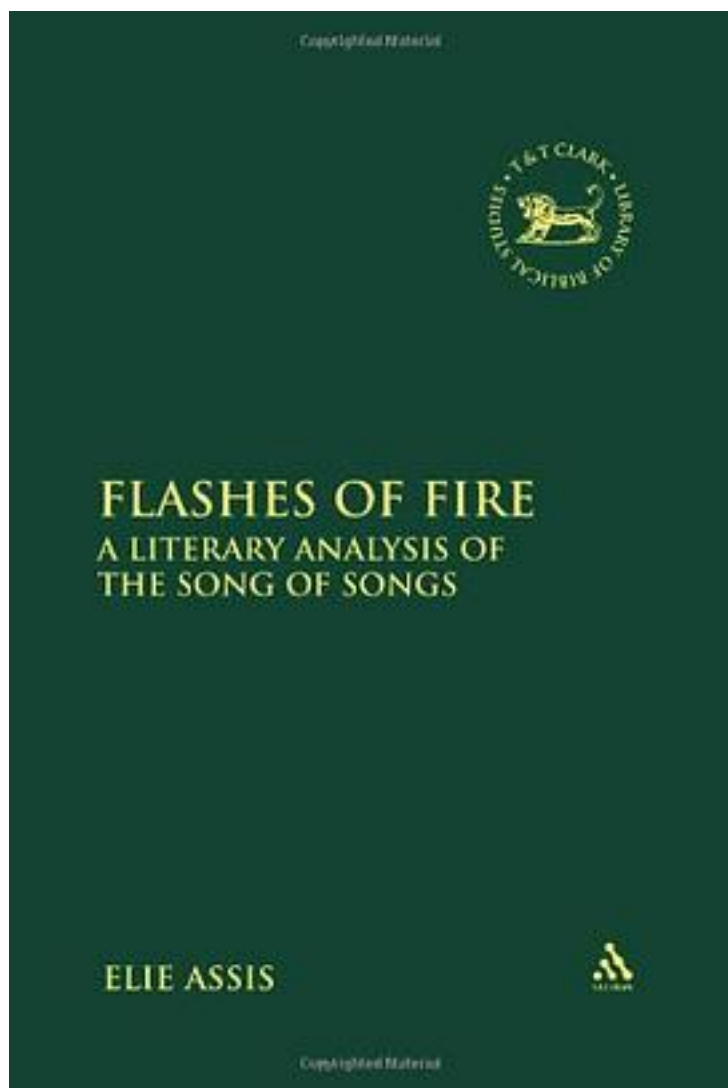


Flashes of Fire



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This literary analysis of the "Song of Songs" employs the methods of New Criticism. Each analysis aims to uncover the messages conveyed by the poems, the inner world of the characters. The analysis brings to the fore the highly sophisticated and the original creativity of the love poetry of the "Song of Songs". In the introduction, the question is posed as to whether the "Song of Songs" is an anthology or one literary whole. After discussing the strengths and weakness of the various approaches, the author proposes a novel structure for the Book predicated on the various genres of the love poems. Assis discerns poems of physical description, poems of adoration, and poems of yearning. In addition, he discerns what he takes to be a previously unrecognized genre, poems of rendezvous - a new structure which is based on a psychological understanding of passionate love is now discovered. One of the undisputed dominant features of passionate love is the longing for union with the beloved. Based on this premise, the book is divided into five sections, each of which ends with an attempt to unite or in a union. The structure of the book reflects an emotional and inner development in the psyche of the lovers and in the relationship between them. Throughout the book the interrelationships between the various genres of the love poems, and the development of the characters is spelled out. A critical feature of this reading is that the most intimate union of the lovers occurs in the middle of the book while the book ends with their separation, leaving the reader with a thirst for something more. Assis posits that this ending signifies that true love is infinite, and can never be fully realized. The essence of true love is in the yearning not in the consummation. Over the last 30 years this pioneering series has established an unrivaled reputation for cutting-edge international scholarship in Biblical Studies and has attracted leading authors and editors in the field. The series takes many original and creative approaches to its subjects, including innovative work from historical and theological perspectives, social-scientific and literary theory, and more recent developments in cultural studies and reception history.

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