

- Gollwitzer, Helmut,
1979 *Song of Love: A Biblical Understanding of Sex*. Trans. Keith Crim. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.
- Peshitta,
1979 *The Old Testament in Syriac--The Song of Songs*. The Peshitta Institute of Leiden, part II, fasc 5. Leiden E. J. Brill, 1979
- Krinetzki, Leo,
1981 *Kommentar zum Hohenlied*. Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie, 16. Frankfurt am Main: Peter D. Lang, 1981.
- Murphy, Roland E.,
1981 *Wisdom Literature*. The Forms of the Old Testament Literature, 13. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1981.
- Falk, Marcia,
1982 *Love Lyrics From the Bible: A Translation and Literary Study of The Song of Songs*. Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1998
BS 1485.5.F35 1982
See also the 1990 revised edition.
- Landy, Francis,
1983 *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs*. Sheffield: Almond, 1983.
- Fox, Michael V.,
1985 *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

This is one of the best, if not the best, study of Song of Songs. It illustrates, among other things, that the study of the Bible is almost useless unless the literature in the Bible is studied in the context of other ancient Near Eastern literature, and, actually, in the context of the whole, total human experience.

Those who do not engage in these kinds of studies will remain hopelessly imprisoned in parochial and unsophisticated ignorance. The arrogance of the ignorant is laughable until the ignorant gain power ... and then their ignorance becomes deadly.

- "Contents,"
- "Preface," ix
- "Editorial Notes," xi
- "Introduction," xix-xxvii

PART ONE: TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

"2. The Song of Songs," 82-177

PART TWO: THE LITERARY TREATMENT OF LOVE

3. Language, Dating, and Historical Context

"The Song of Songs," 186-193

4. The Composition of the Sources and the Songs

"The Song of Songs," 202-226

5. What the Love Songs Were Used For: Function and Setting

"*Religious Poetry*," 234

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"Love Songs and the Sacred Marriage," 239-243

"Mortuary Songs: Love and Death," 243

"*Love Poetry as Entertainment*," 244

"The Egyptian Love Songs," 244-247

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- “The Song of Songs,” 247-250
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 7. What the Songs Speak About: The Major Themes,”
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 “*Imagery: The Problem and Some Proposals*,” 272-274
 “*The Nature of the Song’s Imagery*,” 274-277
 “Mesopotamian Parallels,” 277-278
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 “*Paraclausithyron*,” 282
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 “Mesopotamian Sacred Marriage Songs,” 287-288
 “*The Nobility of Lovers*,” 288
 “*The Alba*,” 288-289
 “*The Love Trap*,” 289-290
 “*Traveling to a Rendezvous*,” 290
 “*Seeking the Beloved*,” 290-291
 “*The Invitation to Come Away*,” 291-292
 “*Excursus: The ‘Travesties’*,” 292-294

 “Bibliography,” 409-426

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1986 *The Song of Fourteen Songs*.

Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series no. 36. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986

Marks, John H. and Robert M. Good, eds.,

1987 *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope*. Guilford, Connecticut: Four Quarters Publishing Company, 1987.

- a wonderful collection of superb articles. Prof. M. Pope is a fine colleague and a dear friend. He invited me (in 1972) to help him with the writing of the third edition of his Job commentary (based on my work on Job in 1970) in the Anchor Bible series (published in 1973).

ARTICLES (a selection)

Dever, William D.,

“Funerary Practices in EB IV (MB) Palestine: A Study in Cultural Discontinuity,”

Foster, Benjamin,

“Gilgamesh: Sex, Love and the Ascent of Knowledge,”

Gordon, Cyrus,

“The Marriage and Death of Sinuhe,”

Pardee, Dennis,

“As Strong as Death,”

Parker, Simon B.,

“Death and Devotion: The Composition and Theme of *Aqht*,”

Childs, Brevard S.,

“Death and Dying in Old Testament Theology.”

Dahood, Mitchell,

“Love and Death at Ebla and Their Biblical Reflections,”

Hillers, Delbert R.,

“Dust: Some Aspects of Old Testament Imagery,”

- Murphy, Roland A., O.Carm.,
 "Dance and Death in the Song of Songs,"
Van Seters, John,
 "Love and Death in the Court History of David,"
Freedman, David Noel,
 "On the Death of Abiner,
Hicks, R. Lansing,
 "The Door of Love,"
Snell, Daniel C.,
 "Notes on Love and Death in Proverbs,"
Hanson, Paul D.,
 "In Defiance of Death: Zechariah's Symbolic Universe,"
Mann, Thomas W.,
 "Holiness and Death in the Redaction of Numbers 16:1-20:13,"
Richardson, Neil H.,
 "Psalms 106: Yahweh's Succoring Love Saves From the Death of a Broken Covenant,"
Sasson, Jack M.,
 "Love's Roots: On the Redaction of Genesis 30:14-24,"
Goldin, Judah,
 "The Death of Moses: An Exercise in Midrashic Transposition,"
Kennedy, Charles A.,
 "The Cult of the Dead in Corinth,"
Rosenthal, Franz,
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1982 *Love Lyrics from the Bible*. Sheffield: Almond, 1982.

- a very fine work by a Jewish feminist. This is the 'scholarly' edition.

Feliks, Yehuda,

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1988 *A Thirst for God. Spiritual Desire in Bernard of Clairvaux's Sermons on the Song of Songs*. Cistercian Studies Series. Number Seventy-Seven. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1988.

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Bloom, Harold, ed.,

1988 *The Song of Songs. Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House, 1988.

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1989 *The Song of Songs*. Old Testament Guides. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989. - an excellent introduction.

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Hamesh Megillot (The Five Scrolls). Ed. Aharon Mirsky, Feibel Meltzer, and Yehuda Kiel. Pp. 1-76. Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1990.

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- "Contents,"
- "Author's Note: History and Acknowledgements,"
- "Preface,"
- "The Song of Songs: Thirty-One Lyric Poems in Hebrew and in English Translation,"
- "Translator's Study,"
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 - "Translation as a Journey,"
- "Endnotes,"
 - Chapter 5
 - "Contexts, Themes and Motifs,"
 - "Four Basic Contexts,"
 - "Five Themes and Their Variations,"
 - "Six Central Motives,"

Murphy, Roland, E., O.Carm.,

1990 *The Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or The Song of Songs*. Hermeneia--A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990.

- an excellent scholarly commentary by a Roman Catholic scholar. It must be read, but, I still prefer the commentary by Fox. He includes an extensive bibliography. See, especially the pre-nineteenth century bibliography on pp. 203-205.

Matter, E. Ann,

1990 *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.

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Stadelmann, Luis,

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Falk, Marcia Lee,

1993 *The Song of Songs: A New Translation*. Illustrated by Barry Moser. New York: HarperSanFrancisco (A Division of HarperCollins Publishers), Paperback Edition, 1993 (1973, 1977, 1982, 1990).

- a very sensitive (but not *literal*) translation by a Jewish feminist. This is the 'popular' edition. I met her a few years ago when she gave a presentation at one of the synagogues in Hyde Park. Actually, about seven people from the Adult Forum, which I conducted in one of the churches, came to the presentation and discussion with me.

Jerusalmi, Isaac,

1993 *The Song of Songs in the Targumic Tradition*. Vocalized Aramaic Text with Facing English Translation and Ladino Versions. Cincinnati: Ladino Books, 1993.

- extremely interesting!

Contents

PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

TARGUM OF THE *Song of Songs*

LEVELS OF RABBINIC INTERPRETATION

Saadia Gaon, Abraham Ibn Ezra & Yosef Ibn Aknin

Ezra of Gerona

Ibn Tibbon

Immanuel of Rome

Isaac Arama

Moshe Almosnino

The Song of Songs: EROTIC POETRY OR EPITHALAMIUM

Origen

Theodore of Mopsuestia

Išo'dad of Merv

Bernard de Clairvaux

St. Teresa of Avilá

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TEXTS IN FACING FORMAT

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REMARKS ON THE LADINO VERSIONS

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ADDENDA:

Nekudoth ha-Kasef, Venice 1619, with facing Romanization

Israel b. Hayyim's Vienna 1814 text with facing Romanization

Išo'dad's *Introduction to the Song of Songs*: Syriac Text with facing English Translation

Shiré Yisrael, the Four Introductions with an English Summary

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ARTICLES BY MITCHELL J. DAHOOD*

In the area of *philological* studies (= the love of words, i.e., emphasis on the study of words and phrases) on a number of biblical books (e.g., Psalms, Job, Qoheleth=Ecclesiastes), including the biblical book of Proverbs, one scholar stands out, namely, Mitchell J. Dahood (1922-1982), because of his particular approach to the study of the ancient biblical Hebrew texts. No other scholar has pursued the insights, which have been gained from Ugaritic (texts found in 1929 going back to about the 14th century BCE) and Eblaite studies (texts found in 1974/75 going back to about the 23rd century BCE), as thoroughly as Dahood. Ugaritic and Eblaite are closely related languages to ancient Hebrew. Dahood was my scholarly mentor from 1966 until his death in 1982 and he continues to be my inspiration. I continue to study and to apply his way of studying the basic Hebrew consonantal biblical text in my own studies and publications. In the following I cite a few of his articles which deal, particularly, with Proverbs:

ABBREVIATIONS M AND H

- M = Martinez, Ernest R.,
Hebrew-Ugaritic Index to the Writings of Mitchell J. Dahood: A Bibliography with Indices of Scriptural Passages, Hebrew and Ugaritic Words, and Grammatical Observations. Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici 116. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967. - This includes the publications from 1952-1966, Numbers 1-135
- Martinez, Ernest R.,
Hebrew-Ugaritic Index II with an Eblaite Index to the Writings of Mitchell J. Dahood: A Bibliography with Indices of Scriptural Passages, Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Eblaite Words, and Grammatical Observations. Critical Reviews, Doctoral Dissertations and Related Writings. Subsidia Biblica 4. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981. - This includes the publications from 1966-1981, Numbers 136-320-G
- H = The abbreviation H refers to a research assistant,

Lisa Hayes (a student at LSTC). The numerical listing for the publications from 1980-1989 (including the number 0 for Dahood's dissertation (in 1951) was suggested by Ms. Lisa M. Hayes (August 22, 1995) based on the system adopted by E. R. Martinez, S.J.

THERE ARE 357 PUBLICATIONS BY MITCHELL J. DAHOOD. (... if the count is correct)

All deal with thorough philological studies using all of the ancient Semitic languages in order to understand the ancient Hebrew of the Bible better. His contributions to biblical studies are very impressive, but also very controversial. The beginning student (who is unfamiliar with the difficulties of Semitic studies) needs to be very careful, but should not, necessarily, immediately turn against a suggestion which M. Dahood has made for a particular reading of a text.

Some of the contributions by M. Dahood to the study of Song of Songs:

- M103 Review:
Robert, A. and R. Tournay, avec le concours de A. Feuillet,
Le Cantique des Cantiques. Traduction et commentaire. Études bibliques. Paris: Gabalda, 1963.
Biblica 45 (1964) 109-111
- M109 Review:
Gerleman, Gillis,
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Biblica 45 (1964) 287-288
- M249 "Canticle 7,9 and UT 52,61: A Question of Method,"
Biblica 57 (1976) 109-110
- H342 "Philological Observations on Five Biblical Texts,"
Biblica 63 (1982) 390-394
Texts: 2 Sam 8:8, Ps 55:3, Prov 14:35, Canticles 5:13, 6:2.

For a complete list of Dahood's contributions the various indexes in his publications must be used.