



Solomon & Delilah

2 Siren Song of Lebanon

Solomon & Delilah: Basis

Israel's spiritual leader displaces his God with the passion of love for his foreign bride

She does not know God

He abdicates his responsibility to witness

He is culpable; Leadership passes to her

Their relationship becomes (unintentionally) lethal

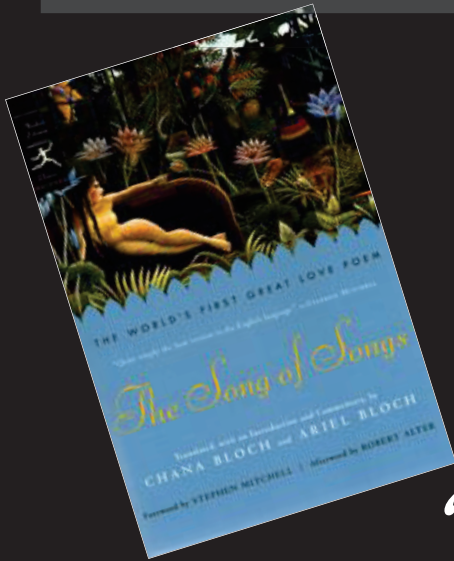
Dynamics with Support Characters

- Daughters of Jerusalem resent her (she takes their place)
- Watchmen of Jerusalem try to eliminate her



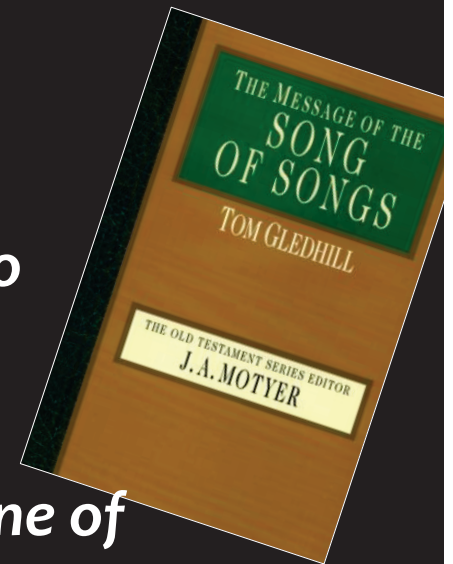
The Male Character

Most modern expositors deny Solomon is a character in the Song despite his mention 7 times



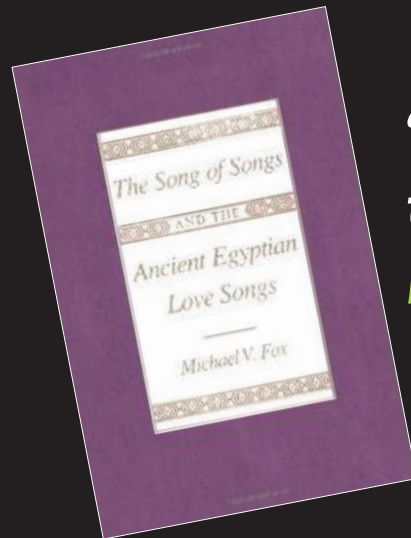
“King Solomon is a central figure in the lovers’ fantasies, not a character in the poem.” **Bloch & Bloch, 1995, p10**

“The two lovers are Everyman and Everywoman and they have nothing to do with Solomon.” **Gledhill, 1994, p23**



“King Solomon is not one of the characters of the Song.” **Fox, 1985, p22**

But no reason is given.
Expert Hebraists, not expositors



Verse of the Song	Assertion (Gledhill 1994)
<i>“Look! It is Solomon’s carriage” 3:7</i>	<i>“The two lovers are Everyman and Everywoman and they have nothing to do with Solomon.” p23</i>
<i>“the king” 1:12</i>	<i>“... again part of the royal fiction” p115</i>
<i>“banquet hall” 2:4</i>	<i>“... perhaps in the girl’s imagination” p125</i>
<i>“look at King Solomon wearing the crown ...with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding” 3:11</i>	<i>“... we have distanced ourselves from the idea that a strong narrative thread can be found in the Song. This enables us to avoid the difficult questions posed by the passage...” p150</i>
<i>“Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines” 6:8</i>	<i>“Many have tried to reconcile these numbers with... Solomon’s harem. But we do not need to be concerned with such matters. The reference is non-specific.” p193</i>
<i>“prince’s daughter” 7:1</i>	<i>“We are under no obligation to take it literally” p205</i>

If God were referencing Solomon, what language would appear?

Making the Metaphors Meaningful



“I liken you, my darling, to a mare among Pharaoh’s chariot horses.”
1:9

“henna... nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with every kind of incense tree, with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices.” **4:13-14**



“Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number; but my dove, my perfect one, is unique.” **6:8-9**

Let the Bible interpret itself

Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. 1 Kgs 11:2-3

Solomon fell deeply in love with multiple queens and concubines: the majority of Israel's citizens did not



“Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number; but my dove, my perfect one, is unique.” 6:8-9

Let the Bible interpret itself

[Solomon] spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. 1 Kgs 4:33

Never again were so many spices brought in as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. 1 Kgs 10:10

“henna... nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with every kind of incense tree, with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices.” 4:13-14



Solomon possessed non-native spices (cinnamon; calamus): the majority of Israel's citizens did not

Let the Bible interpret itself



“I liken you, my darling, to a mare among Pharaoh’s chariot horses.”
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*Solomon’s horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue... They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. **1 Kgs 10:28-29***

Solomon knew about Pharaoh’s chariots and horses: the majority of Israel’s citizens did not

Battle of Kadesh, 1274 BC: Hittites loosed mares in heat against Egyptian stallion-drawn chariots as a military tactic

Making the Metaphors Meaningful



1:9

1 Kgs 10:28-29



4:13-14

1 Kgs 4:33; 10:10



6:8-9

1 Kgs 11:2-3



Comments are only meaningful if uttered by one with the relevant experience: Solomon

Solomon is the male character of the Song

The Growing Harem

I now pronounce you man and 700 wives.

“Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number; but my dove, my perfect one, is unique...” **6:8-9**

- ⇒ 860 partners still to come *Dt 17:17*
- ⇒ This relationship doesn't last!
- ⇒ Solomon is foolish at this time

King & the Bride are Married

- They share houses and a bed

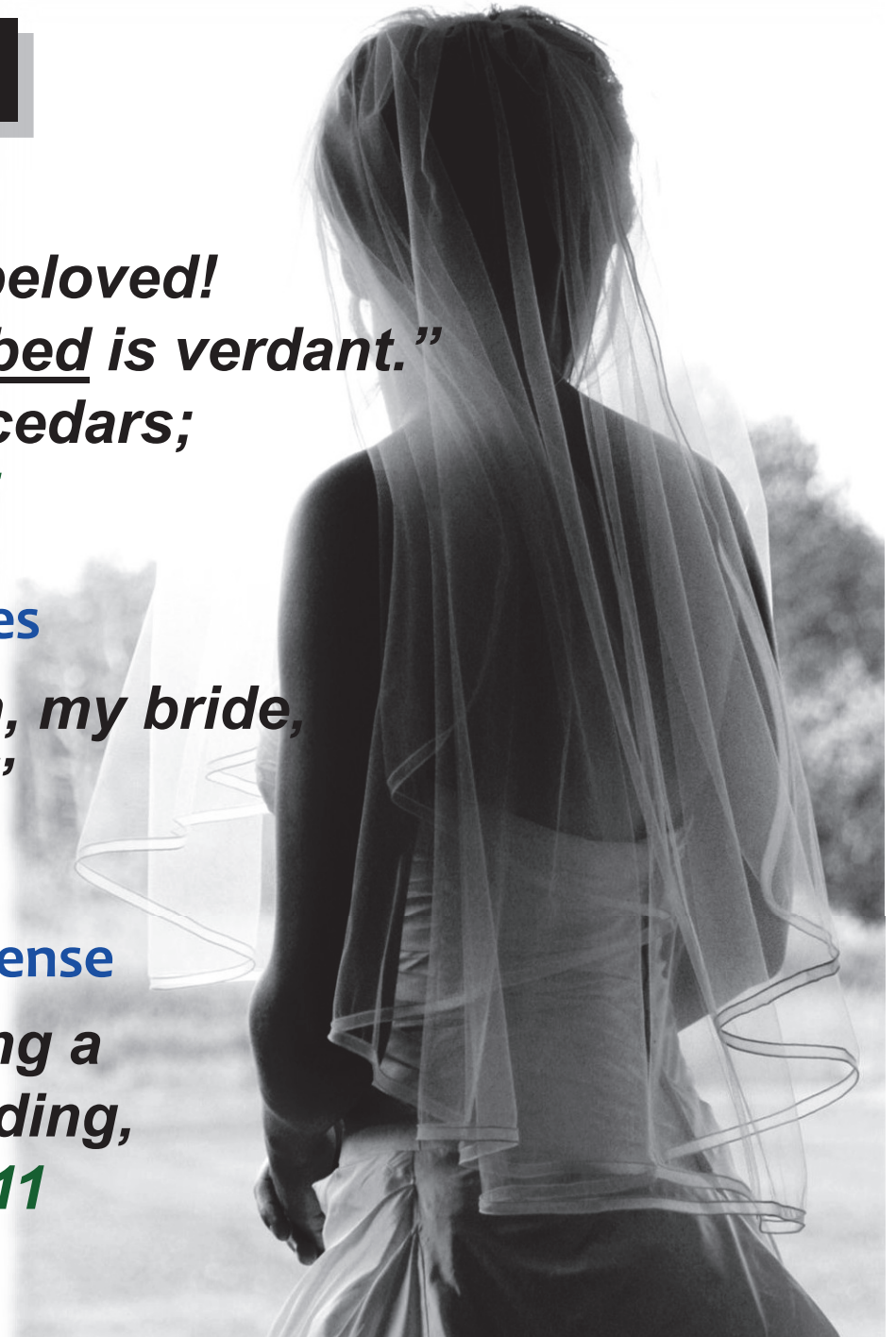
*“How handsome you are, my beloved!
Oh, how charming! And our bed is verdant.”
The beams of our houses are cedars;
our rafters are firs.” 1:16-17*

- King calls her “my bride” 6 times

*“Come with me from Lebanon, my bride,
come with me from Lebanon.”
4:8; also 4:9,10,11,12; 5:1*

- Wedding is mentioned in past tense

*“Look on King Solomon wearing a
crown... on the day of his wedding,
the day his heart rejoiced.” 3:11*



King & the Bride are Married

Modern commentators believe the couple are unmarried because of their separate domiciles; arguing grooms don't live apart from brides *e.g. Gledhill p39; Murphy p263*

Except for Solomon!

Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the City of David to the palace he had built for her, for he said, "My wife must not live in the palace of David king of Israel, because the places the ark of the Lord has entered are holy." **2 Chr 8:11**



Female Character: Lebanese Bride

*“Come with me from Lebanon, my bride,
come with me from Lebanon.” 4:8
& 4:11; 4:15; 7:4*

**The Bride is Foreign:
not a Daughter of Jerusalem
(Shulammite)**

**She is presented in counterpoint
to the “Daughters of Jerusalem”**

*“If only you were to me like a brother...
Then, if I found you outside... I would kiss
you, and no one would despise me” 8:1*

There is tension because of her different nationality, different God

Solomon's Spiritual Collapse

King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done. 1 Kgs 11:1-6

Terrors in the Night

**“Sixty queens there
may be...” 6:8**

**“Look! It is Solomon’s
carriage, escorted by
sixty warriors...
prepared for the
terrors of the night.”**

3:7-8



**Spiritually, the “terrors of the night”
were never outside Solomon’s own bed**

**“for love is as strong as death,
its jealousy unyielding as the grave.”**

8:6

Repeated emphasis that the love will be deadly



Proverbs 7

*Then out came a woman to meet him,
dressed like a prostitute and with
crafty intent.*

*(She is unruly and defiant,
her feet never stay at home;
now in the street, now in the squares,
at every corner she lurks)...*

*I have covered my bed
with colored linens from Egypt.
I have perfumed my bed
with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.
Come, let's drink deeply of love till
morning; let's enjoy ourselves with
love! My husband is not at home; he
has gone on a long journey.*

Prov 7:10-12,16-19



The Bride

*“All night long on my
bed I looked for the
one my heart loves; I
looked for him but did
not find him. I will get
up now and go about
the city, through its
streets and squares...”*

3:1-2

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Prov 7:10-12,16-19



The Bride

*“And our bed is verdant.
...My beloved has gone
down to his garden, to the
beds of spices, to browse
in the gardens” 1:16, 6:2*

*“henna... nard and
saffron, calamus and
cinnamon... with myrrh
and aloes.” 4:13-14*

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Prov 7:10-12,16-19



The Bride

*“Until the day breaks and
the shadows flee, I will go
to the mountain of myrrh
and to the hill of incense”
4:6*

The Godless World

No mention of God in the Song

Oaths sworn in the name of the highest authority (c.f. *Heb 6:13*)

“I adiure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.” 2:7

“Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle..” 8:14

Nothing to swear by but the animals / himself

A satellite map of the region around Jerusalem and En Gedi. The Dead Sea is visible in the center, with En Gedi marked by a yellow star. Jerusalem is marked by a yellow star in the upper left. The terrain is arid and rocky, with some greenery near the water.

Jerusalem



Bride: *“My lover is to me a cluster of henna blossoms from the vineyards of En Gedi.”* **1:14**

Life giving water flows into the Dead Sea at En Gedi

En Gedi



A suggestion she may be deadly to him

En Gedi: Where Man of God was in mortal peril **1 Sam 24; 2 Chr 20:1-4**

Song of Songs' Vineyards beautiful, but perilous to the Man of God

The Veil [ra-diyd]

*they took away my cloak, [Heb: ra-diyd]
those watchmen of the walls! 5:7*

***Sole* Biblical appearance: garment worn by prostitute Judah**



The Lord says, “The women of Zion are haughty... flirting with their eyes... strutting along with swaying hips... In that day the Lord will snatch away their finery: the bangles and headbands... and mirrors, and the linen garments and tiaras and shawls [Heb: ra-diyd].” Isa 3:16-23

=> Bride is represented as sexually enticing; but in a dangerous context

Mandrakes at her Door

*The mandrakes send out their fragrance,
and at our door is every delicacy 7:13*

Hebrew: duda'im; (c.f. dodi,
lovmaking) believed aphrodisiac



***Sole* Biblical appearance: Leah “buys”
a night with Jacob with her mandrakes**



*So when Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. “You must sleep with me,” she said. “I have hired you with my son’s mandrakes.” So he slept with her that night. **Gen 30:16***

=> Bride is represented as sexually enticing; but dangerous

The Predatory Desire

“I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me.” 7:10

Heb: Tashuwqah: desire, of man for woman, or beast to devour

7:10 reverses Gen 3:16

“If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.” Gen 4:6-7

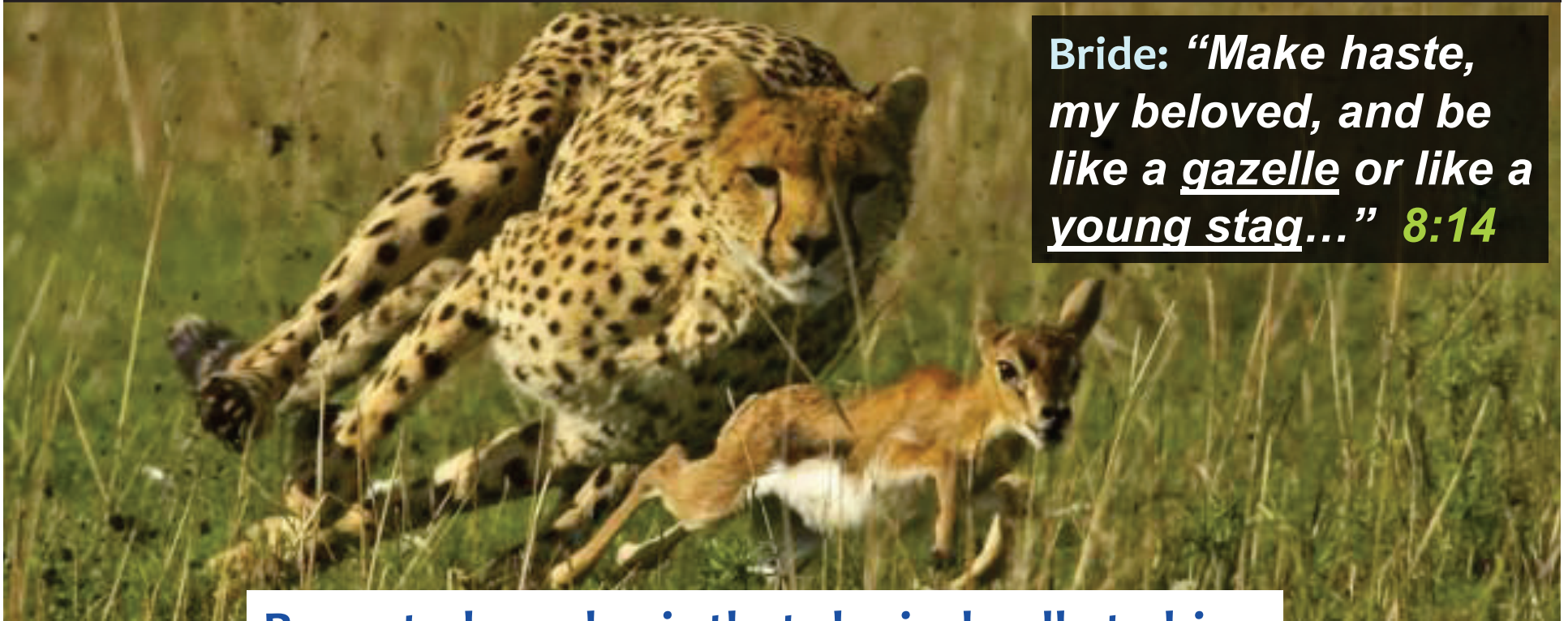
“I will greatly increase your pains in child-bearing... Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” Gen 3:16

Predator and Prey

Solomon: *“Come with me from Lebanon, my bride... from the lions’ dens and the mountain haunts of leopards.”* 4:8



Bride: *“Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag...”* 8:14



Repeated emphasis that she is deadly to him



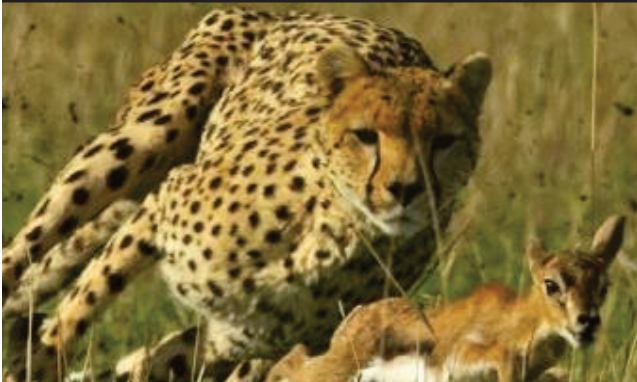
En Gedi



Egyptian mare



60 wrs for 60 qns



Leopard & gazelle



'Ra-diyd' shawl



Proverbs 7 girl



Mandrakes



'Tashuwqah' desire



A Love like Death

Subtle infusions of deadly concepts

Spiritual Immigration: Israel to Lebanon

Solomon to the Bride:

“Your neck is like the tower of David, built with elegance” 4:4

The Bride to Solomon:

“His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as its cedars.” 5:15

Solomon to the Bride:

“Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon looking toward Damascus.” 7:4

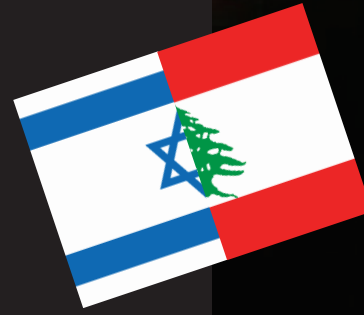
He recognizes a new beauty: Lebanon, not Israel (c.f. *Gen 1:26*)

“You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.”
1 Kings 11:2

Subtle allusion of his yielding; her maintaining



LIFE LESSONS



- Love can be intense enough to replace God if faith is weak
- Even love which is pure & feels right can be fatal if it displaces God

How could love ever cost me my faith?
If I believe “truth,” won’t truth beat error?

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_0^{2\pi/5} \int_0^a \frac{ar}{\sqrt{a^2-r^2}} dr d\phi \\ &= a \int_0^{2\pi/5} \int_0^a \frac{r}{\sqrt{a^2-r^2}} dr d\phi \\ &= a \int_0^{2\pi/5} [-\sqrt{a^2-r^2}]_0^a d\phi \\ &= a \int_0^{2\pi/5} [(-\sqrt{0}) - (-\sqrt{a^2})] d\phi \\ &= a \int_0^{2\pi/5} [\sqrt{a^2}] d\phi = a \int_0^{2\pi/5} a d\phi \\ &= a^2 \int_0^{2\pi/5} d\phi = a^2 \frac{2\pi}{5} \end{aligned}$$

⇒ We’re deceiving ourselves if we think we always value the quest for truth more than celebration of pleasure

