

Preface and Acknowledgments

This study has been long in the making and in publication. The basic arguments of Chapters 2 and 3 were laid out in 1998 in a paper titled “*Sacred Prostitution: Modern Coinage and Conception*,” and presented at the 2000 IOSOT Congress in Cape Town under the title “‘*Sacred Prostitution*’: In Search of Origins.” The first draft of Chapter 1 was completed in July of that year, reaching its “final” in October 2002. And a foundational study for the exegetical arguments of Chapter 6 was presented at the 1995 IOSOT Congress in Cambridge.¹ But other projects intervened, in particular studies on Old Testament theology,² theological anthropology,³ and women’s religious lives in ancient Israel.⁴ Nevertheless, Chapter 2 was completed

1. “The End of the Male Cult Prostitute: A Literary-Historical and Sociological Analysis of Hebrew *qādēš/qēdēšim*,” in *Congress Volume: Cambridge, 1995* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 66; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 33–80. Earlier attention was given to the critical text of Hos 4:14 in the article “‘To Play the Harlot’: An Inquiry into an Old Testament Metaphor,” in *Gender and Difference* (ed. Peggy L. Day; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 75–94, although the focus in that article was on the language of “whoring” (*z-n-h*), and my analysis of the literary history of the periscope changed as I worked on the present volume.

2. An invitation to contribute to the “Biblische Theologie” colloquium of the Gerhard von Rad centennial symposium (Heidelberg, 2001) provided the stimulus for “Old Testament Theology and the God of the Fathers: Reflections on Biblical Theology from a North American Feminist Perspective,” published in *Altes Testament und Moderne*, Vol 14: *Biblische Theologie* (ed. B. Janowski, M. Welker, and P. Hanson; Münster/London: LIT, 2005), 69–107.

3. Exemplified in “Theological Anthropology in the Hebrew Bible,” in *Companion to the Hebrew Bible* (ed. L. G. Perdue; Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) 258–75.

4. Seen in “The Place of Women in the Israelite Cultus” (in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* [ed. P. D. Miller et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987] 397–419; reprinted in Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997] 81–102); “Women’s Religion in Ancient Israel” (in *Women’s Earliest Records: From Ancient Egypt and Western Asia* [ed. Barbara Lesko; Brown University Judaic Studies 166; Scholars Press, 1989] 283–98); and “Israelite Religion and the Faith of Israel’s Daughters: Reflections on Gender and Religious Definition” (in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman*

in 2003 and Chapter 3 in 2006. The texts from classical antiquity that had been the focus of my Cape Town paper were examined more closely and contextually in Chapter 4, reaching their final form in 2009. And the exegetical treatment of the biblical texts, the foundation of the study from the beginning, was updated in Chapter 6, completed in 2010.

What remained “preliminary” was the analysis of the Akkadian *qadištu* texts (Chapter 5, section I), which I had recognized as critical when I began to focus my research on women’s religious lives in 1987. A sabbatical as Research Associate in the Women Studies in Religion Program at Harvard Divinity School in 1989–90 provided me the opportunity to examine the *qadištu* citations of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* with the help of Kathryn Slanski, graduate assistant at the time in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures. Slanski’s aid was indispensable in helping me locate texts, providing preliminary translations of untranslated portions, and introducing me to the Sumerian in which the Old Babylonian legal and economic texts were written.⁵ A further contribution of the program was acquaintanceship with Joan Goodnick Westenholz, Research Associate in 1987–88, who supplied me with a prepublication draft of her article, “Tamar, *qēdēšā*, *qadištu*, and *Sacred Prostitution* in Mesopotamia.”⁶

Completing the study of the Akkadian *qadištu* texts proved difficult after I returned to teaching at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, as I had no colleagues trained in Akkadian and could find no Assyriologist willing to read my work. But using available translations, though dated and partial, I was able to arrive at a picture of the *qadištu* in ancient Mesopotamia, in a variety of contexts over a millennium of time, that forms the essential content of Chapter 5, section I. With the Ugaritic material of Chapter 5, section II completing the study, a “final” draft was submitted to Eisenbrauns editor Jim Eisenbrauns in late fall of 2011, with the assurance of an initial response within a month. A year passed with the manuscript unread, a victim of staff changes at the press.

Discouraged, I considered salvaging the work by creating a shorter, more popular edition for a general audience with a different publisher. But the unique contribution of this study was the presentation, for the first time, of *all* of the relevant extrabiblical texts, in their contexts—not just selections and snippets. I wanted to make the full breadth of the evidence available, to scholars versed in the ancient languages, and to readers without such expertise. With the encouragement of my

K. Gottwald on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday [ed. D. Jobling et al.; Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 1991] 97–108; 311–17; reprinted in Bird, *Missing Persons*, 103–20).

5. She also helped me explore Sumerian *nu-gig*, which provided the logogram for Akkadian *qadištu* and designated a class of women attached to certain temples in ancient Sumer. I was further aided in this inquiry by Professor Piotr Steinkeller, who graciously read and commented on my first attempts to interpret the distinct uses of the term as applied to human and divine subjects.

6. Published in *HTR* 82 (1989) 245–65.

Princeton colleague Katharine Sakenfeld I tried once again to find an Assyriologist willing to bring the Akkadian (and Sumerian) texts into uniform style and update them with references to the latest editions. And this time I succeeded, through the mediation of Sakenfeld's Hopkins teaching assistant who pointed me to a fellow Hopkins student, Anna Glenn. Glenn's collaboration has been indispensable in providing electronic copies of the texts in their latest editions and references to recent commentary as well as standardizing the presentation of the texts and the translations. Through the miracle of the internet we have "conversed" from Evanston, Baltimore, and Bern. And while the final interpretation of the texts remains my own, it has profited immeasurably from this interchange.

Though the publication of the present volume was delayed somewhat by the acquisition of the Eisenbrauns publishing house by Penn State University Press⁷—I remain grateful to Jim Eisenbrauns for honoring his commitment to see my work published—I am hopeful, nevertheless, that the fruit of my labors over many years will at last be available to a wider audience. And I am grateful for the many colleagues who responded over those years with interest and encouragement to portions of the work presented in professional meetings and academic institutions. I look forward now to renewed engagement with a biblical figure who deserves to be known by her given name, *qedēšah*.

7. This latest delay has allowed me to insert references to Mayer Gruber's commentary on Hosea (*Hosea: A Textual Commentary* [LHBOTS 653; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017]), which appeared after my manuscript was already with the publisher.

