Preface, Dedication, and Acknowledgments

This book is a revision of my 2011 dissertation and represents the support and guidance of many people. The idea for the project grew out of discussions with Richard S. Hess (Denver Seminary) as I was completing my training in Akkadian and exploring Ph.D. programs. I am thankful for his continuous encouragement and training, which helped to make this project a reality. In addition, I am obliged to him for acting as cosupervisor, spending numerous hours reviewing the material at various stages. Gordon Wenham (Trinity College, University of Bristol), who was also a cosupervisor, made observations that helped to move the writing from research to scholarship. I am grateful that he shared not only his vast knowledge but also his time, home, family, and gardens. I hope to emulate his gracious character with students in the future. My sincere desire is that all my future work will honor their training and guidance.

I also want specifically to thank my examiners for their comments and suggestions. Knut M. Heim and John Bimson (Trinity College, University of Bristol), as internal examiners furnished an insightful review, emphasizing the need for a careful analysis of ritual aspects and intrabiblical context. Similarly, I appreciate Alan Millard (University of Liverpool) and Philip Jenson (Cambridge), who as external examiners assessed the Akkadian and mentored me on a host of research topics. Their comments and guidance were essential to the research that culminated in this book.

I thank my wife, Betsy, and daughter, Lindsey, for believing in me without reservation. They sacrificed time, energy, money, and emotional support so I could pursue a lifelong dream. Because of their unselfishness, this book is ready for publication and is dedicated to them. My love and appreciation for them are beyond measure.