

On the Song of Songs.¹²⁷⁰

1. Arise, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out (*Canticles iv. 16*). As Joseph was delighted with these spices, he is designated the King's son by God; as the Virgin Mary was anointed with them, she conceived the Word: then new secrets, and new truth, and a new kingdom, and also great and inexplicable mysteries, are made manifest.

2. And where is all this rich knowledge? and where are these mysteries? and where are the books? For the only ones extant are Proverbs, and Wisdom, and Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. What then? Does the Scripture speak falsely? God forbid. But the matter of his writings was various, as is shown in the phrase "Song of Songs;" for that indicates that in this one book he digested the contents of the 5,000 songs.¹²⁷¹ In the days moreover of Hezekiah, there were some of the books selected for use, and others set aside. Whence the Scripture says, "These are the mixed¹²⁷² Proverbs of Solomon, which the friends of Hezekiah the king copied out."¹²⁷³ And whence did they take them, but out of the books containing the 3,000 parables and the 5,000 songs? Out of these, then, the wise friends of Hezekiah took those portions which bore upon the edification of the Church. And the books of Solomon on the "Parables" and "Songs," in which he wrote of the physiology of plants, and all kinds of animals belonging to the dry land, and the air, and the sea, and of the cures of disease, Hezekiah did away with, because the people looked to these for the remedies for their diseases, and neglected to seek their healing from God.¹²⁷⁴

1270 Simon de Magistris, in his *Acta Martyr. Ostiens.*, p. 274 adduces the following fragment in Latin and Syriac, from a Vatican codex, and prefaces it with these words: Hippolytus wrote on the Song of Solomon, and showed that thus early did God the Word seek His pleasure in the Church gathered from among the Gentiles, and especially in His most holy mother the Virgin; and thus the Syrians, who boasted that the Virgin was born among them, translated the Commentary of Hippolytus at a very early period from the Greek into their own tongue, of which some fragments still remain,—as, for example, one to this effect on the above words.

1271 *1 Kings iv. 32.*

1272 ἀδιάκριτοι, "mixed," or "dark."

1273 *Prov. xxv. 1.*

1274 In Gallandi, from *Anastasius Sinaita*, quæst. 41, p. 320.