## **Acknowledgments**

This book is the fruit of much collaboration, and while many people could be mentioned, the following have played especially key roles in producing this monograph:

My parents, Frederick and Carol Kimmel, who taught me not only essential skills, like how to read and write, but also inculcated and modeled a strong work ethic, commitment to excellence, and hopeful reliance upon some of the otherworldly beings at the heart of this project. Moreover, they have supported me in critical, loving, and unwavering ways throughout my life.

My wife, Shoko Mekata, for her faithful companionship, delightful presence, and remarkable penchant for raising perspectives and possibilities which I had never previously considered.

My brother, Nicholas Kimmel, for his irrepressibly good humor, godly example, and invaluable friendship.

My doctoral advisor, Giovanni Bazzana, for being perhaps the most upbeat person I know. As a student, it makes all the difference in the world to feel warmth and acceptance from one's advisor. Giovanni's ability to pair this warmth with incisive intellectual acumen is a skill very rarely found.

The other members of my dissertation committee, including Laura Nasrallah, who has faithfully supported and encouraged this project from its inception in 2018 onwards; David Eckel, who has offered very helpful input on this project's Tibetan sections and whose friendship both Shoko and I cherish; and, last but certainly not least, Francis X. Clooney, SJ, who has graciously served as a deeply wise mentor and example to me over the past decade. Through dozens of conversations—and even more so through his living example of kindness, generosity, humility, wisdom, and integrity—Frank has helped me navigate some difficult transitions, step into my sense of vocational calling, and begin to cultivate the life of a priest and a scholar.

Numerous friends and colleagues who each contributed to this project through helpful conversations and/or moral support—namely: Garrett Yates, Kristian Kohler, Isaac Weaver, Quinn Cannington, Ryan Gregg, Jon-Paul Lapeña, Todd Brown, Luan Ribeiro, Chance Bonar, Erik Nordbye, Daniel Frim, Angela Kim Harkins, Jeffery Jordan, Yonder Gillihan, Matthew Vale, Penghao Sun, Lobsang Shastri, Kimberley Patton, Giovanna Parmigiani, Leonard van der Kuijp, Janet Gyatso, Karen King, Andrew Jacobs, Michael Puett, and Charles Stang. Special mention should be made here of Penghao Sun, who generously dialogued with me for many hours as I worked on translating the Tibetan passages of this project.

The members of colloquia at Harvard and Boston College, including Harvard's "New Testament and Early Christianity" Dissertation Seminar and "Comparative Studies Colloquium," and Boston College's "Bible Area Colloquium" and "Comparative Theology Colloquium."

The team at De Gruyter, especially Aaron Sanborn-Overby and *Ekstasis* founding editor Jack Levison, for their eagerness to embrace this project, their remarkably generous support, and their efficient and incisive guidance in bringing it to fruition. Many thanks as well to Reed Carlson for connecting me with this wonderful team, and also to the anonymous peer reviewer whose excellent and insightful feedback greatly enhanced the final version of this work.

Staff at the following journals, publishers, and institutions who kindly granted permission for the use of certain images or rewritten sections of previously published articles: the British Museum, Oxford University Press, the University of Chicago Press, the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *Biblical Interpretation*, and the *Journal of Interreligious Studies*.

All of these individuals, and many others, have contributed to the creation of this book; for their crucial assistance, I am deeply grateful.