No Prostitute Has Been Here:

A Reevaluation of Hosea 4:13-14

By

Karin R. Shrofel

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Religious Studies
University of Winnipeg
Winnipeg, Manitoba

December, 1999

Canada

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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Abstract

In this thesis, I present the major points of contention with traditional biblical scholars' assumption that the Hebrew *qĕdēšôt* (Hosea 4:13-14) were cult prostitutes. First, in a word study of the Hebrew root *qdš*, I demonstrate that its range of meanings in no way includes sexual activity. Second, by reviewing extra biblical ANE texts in which cognate terms for *qĕdēšôt* occur, I demonstrate that there is no unambiguous evidence supporting the notion of institutionalized sex cults. Third, I argue that ancient Greek sources, which purport to describe sexual rites among ANE peoples, are too rhetorical to be regarded as historically accurate accounts.

The mistaken notion of ANE cult prostitution arises out of scholars' failure to recognize texts such as Hosea 4:13-14 as primarily polemical in intent. Such rhetorical texts were designed to denigrate Israel's rivals, and *not* to offer an accurate portrayal of Canaanite religious activity. Furthermore, traditional scholars, and even certain critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis, have not understood Hosea's sexual language of *znh* and *n'p* as exclusively metaphorical. Hosea adopted the metaphor COVENANT IS MARRIAGE, casting Yahweh as a husband and Israel as an adulterous wife, to effectively convey to his male audience the gravity of breach of covenant, and *not* because the sexual language identified the nature of the apostate religious activity.

Reading the sexual language of Hosea 4:13-14 as an exclusively metaphorical description of apostate religious activity, I maintain that the *qĕdēšôt* were not cult prostitutes. Rather, on the basis of both the connection made between sacrifice and the *qĕdēšôt* in Hosea 4:13-14 and the pairing of *qĕdēšôt*'s cognates with sacrificial activity in the extra biblical material, I propose that the *qĕdēšôt* were official assistants to priests in Canaanite-styled sacrificial rites. These rites were condemned by conservative Yahwists such as Hosea, but were not necessarily, nor even likely, sexual in nature.

INTRODUCTION

HOSEA 4:13-14 AND THE CULT PROSTITUTION HYPOTHESIS

I have a *rîb* with modern biblical scholars in their treatment of the Hebrew *qĕdēšôt*. There is a long tradition of rendering *qĕdēšôt*, found in this form in Hosea 4:14 alone, as "cult prostitutes." It is further assumed on the basis of both this passage and on the sexual language employed in the book of Hosea, particularly in the first four chapters, that a "Canaanite-styled" fertility cult is the primary target of Hosea's invective. The related terms *qĕdēšâ* (feminine singular form - Gen 38:21; Deut 23:17), *qādeš* (masculine singular form - 1 Kings 14:24; Deut 23:18), and *qĕdēšîm* (masculine plural form - 1 Kings 15:12; 2 Kings 23:7; Job 36:14) are also translated as female and male cult prostitute(s). However, the particular occurrence of *qĕdēšôt* in Hosea 4:13-14, surrounded as it is by sexual imagery and cultic language of sacrificing, offerings, and priests, is perhaps the greatest contributor to the notion that the term designates women whose activity was both sexual and cultic. It is for this reason that I focus upon Hosea 4:13-14 in unraveling the case of the cult prostitutes.

The tradition that the *qĕdēšôt* were cult prostitutes is certainly alive and well among an overwhelming majority of modern Hosea scholars. These scholars continue to translate *qĕdēšôt* as "cult prostitutes," "temple prostitutes," "sacral prostitutes," "ritual harlots," or "sacred prostitutes," and assume that ritual sex was carried out in the eighth century B.C.E. at sacred sites in Hosea's native land of Israel.[1] *Qĕdēšôt* literally means "holy

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[1]F.W. Farrar. <u>The Minor Prophets</u> (London: Nisbet and Co., n.d.) 86; W.E. Crane. "The Prophecy of Hosea," <u>Bibliotheca Sacra</u> 89 (1932) 487; Elmer A. Leslie. <u>Old Testament Religion in the Light of its Canaanite Background</u> (New York: Abingdon, 1936) 174-175; Rolland Emerson Wolfe, <u>Meet Amos and Hosea</u> (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945) 94; Abraham J. Heschel. <u>The Prophets</u> (New York: Harper and Row, 1962) 45; J.B. Phillips. <u>Four Prophets: Amos, Hosea, The First Isaiah, Micah</u> (London: Geoffrey

women." However, traditional scholars' notion of an alleged Canaanite sex-cult that beguiled Israel away from acceptable forms of Yahweh worship is firmly entrenched. According to these scholars, the "holy women" who are named in Hosea's scathing invective against Canaanite religion and its hold upon the imagination of Israel, must indeed have been holy harlots.

In recent years, some biblical scholars have begun to question the claims of traditional scholarship about the *qĕdēśôt* and the cultic activity in which they allegedly participated.[2] These critics of the traditional school have identified several crucial points

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Bles. 1963) 35; Jared J. Jackson, "Yahweh v. Cohen et al.: God's Lawsuit with Priest and People - Hosea 4," Pittsburgh Perspective 7 (1966) 31; James M. Ward. Hosea: A Theological Commentary (New York: Harper and Row. 1966) 76; Walter Brueggemann, Tradition For Crisis: A Study in Hosea (Richmond: John Knox. 1968) 49; James Luther Mays, Hosea: A Commentary (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969) 72; J.F.Craghan. "The Book of Hosea: A Survey of Recent Literature on the First of the Minor Prophets," Biblical Theology Bulletin 1 (1971) 83-84; Henry McKeating. The Books of Amos, Hosea, and Micah (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1971) 99; Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Cultic Prostitution: A Case Study in Cultural Diffusion," in Harry A. Hoffner, Jr. (ed.). Orient And Occident (Neukirchener : Verlag Butzon & Bercekr Kevelaer, 1973) 218; Hans Walter Wolff. Hosea (Herm; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) 72; G.W. Anderson, "Hosea and Yahweh: God's Love Story," Review and Expositor 72 (1975) 430; John Olen Strange. "The Broken Covenant: Bankrupt Religion (Hosea 4-6)," Review and Expositor 72 (1975) 441; Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB 24; Garden City: Doubleday and Co.. 1980) 343; Karl A. Plank. "The Scarred Countenance: Inconstancy in the Book of Hosea," Judaism 32 (1983) 346; Harold Fisch. "Hosea: A Poetics of Violence," Poetry With a Purpose (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988) 148; James Limburg, Hosea-Micah (Atlanta: John Knox. 1988) 23; H.D.Beeby, Grace Abounding: A Commentary on the Book of Hosea (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. 1989) 2; Michael Lee Catlett, Reversal in the Book of Hosea: A Literary Analysis (Unpublished Ph.D dissertation. Emory University. Ann Arbor: UMI. 1988) 218; David Allan Hubbard, Hosea (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press. 1989) 106; Douglas Stuart, Hosea-Jonah (Dallas: Word Publishers, 1989) 21; Lloyd J. Ogilvie. The Communicator's Commentary: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah (Dallas: Word Books. 1990) 79; G.I. Davies. Hosea (New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992) 126; Thomas Edward McComiskey, The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. 1992) 65; William D. Whitt. "The Divorce of Yahweh and Asherah in Hos 2:4-7:12ff." Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament 6:1 (1992) 57; Joel F. Drinkard, "Religious Practices Reflected in the Book of Hosea," Review and Expositor 90 (1993) 213.

[2] In this thesis, I build on the work of those who have challenged the cult prostitution hypothesis. (See Eugene Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution in the Ancient Near East? A Reassessment," Biblical Theology Bulletin 6 [1976] 225-236; Stephen Hooks, Sacred Prostitution in Israel and the Ancient Near East [Unpublished Ph.D dissertation. Jewish Institute of Religion, 1985]; Mayer I. Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēśâ* and Her Canaanite and Akkadian Cognates," UF 18 [1986] 133-147; Robert A. Oden Jr.. The Bible Without Theology: The Theological Tradition and Alternatives To It [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987] 131-153; Christina Bucher, The Origin and Meaning of ZNH Terminology in the Book of Hosea [Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, Ann Arbor: UMI, 1988]; Elaine J. Adler, The Background

which undermine the cult prostitution hypothesis. One such point of contention is the absence of concrete evidence from Canaanite or other ancient Near Eastern[3] texts, artifacts, etc. that might substantiate the historicity of Canaanite/ANE cult prostitution.[4] Critics also expose ancient Greek works that describe sexual rites among the ANE peoples, often drawn upon by traditional scholars, as dubious sources for historical reconstruction.[5] Scholars who critique the cult prostitution hypothesis also draw attention to the polemical nature of the biblical texts that allegedly describe Canaanite-styled religious acts. They argue that since these texts were written as anti-Canaanite rhetoric, their capacity to serve as objective descriptions of Canaanite cultic activities is greatly diminished.[6] Scholars from this group who posit an alternative role for the *qĕdēšôt* suggest that these women may have been involved in some sort of sexual activity, likely common prostitution, but that they were not practitioners of sexual rituals sanctioned by the cult.[7]

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for the Metaphor of Covenant as Marriage in the Hebrew Bible [Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Berkeley, 1989]; Phyllis Bird, "'To Play the Harlot': An Inquiry Into an Old Testament Metaphor," in Peggy L. Day [ed.], Gender and Difference In Ancient Israel [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989] 75-94; Jo Ann Hackett, "Can a Sexist Model Liberate Us? Ancient Near Eastern 'Fertility' Godesses," JFSR 5 [1989] 65-76; Joan Goodnick Westenholz, "Tamar, *Qĕdēšâ, Qadištu*, and Sacred Prostitution in Mesopotamia," Harvard Theological Review 82 [1989] 245-265; Rut Tornkvist, The Use and Abuse of Female Sexual Imagery in the Book of Hosea: A Feminist Critical Approach to Hos 1-3 [Uppsala: Rut Tornkvist, 1998]). The reader should note that it is my contention that, though these scholars have succeeded in alerting a handful of biblical scholars to their uncritical acceptance of the historicity of "cult prostitution," I am not satisfied by the common conclusion that though the *qĕdēšôt* were not *cultic* prostitutes, they were most likely *common* prostitutes. I will critique this conclusion in Chapter 6.

[3] Hereafter ANE.

[4] See Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution," 227-230; Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 10-45; Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 137-148; Oden, "Religious Identity," 147-152; Bucher, ZNH, 29-73; Adler, Covenant, 164-199; Bird, "Play the Harlot," 76; Westenholz, "Tamar," 249-263.

[5] Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution," 225-226; Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 32-36 and 40-41; Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 137; Oden, "Religious Identity," 140-147; Bucher, ZNH, 59-62; Adler, Covenant, 178-185; Westenholz, "Tamar," 261-263.

[6] Oden, "Religious Identity," 131-135; Bird, "Play the Harlot," 86-89.

[7] See Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 168; Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 134; Adler, Covenant, 228.

The work of biblical scholars who have critiqued the cult prostitution hypothesis has had a marginal impact upon recent Hosea scholarship. The most significant effect is that a handful of biblical scholars, familiar with this new school which first emerged in the seventies, tend to be more tentative in positing the nature of the role of the *qĕdēšôt*.[8] However, it would seem that the majority of Hosea scholars publishing in the eighties and nineties are either unfamiliar with or choose to ignore the critique of the deeply entrenched notion that the Canaanites engaged in a sex cult that was subsequently adopted by the Israelites. For instance, Rick Johnson[9] simultaneously acknowledges that some scholars have questioned the notion that sexual intercourse was incorporated into Israel's worship and nevertheless trivializes the import this critique brings to traditional understanding of the Canaanite cult and the role of women therein, stating: "Whatever happened in the cult, Hosea considered worship of anyone besides Yahweh to be harlotry."[10] Throughout his article, he discusses the nature of Israel's apostasy in the familiar terms of fertility cult and cultic sexual intercourse.[11] Johnson's work and the relatively recent work of other commentators on Hosea faithfully bear the age-old tradition that the *qĕdēšôt* were cultic prostitutes. In so doing, modern scholars either

[8]William Boshoff's article "Sexual Encounters of a Different Kind: Hosea 1:2 as Foreplay to the Message of the Book of Hosea," (Religion and Theology 1[1994] 329-339) is a good example of scholarship which incorporates the work of critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis.
[9]"Hosea 4-10: Pictures at an Exhibition," Southwestern Journal of Theology 36 (1993) 20-26.
[10]Johnson, "Hosea," 21.
[11]Johnson, "Hosea," 22.

make no reference to supporting evidence for the *qĕdēšôt*'s identity,[12] or present evidence of a highly speculative or subjective character.[13]

Building upon the critique of the cult prostitution hypothesis,[14] it is the goal of my thesis to demonstrate that the *qĕdēšôt* were female cult functionaries whose duties were likely not of a sexual nature at all. Beyond critiquing the traditional understanding of the *qĕdēšôt*, I will also demonstrate that those who have done so before me have not gone far enough in their reassessment of the roles of these women.

I will proceed as follows. In Chapter One, I will discuss traditional scholars' understanding of the way in which Hosea's sexual metaphorical language in Hosea 1-4, which casts Israel as Yahweh's adulterous wife, functions both figuratively in its representation of Israel's religious apostasy and literally in its reference to the *sexual nature* of Israel's apostasy. I will also present the influential translations and interpretations of Hosea 4:13-14 by Hans Walter Wolff, James Luther Mays, and Frances Andersen and David Noel Freedman. This chapter is mainly expository; it will not be the place for the systematic evaluation of the presuppositions and evidence to which modern scholars appeal in their positing of a sexual role for the *qĕdēšôt*.

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[12] Here I refer to scholars who do not argue the identity of the *qĕdēšôt* since the position that these women were cult prostitutes is considered to be beyond rebuttal. As a matter of near scholarly consensus, the identification of the *qĕdēšôt* as cult prostitutes without supporting evidence is ubiquitous.

[13] See for instance Mays (Hosea, 75 n.b), Wolff (Hosea, 88 n.132), and Davies (Hosea, 121), who make use of ANE texts in which cognate terms for Hebrew *qĕdēšôt* occur as evidence for ANE cult prostitution. I will demonstrate in Chapter Three that these ANE texts far from conclusively identify the practice of sexual cultic rites among ancient Israel's neighbors. I include in this list of scholars who appeal to dubious evidence in supporting the notion that the *qĕdēšôt* were cult prostitutes those scholars who build their arguments explicitly upon the work of Mays and Wolff. Strange ("Broken Covenant," 441), Plank ("Scarred Countenance," 344 n.3), and Kruger ("Prophetic Imagery," 149 n.21 and 22) follow Mays' evidence for cult prostitution while Duane Priebe ("A Holy God," 127), Kruger ("Israel the Harlot," 110), Hubbard (Hosea, 106), Fisch ("Poetry," 148), and Plank (also in "Scarred Countenance," 346 n.11) identify Wolff as a source for their reconstruction of the sexual cult activities of the *qĕdēšôt*.

[14] See scholars listed in n.2.

In Chapter Two, I will demonstrate in a study of the over 840 occurrences of the derivatives of the root *qdš* in the Hebrew Bible (which, of course, includes the term *qĕdēšôt*) that the root is in no way used to suggest sexual activity. An in-depth interpretation of the Hebrew Bible texts in which *qĕdēšôt*, *qĕdēšâ*, *qādeš*, and *qĕdēšîm* occur will be undertaken here.

In the first section of Chapter Three, I will demonstrate that nowhere in either the Ugaritic (i.e. Canaanite) or Mesopotamian sources are women unambiguously identified as cult prostitutes. I will examine the usage of the cognate terms for *qĕdēšôt* as well as other Ugaritic and Mesopotamian terms translated by traditional biblical scholars as "cult prostitutes" in their native texts. This exercise will demonstrate that there is no concrete evidence for scholars' notion that cultic sexual activity was widely practiced in the ancient Near East. In the second section, I will examine ancient Greek sources (i.e. the works of Herodotus, Strabo, and Lucian) that have been used by biblical scholars as evidence allegedly supporting the cult prostitution hypothesis. Building on the work of both critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis and classical scholars, I will argue that the ancient Greek sources are not reliable for the reconstruction of Canaanite religious practices.

In Chapter Four, I will argue that in the absence of primary evidence in the Hebrew Bible texts for the translation of *qĕdēšôt* as cult prostitutes, traditional scholars have based their translations and interpretations of Hosea 4:13-14 upon unwarranted assumptions. I will argue that the presupposition held by these scholars that the biblical authors sought to defend Israel's 'ethical' and 'historical' religion from the enticing religion of the Canaanites, which centered upon 'fertility magic' and 'myth,' constitutes

the principal reason for their misunderstanding of the historical role of the *qĕdēšôt*. I will argue that both the presupposition of a unique Israel and the valuation of the historical over the mythic and the ethical over the natural have led scholars to mistakenly understand Canaanite religion to have institutionalized prostitution.

In Chapter Five, I will argue that the nature and function of the sexual metaphorical language employed by Hosea to castigate Israelite apostates have been misunderstood. Building on the work of Julie Galambush[15] and Peggy L. Day,[16] I will argue that Hosea devised his sexual metaphor strictly for the rhetorical purpose of demonstrating the gravity of Israel's apostasy to his male audience. Hosea's intention was to invite his audience to experience Yahweh's pain, shame and anger toward the people of Israel in terms of a husband being sexually betrayed. As is evident in the deep sympathy they express for Yahweh and in their utter contempt for the adulterous wife in Hosea's metaphor, traditional male biblical scholars empathize with Yahweh according to Hosea's intent. So engrossed in the wronged husband position that Hosea invites male readers to take and in the emotions of anger and disgust that accompany it, traditional male commentators have ceased to regard the Israelites *like* whores in their worship of Baal instead of Yahweh, but rather have come to understand them as actually participating in illicit sexual activity. I will argue that this mistaken literalization of Hosea's metaphorical language fuels the assumption that the *qĕdēšôt* were not merely women who engaged in apostasy, but were cult prostitutes. Consequently, contrary to traditional biblical scholars'

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[15] Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992)
[16] "Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel 16." (forthcoming in Vetus Testamentum).

assertions, I will conclude that Hosea's sexual language cannot be used as evidence for cult prostitution among the Canaanites or apostate Israelites.

In Chapter Six, I will critique the conclusion held by the majority of critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis that though *cultic* prostitution was likely never practiced in the ancient Near East, the Hebrew term *qĕdēšâ/qĕdēšôt* is in fact used as a synonym for *zônâ* or "common prostitute." I will suggest that both the extra biblical and biblical evidence, in particular Hos 4:13-14 read without the prejudices of traditional biblical scholars, identifies the *qĕdēšôt* as cult functionaries who assisted priests in sacrificial rites.

I will conclude this thesis in Chapter Seven. Here, I will summarize my findings and demonstrate the significance of this study's conclusions for biblical scholarship, and for the reconstruction of women's history.

CHAPTER ONE

TRADITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP ON HOSEA 4:13-14

In this chapter, my purpose is to present traditional modern scholars' translations and interpretations of Hos 4:13-14 in which the single reference to the *qĕdēšôt* in the book of Hosea is recorded. I will also present scholarly discussion concerning the alleged Canaanite "sex cult," the marriage metaphor of chapters 1-3, and the figure of Hosea's wife Gomer bat-Diblaim, topics that all have direct bearing upon the perpetuation of the contention that cult prostitution was indeed practiced among the Canaanites and by apostate Israelites in Hosea's time. As I have stated in the introduction, it is my goal to systematically critique the notion that cult prostitution was in fact a historical institution by reviewing the validity of modern scholars' evidence and presuppositions for this conclusion. Guided by the conclusions of my research, I may at various junctures in this chapter allude to the tenuous nature of the evidence in a given argument. However, my goal in this chapter is mainly expository and a more thorough analysis of the evidence and presuppositions that uphold the cult prostitution hypothesis will follow in later chapters.

The Marriage Metaphor

The interpretation of the first three chapters of Hosea represents by far the most significant portion of scholarly discussion on the book as a whole. The generation of so much scholarly interest is in part due to the abundance of sexual images found in this

section.[1] According to scholars, the sexual language, especially those terms derived from the Hebrew root *znh* ("to be a harlot," "to commit fornication" [2]), provides a textual link to chapter 4,[3] and likely guided the redactor(s) in determining its place as the first chapter of the oracular section of Hosea.[4] Traditional scholars' position that the sexual language of the much-discussed chapters 1-3 has both a metaphorical function, identifying Israel's Baal cult as apostate, and a literal function, identifying the sexual activity that was a part of that apostate cult, bears directly upon our discussion of the *qĕdēšôt* in Hos 4:13-14. It is therefore worth examining scholarship on the first three chapters of Hosea prior to our investigation of the interpretation of Hos 4:13-14.

In chapters 1-3, Hosea recounts both the story of his marriage to an apparently promiscuous woman, Gomer bat-Diblaim, and then the parallel story of Yahweh's marriage to Israel, personified as a woman who betrays her husband with sexual infidelity. Early Jewish and Christian interpreters paid particular attention to the question of the historicity of Hosea's marriage, finding Yahweh's command to marry an *'ēšet zĕnûnîm*, often translated "woman of harlotry," to be disconcerting.[5] The discomforting effect of Hosea's marriage to such a woman was eased by the suggestion that the story

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[1]Though the focus of most scholars is upon the troubling concept of Yahweh commanding Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman, the "astonishing" concept of Yahweh as a sexual being (i.e. Israel's husband) also contributes to the interest in the first four books of Hosea (Wolff, Hosea, 16).

[2]Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996) 275.

[3]For example, Hubbard (Hosea , 105), commenting on Hosea 4, states: "*Harlotry* dots this section of the book and links it tightly to the theme verse (1:2) and the descriptions of Gomer/Israel as harlot in 2:2-13; 3:1-2." A similar observation is made by Wolff (Hosea, 76), who describes the term "whoredom" as a "catchword" of both Hosea 1-3 and Hosea 4. See also Stuart, Hosea, 21-23.

[4]Scholars generally concede that the book of Hosea is divided into two distinct sections. The first is chapters 1-3, which record the story of Hosea's marriage to Gomer and the parallel story of Yahweh's marriage to Israel. The second is chapters 4-14, which contain a collection of Hosea's oracles.

[5]See John L. Farthing ("Holy Harlotry: Jerome Zanchi and the Exegetical History of Gomer (Hosea 1-3)," in Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson [eds.], Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation

was actually an allegorical tale crafted by Hosea, or perhaps a symbolic dream which Hosea later recorded. Modern scholars continue to place great emphasis upon Hosea's marriage in their interpretations, but have generally resolved the debate about the unlikely pairing of Hosea and Gomer in favor of the position that the marriage actually took place. According to modern scholars, if Hosea had not married Gomer and experienced the pain of sexual betrayal, he would not have been able to so effectively represent Yahweh's anguish on account of Israel's religious apostasy.[6] This is not to say that all scholars accept Hosea's statement that Yahweh commanded him to marry an *'ešēt zěnûnîm* at face value. Several scholars contend that Gomer did not become promiscuous until after her marriage to Hosea.[7] Others suggest that Hosea learned of his wife's character after the marriage took place, and that Hosea speaks in hindsight when he declares that Yahweh commanded him to marry an *'ešēt zěnûnîm*.[8] Though some scholars offer these interpretive glosses, most modern scholars tend to accept the historicity of Hosea's marriage and the "promiscuous" person, Gomer bat-Diblaim.

The principle focus of modern scholars in their inquiry into Hosea's use of the marriage metaphor to condemn the religious practices of the people of Israel is the origin of this sexual language. Hosea is regarded by many scholars as the pioneer of this potent

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[Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. 1996] 292-312) for a survey of the issues raised and conclusions held about Hosea 1-3 by early Jewish and Christian interpreters.

[6]Brueggemann. Tradition, 108; Ogilvie, Hosea, 6.

[7]Wolfe. Meet Amos, 83; Heschel. Prophets. 52; Hubbard. Hosea, 19. For these scholars, this interpretation, besides allaying any moral conflict in Yahweh's commanding Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman, also fits Israel's covenant tradition that the marriage metaphor is thought to reflect. Israel, after all, could not have been an adulteress (an apostate) in relation to a God who was not yet "her" sovereign. When Yahweh "married" Israel (i.e. entered into covenant with Israel) "she" was not considered a "harlot." Only in turning from Yahweh to worship other gods did the nation earn this title. Likewise, when Hosea married Gomer, she had not yet become sexually promiscuous.

[8]Andersen, Hosea and Yahweh. 429; Ward, Hosea, 58.

characterization of Yahweh as the husband of Israel,[9] repeated subsequently in the prophetic literature,[10] and surviving in the Christian concept of the church as the bride of Christ.[11] But where did this idea originate? Some scholars contend that "the image should probably be credited to Hosea's remarkably creative use of language in the formulation of his message."[12] The vast majority, however, locate the origin of the sexual language in what they perceive as the highly sexualized cult of Israel's Canaanite neighbors in which Israel itself has become involved [13] and for which "she" is severely censured by the prophet.

The story of Hosea's marriage to Gomer is generally regarded as Hosea's metaphorical description of Israel's religious apostasy. Hos 1-3 recounts the unhappy story of an adulterous wife and a wronged husband. Though Hosea is called the "prophet of love,"[14] and his tale a "love story,"[15] the derivatives of *znh* ("to be a harlot," "to be promiscuous"[16]) and *n'p* ("to commit adultery"[17]), which occur throughout these chapters, are certainly not the tender words of courtship, but the harsh invective of accusation. As Gomer is accused of promiscuity, so Israel is portrayed as one who has "played the

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[9]For example, Wolff (Hosea, 16), Heschel (Prophets, 50), Ward (Hosea, 8), Craghan ("Hosea: A Survey," 92).

[10]For example, Ezekiel 16 and 23; Jeremiah 2

[11]See Revelation 19 and 21

[12]Davies, Hosea, 67; Catlett, Reversals, 215. Even though Catlett states that Hosea's and Gomer's representation of Yahweh and Israel respectively is not necessarily "dependent upon the Canaanite cult for significance," he ultimately sides with the majority of scholars who maintain that the marriage metaphor originates in the Canaanite conception of the sexual relationship that existed between the principle deity and his consort (221-222). See also Heschel (Prophets, 50), Ward (Hosea, 8), Craghan ("Hosea: A Survey," 92), Wolff (Hosea, 16).

[13]Hosea makes mention of "Baal" or "the Baals," a principle Canaanite deity, several times in chapters 1-3. This (along with the sexual language, as discussed above) characterizes the apostasy of Israel as the worship of Baal and/or the worship of Yahweh through Canaanite-styled rituals.

[14]For example, Wolfe, Meet Amos, 87.

[15]For example Heschel, Prophets, 46-47; Anderson, Hosea and Yahweh, 425.

[16]BDB, 275.

[17]BDB, 610.

whore" (2:5), and as a woman with an insatiable sexual appetite (2:7 and 13). Gomer has

preferred promiscuity to monogamy, and Israel has preferred Baal (or the Baals) to

Yahweh.

Though modern scholars agree that the imagery of marriage and adultery is employed

to *metaphorically* describe Israel's religious defection from Yahweh, they are nearly

unanimous in their contention that Hosea, in his use of the marriage metaphor, also

conveys the *nature* of Israel's religious apostasy against Yahweh. It is widely held by

scholars that the religion of the Canaanites, an agrarian people, aimed to insure the

continued fertility of their crops. Religious rituals thought to stimulate the fertility of the

land are therefore assumed to have been at the heart of Canaanite worship. A prominent

ritual, according to scholars, was the *hieros gamos* or "sacred marriage." [18] In this rite,

scholars maintain that the myth of the rising to life of Baal, the god of vegetation,

thought to die in the winter and spring and rise again in the summer, was enacted. [19] In

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[18] For example Leslie, Old Testament Religion. 178; Mays, Hosea. 25; Craghan, "Hosea: A Survey," 94; McKeating, Amos, Hosea, 98; Fisch, "Hosea: Poetry," 148; Limburg, Hosea-Micah, 23.

[19] There are two major problems with traditional scholars' interpretation of the Baal cycle (for a translation of the Ugaritic Baal cycle, see Michael Coogan, "Baal," in Stories From Ancient Canaan [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978] 75-115). First, recorded as they are on various, and sometimes fragmented tablets, the original sequence of the episodes featuring Baal is uncertain. Traditionally, scholars order the episode in which Baal dies before episodes in which he is alive, necessitating some sort of resurrection of Baal's dead body. Such a resurrection is nowhere recorded in the Baal stories. Baal's resurrection remains a scholarly theory devised to harmonize the "unpaginated" episodes (see Mark Smith, "Interpreting the Baal Cycle," UF 18 [1986] 313-319). As such, traditional biblical scholars' reading of the Baal myth is far from certain. A second problem with biblical scholars' traditional interpretation of the Baal cycle as the heart of the Canaanite cult is the uncertainty that it in fact was used in religious rituals. The tablets themselves are silent in terms of where, when, and how the Baal stories were used among the Canaanite people, and are certainly devoid of instructions for ritual use. Though the Baal stories were clearly known to the Canaanite people, it is not self-evident that the stories' events were in any way enacted. John Gray (The Canaanites [London: Thames and Hudson, 1964] 136) in discussing the Baal cycle notes that "the actual occasion and relevance of this text is one of the notorious problems of the Ras Shamra texts." The speculative nature of positing that a ritual accompanied the myth is also apparent in a statement by Helmer Ringgren (Religions of the Ancient Near East [London: S.P.C.K.] 1973, 134) who comments upon this same Canaanite myth: "The myth **must have been** expressed in rites of which the purpose was to keep [the] cycle of nature in motion" (my emphasis). Though both scholars of Canaanite religion hypothesize that the myth of the dying/rising Baal is a ritual text, their work indicates that this conclusion is speculative. Modern biblical

this myth, as scholars recount it,[20] Baal descends to the underworld and revives upon

encountering and having intercourse with his sexual mate, effecting the return of the

agricultural yield.[21] At the *hieros gamos*, the Canaanite priests had sexual intercourse

with priestesses or "sacred prostitutes" to stimulate Baal and his consort to engage in

their life-giving intercourse with one another.

Scholars regard Israel's illicit cultic activity as the participation in the Canaanite-

styled "sacred marriage," which was the very activity that inspired Hosea's use of the

marriage metaphor to convey the relationship of Yahweh to Israel. Several scholars state

that Hosea's use of this metaphor is "risky" for its application of "pagan"[22] elements to

Yahweh and his people. However, scholars also describe Hosea's use of this metaphor as

an effective tool in castigating Israel's apostasy in its participation in Canaanite-styled

mythology and rites. According to scholars, by using the Canaanite image of marriage

effecting the agricultural yield, but inserting Yahweh and Israel in the roles traditionally

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scholars who discuss the alleged sexual rituals which Hosea condemns do not give any indication of the tenuous nature of the connection between Canaanite texts and supposed rituals. Harold Fisch ("Hosea: Poetics,"148), for instance, writes: "As is well-known, at the heart of the Baal cult is the union of Baal with his sister-consort Anat: it is this *hieros gamos* that guarantees rain and fertility." James Limburg (Hosea-Micah, 23) is similarly confident in positing that the Canaanite men and women took on the roles of Baal and Anat according to this myth: "Cultic practices [of the Canaanites] were based on the notion of imitative behavior. The participant in the cult entered into a sexual relationship with a cult prostitute, thus imitating the action of Baal and his mate and helping to bring this union about."

[20] See n.18.

[21] Just as Baal's resurrection is not explicitly described in the Baal cycle tablets, neither is the mode of Baal's resurrection indicated within the stories themselves. Modern biblical scholars frequently explain that Baal was brought back to life through intercourse with his sister/consort Anat. However, Anat is not portrayed explicitly as Baal's consort in this cycle. Anat laments over the dead Baal, offers multiple sacrifices on his behalf, and avenges his death by killing Death, the son of El himself. Her compassion for Baal is described in terms of the love of a mother for her offspring, and not of a bereaved lover: "like the heart of a cow for her calf, like the heart of a ewe for her lamb, so was Anat's heart for Baal" (Coogan, Stories, 112). However, it is precisely the image of a cow that scholars have used to identify Anat as Baal's consort since Baal, earlier in the cycle, falls in love with and impregnates a heifer (108). The fact that there is no unambiguously attested sexual encounter between Anat and Baal undermines the position commonly held by biblical scholars that the Canaanites practiced ritual sexual intercourse in imitation of this event in the Baal cycle.

held by Baal and his consort, Hosea achieves two things. First, Yahweh, and not Baal, is shown to be the true provider of agricultural bounty. Second, this agricultural bounty is shown to be secured by means of Israel's covenant relationship to their God, and not through ritual enactments of divine sexual activity. Michael Lee Catlett's statement about Hosea's use of the marriage metaphor is representative of the conclusions of most commentators: [23]

> Hosea not only creatively uses the traditions and language of his own people, but appropriates the language and imagery of the Canaanite cult. The prophet uses the words of the cult as weapons against it. They become the building blocks of the fortifications against the onslaught of Baal worship. The danger in this method is that one approaches assimilation of the cult as one combats it using the language of the cult. Hosea's reinterpretation and reapplication of the imagery and language is a daring and forceful way of dealing with the intrusion of Canaanite elements into Israelite worship.

An important point for traditional scholars interpreting Hosea's use of the Canaanite "sacred marriage" imagery is that Hosea, in so doing, does not simply incorporate all that Baalism has to offer into Israel's theology. Instead, scholars maintain that Hosea engages in a process that Craghan calls "demythologizing."[24] That is, Hosea appropriates elements of Canaanite religion, but fashions them according to Yahwism, which, for most scholars, is characterized by its emphasis upon history as opposed to nature.[25] Hosea's Yahweh may have a consort, but this consort is not a fertility goddess or the land, but rather the people of Israel. In this way, Yahweh is not portrayed in a cyclic relationship of

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[22] This is not my descriptive term for the Canaanite cult, but a familiar word in the commentaries used to describe non-Israelite religion and people. See for example Heschel (Prophets, 44), Brueggemann (Tradition, 97), and Mays (Hosea, 75).

[23] Reversals, 221-222. For similar assessments of Hosea's effective appropriation of elements of the Baal cult to express Yahweh's sovereignty over Israel, see Ward, Hosea, 11; Wolff, Hosea, p. xxvi, 34; Andersen, "Hosea and Yahweh," 433; Davies, Hosea, 66-67.

[24] "Hosea: A Survey," 92.

encounter and separation with his partner, mirrored in nature by the fertile seasons and the time of the fallowness of the field. Yahweh and Israel. "married" in the making of the covenant at Sinai, were separated at Israel's initiation in her apostasy, and will be reunited at Yahweh's initiative. This story is told once, and is not meant to be repeated. As the relationship between Yahweh and his consort is *not* cyclic, it cannot be invoked by (sexual) rituals.[26] Yahweh and Israel secured a "moral bond"[27] in the covenant, and this bond is upheld in daily life, that is, in history. Loyalty to the covenant is the way the relationship is "consummated," not by way of ritual.

The distinction between Yahwism, the religion of history, and Baalism, the religion of nature is made repeatedly by scholars.[28] With great frequency, scholars also employ castigating language to describe the religion of the Canaanites which has "ensnared" the Israelites.[29] Clearly, for modern scholars, a history-centered religion is far superior to one that centers upon nature and concerns of fertility. Consider the following statements by way of illustration. John Olen Strange regards the cult of the Canaanites in which the Israelites participated as degenerate, stating dramatically : "The religious cult of the Canaanite religion with its accompanying immoralities had overtaken [the Israelites]." [30] James Luther Mays describes Israel's participation in a cult modeled upon the cult of

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[26] The commonly made distinction of modern scholars between 'historical/ethical Yahwism' and 'nature-centered/magic practicing Baalism' will be thoroughly treated in Chapter 4.

[27] Commenting upon the distinction between Yahweh's and Israel's 'sacred' marriage and hoped for reconciliation in Hosea 1-3 and the alleged "sacred marriage" ritual of the Canaanite cult, Fisch ("Hosea: A Poetics," 149) states: "We do not have seasonal repetition as in the fertility myths, but a new event, a creation."

[28] Ward. Hosea. 12.

[29] See n. 25.

[30] Because the judgment of Canaanite morality occurs so often in the work of modern scholars on Hosea, it is worthy of mention in this review of scholars' interpretation of Hosea's sexual language and its alleged referent (i.e. the Canaanite sex-cult). Throughout the course of this thesis, scholars' contempt for the Canaanites will be exposed as a prejudice that contributes to the misguided conclusion that the *qĕdēšôt* were sexual practitioners in a sex cult.

Baal as a "sinking back into the morass of the common pagan conception of man and his relation to nature."[31] Thomas Edward McComiskey calls Israel's participation in the Canaanite-styled cult a "plunge into the abyss of idolatry,"[32] while Rolland Emmerson Wolfe, discussing the alleged practice of sacred prostitution, writes that "the degenerate religion of that day, far from condemning, glorified these practices [i.e. the sexual rites] with the halo of religious sanctity."[33] Indeed, these are but a sample of the moral condemnations that commentators inflict upon the Canaanite cult. Littered throughout the commentaries are descriptions of the Canaanite cult as "lascivious," [34] "enticing,"[35] and as a "narcotic of deception"[36] and "a snare."[37] From the point of view of the commentators who judge Canaanite religion so harshly, why they contend that Hosea's alleged use of Canaanite religious imagery to form his invective against the cult is "risky" is certainly clear. For the commentators, Canaanite religion represents all that is morally reprehensible.

Gomer bat-Diblaim

Scholars' position that Hosea's marriage metaphor condemns the people of Israel for their apostate, sexual activity is bolstered by many scholars' treatment of a key character in Hosea's parallel tales of his and Yahweh's broken marriages, Hosea's own wife, Gomer bat-Diblaim. As the volumes of scholarly literature examining Hosea's marriage

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[30] "Broken Covenant," 440.
[31] Hosea, 75.
[32] Minor Prophets, 66.
[33] Meet Amos and Hosea, 94.
[34] Hubbard, Hosea, 107.
[35] Plank, "Scarred," 346.
[36] Wolff, Hosea, 99.
[37] Craghan, "Hosea: A Survey," 83.

demonstrate, traditional scholars hold an almost voyeuristic fascination with the *'ešēt zěnûnîm* whom Yahweh himself commands Hosea to marry. Scholars resolve the question of Gomer's identity, specifically, the matter of what is meant by her famous epithet *'ešēt zěnûnîm*, in various ways. However, common elements in their convictions about Gomer's identity are that a) she was literally sexually promiscuous, and b) her sexual promiscuity was related, either directly or indirectly, to the degenerate sexual activity that was taking place in Israel's Canaanite-styled cult.

Two of the most influential Hosea scholars, Hans Walter Wolff and James Luther Mays, contend that Gomer committed adultery by participating in the sexual rites of Israel's apostate cult. Wolff, on the one hand, suggests that Gomer was an initiate in a Canaanite-styled bridal rite, in which a bride-to-be consecrated her womb to a fertility goddess by having sex with a stranger before marriage.[38] According to Wolff, since Gomer was a northern Israelite woman, she had undoubtedly "surrendered [herself] to [a stranger] in the holy precincts."[39] As a consequence of her pre-marital sexual activity, she consequently earned the title *'ešēt zěnûnîm*. For Wolff, Gomer is "not an especially wicked exception [among Israelite women]; she is simply representative of her contemporaries in Israel."[40] Mays, on the other hand, followed by a contingent of scholars, declares that Gomer was a *qědēšâ*, which to him of course means "cult prostitute," though she is not identified as a *qědēšâ* in the text.[41] In fact, the only

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[38]Wolff relies on the Greek historian Herodotus' discussion of such sexual rites which he allegedly witnessed in Babylonia in the fifth century B.C.E. The reliability of Herodotus' account for the reconstruction of Canaanite practices has come under critical scrutiny by scholars who refute the cult prostitution hypothesis and will be investigated in Chapter Three.

[39] Wolff, Hosea, 14.

[40] Wolff, Hosea, 15.

[41]Farrar, Minor Prophets, 98; Leslie, Old Testament, 173-175; Mays, Hosea, 26.

occurrence of the Hebrew term translated as "cult prostitute" is in Hos 4:14, in which Gomer does not figure at all. However, proceeding not on the basis of the text but on the presupposition that Israel's apostate worship was sexual in nature and involved the institution of cult prostitution, these scholars contend that Gomer was one of the *qĕdēšôt*. Mays argues that, based on Hosea's use of terms derived from the root *znh* ("to be a harlot") to describe Gomer, it would be reasonable to assume that she was in fact a common prostitute.[42] However, he insists that it is more fitting to understand Gomer to have been a *qĕdēšâ* (i.e. a cult prostitute) stating that "[a] common prostitute would satisfy the public symbolism, but **not as eloquently** as one whose sexual promiscuity was a matter of the very harlotry of Israel in the cult of Baal."[43] According to this group of scholars, Gomer's habitual sexual activity in the Canaanite-styled cult as a cult prostitute was the source of her designation as an *'ēšēt zĕnûnîm*.

The majority of traditional Hosea scholars acknowledge the ambiguity of the phrase *'ēšēt zĕnûnîm* and consider Gomer to be a prostitute of indeterminate (cultic? common?) status.[44] Most acknowledge that identifying Gomer as a cult prostitute would be highly appropriate in terms of the purported goal of Hosea's invective to denounce the Canaanite-styled worship in which the Israelites participate. However, unlike Mays and Leslie, these scholars acknowledge the lack of textual evidence that Gomer was a

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[42] Mays, Hosea, 26.

[43] Mays, Hosea, 26 (my emphasis). Elmer A. Leslie (Old Testament, 173) also portrays Gomer as a cult prostitute, citing no evidence to support his interpretation of the otherwise unattested phrase *'ēšēt zĕnûnîm*. Leslie simply states that Gomer "had apparently been connected with one of the Israelite sanctuaries as a votary in the service of Astarte." Leslie further conjectures that Gomer, having initially given up her life in this cultic capacity to marry Hosea, "went back to the old life, that of a sacred prostitute" (175).

[44] Wolfe, Meet Amos, 81; Ward, Hosea, 71; Andersen, "Hosea and Yahweh," 428; McKeating, Amos, Hosea, 77; Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 159; Limburg, Hosea-Micah, 8; Walter Vogels, "Hosea's Gift to Gomer," Biblica 69 (1988) 412-421, 416; Hubbard, Hosea, 19; Ogilvie, Hosea, 14.

qĕdēšâ. Statements from a few scholars from this large group[45] demonstrate their tentativeness in positing the exact nature of Gomer's promiscuity. Ogilvie notes, for instance, that though "it is certainly tempting to read into the text that she was a cult prostitute...a strong case cannot be proven from the text itself."[46] Acknowledging the possibility that Gomer was a cult prostitute, Ogilvie prefers to stand by his "simple" interpretation of Gomer as a common prostitute. Andersen and Freedman are similarly tentative, but favor the other side of the proverbial fence in their contention that cultic prostitution is the most likely nature of Gomer's sexual transgressions. Andersen and Freedman note, as does Mays, that Gomer's identity as a cult prostitute would be most appropriate in the context of Hosea's condemnation of Israel's sexual/religious betrayal of Yahweh.[47] They also argue that Hosea does not use the common Hebrew terms for the common prostitute, *'iššâ zônâ* or *zônâ*, leading them to conclude *'ešēt zĕnûnîm* must be the title for a special kind of prostitute, i.e. the cult prostitute encountered elsewhere in Hosea.[48] However, given the speculative nature of their theory, they state: "We may speak **provisionally** and **tentatively** of cultic sexual activity as the specific form of [Gomer's] adultery."[49] Commentators of this group might incline toward the hypothesis that Gomer was a cult prostitute, but present their conclusions with a characteristic tentativeness.

Another important interpretation of Gomer's title *'ešēt zĕnûnîm* is that it is a term used not to describe Gomer's profession, but her character.[50] Abraham Heschel states in

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[45] Ward, Hosea, 71; Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 159; Limburg, Hosea-Micah, 8; Ogilvie, Hosea, 14.
[46] Ogilvie, Hosea, 14.
[47] Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 159.
[48] Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 159.
[49] Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 159 (my emphasis).
[50] Heschel, Prophets, 52; Harold Henry Rowley, "Marriage of Hosea," Men of God: Studies in Old Testament History and Prophecy (London: Nelson: 1963, 66-97) 90; Craghan, "Hosea: A Survey," 84-85; McComiskey, Minor Prophets, 67; Fisch, "Hosea: Poetics," 148; Johnson, "Hosea 4-10," 22.

his notes that "the phrase 'esheth zĕnûnîm does not connote a harlot ... but ... a person who is disposed to become a harlot, a woman filled with the spirit of whoredom."[51] This group of scholars regards Gomer's promiscuity as indirectly related to the condemned cult. As I shall discuss in the following section, a significant number of scholars think that the degenerate sexual practices that occurred in the apostate cult induced a general loss of morality among the Israelites in their every day affairs. As a woman who was inclined to promiscuous ways, the character of Gomer symbolizes the depravity of the Israelite community that had adopted Canaanite ways, both in cultic and everyday life.

As in the case of traditional scholarly interpretation of Hosea's use of the marriage metaphor as a whole, most scholars contend that the story of Gomer's sexual betrayal is not told to merely expose the *fact* of Israel's apostasy, but also to identify its sexual nature. Modern scholars are also nearly unanimous in their contention that Gomer was a literally promiscuous woman and as such, a perfect surrogate Israel. Whether she was a bridal-rite initiate, a cult prostitute, a common prostitute, or a woman who was inclined toward promiscuous sex, traditional scholars understand Gomer to have violated her marriage vows with illicit sexual activity that was a product, either directly or indirectly, of the degenerate cult that had taken hold of Israel's religious imagination.

Modern Scholarship on Hosea 4:13-14

Both scholars' conception of cultic sex as the basis for Hosea's sexual metaphor of covenant as marriage in chapters 1-3 and their insistence that Gomer's promiscuity stemmed from the sexually degenerate cult in some way have reinforced the notion that

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[51] Heschel, Prophets, 52 n.8

the sexual language of Hos 4:13-14, in which the *qĕdēšôt* are named, refers to literal cultic sex. Scholars interpret Hosea's use of *znh* in chapter 4 to have the same function as it does in chapters 1-3. Namely, the *znh* language identifies Israel's betrayal of "her" exclusive relationship to Yahweh in the form of sexual rites devoted to Baal.

Of the many commentaries on Hosea, three in particular are most often cited approvingly by biblical scholars who have treated issues in the first four chapters of this prophetic text: those of Hans Walter Wolff, James Luther Mays, and Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman. I will present their translations and interpretations of Hos 4:13-14 with particular emphasis upon their treatment of the *qĕdēšôt*, and identify the work of other Hosea scholars that reflects the varied conclusions of Wolff, Mays, and Andersen and Freedman on particular textual issues. The intent of this presentation is to offer a comprehensive picture of modern biblical scholarship on Hos 4:13-14, apart from the 'new school' of scholars who refute the cult prostitution hypothesis.

Furthermore, in presenting the at times strikingly different ways in which these three influential commentaries translate and interpret aspects of Hos 4:13-14, I will suggest that the reliability of their common position that the *qĕdēšôt* were cult prostitutes in a Canaanite-styled sex cult is undermined. It is my conclusion in observing Wolff's, Mays', and Andersen and Freedman's differing assessments of, for instance, the addressee(s) of Hosea's invective and the type of sexual rites that he allegedly condemns, that there is little scholarly certainty about the actual subject of arguably the most important biblical passage concerning the Hebrew *qĕdēšôt*. The deeply entrenched notion of the Hebrew *qĕdēšâ*'s identity as cult prostitute is thus profoundly threatened by the very persons who perpetuate it.

In order to facilitate the comparison of the scholarly treatment of Hos 4:13-14, the

Masoretic text[52] is given, followed by Wolff's, Mays' and Andersen and Freedman's

translations, respectively:[53]

13 עַל־

רָאשֵׁי הֶהָרִים יְזַבֵּחוּ וְעַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת יְקַמֵּרוּ תַּחַת אַלּוֹן וְלִבְנֶה

וְאֵלָה כִּי טוֹב צִלָּהּ עַל־כֵּן תִּזְנֶינָה בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם וְכַלּוֹתֵיכֶם

14 וְעַל־ תִּזְנֶינָה כִּי בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם עַל־בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם לֹא־אֶפְקוֹד תְּנָאַפְנָה:

וְעִם־ יִפָּרֵדוּ הַזֹּנוֹת עִם־הֵם כִּי־הֵם תְּנָאַפְנָה כִּי כַלּוֹתֵיכֶם

הַקְּדֵשׁוֹת יְזַבֵּחוּ וְעָם לֹא־יָבִין יִלָּבֵט:

13 On the mountain tops they hold sacrificial meals, on the hills they burn offerings, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is pleasant. Therefore your daughters play the whore, your sons' brides commit adultery. 14 I will not punish your daughters because they play the whore nor your sons' brides because they commit adultery. For these men go aside with whores and share sacrificial meals with temple prostitutes [qĕdēšôt]. Thus an unknowing people comes to ruin (Wolff).[54]

13 On the mountain tops they sacrifice and on the hills they burn offerings, under oak and poplar and terebinth because its shade is pleasant. Therefore your daughters play the harlot and your sons' wives commit adultery. 14 I will not punish your daughters for playing the harlot or your sons' wives for committing adultery; for they themselves go apart with harlots and sacrifice with sacred prostitutes [qĕdēšôt]. A people that does not understand shall be ruined (Mays).[55]

13a[56] On mountain tops they make sacrifice and on high peaks they burn incense.13b Under oaks, poplars, and terebinths, whose shade is good.

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[52] The text is take from Norman Henry Snaith's MT published by The British and Foreign Bible Society.

[53] Since my own translation of Hos 4:13-14 relies on the critique of traditional Hosea scholarship and upon extra biblical evidence that will be presented subsequently, it will be withheld until Chapter Six of this thesis.

[54]Wolff, Hosea, 72.

[55]Mays, Hosea, 72.

[56]Andersen and Freedman divide Hos 4:13-14 into 4 parts (13a, 13b, 14a, and 14b) according to their understanding of the shifting subject of Hosea's invective. They contend that Hosea's invective in chapter 4 is directed entirely at the chief priest and concerns objectionable cultic and social activities performed by the priest himself, and by members of his family. (Only verse 15 proves an exception to this, which records what Andersen and Freedman consider to be prohibitions for the people of Israel at large.) According to

> Because your daughters are promiscuous and your daughters-in-law commit adultery, 14a I will punish your daughters because they are promiscuous and your daughters-in-law because they commit adultery. 14b They segregate themselves with sacred prostitutes [*qĕdēšôt*] and make sacrifices with sacred prostitutes. A people without discernment will be ruined (Andersen and Freedman).[57]

Though the translations of Hos 4:13-14 made by Wolff, Mays, and Andersen and Freedman have much in common, a few differences are worth noting as they both reflect these scholars' presdispositions toward the cult prostitution hypothesis and demonstrate the ambiguity of the text's subject. For instance, a striking feature of Wolff's text is his translation of the verb *yĕzabbēḥû* in verse 13. Mays translates "they sacrifice" and Andersen and Freedman similarly translate the verb as "they make sacrifice" whereas Wolff translates "they hold sacrificial meals." According to Wolff, the verb as it appears in the Piel form "means not only the slaughter of the sacrificial animal ...but especially the eating of its meat...at the meal of *communio*."[58] It clear from Wolff's discussion that he is persuaded to translate "they hold sacrificial meals" not only by the grammatical argument that he makes, but also by his unfounded presupposition that sacrificial meals and sexual rites occur together in the religion of Baal.[59]

Andersen and Freedman stand apart from both Mays and Wolff in several respects in their particular translation of Hos 4:13-14. For instance, in verse 14a the daughters and daughters-in-law *are* in fact threatened with punishment for their (sexual) behavior. These commentators suggest that the occurrence of the negative particular *lō'* in verse 14

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these commentators, Verses 13 and 14 present the abominable actions of the chief priests' male and female children; 13a and 14b concern his sons, and 13b and 14a concern his daughters.

[57]Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 343.

[58]Wolff, Hosea, 8.

of the MT is the result of scribal error. On the one hand, Andersen and Freedman argue

that *lō'* may occur in the MT due to haplography.[60] According to this theory, the

interrogative *hē* originally preceded *lō'*, but was mistakenly dropped by scribes as this

same letter occurs at the end of the preceding word, *tēnā'apnâ*. In other words, Hosea

originally intended to ask the rhetorical question "Shall I not punish your daughters

because they are promiscuous or your daughters-in-law because they commit adultery?"

Andersen and Freedman, however, prefer the explanation that *lō'*'s final aleph is the

result of dittography. [61] According to this explanation, the ' of *lō'* is a reduplication by

the MT scribes of the first consonant in the following word, *'epqôd*. Andersen and

Freedman maintain that the *l*, without the aleph, was originally intended to be

asseverative. In other words, the verb *'epqôd* is to be translated positively and

emphatically as Andersen and Freedman do in their commentary, i.e. "I will punish your

daughters because they are promiscuous and your daughters-in-law because they commit

adultery."

Andersen and Freedman, contrary to the majority of Hosea scholars, are convinced

that "it is inconceivable that the women [i.e. the daughters and daughters-in-law] could be

exculpated, even if the men were primarily responsible."[62] It is even more inconceivable

that daughters of *priests*, which Andersen and Freedman contend is the obvious identity

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[59] Wolff. Hosea, 86. The dearth of evidence available to scholars concerning the Canaanite cult and Hosea
scholars' tendency to rely on presuppositions about Canaanite rituals rather than on concrete evidence will
be more fully discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.
[60] Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 369.
[61] Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 369.
[62] Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 369.

of these women,[63] would go unpunished for the crime of prostitution.[64] This conviction

fuels Andersen and Freedman's conjectural emendation of Hos 4:14 in the MT.[65]

The other notable difference between Andersen and Freedman's translation and those

of Wolff and Mays is their translation of both the terms *zōnôt* and *qĕdēšôt* in verse 14b

as "sacred prostitutes." They are alone among the commentators in translating both *zōnôt*

and *qĕdēšôt* as "sacred prostitutes," but they are not alone in regarding both Hebrew

terms as designations for the same group of women. Ogilvie,[66] McComiskey,[67] Hubbard,[68]

and Stuart,[69] for example, translate *zōnôt* and *qĕdēšôt* with distinct English terms, but

interpret these two terms as signifying women who participated in the sexual rites of the

apostate cult.[70] The different designations do not, for these commentators, entail a

different status or the performance of different activities for these groups of women.

Andersen and Freedman's categorical statement befits their own unique English

translation as well as the line of interpretation followed by the above-mentioned

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[63] Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 343.

[64] The commentators cite Leviticus 21:9, which prescribes death by burning for the daughter of a priest who practices prostitution, to demonstrate the grievous nature of this offense in ancient Israelite law.

[65] As I have stated above, the vast majority of commentators retain the negative particle in their translation of verse 14. The common interpretation accompanying this translation is that Israelite men in the cult commit sexual transgressions, and the women follow suit committing sexual offenses under the men's negative influence. Hubbard's (Hosea,106) comment is representative of commentators' usual explanation of verse 14: "[o]ne of the rude results (note the *therefore* of v.13) of the priests' infidelity to God was the promiscuous sexual conduct of their own daughters and daughters-in-law." As a *result* of the influence of the men's (mis)conduct, scholars argue that the men themselves are held accountable for the daughters' (mis)conduct, and the women are exculpated. (See also Mays, Hosea, 75; McKeating, Hosea, 101;Ogilvie, Hosea, 82; McComiskey, Minor Prophets, 67).

[66] Hosea, 79.

[67] Minor Prophets, 65.

[68] Hosea, 106.

[69] Hosea, 2.

[70] Stuart, Hosea, 20; Ogilvie, Hosea, 82; McComiskey, Minor Prophets, 67.

commentators: "The terms *zōnôt* and *qĕdēšôt* are mutually defining; they refer to cult prostitutes, women who participated fully in the cult."[71]

Beyond bearing distinctions in their English translations of Hos 4:13-14, Wolff, Mays, and Andersen and Freedman, at times differ significantly in their interpretation of the context of these verses so crucial in supporting the cult prostitution hypothesis. As in the case of their translations, the different approaches to the text taken by these commentators are representative of the range of interpretations presented by modern Hosea scholars. Three points in Hos 4:13-14 that are interpreted quite differently by Wolff, Mays, and Andersen and Freedman are: the identity of the addressee or addressees, the identity of the women (the daughters, daughters-in-law, *zōnôt*, and *qĕdēšôt*), and the nature of the activity suggested by the text's sexual language. As the reader will note, these three points are inextricably bound to one another. My presentation of the divergent views on these points will therefore demonstrate how each of the three commentators deals with these issues as a whole, making note of those Hosea scholars who reflect their perspectives.

The manner in which Wolff identifies the addressees and the various women of verses 13 and 14 hinges upon his understanding of the nature of the sexual activity suggested by Hosea's use of sexual language. It is Wolff who is the major proponent of the concept that two distinct sorts of cultic sexual rites are identified and condemned in Hos 4:13-14. For Wolff, 13a[72] and 14b make reference to the fertility rites that the priests carried out regularly with female temple personnel by having intercourse with them at the holy sites. Wolff regards the third person plural subject of 13a and 14b as the priests, and the

[71]Andersen and Freedman. Hosea, 370.

references to mountain tops, hills, trees, as a Hosean version of the formulaic "high places" and "under every green tree," the locales of abominable, foreign cult practices of the Deuteronomists.[73]

In Wolff's analysis, 13b and 14a speak of another distinct cultic sexual ritual, that of the common women of the community prostituting themselves once in their life prior to marriage in an initiation ceremony which Wolff terms the "bridal rites."[74] Wolff relies upon the account of the fifth century B.C.E. Greek historian Herodotus[75] of a custom that he allegedly witnessed in his travels to Babylonia. Wolff quotes Herodotus' account at length, in which "the foulest Babylonian custom"[76] is described. According to Herodotus, a Babylonian woman, once in her life, is to wait in the temple of Aphrodite for a "stranger man" to demand intercourse with her, an act which "[makes] herself holy in the goddess' sight." Without providing a bridge of evidence between Herodotus' account and Hosea's invective in chapter four, Wolff simply states that "the Canaanite bridal rites were quite similar."[77]

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[72] I make use of Andersen and Freedman's helpful verse divisions here for the sake of clarity.

[73] In using the term "Deuteronomists," I am following the widely accepted scholarly theory that the books Deuteronomy through 2 Kings (following the book order of the MT), which purport to record the pre-monarchic and monarchic history of ancient Israel, were redacted by a school of editors in two main stages: during Josiah's reign (640-609 B.C.E.) and following Jerusalem's destruction at the hands of the Babylonians in 587 B.C.E. The Deuteronomistic school is characterized by its recording of Israel's history according to this particular theology: Israel's exclusive worship of Yahweh will guarantee the nation's prosperity while apostasy and foreign political alliances will result in economic and social disaster. (See Stephen L. Harris, Understanding the Bible [London: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1997] 116-155).

[74] Wolff, Hosea, 8.

[75] As I have already pointed out in n.38 above, the unreliability of Herodotus' Histories has been identified by many contemporary classics historians and several scholars who have critiqued the cult prostitution hypothesis. The evaluation of Wolff's evidence and the evidence relied upon by other commentators to support their contention that cult prostitution was a historical institution practiced among apostate Israelites will be presented in Chapter 3.

[76] Aubrey De Sélincourt, Herodotus: The Histories I.199 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972) 120.

[77] Wolff, Hosea, 87.

Besides Wolff's implicit presupposition that Herodotus' fifth century account of a Babylonian rite is relevant for the reconstruction of eighth century Israelite worship, Wolff regards the language of the biblical text as supporting his theory of the Israelite practice of the bridal rite. First, there is the issue of the shifting subject of Hosea's rhetoric, indicated by different pronominal suffixes. In verses 13a and 14b, the subjects are identified as third person masculine plural. As noted above, Wolff maintains that these subjects are priests. The subjects of 13b and 14a are second person masculine plural and, according to Wolff, are clearly different subjects.[78] As the object of the pronominal suffixes are the "daughters" and "daughters-in-law," Wolff understands fathers and fathers-in law to be the natural subjects of Hosea's invective. The shift in the pronominal suffixes from the third person plural (i.e. priests) indicates that these "fathers" are distinct from the priests and are most likely common Israelite men. Wolff regards the sexual offense of the "fathers' daughters" to be their participation in a customary sexual rite, distinct from the priests' consorting with cult prostitutes.

The term "therefore" ('al- kēn) is crucial in Wolff's understanding that verses 13 and 14 refer to two distinct types of cultic sexual rites. "Therefore" links 13a/14b to 13b/14a in a cause-and-effect relationship. The consorting of the priests with cultic prostitutes inspires the common Israelite men to also resort to cultic practices that involve sexual activity. This also explains the troubling scenario of sexually offending women being exculpated of their transgressions (Hos 4:14). For Wolff, Hosea's invective holds the priests ultimately culpable for Israel's apostasy in their sanction of and direct

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[78]Wolff indicates that some commentators, rather than taking the MT at face value, have changed the subject endings of verses 13-14 to third person plural (Hosea, 85). As I do not read German, I do not have

participation in cultic sex. The common men simply follow the bad example of the priests.

Apart from distinguishing two different types of cultic sexual practices in his interpretation of Hos 4:13-14, Wolff also regards the terms zōnôt and qĕdēšôt in 14b as references to two distinct classes of women. According to Wolff, the qĕdēšôt are clearly cultic personnel with whom the priests carry out "official" sexual duties.[79] The zōnôt are not as easily identified by Wolff. He states with a degree of certainty that "the zōnôt, as distinguished from the qĕdēšôt, should probably be thought of as a group of public prostitutes."[80] However, he finds their role in relation to the priests to be ambiguous. Wolff surmises that the zōnôt of 14a may in fact be some of the same women who "play the whore" in verse 13b (that is, who participate in the alleged Herodotean bridal rites), stating that possibly, "the priests sought out the more beautiful among the brides who came to the rites of initiation at the high places and went aside with them into the forest."[81] Wolff is tentative in his identification of the zōnôt and their activity. However, he is certain that the zōnôt were women who committed literal sexual offenses.

Commentators in general are reluctant to adopt Wolff's interpretation of verse 13 as a reference to a sort of bridal initiation rite. Ward considers the hypothesis that Hos 4:13 makes reference to a sexual rite which initiated young women as brides to be "improbable...although not impossible."[82] For Ward, Hos 4:13-14 is "cryptic" and does not readily lend itself to the clear interpretation made by Wolff. However, conveying the

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access to the commentaries that Wolff cites. In my own research, which has focused upon English and French sources. I have not encountered this textual emendation apparently made for the sake of coherence.
[79]Wolff, Hosea, 88.
[80]Wolff, Hosea, 88.
[81]Wolff, Hosea, 88.

sentiment held by commentators who, though not readily embracing Wolff's position, nonetheless allow for the possibility that a bridal rite such as Wolff describes may have been a part of Israel's worship, Ward estimates that "the imagination of man in the domain of sex is highly inventive, and the popular cults of ancient times sanctioned wide varieties of sexual practice in a ritual context."[83]

Though not necessarily accepting Wolff's hypothesis of two distinct sexual rites, several scholars do resemble Wolff in their contention that the sexual terms of Hos 4:13-14 refer to activity that is cultic in nature. In his comments on verse 13, McComiskey describes the whoring and adultery of the daughters and daughters-in-law as "engag[ing] in the pernicious cult that represents gross unfaithfulness to God."[84] Ogilvie's commentary provides another example of an interpretation that regards verses 13 and 14 as identifying the sexual offenses which took place in the context of the cult. Ogilvie interprets verse 13 as Hosea's description of "Israel's stubborn, persistent obsession with the Baal fertility cults."[85] Ogilvie does not elaborate upon the exact cultic ritual in which the daughters and daughters-in-law presumably participated. He seems to allude to the women's habitual participation rather than Wolff's perceived one-time ritual in stating that "the men should not be alarmed to find their wives or daughters **off in the cult**. They had set the example!"[86] Though Ogilvie and McComiskey may differ from Wolff in their reconstructions of the cultic involvement of the women of verse 13, they clearly share

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[82] Ward, Hosea, 9. See McKeating (Amos, Hosea, 100) for a similar assessment of Wolff's hypothesis.
[83] Ward, Hosea, 91.
[84] McComiskey, Minor Prophets, 67.
[85] Ogilvie, Hosea, 82.
[86] Ogilvie, Hosea, 82.

Wolff's contention that the sexual transgressions of the daughters and daughters-in-law were literal and cultic.[57]

Mays, like Wolff, regards the sexual offenses identified in verses 13 and 14 as belonging to two distinct categories, one pertaining to cultic personnel (i.e. the priests, elders, and the *qĕdēśôt*), and the other to the public at large. However, the categories are not types of cultic sex as they are for Wolff. Mays acknowledges Wolff's theory that the sexual activity of the daughters is their participation in a bridal rite, but concludes that "whether the language of the text points to something other than general immorality is difficult to say."[58] The offense of the daughters and daughters-in-law of the elders,[59] for Mays, is their illicit sexual behavior in the public sphere. For Mays, these women commit adultery and harlotry in violation of their marriage vows, but not at the shrines or in the context of a cult ritual such as the bride rite described by Wolff. Mays surmises that "harlotry and adultery were perceptibly on the rise and the prophet brings the sexual disorder of society and the sexual focus of the cult together ... the spirit of harlotry spread from cult to town and home."[90] Mays' interpretation of society mimicking the sexual excesses of the cult hinges, as it does for Wolff, on the term *'al-kēn* ("therefore") in verse 13.

Mays differs from Wolff in his assessment of the type of sexual offense that the daughters and daughters-in-law commit, but agrees that the priests and religious leaders are clearly condemned for their participation in cultic, sexual rites with the *qĕdēśôt* and

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[57]See also McKeating (Hosea, 100-101) and Limburg (Hosea, 24), who understand the sexual offenses enumerated in verse 13 to be sexual cultic practices.

[88]Mays, Hosea, 74.

[89]Mays contends that these women are of the common people of Israel. He does not attempt to connect them to the priests' families as do Andersen and Freedman.

the *zōnôt*. Like Wolff, he assumes that the priests and "elders" are the offenders who "go

apart with harlots and sacrifice with sacred prostitutes,"[91] and that their activity is "tersely

but plainly cited in the text."[92] It is obvious for Mays that Hosea here refers to "[s]acrifice

accompanied by ritual intercourse ... meant to stimulate sexual activity of the gods for the

sake of the land's fertility."[93] Apart from this typical assessment of the sexual offenses of

the priesthood and the involvement in these offenses by the *qĕdēšôt*, Mays makes a

remarkable speculation about the identity of the *zōnôt* ("harlots") mentioned prior to the

qĕdēšôt in verse 14. Like Wolff and unlike Andersen and Freedman, whose conflation of

the terms *zōnôt* and *qĕdēšôt* was discussed above, Mays regards the *zōnôt* and the

qĕdēšôt as two distinct classes of women, common "harlots" and "sacred prostitutes,"

respectively. Mays emphatically states that "sacred prostitutes ... are not harlots."[94] He

goes on to speculate that the reason for the presence of common harlots at places of

worship was that "sexual orgies at the shrine had become so common that harlots were

used as substitutes for cultic personnel."[95] This statement is remarkable given that the text

is silent on the subject of an unbalanced ratio between *qĕdēšôt* and priests. To my

knowledge, besides John Olen Strange,[96] who cites Mays' hypothesis, no other

commentator has argued that the reason for Hosea's listing of two distinct types of

women is a shortage of *qĕdēšôt*, although the contention that Israel had become addicted

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[91]Mays, Hosea, 74. See also Wolfe (Meet Amos, 94), Strange ("Broken covenant," 441), and Davies (Hosea, 126) who also regard Hos 4:13-14 as a condemnation of both cultic and public sexual offenses.
[91]Mays' (Hosea, 72) translation.
[92]Mays, Hosea, 75.
[93]Mays, Hosea, 75.
[94]Mays, Hosea, 75.
[95]Mays, Hosea, 75.
[96]"Broken Covenant," 441.

to sex, and that "nothing could be more inimical to Israel's role as Yahweh's covenant people,"[97] is widely held."[98]

Andersen and Freedman offer another interpretation of the subjects of Hosea's invective, and also differ from Wolff and Mays in their reconstruction of the sort of sexual offenses identified in Hos 4:13-14. First, as suggested by the headings that they place above self-styled sections in Hos 4:4-19.[99] Andersen and Freedman contend that the entire chapter, with the exception of verse 15,[100] is directed toward the chief priest and his children. In this way, Andersen and Freedman resolve the notorious problem of identifying the addressees of Hosea's rhetoric in this chapter. The pronominal suffixes of the subjects being accused of religious offenses shift among the second person singular, third person singular, third person plural, and second person plural. For these commentators, when the second person singular and third person singular pronominal suffixes are employed, the chief priest is the subject of Hosea's invective. When the third person plural is employed, the scathing rhetoric, still directed at the chief priest, turns upon the actions of his children. Hos 4:13-14 thus falls under the heading "*The actions of the chief priest's children*" and is further subdivided as follows: Verses 13a and 14b fall under the heading "*Male*" (i.e. the chief priest's *male children*), and 13b and 14a are given the heading "*Female*" (i.e. the chief priest's *female children*). Andersen and Freedman acknowledge the problem that is created in thus dividing and interpreting these

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[97]Mays. Hosea, 75.
[98]See page 16.
[99]Andersen and Freedman divide chapter 4 into 10 main sections (v.4a,vv. 4a-6b,vv. 7a-8b,v. 9,v. 10a, vv. 10b-12b. vv. 13a-14b,v.15, vv.16a-18a, vv.18b-19b).The headings indicate that either the actions of the priest or those of his children are at issue (e.g. vv.7a-8b. and vv.13a-14b fall under the heading: *The actions of the chief priest's children*).

verses. Namely, the subject of verses 13b and 14a that allegedly refer to the (singular) chief priest's female children, is second person *plural*. The commentators contend that these two verses are recognizably discontinuous with the rest of the chapter, noting their length as compared to the shorter verses of the rest of the chapter and the introduction of the actions of female subjects.[100] However, despite this difficulty, they elect to interpret these verses according to their theory that alternately throughout the chapter, either the actions of the chief priest or those of his children are condemned. They suggest that the daughters and daughters-in-law of verses 13 and 14 should be understood as the daughters of *priests* as opposed to a single *priest*, thus resolving the problem of the second person plural subject.[101]

Like Wolff and Mays, Andersen and Freedman contend that two types of illicit sexual activities are described in the castigating rhetoric of Hos 4:13-14. Clearly for these commentators, the activity of the sons of the priest (the third person masculine subjects) in verses 13a and 14b is the familiar habitual activity of members of the priestly class engaging in sexual intercourse with "sacred prostitutes" in a ritual context.[103] Of the daughters and daughters-in-law they conclude, like Mays, that these women commit an offense against their families, and not the cult *per se*, in having adulterous affairs and prostituting themselves. Without elaboration, Andersen and Freedman dismiss the possibility that verses 13b and 14a make reference to cultic offenses perpetrated by the daughters, stating: "The terminology of vv 13 and 14 suggests that the men resort to the

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[100] In this verse alone, according to Andersen and Freedman, the people of Israel at large are addressed by the prophet. Otherwise, the entire chapter is directed at the chief priest and concerns his actions and those of his family members.
[101] Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 368-369.
[102] Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 370.

female prostitutes of the cult shrines and the women commit adultery with male counterparts."[104] Andersen and Freedman do not suggest a cause and effect relationship between the degeneration of the cultic sphere and that of the public sphere. In fact, unlike Mays and Wolff, they translate *'al-kēn* as "because" rather than "therefore," [105] creating a radically different translation (and interpretation) of verse 13b from those found in the majority of Hosea commentaries. As discussed above, for Andersen and Freedman, the daughters are punished *because* of what they themselves have done, and are not exculpated because of the bad influence of their elders.

To summarize, Andersen and Freedman's interpretation of Hos 4:13-14 might be described as combining elements of both Wolff's and Mays' conclusions. Wolff, on the one hand, regards both the cultic personnel (priests, *qĕdēśôt*) and the common people (the daughters, daughters-in-law, and their fathers) to be guilty of participating in cultic, sexual activity. Mays, on the other hand, regards the cultic personnel to be guilty of participation in cultic, sexual activity and the common people of engaging in illicit sexual relations in the public sphere. Andersen and Freedman contend that verses 13 and 14 pertain entirely to the cult, in that the subjects of the invective are the children of the chief priest or priests, but that the male children commit sexual offenses in the cultic sphere and the female children commit them in the public sphere.

Though there is disagreement about the identity of the "daughters" and concerning the nature of their sexual offenses, whether they be cultic or public, there is no question for

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[103]Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 368-370.

[104]Andersen and Freedman, Hosea, 369. Presumably, the "terminology" that differentiates between the sexual offenses of the female subjects of 13b and 14a and the male subjects of 13a and 14b is the clearly cultic language of sacrifice, burning incense, and the naming of the *qĕdēśôt* in relation to the males, while the females are equated with harlotry and adultery without overt cultic references.

modern commentators that the language of whoring and adultery is to be understood literally. The sexual activity of the *qĕdēšôt* is not even afforded the debate given to the nature of the activity of the daughters, but rather it is uniformly regarded as professional service for a fertility cult in which cult leaders had intercourse with the *qĕdēšôt* to promote the fertility of the land.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that traditional commentators unite in their discussion of topics that have bearing upon the cult prostitution hypothesis, outside of those issues arising directly from Hos 4:13-14. For instance. commentators commonly denounce Canaanite religion as immoral, claiming that these people and their cult were degenerate and morally inferior to the religion of the Israelites. They regard the first three chapters of Hosea, where marriage is the predominant metaphorical image, to have been derived from the very rites and myths of the Canaanites that they contend centered upon (sacred) marriage and sex. Commentators also regard Gomer as the literal embodiment of what is degenerate and base in Canaanite religion and society. Whether she is a cult prostitute, a common prostitute, or a loose woman, Gomer's literal sexual disobedience reflects not only Israel's rejection of God, but also the literal sexual way in which Israel rejected him. As Mays writes in reference to Gomer/Israel's harlotry and adultery: "metaphor and reality are almost synonymous."[106]

In this chapter, I have also demonstrated that traditional Hosea commentators, in interpreting Hos 4:13-14 itself, share the convictions that the Israelites participated in a

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[105]Andersen and Freedman. Hosea, 343.

Canaanite-styled sex cult, and that this sex cult enlisted a class of women, the *qĕdēšôt*, to serve as cult prostitutes. However, as is made obvious by commentators' dramatically different interpretations of the nature of the sexual offenses signified by Hosea's sexual language in Hos 4:13-14, there is an obvious lacuna in specific knowledge about the religion of Baal from which the Israelites of Hosea's time and place were enjoined. It is my conclusion that the inability of scholars to concur in their interpretations on crucial points of this text, particularly on the nature of the alleged sex rites under fire, suggests that their certitude about the cultic sexual role of the *qĕdēšôt* is unfounded.

It is clear that literal sex practiced by the "inferior" cult of the Canaanites is a cherished notion among Hosea commentators. The following chapters will critique this notion systematically. First, I will demonstrate that traditional scholars' very translation of the term *qĕdēšôt* as "cult prostitutes" is problematic. Second, I will argue that there is no supporting evidence for cult prostitution to be found in the ANE sources. Finally, I will demonstrate that layers of false presuppositions drive traditional scholars' reconstruction of the Canaanite sex-cult and the role of its functionaries.

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[106]Mays, Hosea, 25.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROOT *QDS*

An investigation of the range of meanings of the Hebrew root *qdš*, from which *qĕdēšôt* is derived, is in my estimation a logical place to begin a reconstruction of the role of these women in ancient Israelite society. As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, the majority of modern biblical scholars continue the tradition of translating *qĕdēšôt* as "cult prostitutes." However, a significant number of scholars have critiqued this translation and the accompanying presupposition among scholars that a sex cult was at the heart of Canaanite religion.[1] In fact, it is the view of the critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis that the translation "cult prostitutes" for *qĕdēšôt* is based not upon any inherent meaning of the root *qdš*, but rather upon presupposition. In order to establish that the lexical value of Hebrew *qdš* does not include sexual connotations, I have undertaken a review of the over 840 occurrences of the derivatives of the Hebrew root *qdš*. I have established a working definition for the root *qdš*, to be presented in the course of this chapter, that sheds light upon the reconstruction of the identity of the *qĕdēšôt*.

The method of this word study was to review each occurrence of the derivatives of the root *qdš* in order to delineate the range of meanings with which the various forms may be associated. I assume that determining the meanings of the various forms of *qdš* in its over 840 occurrences sheds light upon the task of defining the terms *qĕdēšâ/qĕdēšôt* as well as *qādeš/qĕdēšîm*, which appear a total of eleven times (4, 1, 3, and 3 times respectively). Given the sheer number of occurrences of terms derived from this root, it is

impossible to review each of these in this brief chapter. However, I will attempt to adequately summarize what was discovered about the range of meanings for *qdš* by providing the most salient examples. This study is limited almost exclusively to the primary evidence of the Hebrew Bible. My intent was to establish a definition for the root *qdš* based on how it was used in its biblical contexts, thus avoiding the prejudice of modern commentators toward translating *qĕdēšôt* as "female cult prostitutes" and *qĕdēšîm* as "male cult prostitutes."[2]

The Root *qdš*

The Hebrew adjective *qōdeš* is often translated as "holy" in English texts. It is a word that one rarely thinks of defining any further. God is "holy." The Bible is "holy." An archaeological find may be described as a "holy" relic for an ancient people. "Holiness" is somehow bound to religious titles and objects. In its popular usage, "holy" connotes a mystic power or a spiritual status.

Though I would not argue that this is a false definition for "holy," I would suggest that, for the ancient Israelites, the derivatives of the root *qdš* generally had a more tangible, less mystic meaning pertaining to space, matter, time, and personnel particular to their cult. What is holy is best described as that which is "set apart" and rendered obviously different from other things. Certainly, forms of *qdš* are employed as titular references to the intangible, Yahweh, especially but not uniquely in Isaiah (e.g. 1:4;

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[1] See Introduction, p.2 n.2

[2] As I have argued in the previous chapter, modern commentaries are perhaps the most important sources for the mistranslation of *qĕdēšôt* and for the perpetuation of the notion of cult prostitution. Some secondary material will be introduced, but this will be kept to a minimum for this reason.

30:11, 12, 15)[3] and in the Psalms (77:13; 99:9), suggesting that one should conceive of "holy" as pertaining to what is incomprehensible in power and in essence. However, *qōdeš*/holy is the term used most often in a cultic context to describe, for instance, men who are ordained as priests of Yahweh,[4] animals (e.g. Lev 6:27; 14:13; Exod 29:27) and cereals (e.g. Lev 2; 6:17) that are offered to the Lord, and festival times observed in commemoration of events in the history of Israel.[5] The verbs and nouns derived from *qdš* are not only used to identify an innate quality of human entities, material objects, and days of the year. What ultimately characterizes these things as "holy" are ritualized, physical actions that effect their transformation from profane to sacred. Again, this is not to deny a mystical sense to the terms derived from *qdš*, as my use of the words "profane" and "sacred" implies. However, my argument is that, while in the contemporary Western world there is a tendency to ascribe holiness or sanctity to interior, invisible, or spiritual matters, the ancient Hebrew concept of holiness was related to outward, ritualized actions and observances. Inextricably bound to the rituals and ordinances of the cult, forms of *qdš* are terms that we may describe as technical and cult-related.

It seems clear from the contexts in which the various occurrences of the derivatives of the root *qdš* occur that something which is holy (*qōdeš*) is differentiated from other things for a specific cultic purpose. Likewise, the act of making something holy, conveyed in the verbal forms of *qdš* and often translated in English as "to consecrate," is the act of setting something apart through outward, ritualized actions. Often throughout

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³Unless otherwise noted, all verse references follow the NRSV versification.
⁴ See for example the ordination of Aaron and his sons in Exod 29 and in Lev 8.

the Hebrew Bible, terms derived from *qdš* are used adjectivally, their meanings obviously known to the original audience but not as clear to modern ones. Isaiah's titular use of *qdš* to describe God, calling him the "Holy One (*qědôš*) of Israel" (Isa 30:11, 12, 15), cannot give a sure insight into what this term may mean, although, used in reference to God, one might assume its meaning to be positive. However, the connotation of something put aside for cultic purposes is made clear in various passages, most notably in the priestly literature[6] in which forms of *qdš* occur most frequently. Due to the detailed, legal language of these texts, *qdš* seems quite clearly defined. A particularly vivid example of what is meant by forms of *qdš* is the notion of "keeping the Sabbath holy (*lěqadšô*)" in Exod 20:8. Verse 9 elaborates upon what is entailed by holiness: "Six days shall you labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work." Clearly, something that is holy is something accorded a special status over and against what is common. In this case, time is made holy as it is differentiated from other, common time. Six days of the week are characterized by a working community, and the seventh day is differentiated from the rest of the week by the fact that no one works. Moreover, implicit in this notion of something being "set aside" from other things is that this thing is also "set above." The Sabbath is a day "to the Lord." It has cultic import as it is set aside by and for Yahweh. The example of the holy

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[5] E.g. 2 Chr 30:15 (the celebration of "Passover" in commemoration of Yahweh's sparing of firstborn Israelite males during Israel's enslavement in Egypt, recorded in Exod 12).

[6]Following the Graf-Wellhausen documentary hypothesis, the so-called "priestly writers" or editors are responsible for contributing, at the time of the Babylonian exile and onward, the Torah's legal material found concentrated in Exodus 35-Numbers 10 as well as redactions of some of the Yahwist's ("J") and Elohist's ("E") material. In using the term "priestly literature," I refer to Exodus 35 and onward, the book of Leviticus, and the book of Numbers chaps.1-10. (For a discussion about the documentary hypothesis, refer to Harris Understanding The Bible, 65-75.)

Sabbath day illustrates the two basic attributes that I consider to be implicit in each occurrence of *qdš* - a designation of **separateness** for the **purposes of the cult.**

There are other times described as "holy" in the Hebrew Bible. The Festival of Booths is one example, while the Year of Jubilee is another instance of time set aside from common time by special actions for the purposes of cultic life. During the Festival of Booths, the Israelites are to live in booths or tents for seven days (Lev 23:42), presumably leaving their more permanent homesteads. In the Jubilee, a festive year which allegedly occured every fifty years, no farming is to be practiced for an entire year (Lev 25:8-12), an abstinence from work that is unparalleled in common time. Both holy times revolve around the center of the cult, Yahweh, and can therefore be understood as having cultic import. The Festival of Booths is held in commemoration of Yahweh's leading the Israelites out of Egypt to live in tents (Lev 23:43), while the Jubilee is time made holy, as is the Sabbath, by the very decree of Yahweh (Lev 25:2). Again, both of these times are defined by forms of the root *qdš* as they are times characterized by uncommon actions on the part of the people for the purposes of the cult.

Just as time may be considered "holy," persons may be described throughout the Hebrew Bible, and especially the priestly literature, as "holy." Again, these people are characterized by actions and responsibilities that differ from those of common people, and that constitute a cultic role. The priests of Aaron's line provide a particularly vivid example of what it means to be a holy person. Aaron and his male descendants alone are charged with the responsibility of serving in the most holy space of the tabernacle containing the "mercy seat" (Lev 16:2). It is understood that common Israelites cannot serve in this capacity; even the Kohathites, whose cult service is described as pertaining

to the most holy things (Num 4:4), are not to "go in to look on the holy things even for a moment" lest they die (Num 4:20). Aaron and his family, given their holy status, are also the only Israelites privy to the consumption of the "sacred donations" (*qōdeš*; Lev 22:10). Lev 22:10 states: "No lay person shall eat of the sacred donations. No bound or hired servant of the priest shall eat of the sacred donations." Only Aaron and his family may engage in the act of eating food that is offered to Yahweh by lay people in a cultic context. They are thus set apart and above their fellow Israelites for cultic service, being privy to certain places and objects designated for Yahweh, and being able to serve as representatives of Yahweh (i.e. eating food offered to the Lord).

Not only do Aaron and his family perform designated ("set apart"/holy) actions within the cult, their holy status is conferred upon them by special cultic actions. It becomes clear that in order to be holy, a person must be *made* holy. As in the case of the designation of holy time, the consecration of people involves a procedure of special, ritualized actions. Exod 29:1-35 and Lev 8 detail the ordination of Aaron and his sons as the priests of Israel. The ceremony includes the anointing of the head (Lev 8:12), washing of the body (Exod 29:4), the donning of special garments (Lev 8:13), and the putting of blood upon the ear lobe (Lev 8:23-24). Outward physical actions, in a cultic context, are regarded as the means of transforming what is common into what is holy. The cultic responsibilities with which Aaron and his family alone are charged and the ceremony of ordination that they undergo make them "holy."

Like time and people, space may also be said to be holy or consecrated. Just as "different" or "extraordinary" actions make time and persons holy, physical actions and ceremonies that are not performed day to day or in just any place may make space "holy."

2 Chronicles provides a good example of how human actions might make space holy. Hezekiah, in a plan to re-institute pure Yahwistic worship over the apostate cult which had been supported by his father Ahaz, commissions the priests to "sanctify" (*qaddēšû*) the temple (2 Chr 29:5). The priests physically carry out objects that are considered "defiling" to the temple (v.16), and cleanse the utensils that are designated for the cultic worship of Yahweh (v.18), actions described as "sanctification" (*yeqadšû* - "they sanctified") in verse 17. This act of cleansing supports our understanding that forms of *qdš* imply the separation of something, in this case, some place, from common or mundane elements for the purposes of the cult.

Though the act of cleansing space by human beings may be one manner of consecrating space, clearly this is not the only vehicle for making space holy. (The episode in 2 Chronicles is, after all, a re-dedication or re-sanctification of a space, and therefore cleansing might be a unique part of this particular consecration.) When Solomon first erects the temple in 1 Kings, he too is described as consecrating space, in this case so that the cultic sacrifices may be made (1 Kgs 8:64). Here, it is not as clear by what means Solomon consecrates the space. One might speculate that oil or blood is sprinkled there to make the space holy, apparently common ways, according to the priestly literature, of consecrating an object or a space.[7] Whatever the method of consecration in 1 Kings, it is clear in this text that it is Solomon who engages in some sort of ritual to clearly demarcate or set aside a particular space for the purposes of the cult.

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[7] See, for example, Lev 8:10-17, where Moses is portrayed as anointing the tabernacle with oil and thus consecrating it, and as pouring blood upon the base of the altar, likewise making it holy.

Space may be sanctified through physical actions of humans, such as the demarcation

of boundaries[8] and anointing.[9] The presence of Yahweh himself may also render a space

"holy." Exod 3 provides perhaps the most famous example of this when Moses is urged

to remove his sandals since the ground upon which he is standing is visited by God

himself, making it "holy" (Exod 3:5). Several times throughout the priestly literature,

Yahweh indicates that his presence will sanctify or render a place holy (e.g. Lev 10:1-3;

Exod 29:43; 40:34-35).

A peculiar feature in the "consecration" of space is that what is holy may only come

in contact with what is also holy. Innumerable times throughout the Hebrew Bible,

Yahweh is described as holy (e.g. Josh 24:19; Isa 5:16; 2 Kgs 19:22). It seems as though

holy Yahweh requires that space be made holy so that he might manifest himself within

it. That is to say, certain ritualized actions must be carried out, by priests (holy persons),

in a particular place before Yahweh will make an appearance. Before Yahweh comes to

Mount Sinai in order to deliver the Decalogue, the mountain itself must be kept "holy,"

bounded, or differentiated from common space that may be freely used. In this case, the

people's breaking past the boundaries around the mountain, defiling holy space, would

result in their death (Exod 19:23-24). Elsewhere, the contact of holy Yahweh with unholy

space has an adverse effect upon Yahweh himself, or at least upon his name (if in fact one

is able to distinguish between the *being* of Yahweh, and his name). Ezek 43:8, in the

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[8] E.g. Exod 19:23 where boundaries are set around Mount Sinai to prevent the Israelites from approaching, making it a distinct (holy) space differentiated from other spaces that may be freely used. See also Ezek 40-48, in which the measuring out and designation of space for certain purposes and for certain persons renders it "holy."

[9] In Num 7:1, Moses is described as "anointing and consecrating" the tabernacle. Lev 8:10 likewise portrays anointing as the vehicle for consecration: "Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them."

context of Ezekiel's vision of the new temple, describes how the name of Yahweh was once profaned when his sanctuary was the location for the worship of idols.

Space is not the only element that may impart its "holiness" or "unholiness" upon another element. Holy and unholy persons, space, matter, and time might have a transforming effect on another element with which they come into contact. As in the examples given above, either what is holy might make a common thing holy as well, or an unholy object may defile the holy thing with which it has come into contact. In Leviticus, contact between priests and "unholy" bodies, such as those of corpses and prostitutes, results in the priests' defilement (Lev 21:11 [on corpses], 14 [on prostitutes]). Alternatively, Exod 29:37 states that the holy altar of Yahweh will render whatever touches it holy as well. In Lev 20:26, Yahweh bestows holiness upon Israel in the action of choosing them for his own, an action that may be interpreted as Yahweh *approaching* Israel: "You shall be holy to me; for I the Lord am holy, and I have separated you from the other peoples to be mine."

Contact with what is holy, however, does not ensure that the object will become holy, as we have seen in the example of Exod 19 where death is promised to those who come too close to Yahweh. This same idea of what is holy destroying what is not holy enough is found again, for example, in the verse which prohibits Aaron, the most holy of priests, from entering the most holy place (i.e. Yahweh's abode) at certain times and without proper preparation (Lev 16:2-5). This particular prohibition leads me to conjecture that hierarchy and a strict adherence to order are integral to the concept of qdš. One may be holy, but for some situations, not holy enough. In this hierarchy, Yahweh is the most

holy, the Aaronic priests follow, the Levites follow these in terms of holiness,[10] and the general populace of Israel after these.[11] The degree of one's holiness proportionately restricts one's access to God, literally the physical proximity within which one may approach the altar. Moreover, this hierarchy and its consequent boundaries between Yahweh and the Israelites must be respected, and mediating actions, such as sacrifice, consecration, the donning of particular clothing, etc. must be performed if these physical borders are to be crossed. The transitive property of holiness and unholiness, conveyed through physical contact between objects, space, time, and persons made holy through ritualized actions in a cultic context, further underlines the physicality inherent in the root *qdš* as well as its cultic sense.

Though it may seem as though this understanding of *qdš* (i.e. the concept of being set apart for cultic observances) is almost exclusive to the use of its derivatives in the priestly material, by its nature concerned with cultic practices, I have found that this definition is applicable to the use of *qdš* terms throughout the Hebrew Bible. This is not to gloss over the different concerns and contexts of the various biblical books. However, in my estimation, it is possible to apply this understanding of *qdš*, gleaned primarily from the priestly source where it occurs most frequently and where its meaning is made so explicit, to other passages in which forms of *qdš* occur. For instance, in the prophetic literature, the people of Israel are often described as a "Holy People" (Isa 62:12). As *qdš* is here being used adjectivally, it is difficult to say with certainty what is meant by such an epithet. However, the definition that we have constructed from the occurrences of the

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[10] In Num 3:6, the Levites are described as assistants to Aaron's priests. They are commissioned to serve *outside* of the tabernacle while Aaron and his line serve within the sanctuary.

forms of *qdš* found primarily in the priestly literature resounds in these contexts as well. First, when the term "holy people" or a related term is used, it is to describe Israel's special status *among other peoples*.[12] Just as "holy" time, space, matter, and persons were differentiated from their common equivalents, the title "holy" for Israel is a testimony to its sense of difference from (and perhaps superiority above) other nations. The source of the difference would be cultural identity or, more specifically, the *cult* identity - that is, the laws, traditions, and composition of society that were "unique"[13] to Israel. The prophets relentlessly castigate the cults of their neighbors. Cultic difference and superiority (i.e. what we have come to understand holiness to signify) seem to be key to Israel's sense of self-identify. This also applies to the adjectival usage of "holy" to describe Yahweh:[14] Yahweh is holy because he is different from and superior to other gods. Israel is aware of this difference through its "unique" cultic life through which it relates to Yahweh. Difference for the sake of the cult is again signified by the use of forms of *qdš* applied to Yahweh.[15]

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[11] The whole nation of Israel is referred to as holy (e.g. Isa 62:12), but certainly the entire nation is not invited to preside at the altar of Yahweh.

[12] Isa 52:1, for instance, refers to Jerusalem's "redemption" from its subjugation to foreign powers. Jerusalem will again be the abode for the people of God alone without foreign intrusion by "the uncircumcised and the unclean." The city is thus "holy" in that it is physically *set apart* from other peoples for the purpose of *cultic* integrity.

[13] I place this term in quotations to make it clear to the reader that I refer to Israel's own sense of self-identity as unique, conveyed through the texts of the Hebrew Bible. I do not align myself with commentators, ancient and modern, who presuppose *the fact* of Israel's difference and superiority over and against the cults of their neighbors. This line of thought has blinded many commentators in the conceptualization of the cultures of Israel's contemporaries, even when concrete evidence surfaces to demonstrate that the alleged chasm between the Israelite cult and those of its neighbors is not wide. Being sensitive to Israel's *relationship* to surrounding cultures rather than presupposing its uniqueness is particularly important in this attempt to define the role of the *qĕdēšâ*, a female figure portrayed by the Bible as 'foreign.'

[14] "Holy" is often used as a title for God in Isaiah and in the Psalms. See for example Isa 1:4; 30:11, 12, 15; 31:1; Ps 77:13; 99:9 (both NRSV versification).

[15] Having said that the prophetic texts tend to use terms derived from *qdš* to describe Israel and Yahweh while the priestly writers focus more on specific rituals and daily activities, I do not wish to create an absolute dichotomy among the usages of *qdš*. Ezekiel, for example, uses derivatives of *qdš* in much the

The occurrences of the derivatives of qdš that I have presented up to this point describe not only what is "set apart" from other things (peoples, places, etc.) but furthermore, what is set apart *for the purposes of* Yahweh. This makes sense in the context of a historical document such as the Hebrew Bible that attempts to convey the history of the ancient Israelite cult, which of course centered upon Yahweh. However, I would argue that qdš is *not* synonymous with the concept of being "set apart for Yahweh." First, there is the matter of the titular use of qdš used to describe an attribute of God (i.e. that he is set apart from and exalted above other gods). Yahweh would not be "set apart for Yahweh," nor necessarily set apart *by* Yahweh. He is simply "set apart"/ "set above." I maintain that even in the titular usage of qdš, a *cultic* sense is conveyed as Yahweh's "holiness" is regarded as the reason for the "holiness" of Israel's cult. However, as the following paragraph illustrates, the *cult* signified by the derivatives of the term qdš is not necessarily Yahwistic.

There are several instances in the Hebrew Bible in which what is holy or what is being made holy is clearly *not* designated for Yahweh's cult or his purposes. For example, in 2 Kgs 10:20, Jehu, in a ploy to identify and destroy worshippers of Baal, orders: "'Sanctify (*qaddēšû*) a solemn assembly for Baal.'" Clearly, time, space, and people are being "set aside," not for Yahweh, but for Baal. Isa 65:5 furnishes another example. In this text, Yahweh condemns his "rebellious people" for participating in forms of worship that were not pleasing to their Lord (Isa 65:3-4). These people are portrayed as

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same way as the writers of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, where his vision of the new Temple and the allotments of the land (Ezek 40-48) resonates with the same language and concerns found in the priestly writings. Likewise, in the priestly source, Israel is described as a holy people, and Yahweh is accorded the titular usage of holy (e.g. Lev 22:32). My intent is to demonstrate *tendencies* in the way that the derivatives of qdš are employed in the various biblical literary genres.

saying to Yahweh, " 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you (*qĕdāštîkā*).'" "Holy" is not used here to describe a state of being set apart for or set above by Yahweh, but rather a sense of self-importance derived from worship that is clearly not directed toward Yahweh. Surely, Isaiah creates an ironic play on words by putting the term "holy" in the mouths of those who, according to the prophet, are instead a disgrace. This passage demonstrates that *qdš* does not necessarily imply the cult of Yahweh. It retains the sense of being "set aside" as well as a cultic sense, but the cult for which one claims to be set aside need not be that of Yahweh. The fact that *qdš* carries with it a sense of being set apart, not necessarily for Yahweh but for some sort of cultic purpose, supports our contention that the *qĕdēšôt* are women designated for non-Yahwistic (at least in the eyes of the writers whose theology and history are preserved in the Hebrew Bible) cultic service.

It should be apparent at this point in our review of the range of meanings of the derivatives of *qdš* that nowhere in the Hebrew text are space, time, matter, persons, or gods qualified by some form of this root linked to sexual behavior. That is to say, personnel, festivals, and instruments of sacrifice are not associated with sexual acts which constitute a part of worship. Sexual behavior is not completely ignored by those texts in which "holy" persons appear. In these cases, however, sexual behavior and certain sexual unions are *prohibited*, not prescribed. This prohibited behavior is regarded as something that presumably *infringes* upon holy space or upon the office of those dedicated to the service of Yahweh. For example, in Exod 19, prior to Yahweh's giving of the Decalogue, Moses is instructed by the Lord to "consecrate" the people of Israel as Yahweh intends to manifest himself upon Mount Sinai (Exod 19:10). As we have remarked previously,

Yahweh's presence makes space holy. To not infringe upon this "holiness," the people are also "made holy" or consecrated. Moses further instructs the people (or men) to wash their clothing (Exod 19:14) and to "not go near a woman" (Exod 19:15). Presumably, dirty clothes and sexual relations would "undo" their consecrated state, and perhaps even defile the "holy space" that Yahweh was about to demarcate by his very presence. In any event, sexual relations, in this case any at all, are regarded as anathema to, as opposed to a part of, a state of holiness.

Particular sexual acts are similarly prohibited to priests in Lev 21. Here, certain sexual unions are prohibited for Aaron and his descendants since they have "the consecration of the anointing oil of ... God" upon them (Lev 21:12). Marrying a widow, a divorced woman, or a prostitute is prohibited to the sons of Aaron (Lev 21:14), described as actions that profane (v. 15, *yĕhalēl*) one's offspring. Only in the sense that certain sexual relationships are off limits to those men made "holy" by Yahweh is sexual behavior a concept related to the root *qdš*. Sexual activity seems related to *qdš* only peripherally in the same sense that clean clothing (Exod 19:14) and the priest's avoidance of corpses (Lev 21:11) are related to *qdš*. None of these concepts is integral to the range of meanings for *qdš*.

It is my conclusion that no sexual activity whatsoever is implicit in the range of meanings and connotations of the derivatives of *qdš*. Rather, if sexual activity plays any part in the concept of *qdš*, it is that certain sexual behaviors occurring in the domestic, as opposed to cultic, lives of Yahweh's people and priests are condemned. In saying this, I do not intend to draw an artificial separation between domestic and cultic space that perhaps would not resonate with the people of ancient Israel. My point, however, is to

demonstrate that the Hebrew Bible's discussion of sexual activity among "holy" persons concerns those relationships that are engaged in outside of the temple or holy space, and are therefore unrelated to the cult in this sense. This conclusion is significant in refuting the arguments of the proponents of the historicity of cult prostitution, who maintain that the terms *qĕdēšâ/qĕdēšôt* and their masculine counterparts *qādeš/qĕdēšîm* connote sexual activity that was carried out in cultic spaces. There is, in my opinion, no implicit sexual meaning within the range of meanings of any derivative of *qdš*. It is my conviction, upon completing this word study, that *qĕdēšôt* is best rendered as "female cult functionaries," and that its masculine counterpart *qĕdēšîm* should be likewise translated as "male cult functionaries." A review of the derivatives of *qdš* determines that all such terms suggest the notion of something being set aside for the purposes of cultic practices.[16] Though this translation does not preclude a sexual role for these functionaries, neither does it necessarily include it.

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[16] Three important critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis. Hooks (Sacred Prostitution). Gruber ("Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*"). and Adler (Covenant). argue that the root *qdš* does not always connote a cultic sense. and may simply mean "set apart whether for exaltation or degradation" (Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*." 148). I do not find their arguments convincing in light of my study of the root *qdš*. The biblical examples that these scholars offer as evidence are meager and ambiguous. For instance, Hooks cites a portion of Jer 12:3 as evidence for the secular usage of *qdš*. The verse reads: " Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter. and set them apart (*wĕhaqdišēm*) for the day of slaughter." Hooks contends that here. the root *qdš* refers to the categorically non-cultic selection of sheep for slaughter. In my opinion, the use of *qdš* here need not be understood as devoid of cultic overtones. Rather, the author may have been metaphorically comparing "the wicked" to consecrated animals which were to be killed for sacrifice. As I have previously stated. I have found *qdš* used only to describe a person, place. time or thing set aside for the purposes of the cult. In my view. the understanding of *qdš* as able to designate something set apart in a non-cultic sense is anticipated by their mistaken interpretation of the *qĕdēšâ* as a common prostitute. The three scholars who contend that the *qĕdēšôt* were not cultic prostitutes but common prostitutes base their argument largely on the observation that the term *qĕdēšâ* is often paired with the term for common prostitute, *zônâ* (Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*, 134; Adler, Covenant, 200). In Chapter Six. I will argue that the interpretation of the *qĕdēšôt* as common prostitutes rests largely on a misunderstanding of the nature and function of the metaphorical sexual language (derived from *znh*) by which they are described.

It is surprising then to turn to the eleven references[17] to persons who bear titles derived from the root qdš and to find these translated as male or female "cult prostitutes." Certainly, the reference to "cult" does not deviate from my understanding of the meaning of forms of qdš. My review of the forms of qdš leads me to conclude that a cultic sense, though not necessarily one that is Yahwistic, is always implied in the various forms of this root. Prostitution, on the other hand, does stretch the definitions that I have demonstrated to be native to biblical Hebrew in an unexpected and, I would argue, unwarranted way. Qdš, which has until this point been used to describe space, time, matter, and personnel dedicated to Yahweh and to describe Yahweh himself (with the above-noted exceptions of qdš referring to non-Yahwistic cultic activity), is assumed by the majority of traditional modern scholars to take on a sexual meaning in these eleven instances.

Indeed, the key word in the enterprise of translating qĕdēšâ/qĕdēšôt and its masculine equivalents qādeš/qĕdēšîm is "assumption." Translators who render these Hebrew titles as male or female "cult prostitute" *assume* that a sex cult existed amongst Israel's neighbors, particularly the Canaanites. Since each of the occurrences of these titles seems to be in reference to foreign/Canaanite persons or to those Israelites who have supposedly adopted foreign cult practices, the translations seem warranted. The train of thought seems to run in the following way: *Qādeš/qĕdēšîm and qĕdēšâ/qĕdēšôt, derived from the root qdš, imply some sort of cultic activity. In each case, the cultic activity is condemned by the biblical authors or described as foreign to the Yahweh cult.*

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[17]1 Kgs 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kgs 23:7; Job 36:14; Deut 23:17; Gen 38:21-22. (Hos 4:14, the eleventh such occurrence, will not be examined at this juncture as it is the subject of the thesis at large.)

Moreover, three of the occurrences are surrounded by sexual language. Therefore, the foreign cultic personnel must be sacred prostitutes of the Canaanite sex cult.

Apart from the fact that textual evidence from Canaanite civilization contemporaneous with that of ancient Israel demonstrates that the cognates for the Hebrew titles in question do not describe a practitioner of cultic sex,[18] it is my contention that there is no concrete biblical evidence to support the translation of these derivatives of *qdš* as "cult prostitute." Turning to these texts, I will demonstrate how the context for each occurrence of *qĕdēšâ, qĕdēšôt, qādeš*, and *qĕdēšîm* casts doubt on the traditional translations (i.e. "female and male cult prostitutes") made by most modern scholars.

Qādeš/Qĕdēšîm in 1 and 2 Kings

We encounter the title *qādeš* and its plural form *qĕdēšîm* most frequently in 1 and 2 Kings. Four of its six occurrences are there (1 Kgs 14:24; 15:12; 22:47; 2 Kgs 23:7). It is clear from the similar contexts in which each of these verses occurs that the *qĕdēšîm* were *not* members of a class of priests acceptable to the Deuteronomistic editors. As I will demonstrate, each occurrence of the term *qādeš* or its plural form purports to offer a glimpse into the 'deplorable' state of the religion of Judah or Israel, which is either 'reformed' by a particular king and lauded by the Deuteronomists, or left alone, causing Israel's domination by foreign powers.

It is the latter situation that occurs in 1 Kgs 14:24. During the reign of Rehoboam, the people of Judah are said to have done "what was evil in the sight of the Lord" (v.22). Their "evil" is described in the following way:

23 For they built for themselves high places, pillars, and sacred poles on every high hill and under every green tree, 24 there were also *qĕdēšîm* [19] in the land. They committed all the abominations of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel.

Directly after this verse, the author states that King Shishak of Egypt succeeded in removing gold and silver from the temple. It seems clear that the Deuteronomists are being faithful to their theory of history, which maintains that Judah/Israel will suffer foreign domination if the people are not prevented from engaging in foreign worship practices.[20] The *qĕdēšîm* are clearly involved in these cultic practices and, given our understanding of the range of meanings of the root *qdš*, should be understood as official functionaries in this 'foreign' cult. The text does not furnish us with other clues as to the role of the *qĕdēšîm*.

In 1 Kgs 15:12, 1 Kgs 22:47, and 2 Kgs 23:7, three different kings, Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Josiah, respectively, are lauded for their displacement or extermination of the *qĕdēšîm* in the land. This action is accompanied in 1 Kgs 15:12 and 2 Kgs 23:7 by the burning of the image of Asherah and the removal of idols. In 1 Kgs 22:47, the author notes critically that the removal of idols did not occur under Jehoshaphat although the *qĕdēšîm* were destroyed. The intended tone of this verse is one of criticism, suggesting that this particular purgation was somewhat incomplete. Clearly the removal of the *qĕdēšîm* is a part of the approved purging of apostate or foreign religious practices from Judah in these Deuteronomistic texts.

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[18] Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 133-147. The cognate forms for *qĕdēšâ* will be presented and analyzed in Chapter Three.

[19] Fundamental to my thesis is the inadequacy of the English translations of *qĕdēšâ*, *qĕdēšôt*, *qādeš*, and *qĕdēšîm*. In presenting the Hebrew Bible verses in which these terms occur, I will therefore retain their transliterated forms.

From the texts of 1 and 2 Kgs, it is clear that the Deuteronomists understood the

qĕdēšîm as playing a role in a cult foreign to an exclusively 'Yahwistic' cult. Given the

conclusions of our investigation of the range of meanings of *qdš*, we might say with a

high degree of certainty that the *qĕdēšîm* were designated officials of this cult. There

seems to be a relationship between the *qĕdēšîm* and Asherim, "sacred poles," and "high

places," but the texts give little indication as to the nature and practices of this 'deviant'

or non-Yahwistic cult.[20] What is clear from the texts is that people who engage in

'foreign' (and not necessarily *sexual*) practices are considered by the Deuteronomistic

editors to be worthy of condemnation.

It is quite striking, then, to turn to the various English translations of the Hebrew text

and find *qādeš/qĕdēšîm* translated as "male cult prostitute(s)" or some variation

thereupon. It is my opinion that nothing in the texts of 1 and 2 Kgs alludes to a sexual

role for the *qĕdēšîm*. The translations of these texts are clearly influenced by

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[20] See n.73 in Chapter One.

[21] The lack of information in the 1 and 2 Kgs texts about the high places, sacred poles, and Asherim with which the *qādeš/qĕdēšîm* are presumably connected does not cause commentators to hesitate in interpreting these elements as constituting a sex cult. Gwilym H. Jones (1 and 2 Kings [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1984] 277) speculates that the sacred pole was "a symbol of the male deity in the Canaanite fertility cult, and may have originally been a phallic symbol." The *qādeš* of 1 Kings 14:24 are, for this author, cultic sexual practitioners in this alleged sex cult who, through "the magic symbolism of this practice" secured fertility. John Gray (OTL: 1 and 2 Kings [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970] 342) interprets this same list of objectionable (according to the Deuteronomists) items as "associated with the local nature shrine of the Canaanites." For Gray, the term Asherah, which appears to be associated with the *qādeš/qĕdēšîm* (1 Kgs 14:23 (plural form); 15:13; 2 Kgs 23:7), is the name of "the mother-goddess in the Canaanite fertility-cult" (342) and establishes the sexual function of the practitioners of this cult, i.e. the *qĕdēšîm*. James A. Montgomery (The Book of Kings [Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1960] 275) clearly regards the *qĕdēšîm* as sexual functionaries, as he translates the term by the English "sodomites." Despite these bold assertions about the relationship of the "standard deuteronomic list of evils" (Jones, Kings, 277) to cultic sexual activity, the texts in question are devoid of sexual language. Also, the Kings commentators (Montgomery, Kings, 268; Gray, Kings, 343; Jones, Kings, 277) refer the reader to other Hebrew Bible verses in which *qādeš* and related terms are featured (Deut 23:17; Hos 4:14) as "evidence" for the cultic sexual role of these figures. Throughout the course of this chapter and the rest of this thesis, I will demonstrate that a sexual role cannot be unambiguously attested for the *qĕdēšîm* on the basis of these texts.

presuppositions of a sex cult among Israel's neighbors. 2 Kgs 23:7 furnishes a good

example of inference as determining factor in the translation "male cult prostitutes" for

qĕdēšîm rather than evidence from the text itself. This verse pairs the *qĕdēšîm* with "the

women [who] did weaving for Asherah." Asherah, as a Canaanite deity and more

precisely, a Canaanite goddess, has long been associated with fertility and presumed

sexual rites, including cultic acts of sex.[22] That Asherah and women are mentioned in

close proximity to the *qĕdēšîm*, though neither the goddess nor the women are portrayed

by the texts as encouraging or participating in any sexual activity (the women are

weaving), seems to be enough in itself to create a sexual overtone and thus provides for

many translators and commentators a (false) basis for the translation of *qĕdēšîm* as

"male cult prostitutes."

Qĕdēšîm in Job 36:14

Job 36:14 is translated in the NRSV as follows : "They [the godless in heart] die in

their youth, and their lives end among the *qĕdēšîm*."[23] As the various English

translations of the Hebrew Bible and Job commentators suggest in their differing

translations of *qĕdēšîm*, the significance and meaning of this term in this context is not

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[22] See Saul Olyan's study of Asherah (Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988]). The uncritical association of ancient Near Eastern goddess figures with fertility/motherhood has come under serious scrutiny in recent scholarship (e.g. Hackett, "Sexist Model," 65-76). The presupposition that the goddess is primarily a sexual figure often overshadows her other more important functions or imposes upon the goddess qualities which are foreign to her character. The implication of these observations for my thesis is that the 1 and 2 Kgs occurrences of *qĕdēšîm* that mention Asherah or her image in conjunction with the *qĕdēšîm* should not be identified, on the basis of the assumption that Asherah functioned as a fertility goddess, with cultic sexual activity.

[23] The NRSV renders *baqdēšîm* as "in shame," with a textual note indicating that the MT is translated more literally as "among the temple prostitutes."

easily discerned. Scholars either translate *qĕdēšîm* as the name of a particular class of

persons,[24] or as a state of shame.[25]

Though these two types of translations may seem categorically different, the

commentators demonstrate in their discussions that there is an affinity between the two

translation schools. The commonality is that *qĕdēšîm* is regarded by commentators as a

metaphor employed to describe the fate of "the godless in heart."[26] Driver, who translates

Job 36:14 as "their soul dieth in youth, and their life among the temple prostitutes,"

contends that the phrase "among the temple prostitutes" literally means that the "godless

in heart" are consigned to the alleged fate of temple prostitutes, i.e. "premature death."[27]

According to Driver, the "male devotees to unchastity (i.e. *qĕdēšîm*) ... worn out by

their excesses, must have died, as a rule, at an early age, so that they become the

proverbial victims of an untimely death."[28] *Qĕdēšîm* is thus used as a metaphorical

elaboration of the first part of the verse ("They die in youth..."). Gibson makes a similar

case for the *qĕdēšîm*, a term that he translates as "the unclean."[29] He contends that

qĕdēšîm is "the technical name for those who practiced immorality in the worship of a

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[24]Marvin H. Pope (AB : Job [Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965] 231) translates *baqdēšîm* as "among the sodomites." Edgar C.S. Gibson (The Book of Job [London: Methuen and Co., 1905] 196) translates "among the unclean," the same translation found in the KJV. Norman C. Habel (The Book of Job [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985] 498) translates "among perverts." The NKJV Bible, similar to Habel, translates *qĕdēšîm* as "among perverted persons." S.R. Driver (The Book of Job [Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1921] 276) also translates *qĕdēšîm* as a name for a class of persons, rendering the term as "among temple prostitutes." The NASB, and NIV translations are similar to Driver's, translating *qĕdēšîm* as "among cult prostitutes" and "among male prostitutes of the shrines" respectively.

[25]Robert Gordis (The Book of Job [New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978] 406) translates *baqdēšîm* as "in shame." Both the NRSV and the RSV also give this translation.

[26]Pope (Job, 233) may be an exception among the commentators. He notes that his translation of *qĕdēšîm* ("sodomites") is a variation of the more literal (in his estimation) "'holy males,' the consecrated prostitutes of the Canaanites fertility cult" (233), and then goes on to dismiss the "usual explanation" of *qĕdēšîm* as the proverbial symbol of early mortality.

[27]Driver, Job, 311.

[28]Driver, Job, 311.

[29] Gibson, Job, 196.

deity and in the immediate precincts of a temple." However, like Driver, he understands

qĕdēšîm to have a metaphorical purpose in Job 36:14. The "godless in heart" do not

literally become *qĕdēšîm*, but they die young *as do* the *qĕdēšîm*.[30]

Gordis, who translates *baqdēšîm* as "in shame," similarly understands *qĕdēšîm* to

be used in this text as a metaphor or euphemism. He acknowledges that the more "literal"

translation "among the male harlots" is a virtual synonym for "in shame."[31] Again, Gordis

does not envision the text describing the "godless in heart" becoming "male harlots," but

rather living (or ending) their lives in a kind of shame that the image of the *qĕdēšîm*

aptly represents.[32]

It is my contention that the translations and interpretations of *qĕdēšîm* in Job 36:14

rest entirely upon presuppositions about this class of functionaries. Although I agree with

their assessment that the term *qĕdēšîm* is used to denigrate the "godless in heart," I

disagree with the notion that this denigration is necessarily sexual in nature. As in the

case of the occurrences of *qādeš* and *qĕdēšîm* in 1 and 2 Kings, the term *qĕdēšîm* in

Job 36:14 is not paired with any sexual language. The attribution of sexual activity to the

qĕdēšîm is necessarily based upon common presuppositions about the role of this class

of persons.[33] The symbolic connection between the *qĕdēšîm*, who are thought to die

young due to their debauchery,[34] and the premature death of the godless in heart is not

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[30] Gibson (Job, 196) writes: "The allusion here must be to their (*qĕdēšîm*) habits of life leading to a premature and miserable death."

[31] Gordis, Job, 415.

[32] Gordis, Job, 415.

[33] In fact, all four commentators cited refer the reader to Deut 23:17, and the occurrences of *qādeš/qĕdēšîm* in 1 and 2 Kings for an elaboration upon the role of the *qĕdēšîm* as practitioners of cult sex. It is my contention that these verses do not constitute evidence for the reconstruction of a sexual role for the *qĕdēšîm* as the above discussion should make clear.

[34] This, in my estimation, is a poignant example of scholars' interpretations being guided by prejudice and stereotype, specifically the stereotype of the sexual excesses of non-heterosexuals.

clear, as even those scholars who posit this connection admit.[35] Even if one accepts that

the *qĕdēšîm* were in fact male cult prostitutes, there is no biblical text that describes the

qĕdēšîm as practicing excessive sexual activity and dying young. In summary, Job 36:14

does not provide evidence for the translation of *qĕdēšîm* as "cult prostitutes" or for a sex

cult in ancient Israel. Presupposition and tenuous connections between images in Job

36:14 rather than clear evidence account for the (mis)translation and (mis)interpretation

of the term *qĕdēšîm* in this verse.

Qādeš and Qĕdēšâ in Deuteronomy 23:17

The next text in question is Deuteronomy 23:17 (v.18 in the MT) in which both the

term *qādeš* and the term *qĕdēšâ* appear. Verse 17 reads as follows: "None of the

daughters of Israel shall be a *qĕdēšâ*; none of the sons of Israel shall be a *qādeš*."

English Bible translations and Deuteronomy commentators[36] translate *qādeš* and *qĕdēšâ*

respectively as "male" and "female temple prostitute." These translations are made on

the basis that the following verse, which reads "You shall not bring the fee of a prostitute

(*zônâ*) or the wages of a dog (*keleb*) into the house of the Lord your God in payment for

any vow, for both of these are abhorrent to the Lord your God," is regarded as qualifying

verse 17. According to commentators,[37] *zônâ*/prostitute in verse 18 (v.19 in the MT)

[35]Driver (Job, 311) demonstrates the speculative nature of his position in his use of the word "must" to describe the alleged premature death of the *qĕdēšîm*. Gibson (Job, 196 - my emphasis) is also clearly speculating in connecting the *qĕdēšîm* to a proverbial untimely death: "The allusion here must be to their habits... leading to ... death." Pope (Job, 233) dismisses this connection entirely.

[36]See for example S.R. Driver, Deuteronomy (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1896) 264-265; Gerhard Von Rad, Deuteronomy:A Commentary (OTL: Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966) 147-148; A.D.H. Mayes, Deuteronomy (London: Oliphants, 1979) 320.

[37]Deuteronomy commentators explain that the function of *zônâ* and *keleb* in the text is to qualify *qĕdēšâ* and *qādeš*. (See Driver, Deuteronomy, 265; Von Rad, Deuteronomy, 147-148; Mayes, Deuteronomy, 320). Certain English Bible translations of the MT also reflect this alleged connection. The NIV, which

identifies the role of the *qĕdēšâ*, and *keleb*/dog, either as a debasing term for a *qādeš* or as a neutral term meaning a male devotee in the Canaanite cult,[38] explains the role of the *qādeš*.

In order to regard verse 18 as an elaboration of verse 17, one must first ascertain that the two verses were originally intended to be paired. It is my contention that this is not self-evident, as these verses appear in a longer list of disjointed proscriptions and prohibitions.[39] There is no obvious pattern throughout this text as a whole that connects one law to the next. The ordinances range from the exclusion of a castrated man from the "assembly of God" (23:1) to the prohibition against charging interest on a loan to a fellow Israelite (v.19). There is, furthermore, no pattern of "law-explanation" that might arguably relate verse 17 to 18. Some of the laws are elaborated with an explanatory sentence (e.g. 23:15-16; 21-22), others appear as an unqualified statement (e.g. 23:9; 24). Given these characteristics of Deuteronomy 23, I contend that it is a reasonable position to take verse 17 and 18 as separate prohibitions. The first verse is a prohibition against

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translates *qĕdēšâ* and *qādeš* as male and female "shrine prostitutes." translates *zônâ* as "female prostitute" (as might be expected), but also translates *keleb*, which literally means "dog," as "male prostitute." The NIV Study Bible comments on its translation of *keleb* as "male prostitute" that the Hebrew term is literally "dog," but that this word is "often associated with moral or spiritual impurity" (272). The evidence for this usage of *keleb* is drawn from the NT books of Matthew and Philippians. I contend that this evidence is anachronistic and therefore irrelevant to the interpretation of Deut 23:18. The NRSV similarly renders *keleb* as "male prostitute." The KJV, on the other hand, regards *qĕdēšâ* and *zônâ* as synonyms, translating both terms as "whore."

[38]Driver (Deuteronomy, 265) describes *keleb* as "an opprobrious designation of the male *qĕdēšîm* referred to in v.18." Mayes (Deuteronomy, 320) notes that *keleb* can be used both pejoratively (presumably to characterize one who is called thus as being no better than an animal) or positively, to designate a "faithful servant and follower" in terms of the loyalty of a dog. Von Rad (Deuteronomy, 147-148) also notes that *keleb* can have both a negative or a positive/neutral connotation, and that it is most likely that the latter meaning is intended in verse 18. Though the term itself may not be pejorative, the *keleb* (the devotee to Canaanite deities), these commentators maintain, is still condemned by the text for *being* a *keleb*. All three commentators maintain, however, that a male devotee to a Canaanite deity would have been a cult prostitute, as their translations of *qĕdēšâ* and *qādeš* in verse 17 and their insistence upon the connection between vv.17 and 18 demonstrate.

[39] Hooks (Sacred Prostitution, 171) presents this as one argument which problematizes the traditionally unquestioned assumption that Deut 23:17 and 18 are paired and mutually defining.

cultic activities led by non-Yahwistic[40] cult functionaries, and the second a prohibition against the offering of money acquired by the sale of an activity (i.e. prostitution) or object (i.e a dog) designated as unclean or defiling.[41]

Without taking the position that verses 17 and 18 address two distinct (mis)behaviors, one might still argue that verse 18 does not literally spell out the activities of the persons condemned in verse 17.[42] Instead, one might take verse 18 as an analogy that demonstrates more the contempt that the conservative Yahwists held for these cultic functionaries than the nature of their roles. The 1 and 2 Kgs texts demonstrate how the *qĕdēšîm* were despised to the point that their execution or exile was applauded. It would not be surprising for the Deuteronomists to use derogatory language in referring to the *qĕdēšâ* and the *qādeš* in the context of a law which prohibits their role in this society. Verse 17 then decrees that these "apostate" cultic functionaries are personnel prohibited from the cult of Yahweh, and verse 18 functions as an analogy or a rhetorical statement that reflects the great contempt of the writer(s) toward them. The following paraphrases

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[40] I.e. according to the Deuteronomists.

[41] Sexual intercourse with a *zônā* is described in Leviticus as defiling to priests (Lev 21:7, 14). Likewise, the "unclean" status of the *keleb* is also clear. Isa 66, in which the author(s) of Isaiah claims that Yahweh favors the "humble and contrite in spirit" (v.2) as opposed to those who perform sacrificial rituals, provides a good example. The author likens the performance of "acceptable" sacrificial actions to abominable acts. Verse 3 reads: "Whoever slaughters an ox is like one who kills a human being; whoever sacrifices a lamb **is like one who breaks a dog's neck**; whoever presents a grain offering, like one who offers swine's blood" (my emphasis). Other verses that demonstrate the low status of the dog include Ps 59: 6,14; Exod 22:31; and Job 30:1.

[42] Adler (Covenant, 208) argues that the *qĕdēšâ* was a common prostitute and that the *qādeš* was a male cult functionary. This is based in part on what I consider her erroneous interpretation of the possible range of meanings for the root *qdš* (see note 16 above). She argues that Deut 23: 17 and 18 support her position in that if in fact the *qĕdēšâ* was in essence a female *qādeš*, the author could simply have referred to *qĕdēšîm*. Instead, referring to both *qādeš* and *qĕdēšâ*, the author allegedly identifies two different types of persons who are seen as objectionable to the Yahweh cult, a male cult functionary on the one hand, and a prostitute on the other. Gruber ("Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 135-136, n.8) also argues that *qādeš* refers to a male cult functionary, disparagingly referred to as *keleb* (dog), and the *qĕdēšâ* refers to a common prostitute. I find this interpretation unconvincing. In Chapter Six of this thesis, I will argue that Adler, Gruber, and Hooks mistake the *qĕdēšôt* for a common prostitute because of their lack of attention to the nature and function of the *znh* terminology which accompanies this Hebrew term.

this idea of law and analogy: *There shall be no qĕdēšâ or qādeš among you. Their services in the cult are illegitimate, defiling and have no place in the cult. Would you consider the money that a prostitute makes or that you might acquire for the sale of your hound fit for Yahweh? Likewise, you must not accept the services or the earnings of such despicable people in your holy places.*

If verses 17 and 18 are not necessarily intrinsically related, there is no reason, in my opinion, to translate *qĕdēšâ* or *qādeš* as cult prostitute, male or female. If in fact they are related, I suggest that it is for the rhetorical intention of denigrating these 'foreign' cult practitioners whose activities are so hated. I maintain that the terms "female cult functionary" and "male cult functionary" should be employed here. As I have demonstrated with regards to the *qĕdēšîm*, such functionaries, likely officiating in a cult not deemed purely Yahwistic, are condemned by the conservative Yahwists who have left us the text of the Hebrew Bible and their version of Israelite history. In the Kings texts and in the book of Job, these functionaries are not condemned because of a sexual role, but because of their representation of the Baal cult and/or their association with Asherah. Likewise in the Deuteronomy text, we may reasonably understand that the Israelites are prohibited by law to become cultic servants of anything not deemed legitimate Yahwism by the Deuteronomists. The specific nature of the cultic service entailed is not explicitly illuminated in this text, and therefore one cannot say with certainty that it either precludes or includes sexual acts in exchange for goods or money. It is my suggestion that scholars who posit a cultic, sexual role for the *qādeš*, *qĕdēšâ*, and *qĕdēšîm* are in the unfavorable position of constructing an argument from silence.

Qĕdēšâ in Genesis 38: 21-22

In the story of Tamar and Judah in Genesis 38, the terms *zônâ* and *qĕdēšâ* seem to be used interchangeably. It is therefore, in my estimation, the most challenging piece of biblical evidence to refute in critiquing the cult prostitution hypothesis. However, I will present below what I maintain is a plausible reinterpretation of certain elements of the story that have traditionally been used to justify the translation of *qĕdēšâ* as "cult prostitute."

Tamar, in a ploy to conceive a son by Judah, her father-in-law, dons a veil to disguise her face,[43] and waits for him "at the entrance to Enaim" (38:14). Verse 15 states that "When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a prostitute *(zônâ)*."[44] The scenario presumably unfolds according to Tamar's plan as Judah proposes intercourse, promising a kid to the *zônâ* who insists upon keeping his "signet, cord and staff" (v.18) as collateral until she receives the animal. Judah attempts to deliver the promised kid by sending his friend Hirah the Adullamite to find Tamar, to whom Hirah refers as a *qĕdēšâ* in inquiring after her whereabouts. Verse 21 reads: "He asked the townspeople, 'Where is the *qĕdēšâ*

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[43] I consider Tamar's veiling to be a practical consideration on her part, namely that she did not want to be recognized by Judah! The veil, however, is understood by several commentators to be an interpretive crux that confirms Tamar's intention to don the disguise of a *qĕdēšâ*. For John Skinner (A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910] 452) Tamar's veiling "explains not Judah's failure to recognize her, but his mistaking her for a harlot." Skinner describes the veil as part of "the garb of the common prostitute" but then notes that the veil may also be a symbol of "dedication to Ištar, the veiled goddess" and signal Tamar's intention to assume the status of a sexual "votary" (454). S R. Driver (The Book of Genesis [London: Methuen & Co., 1906] 330) states of Tamar's veiling : "Tamar dressed herself in the garb, not of an ordinary harlot, but of a *votary*, or temple-prostitute." Contrary to these interpretations of the significance of the veil, I read this text with Phyllis Bird ("The Harlot As Heroine: Narrative Art and Social Presupposition in Three Old Testament Texts," Semeia 46 [1989] 119-139). Bird states of Judah's belief that Tamar must be a prostitute upon seeing her at the entrance to Enaim (v.15): "Tamar's position is probably just as telling as her garb. A lone woman sitting by the road without apparent business would probably be enough to suggest the wares she was selling" (124). More than a simple alternative reading of the function of the veil, Bird critiques the commentators for relying upon information about women's dress from the Middle Assyrian laws which are not necessarily

who was at Enaim by the wayside?' But they said, 'No *qĕdēšâ* has been here.'" In verse

22, in reporting the incident to Judah, Hirah again uses the term *qĕdēšâ* to describe

Tamar.

The interchange of *zônâ* and *qĕdēšâ* is often regarded as a solid basis for attributing

a sexual role to the *qĕdēšâ*. One theory is that *qĕdēšâ* may be the Canaanite-dialect

equivalent of *zônâ*. This explains why Judah, the Israelite, regards Tamar as a *zônâ*

whereas Hirah, in addressing Canaanite people, asks for a *qĕdēšâ*.[45] However, the more

frequently made argument is that the terms are not simple synonyms, even according to

those who argue that both the biblical *zônâ* and *qĕdēšâ* performed sexual acts in

exchange for some form of payment. The *zônâ* for these commentators is the common

prostitute on the periphery of Israelite and Canaanite society, whereas the *qĕdēšâ* is a

religious sexual functionary whose role was "repulsive to Israel,"[46] but acceptable to

Canaan.[47] One explanation for the interchange of these two allegedly related but not

identical terms is that Judah, the Israelite, in his journey to the Canaanite town of Enaim

where cult prostitution allegedly takes place, "mistakes Tamar for a common harlot,"

which explains the use of the term *zônâ* in verse 15. His Adullamite friend Hirah,

knowing the customs of the land, properly inquires in Enaim about the *qĕdēšâ* with

whom his friend consorted.[48] Even though this theory of mistaken identity demonstrates

that the *terms zônâ* and *qĕdēšâ* are not synonymous, that the Canaanite *qĕdēšâ*'s role

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applicable to Canaan or Israel (135, n.15). Westenholz ("Tamar," 247) similarly takes issue with the "*communis opinio*[that] veiling was the disguise of a common harlot."
[44]See note above.
[45]Skinner, Genesis, 454.
[46]Gerhard Von Rad, OTL; Genesis: A Commentary (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972) 359.
[47]Driver (Genesis, 330); Skinner, Genesis, 454; E.A. Speiser (AB; Genesis [Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1964] 300).
[48] Speiser Genesis, 300.

was sexual and that her status was equated with that of the common prostitute, at least in the eyes of the Israelites, is the final conclusion of the commentators.

In my assessment, there is one crucial element that undermines the commentators' theory, based on their interpretation of this text, that though the qĕdēšâ was esteemed differently by Israelites and Canaanites, her role was indisputably sexual. This crux is Judah's great concern with his reputation, explicitly revealed in verse 23 when he instructs the unsuccessful Hirah to abandon the pursuit of retrieving Judah's possessions since "otherwise, we will be laughed at." This concern pervades the search for the prostitute at Enaim and may provide an explanation for the use of the term qĕdēšâ. Judah, after all, does not venture back to the town himself to retrieve his possessions, sending a friend in his place. This action may reasonably be interpreted as one performed out of embarrassment at having visited a prostitute.[49] Moreover, if the search for a prostitute to settle a payment is a delicate situation for a man, then Hirah, as the one who searched for Tamar, would surely have risked the same shame that Judah averted by sending his friend. It is not unreasonable to suppose, along with Phyllis Bird,[50] that Hirah, like Judah, employed his own scheme to accomplish his mission while avoiding public humiliation. Approaching the townspeople, Hirah, leading a kid into Enaim, asks for the whereabouts of the qĕdēšâ, a female cult functionary (and one who may have in fact received animal offerings for sacrifice).[51] Hirah claims that the qĕdēšâ had been by the road, on the chance that he might acquire a clue about the prostitute without embarrassing himself or Judah, on whose behalf he makes inquiries. The response Hirah hoped for may

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[49]Von Rad (Genesis, 360) describes the locating of Tamar for the purpose of payment as "a delicate situation" which Judah, for this reason, tries to accomplish "through an intermediary."
[50]Bird, "Harlot as Heroine," 126.

have been something to this effect: "No *qĕdēšâ* has been here, only a common *zônâ*."

Given that the theme of embarrassment pervades this brief scenario, it is not unreasonable

to propose that *zônâ* is replaced with *qĕdēšâ* not as a synonym, but as a face-saving

"euphemism."[52]

Even in Gen 38, where *qĕdēšâ* seems to be paired with *zônâ*, there is ambiguity in

terms of evidence of a sexual role for the *qĕdēšâ*. In my estimation, each of the Hebrew

Bible occurrences of *qĕdēšâ*, *qādeš*, and *qĕdēšîm* is best translated with a term that

indicates that these people were female and male functionaries in a cult 'foreign' to the

cult of Yahweh in the minds of the biblical authors. The understanding of the sexual

nature of the cult relies on presupposition, and not on textual evidence.

Conclusion

It is my conclusion that the term *qĕdēšâ* is the title of a female cult functionary

officiating in rites of sacrifice and/or worship that were not sanctioned by the

conservative Yahwists whose record of history and whose conception of the ideal

Yahweh cult is preserved in the Hebrew Bible. There is no conclusive evidence in the

Hebrew texts that the *qĕdēšâ* participated in cultic sexual rites to fulfill her job

description. Furthermore, in reviewing all of the derivatives of the root *qdš* that occur in

the Hebrew Bible, no connotation of sexual activity is to be found. If there is any

connection between *qdš* and sexual activity, it is that of the *prohibition* of certain sexual

relations for those considered "holy" rather than their *prescription*. The translation of

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[51]This suggestion is also made by Westenholz ("Tamar," 248).

[52]Bird, "Harlot as Heroine," 126. See Chapter Six (175-177) for a more elaborate discussion of Gen 38 in light of the evidence refuting the cult prostitution hypothesis presented in the following chapters.

qĕdēšâ as "cult prostitute" is unwarranted in terms of the biblical evidence. Translating

qĕdēšâ as "cult prostitute" rests on the presupposition of a sex cult among non-Israelites

that "beguiled" some of the "holy people" of Israel.

CHAPTER THREE

"CULT PROSTITUTES" IN EXTRA BIBLICAL AND CLASSICAL SOURCES

Scholars who understand the *qĕdēšôt* to be cult prostitutes claim that women commonly held roles as ritual sexual functionaries in the cults of Israel's neighbors. Some of these scholars appeal to extra biblical, ANE documents where cognate terms for *qĕdēšôt* occur as evidence for the presence of cult prostitutes among, for example, the Canaanite and Mesopotamian peoples. Scholars claim that further evidence for the institution of cult prostitution in the ANE is found in the writings of Herodotus, Lucian, and Strabo.[1]

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that scholars' extra biblical ANE and classical evidence is highly contentious. First, building on the arguments of those biblical scholars who refute the cult prostitution hypothesis,[2] I will argue that there are no unambiguous references to ritualized sexual activity and cultic sexual functionaries in the ANE documents. Second, I will demonstrate that classics scholars do not consider the ancient Greek accounts to be useful for accurate reconstructions of ANE cultures and customs. It is my contention that biblical scholars cannot claim any extra biblical evidence as support for their conceptualization of the *qĕdēšôt* of Hos 4:14 as sexual functionaries in a Canaanite-styled sex cult.

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[1] Herodotus, a 5th century B.C.E. Greek traveler/historian, produced a travel account known as The Histories. His account of alleged cult prostitution in Babylonia, recorded in book one of the Histories, is the most widely-used classical source as evidence by biblical scholars who support the cult prostitution hypothesis. Strabo's (a first century B.C.E geographer) and Lucian's (2nd century C.E. satirist and rhetorician) accounts of cult prostitution in the ANE, less frequently used as evidence by biblical scholars, do receive critical attention by those biblical scholars who refute the cult prostitution hypothesis.

[2] Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution," 225-226; Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 32-36 and 40-41; Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*,"137; Oden, "Religious Identity," 140-147; Bucher, ZNH, 59-62; Adler, Covenant, 178-185; Westenholz, "Tamar," 261-263.

Qĕdēšôt's Extra Biblical Cognates[3]

As demonstrated in Chapter One, it is commonplace for modern biblical scholars to claim that the phenomenon of cult prostitution was "widespread" throughout the ancient Near East. The majority of Hosea scholars, however, do not make specific mention of cognate terms for *qĕdēšôt* in ancient Semitic languages in order to illustrate that classes of women indeed functioned as cult prostitutes in Canaan and Mesopotamia. More common than an appeal to cognate terms as evidence for cult prostitution in Hosea's Israel is a generalized statement about the presence of sex in Canaanite cult rituals. For instance, without supporting evidence from Ugaritic materials, G.W. Anderson makes the following claim: "Fertility was a dominant motif in the Canaanite cult by which Israelite worship had been corrupted. One expression of the concern for fertility was the presence at the sanctuaries of women who made themselves available as cultic prostitutes."[4] Abraham Heschel similarly describes Canaanite sexual rites without any appeal to Canaanite ritual documents:[5]

> without abandoning the cult of the God of their Fathers, the Hebrews worshipped the gods of the land they had conquered, sacrificing on the tops of mountains and making offerings ... The rites included sacred prostitution as well as intoxication. It was the worship of a god of the land rather than of the Creator of heaven and earth; a god who in return for the blessings of fertility demanded the gifts of incense and the excitements of the flesh.

Unsubstantiated statements about the presence of "cult prostitutes" in the Canaanite cult such as the two cited above are far too numerous to present in this chapter. In my

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[3]As I do not read Ugaritic or Akkadian, I have consulted English translations of the Ugaritic and Akkadian material.
[4]Anderson, "Hosea and Yahweh," 428.
[5]Heschel, The Prophets, 45.

estimation, scholars' lack of attention to the content of the ANE sources in their postulation of rampant ritualized prostitution among non-Israelites is an enormous methodological flaw. In positing the activities of Canaanite and Mesopotamian women, the overwhelming majority of Hosea scholars have failed to take what I consider to be the first step in such a reconstruction, namely to consult available sources native to Canaan and Mesopotamia. In the course of this chapter, I will present the ignored or otherwise misrepresented Canaanite and Mesopotamian texts concerning women who are prejudicially assumed to have been cult prostitutes.

The Ugaritic Evidence

Arguably the most relevant documents for biblical scholars who reconstruct the practice of cult prostitution as the condemned activity of the Canaanite-styled *qĕdēšôt* are Canaanite texts, namely the Ugaritic Tablets discovered at Ras Shamra in 1929. Scholars, prior to this discovery, were faced with a dearth of primary evidence concerning the Canaanites. Though it cannot be argued that these tablets represent Canaanite culture exhaustively, the skeletal knowledge of Canaanite worship and history that can be gleaned from the biblical literature has been considerably fleshed out by these tablets.

Of immediate interest to my investigation are the occurrences of the term *qdšm*[6] in the Ugaritic corpus. Their role in the cult is not well defined by the Ugaritic material. Significantly, however, there is no indication in these texts that the role of the *qdšm* had anything to do with cultic sexual activity. It is reasonable to conclude that the *qdšm* had a

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[6]Westenholz ("Tamar," 250) argues that both masculine *qdš* and the feminine *qdšt* are subsumed under the masculine plural term *qdšm*. Given that female cult functionaries (*qĕdēšôt*) in a Canaanite-styled cult are identified by Hosea (4:14), I am persuaded by her position.

priestly function, given that five times[7] the term *qdšm* occurs in administrative texts immediately following the term *khnm*.[8] Indeed, on the basis of this classification, C.H. Gordon defines *qdšm* in the UT glossary as "a class of priests." Little else can be deduced about the role of these figures from the administrative lists, since they record only the titles of these cult officials and do not indicate their functions.[9] However, Westenholz presents a Ugaritic ritual text in which a *qdš* is identified as a cantor at sacrificial rites.[10] On the basis of this evidence as well as the consistent listing of *qdšm* following *khnm* in the administrative lists, she suggests that the *qdšm* had a function in the cult at Ugarit analogous to that of the Levites in the cult of Israel.[11]

The feminine term *qdšt*, the direct cognate of Hebrew *qĕdēšâ*, occurs twice in the Ugaritic corpus as *bn qdšt*.[12] Gordon describes the contents of UT 400 as a list of "payments in silver to guild members." According to Gruber, all terms following *bn* in this list are personal names.[13] Gruber describes UT 2163 as "a list of guilds and clans."[14] On the basis of these lists, it appears that *bn qdšt* is a clan name, translated "son of Qadishtu."[15] The term *qdšt* as it occurs in these two instances does not elucidate the role

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[7]UT 63.81,113,114, and 169 (UT is the standard abbreviated form of <u>Ugaritic Textbook</u> by C.H. Gordon [Rome: Pontificum Institutum Biblicum, 1965]).

[8]Cf. Hebrew *kōhănim*, "priests." This definition suits the conclusions of my study of the Hebrew root *qdš* in Chapter Two. The root *qdš* in Hebrew means "set apart for the purposes of the cult." It would not be surprising to find a parallel usage in the Semitic language of Ugarit.

[9] Fisher ("Cultic Prostitution," 228), Hooks (<u>Sacred Prostitution,</u> 39), Bucher (<u>ZNH,</u> 66-68), Adler (<u>Covenant,</u> 200), and Westenholz ("Tamar," 249) refer to the Ugaritic administrative texts. They note that other than the likely connection of the *qdšm* to the cult, given that this term regularly follows *khnm*, little else can be presumed about the role of this class of persons.

[10]Westenholz ("Tamar," 249) refers to KTU (<u>Keilalphabetische Texte aus Ugarit</u>) 1.112.

[11] The Pentateuch portrays the Levites as participants in the sacrificial cult subordinate to the Aaronic priests. See, for example, Numbers 1:47-54

[12] *bn qdšt* occurs in UT 400 and in UT 2163.

[13]Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 147.

[14]Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 147.

[15]Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 147. Gruber theorizes that *Qadištu* is the name of an eponymous ancestor of this particular clan (147); see also Westenholz, "Tamar," 250.

of female cult functionaries in the cult at Ugarit, or in a Canaanite-styled cult in Israel. The occurrences certainly do not provide evidence supporting the cult prostitution hypothesis.

Though, as I have stated at the beginning of this discussion, most scholars do not appeal directly to extra biblical evidence to substantiate their claim of a Canaanite sex cult, some Hosea scholars cite the Ugaritic cognates for *qĕdēšôt* as evidence for cult prostitution in the Canaanite cult.[16] However, in my estimation, Hosea scholars have misrepresented the silence of the Canaanite texts concerning cult prostitution. Mays' and Wolff's influential commentaries cite Gordon's work on the Ugaritic materials as a source confirming that a class of temple functionaries known as *qdšm* existed in ancient Canaan, and that they were cult prostitutes.[17] Gordon's UT indeed confirms that there was a class of temple personnel known as *qdšm*. However, as stated above, Gordon defines *qdšm* simply as "a class of priests." He does not describe the *qdšm* as having a sexual role, presumably because he has no evidence for doing so. Wolff's and Mays' "evidence," followed by so many scholars, is severely undermined by these points.

The Mesopotamian Evidence

Though the Hebrew *qĕdēšâ*, whatever her cultic role, seems to be condemned by Hosea for her participation in a cult directed toward Baal (i.e. a Canaanite cult), scholars' charge of cult prostitution extends well beyond the borders of ancient Canaan in their

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[16]Of the Hosea scholars reviewed in this thesis, Mays (Hosea, 75 n.b), Wolff (Hosea, 188 n.132), and Davies (Hosea, 121) alone appeal directly to the extra biblical cognate terms as evidence for cult prostitution in the ANE. However, several scholars explicitly state that they are building on the evidence of Wolff and Mays. In this way, I consider these scholars to make use of the extra biblical evidence.
[17]Mays, Hosea, 75 n.b; Wolff, Hosea, 88 n.132.

position that such a practice was widespread throughout the ancient Near East. Some

Hosea scholars argue that there is Mesopotamian evidence for cult prostitution. The

occurrence of the term *qadištu* in the Code of Hammurabi[18] is regarded as evidence for

cult prostitution in Mesopotamia by a number of Hosea scholars.[19] It is the most often

cited Mesopotamian evidence for cult prostitution, and it is to this document that I shall

now turn.

The term *qadištu* occurs in the Code of Hammurabi, Law #181. Following Driver's

and Miles' English translation,[20] CH 181 reads as follows:

> If a father has offered (his daughter as) a priestess a *qadištu* or a votaress
> to a god but has not bestowed a dowry on her, after the father goes to (his)
> fate she shall at the division take one third of her inheritance out of the
> property of the paternal estate and shall have the usufruct (of it) so long as
> she lives. Her estate belongs to her brothers.[21]

The laws surrounding CH 181 are similarly concerned with rules for property inheritance

and are free of any reference to sexual activity on the part of the *qadištu*. There is no

evidence in this text justifying the translation "cult prostitute." Driver and Miles translate

qadištu as "hierodule,"[22] a term which for them does not necessarily connote a sexual

role within the cult.[23] In their legal commentary, Driver and Miles correctly state

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[18] A Babylonian document written during King Hammurabi's reign, in approximately 2250 B.C.E. (See Driver and Miles, The Babylonian Laws [Oxford: Clarendon, 1960] for an English translation, historical contextualization, and legal commentary on the Code of Hammurabi.)

[19] Mays, Hosea, 75 n.b; Wolff, Hosea, 88 n.132; Davies, Hosea, 121. As discussed in Chapter One, Mays' and Wolff's commentaries are among the most influential sources for Hosea scholars. For instance. Strange ("Broken Covenant," 441), Plank ("Scarred Countenance," 344 n.3), and Kruger ("Prophetic Imagery," 149 n.21 and 22) follow Mays' evidence for cult prostitution, while Priebe ("Holy God,"127), Kruger ("Israel the Harlot," 110), Hubbard (Hosea, 106), Fisch ("Poetry," 148), and Plank (also in "Scarred Countenance," 346 n.11) identify Wolff as their source for their reconstruction of the sexual cult activities of the *qĕdēšôt*.

[20] I have, however, preserved the transliterated *qadištu* and not Driver and Miles' "hierodule."

[21] Driver and Miles, The Babylonian Laws, 73.

[22] Driver and Miles, The Babylonian Laws, 73.

[23] "Hierodule" is a composite of the Greek terms *hieros* ("sacred")and *doulos* ("slave"). There is no inherent reference to sexual activity in the term itself.

concerning the term *qadištu* as it occurs in the Code of Hammurabi that "there is nothing

to show the nature of her service nor whether she may or may not have been devoted to

sacral prostitution."[24]

Contrary to Driver and Miles, Theophile J. Meek in his translation of the Code of

Hammurabi renders *qadištu* "sacred prostitute."[25] It comes as no surprise that scholars

who support the historicity of cult prostitution use Meek's, and not Driver's and Miles'

translation for supporting evidence.[26] However, as Gruber succinctly states, there is "no

shred of evidence" for such a translation.[27] Gruber argues that, since there is no

description of a sexual role for *qĕdēšôt*'s cognate terms in their native texts,[28] Meek's

English translation "sacred prostitutes" is actually influenced by the presupposition that

Hebrew *qĕdēšôt* designates "sacred prostitutes."[29] Meek's translation, influenced as it is

by assumptions about the Hebrew *qĕdēšâ*, cannot constitute extra biblical evidence for

cult prostitution.

Other Mesopotamian texts in which the term *qadištu* occurs are similarly devoid of

any reference to a cultic sexual role for this "woman of special status."[30] In both legal

texts and ritual texts, the *qadištu* woman is variously described as a wetnurse and as an

officiant at cultic rites.[31] Old Babylonian legal texts describe the *qadištu*-woman as a

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[24] Driver and Miles, Babylonian Laws, 369.

[25] Theophile J. Meek, "Code of Hammurabi," in James B. Pritchard (ed.), The Ancient Near East, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1958) 159.

[26] See n. 19.

[27] Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 144.

[28] As the reader will note in reading Driver's and Miles' translation of CH 181 above and in the following discussion.

[29] Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 137-138; so also Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution," 228.

[30] The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Q (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1982) 48. The Assyrian Dictionary will from now on be referred to by its standard abbreviated name, CAD.

[31] CAD Q, 48-50.

wetnurse who earns pay for suckling infants.[32] In Babylonian literature such as <u>Atra-hasis</u>,[33] the *qadištu* woman is again associated with childbirth. The passage concerning the *qadištu* states "let the midwife rejoice in the house of the *qadištu*-woman where the pregnant wife gives birth."[34] Clearly, according to these texts, the *qadištu* plays a role in the event of childbirth. Westenholz suggests that "perhaps while the midwife tended to the physical needs of the woman in childbirth, the *qadištu* presided over the spiritual requirements of the birthing."[35]

A particularly intriguing ritual text[36] portrays the *qasdatu*[37]-women as officiating in a rite in the Adad cult.[38] Westenholz presents the following translation and explanation of this text:

> on the day that they...Adad, they let the *qadištu*-women go out (of the temple), they make a meal offering in the Temple of Adad, the *qadištu*-women intone the *inḫu*-chant,[39]prolong the *inḫu*- chant, the SANGA[40] performs a purification ceremony, the *qadištu*-women raise the (statue of the god) Adad. The procession continues to various other temples and the same activities are repeated. During these rituals, the *qadištu*- women wear certain jewels. Furthermore, the *qadištu*-women partake of the sacrificial offering.[41]

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[32]CAD Q. 48. Obviously, it follows that the *qadištu* was herself able to bear children.

[33]W.G. Lambert and A.R. Millard, Atra-Hasis, the Babylonian Story of the Flood (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969).

[34]Lambert, Atra-Hasis, 62 I 290. This text is cited by Westenholz ("Tamar," 252) and Gruber ("Hebrew Qēdēśâ," 143). Note that Lambert translates *qadištu* as "prostitute." The context, however, does not necessarily suggest this role for the *qadištu*.

[35]Westenholz, "Tamar," 252.

[36]The text is KAR (Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiosen Inhalts) 154, a Middle Assyrian text (see CAD Q. 49). Westenholz ("Tamar," 254) and Gruber ("Hebrew Qēdēśâ," 139) cite this text.

[37] The plural form of *qadištu*.

[38] Adad is described by Hooks (Sacred Prostitution, 15) as a "weather god." Westenholz ("Tamar," 253) elaborates that Adad is "usually depicted as the god of thunderstorms and lightning who holds back the fructifying rain in his anger [but] Adad is also known as the god of divination and the brother of Belet-ili, the goddess of childbirth."

[39] CAD I/J defines *inḫu* as "a tune or song" (148).

[40]A priest in the Adad cult. See Westenholz, "Tamar," 254.

[41]Westenholz, "Tamar," 254. The *qadištu* entry in CAD also cites this text, translating into English only those lines in which the actual term *qadištu* occurs (49). For this reason, I chose Westenholz's English translation and explanation in order to more fully illustrate the role of the *qadištu* at this cult ceremony.

Another text which relates the *qadištu* to Adad in an apparently cultic context is the Babylonian hymn entitled "The Contest between the Tamarisk and the Palm."[42] Lambert translates the passage concerning the *qadištu*-woman thus: "Come, let us go to the city of Kis ...The *qadištu* has sprinkled water and ... she takes and they worship and hold a festival."[43] Westenholz contends that this passage likely indicates a ritual function for the *qadištu*, "perhaps in a purification ceremony in Old Babylonian Kish."[44] Moreover, CAD presents another ritual text[45] in which the *qasdatu*-women are described as carrying "water for purification."[46] The cultic role of the *qasdatu*-women does not, according to the texts cited, appear to have included sexual activity.

A legal text mentioning the *qadištu* states that a married *qadištu* "is veiled in public, one who is not married is bare-headed in public."[47] Hooks notes that this text has played a key role in scholars' assumption that the *qadištu* was a cult prostitute.[48] Two points about this statute concerning the *qadištu* have been regarded by some scholars as

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This text is intriguing both for its lack of any reference to cultic sexual activity, and to the sacrificial context it gives for the role of the *qadištu*. As I will propose in Chapter Six, reading Hos 4:13-14 without the traditional assumptions of modern scholars about non-Israelite sex cults, the *qĕdēšôt* appear to be female cult functionaries whose role is to assist in sacrificial rites. This Middle Assyrian text suggests, at the very least, that a class of women in the ancient Near East bearing a title that appears to be semantically related to *qĕdēšôt* (i.e. *qadištu*) participated in sacrificial rites. I will argue that the administrative texts from Ugarit which seem to relate the *qdšm* with sarcedotal priests (*khnm*- see n.8 above) provide further evidence for a sacrificial role for the Canaanite-styled *qĕdēšôt* in Hosea's Israel.
[42]W.G. Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom Literature (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967) 155-164.
[43]Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom, 161. The reader should note that Lambert translates the term *qadištu* as "prostitute." I have preserved the transliterated form of this Babylonian term as does Westenholz ("Tamar," 253) in her presentation of this passage from Lambert's Babylonian Wisdom. The entry *qadištu* in CAD also preserves the term *qadištu*, and notes in summarizing what is known about this figure from the various Babylonian texts that "there is no evidence of her being a prostitute" (50).
[44]Westenholz, "Tamar," 253.
[45]KAR 321:7
[46]CAD Q, 49.
[47]CAD Q, 49. The law is recorded in KAV (Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenen Inhalts) 1 line 61 and pertains to Assur.
[48]Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 16.

supporting the cult prostitution hypothesis. First, the veiling of the *qadištu* calls to mind

Tamar's disguise as a *zônâ* in Gen 38. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the majority

of Genesis commentators maintain that Tamar has disguised herself not merely as a *zônâ*

but as a cult prostitute.[49] Second, immediately following the *qadištu* statute is a statute

pertaining to the dress of the *harīmtu*, the Babylonian term for "prostitute."[50] Scholars

have assumed that the reason for the *qadištu*'s and *harīmtu*'s side-by-side classification

is their alleged common sexual functions.[51] In refuting the notion that these statutes

concern harlots of varying statuses, Hooks notes that the dress of other women such as

the female slave (*āmtu*) and the concubine (*esirtu*) is also discussed in this particular law

code, and that "it is not the intent of this statute to designate all of these women as

harlots."[52] Rather than harlotry, the common characteristic of the unveiled women is their

unmarried status.[53] As discussed above, the *qadištu* is not elsewhere portrayed as a

harlot, common or cultic. Furthermore, as Gruber notes, the text that allows the veiling of

the *qadištu* upon marriage goes on to list the punishments specifically for a prostitute

(*harīmtu*) who dares to veil her head, which include flogging and the pouring of pitch

upon her head.[54] Indeed, this separate statute concerning the *harīmtu* attests to the

difference in status, and not the commonality, between the *harīmtu* and the *qadištu*. It

is reasonable to conclude along with Hooks that "the absence of a veil on the *qadištu* in

[49] "See Chapter Two 65. See also Astour's discussion of the Babylonian laws concerning the veiling of women in "Tamar the Hierodule: An Essay in the Method of Vestigial Motifs," Journal of Biblical Literature 85 (1966) 185-196.

[50] CAD H, 102.

[51] Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 16.

[52] Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 16.

[53] Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 16.

[54] Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 145.

the streets of Assur did not designate her as a harlot. it simply designated her as unmarried."[55]

Another text which, according to Hooks and Westenholz, has influenced scholars to interpret the *qadištu*'s role as that of a cult prostitute is MSL 7.iii.7ff.[56] In this text, a man marries a *qadištu* "from the street" (*ina sûqi*).[57] The *qadištu* subsequently takes in a child also "from the street" and nurses him.[58] Scholars like Astour[59] understand the *qadištu* to be a cult prostitute on the basis that the text locates the *qadištu* in the streets, the familiar haunt of the *harimtu*. However, according to Westenholz, the term *ina sûqi* ("from the streets") "is a legal definition of [the *qadištu*'s] status within the sociological structure of Akkadian society. since the street was a place where people not belonging to organized households congregated."[60] Hooks notes that the child in this passage is also identified as "from the street," and is surely not meant to be designated as a prostitute.[61] Both Hooks and Westenholz argue that this text portraying a *qadištu*-woman as taken in marriage "from the streets" does not prove her role as a prostitute. sacred or common. Rather, as Hooks states, "it would appear that the purpose of the phrase *ina sûqi* in this text is not to describe a common character to the *qadištu* and the child but a common status; that is, neither are a part of an established family."[62]

[55]Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 16.
[56]The abbreviation for Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon, cited by Hooks (Sacred Prostitution, 17) and Westenholz ("Tamar," 251).
[57]Hooks. Sacred Prostitution, 17: Westenholz. "Tamar." 251.
[58]Further to the present discussion, the passage is notable for its representation of the *qadištu* in the capacity of wetnurse.
[59]Astour, "Tamar the Hierodule," 191.
[60]Westenholz, "Tamar," 251.
[61]Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 17.
[62]Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 17.

From the above-cited Mesopotamian texts, it appears that the *qadištu* functioned as a wetnurse and/or a sacrificial assistant. The texts further establish that the *qadištu* may or may not have been married. None of the texts establishes a cultic sexual role for the *qadištu*. Arguably, the *qadištu* may have held these two functions (i.e. wetnurse/sacrificial assistant) simultaneously. Westenholz, on the other hand, suggests that the *qadištu* woman "may have had more than one function during the diachronic span of Mesopotamian culture."[63] Whether the role of the *qadištu* changed over time, or whether she held a dual role, the CAD entry *qadištu* seems correct in stating that "there is no evidence of [the *qadištu*] being a prostitute."[64]

As critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis note, the *qàdištu* is not the only female figure featured in Mesopotamian documents whose role is assumed by biblical scholars to be that of a cult prostitute.[65] Some Hosea scholars refer to a baffling array of women whom they assume to have been cult prostitutes. Women thus identified include the *entu*, *nadītu*, *harīmtu*, *ištarītu*, *kezertu*, *kulmašītu*, and *ugbabtu*.[66] More frequently than in Hosea scholarship,[67] works explicitly devoted to the reconstruction of the institution of cult prostitution make reference to the classes of Babylonian women listed above. Their roles are invariably understood to be sexual in nature, though scholars make a distinction

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[63]Westenholz, "Tamar," 254.

[64]CAD Q, 50.

[65]Because of its semantic proximity to *qĕdēšá*. I have focused my investigation on *qadištu* in presenting the lack of evidence for cult prostitution in Mesopotamia.

[66] It is my observation that in the majority of scholarly works in which Hosea's *qĕdēšôt* are regarded as "cult prostitutes," no appeal to extra biblical evidence is made. (See page 71 where I discuss the tendency of Hosea scholars to proceed in reconstructing the institution of cult prostitution based on the presupposition, rather than on primary evidence, that non-Israelites engaged in sex cults.) However, as previously mentioned, many Hosea scholars rely upon Wolff's assertion of a sex cult among the Canaanites, and therefore rely upon this Mesopotamian "evidence" indirectly. Wolff (Hosea, 88 n.135) presents four classes of Sumerian women (*entum, nadītum, kulmašītum*, and *sugetium*) whose titles he considers to be designations for "various groups of harlots."

between common and cultic sexual functionaries. Astour, for instance, considers the

harīmtu and *kezertu* to have been common harlots whose function he compares to the

Hebrew *zônâ*,[68] while the *entu, ugbabtu, nadītu, kulmašītu,* and *ištarītu* were "sacral

prostitutes," whose cultic function he compares to that of the Hebrew *qědēšâ*.[69]

Yamauchi regards the *qadištu, nadītu, ištarītu* as well as the *harīmtu* to have been

"cultic prostitutes."[70]

As with the textual evidence describing the role(s) and function(s) of the *qadištu* in

Mesopotamian society, there is a lack of evidence supporting the notion that the above-

mentioned classes of women can be identified as cult prostitutes.[71] CAD H defines

harīmtu as "prostitute" and offers no indication that this role involved cultic service.[72]

The term *entu* is defined in CAD E as "a high priestess."[73] Bucher elaborates upon this

definition by describing the *entu* as the female counterpart of the *en*-priest, who ranked

highest among the temple personnel.[74] Intriguingly, the CAD entry notes that the *entu*-

priestess was "supposed to live in chastity, as is illustrated by numerous apodoses in the

omen texts, and in [a] passage from the Legend of Sargon of Akkad."[75]As Oden wryly

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[67] See above note.

[68]Astour. "Tamar the Hierodule." 187.

[69]Astour. "Tamar the Hierodule." 188-190.

[70]Yamauchi. "Cultic Prostitution," 214-216.

[71]Fisher. "Cultic Prostitution," 227-228; Gruber, "Hebrew *Qědēšâ*, " 138-139; Oden. "Religious Identity," 147-152; Bucher, ZNH, 46-56; Adler. Covenant. 168-178; Westenholz. "Tamar." 251.

[72]CAD H, 102. See also Gruber, "Hebrew *Qědēšâ*." 146; Oden. "Religious Identity." 149; Bucher, ZNH, 56; Adler. Covenant, 172; Westenholz. "Tamar." 251.

[73] CAD E. 172.

[74]Bucher. ZNH, 48.

[75]CAD E, 173. The Legend of Sargon tells the story of Sargon I of Akkad (2334-2279 B.C.E.) coming into power to rule the Mesopotamian empire. The legend recounts the story of Sargon's survival of exposure as an infant. Sargon claims that his mother was an *entu*-priestess and gave birth to him in secrecy and exposed him, presumably because childbirth was forbidden to women holding this office (CAD E. 173; Oden. "Religious Identity," 148). For further discussion, see Brian Lewis. The Sargon Legend: Study of the Akkadian Text and the Tale of the Hero Who Was Exposed At Birth (Cambridge: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1980) 152.

notes, since chastity is an integral part of her job description, the *entu-* priestess is not "a

very strong candidate for a term describing a sacred prostitute."[76]

About the *ugbabtu*-priestess, another term occasionally translated as cult prostitute

and often occurring with *entu*, even less is known. As is acknowledged in CAD, the

ugbabtu-priestess appears to be subordinate to the *entu*. For instance, in YOS [77] 10 38

r.11, it is stated that "the high priestess will die, and an *ugbabtu*-priestess will be

installed."[78]According to CAD, the *ugbabtu*-priestess similarly "lived in chastity."[79] Other

than this, nothing more is known about the *ugbabtu*.[80]

The *nadâtu*-women are identified by critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis as

identifiable by their vow of chastity,[81] as well as their noble births.[82] Following Rivkah

Harris' work,[83] the critics contend that young women of noble births were occasionally

appointed by their families to live cloistered lives, adopting the title *nadītu*, where they

remained unmarried and had no children.[84] First, there were religious motivations for the

sequestering of noble daughters. Adler notes that "a special bond was thought to have

existed between the *nadītu* and Shamash so that her prayers had a special efficacy."[85]

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[76]Oden. "Religious Identity," 148.

[77]The abbreviation for Yale Oriental Series.

[78]Cited in CAD E, 173.

[79]CAD E, 173.

[80]See Oden, "Religious Identity," 148.

[81]Hooks (Sacred Prostitution, 14) notes that *nadītu* is derived from the root *nadu*, meaning "land left uncultivated." Applied to women, the meaning of the term seems to be "fallow woman."

[82]Oden. "Religious Identity," 148; Bucher, ZNH, 51; Adler, Covenant, 169.

[83] Rivkah Harris, "The *Nadītu* Woman," in Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of Chicago, 1964) 106-134.

[84]As Harris ("Nadītu," 106) notes, the *nadâtu* were long considered to be cult prostitutes by Assyriologists since their domicile (*gagû*) was incorrectly understood to mean "brothel." Her study confirms that the term in fact means "locked house," and implies a sort of "cloister."

[85]Adler, Covenant, 170. Harris ("Nadītu,"113). in addition to connecting the *nadītu* to the male god Shamash, also notes a relationship between this female figure and the goddess Aja.

However, "just what those obligations were is hard to determine."[86] Harris hesitates to designate these women as "priestesses" since "there seem to be no rites or rituals which they and they alone were qualified to perform."[87] A second motivation for designating one's daughter as an unmarried, childless *nadītu* may have been to "prevent the permanent loss of a dowry from her father's estate."[88] Once again, beyond these few details, little is known about the *nadītu*. There is no evidence suggesting that she was a cult prostitute.

The term *ištarītu* shares CAD's definition of *qadištu*, "a woman of special status."[89] This vague designation suggests that indeed little is known about this class of women.[90] The presence of the name Ištar in the title *ištarītu* suggests a cultic role related to this particular goddess.[91] One text that scholars have used to establish a sexual role for the *ištarītu* is a document called "Counsels of Wisdom," a text of admonitions. In this text, men are warned not to marry an *ištarītu* "who is dedicated to a god."[92] The reference to the *ištarītu* is sandwiched between an admonition warning men to avoid marrying either a *harīmtu* ("common prostitute") "whose husbands are legion" or a *kulmašītu* "whose favors are many."[93] As Bucher suggests, listing *ištarītu* with these other women is not

[86]Bucher, ZNH, 51. See also Oden, "Religious Identity," 148.
[87]Harris, "Nadītu," 108.
[88]Adler, Covenant, 170. See also Bucher, ZNH, 50-51. Bucher further states that the Code of Hammurabi provides that a *nadītu* might marry upon leaving the cloister (*gagû*), but that any children which were to be had must be provided to her husband through a slave or "secondary wife" (51). Presumably, this ensured that the dowry remained with the *naditu*'s father's estate. See Harris, "Nadītu," 109.
[89]CAD I/J, 270.
[90]Oden ("Religious Identity") concurs with this point (149).
[91]Bucher, ZNH, 55.
[92]Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom, 103, line 73. Lambert translates *ištarītu* as "temple harlot." It is my contention that the context of this admonition does not provide convincing evidence for this translation.
[93]Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom, 103, lines 72 and 74. Lambert translates *kulmašītu* as "courtesan" on the basis of his translation of the words that follow, "whose favors are many." Hooks (Sacred Prostitution, 20-21) notes that the meaning of these words is ambiguous, and that other scholars have offered different translations. He notes that R.W. Rogers, for instance, translates "an outcast, whose speech is abundant"

sufficient evidence to ascertain that the *istarītu* was a cult prostitute.[94] The admonition is given as the author seems to fear that women who have "obligations" outside of marriage will make poor wives.[95] The "obligation" of the *istarītu* is toward a god, as is implied by the presence of Ištar's name in her very title and as is plainly stated in the admonition itself. The implication of the admonition is that the *istarītu* would not be exclusively obliged to her husband because of her cultic duties. This does not secure the *istarītu*'s function as a "cult prostitute."

The Mesopotamian *kezrētu* -women are defined by CAD[96] as prostitutes. As in the cases of the previously examined classes of Mesopotamian women, little is known for certain about the *kezrētu* -women's functions. The *kezrētu* -women are paired with the *harīmtu*-women ("prostitutes") in the epic of Gilgamesh, gathered by Ištar to bewail the slain Bull of Heaven,[97] but this does not unambiguously prove that the *kezrētu* -women had the same function as the *harīmtu* -women. The fact that this text does not mention sexual activity on the part of either type of women is worthy of note, and suggests that perhaps the *kezertu* is paired with the *harīmtu* in this text for a reason other than a shared role of harlotry in Mesopotamian society. The *kezrētu* -women are also paired with the *istarītu* -women who, as discussed above, likely had a cultic relationship to

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(20) while S. Langdon translates "a votaress, whose humiliation is manifold" (21). Clearly, there are other alternatives to Lambert's translation which challenge Lambert's translation of *kulmašītu* as "courtesan." Hooks cites CH and other Mesopotamian texts that imply that the *kulmašītu* was a "religious devotee" (20). As in the case of the *istarītu* who is dedicated to a god and therefore regarded by the author of the "Counsels of Wisdom" as undesirable for a wife, I contend that a man is cautioned against marrying a *kulmašītu* whose devotion would be divided between her cultic role and her role as a wife.
[94]Bucher, ZNH, 56.
[95] Lines 75-79 of the "Counsels of Wisdom" warn a man about the three sorts of women: "In your trouble she will not support you, in your dispute she will be a mocker; there is no reverence or submissiveness with her. Even if she dominate your house, get her out, **For she has directed her attention elsewhere**" (Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom Literature, 103 - my emphasis).
[96]CAD K, 314.

Ištar.[98] On this basis, Hooks[99] and Adler[100] suggest that the *kezrētu* -women may have

had cultic associations, although again, merely on the basis of the *kezertu*'s association

with the *ištarītu*, their contention is speculative. Some scholars have speculated that the

kezertu's functions included hair-dressing.[101] In fact, the term *kezertu* means "one with

curled hair."[102]

Gallery identifies the *kezrētu* -women as persons who were obliged to take part in

"non-marital intercourse" as "part of their services rendered to a goddess"[103] on the basis

of three Old Babylonian texts which outline the service obligations (*parṣu*) that certain

women, identified simply as wives, owe to a goddess.[104] Gallery identifies these women

as *kezrētu* -women, though they are not so-called in the texts, since the obligations,

including non-marital sexual activity and hair-dressing, recall the previous speculations

about the *kezrētu* -women's functions. In my opinion, there are two problems with

Gallery's argument. First, the texts which she examines do not explicitly identify the

women who are obliged to a goddess as *kezrētu* -women. Second, it is not clear, as

Gallery herself concedes, that the obligation of *ru-u-tum* ("friendship") outlined in the

first text which she examines, necessarily means sexual intercourse. In my view,

whatever the identity of the women in these *parṣu* texts, it is far from certain that they

participated in non-marital sexual activity dedicated to a goddess.

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[97]Alexander Heidel, The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1949) 54. Hooks (Sacred Prostitution) cites this text on page 24.
[98]CAD I/J, 271.
[99]Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 23.
[100]Adler, Covenant, 174.
[101] See Maureen Gallery, "Service Obligations of the *kezrētu* - Women," Or NS 49 (1980) 333-338.
[102] Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 24.
[103] Gallery, "Service Obligations," 338.
[104] Gallery, "Service Obligations," 333.

This overview of the scant information concerning classes of women in Mesopotamian society has demonstrated that a) little is known about the activities of these women, and b) what *is* known does not verify the assumption sometimes held by biblical scholars that they served in the capacity of cult prostitutes. Even in the event that people of the Mesopotamian plain actually engaged in an activity resembling cult prostitution, this would not provide sufficient evidence that a similar practice occurred among the Canaanites. Hosea's polemical text and the other texts of the Hebrew Bible that name and condemn the *qĕdēšôt* are concerned with the *Canaanite* people. The Ugaritic material should therefore be of primary importance in the verification of a Canaanite-styled sex cult. As I have demonstrated, the Ugaritic texts do not give any indication that the Canaanite *qdšm* were cult prostitutes. However, the apparent *absence* of the institution of cult prostitution among the Mesopotamian people reinforces the argument of those who refute the cult prostitution hypothesis.

In general, for scholars who refute the cult prostitute hypothesis, the exercise of examining the cognate terms for *qĕdēšâ* in their own contexts plays a substantial role in their arguments. For all of the scholars in this group, the lack of evidence supporting a sexual role for these female figures seriously undermines the notion of the historicity of cultic sex among non-Israelite, ANE peoples. The fragmentary nature of the extra biblical evidence is duly noted by several scholars who indicate that, in the absence of an exhaustive corpus of cult literature from the ancient Near East, it is impossible to categorically claim that there was no such institution as cult prostitution. However, as Fisher notes,

if sacred prostitution was religious law and had such a central place in the ancient cult, one would expect that the law codes, the records of temple administration, and the lists of temple personnel which we now have in some abundance would make fairly explicit if not frequent mention of it.[105]

Reviewing the extra biblical evidence in which cognate terms for Hebrew *qĕdēšâ* occur, I have adopted Fisher's conclusion. The extra biblical documents to which scholars have access do not provide evidence for the institution of cult prostitution in the ANE.

Ancient Greek Sources

If there is no evidence for cult prostitution in the ANE texts, from whence do modern biblical scholars draw their conclusion that a sex cult was widely practiced in the ancient Near East? Scholars who challenge the cult prostitution hypothesis contend that the concept of the ANE sex cult originated with the accounts of the classical writer Herodotus (5th century B.C.E.), the geographer Strabo (1st century B.C.E.), and writer Lucian of Samosata (2nd century C.E.).

Of the works produced by these three men, Herodotus' account of Babylonian women prostituting themselves in the temple of Aphrodite is most often used by biblical scholars as evidence for a sex cult in ancient Canaan.[106] Since Herodotus' account has

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[105] Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution," 226.

[106] As discussed in Chapter One, Wolff (Hosea, 86) makes the most overt use of Herodotus among biblical scholars. He quotes Herodotus 1.199 at length in his reconstruction of the alleged sex cult of Canaan and in explaining why the daughters and daughters-in-law of Hos 4:13-14 are said to "play the whore" and to "commit adultery." Though Wolff notes that the alleged once-in-a-lifetime bridal rite of the Canaanites "must be carefully distinguished from the institution of permanent prostitutes hired for the cult" (14), the two types of cultic sexual activity are clearly, for Wolff, not entirely separate. In his explanation of the term *zōnôt* in verse 14, Wolff suggests this term may have described "the more beautiful among the brides who came to the rites of initiation" whom the priests chose to have intercourse with, as they allegedly did with the *qĕdēšôt* (88). For Wolff, Herodotus' account of Babylonian temple prostitution provides an important foundation for his contention that the Canaanites had an institutionalized sex cult, which included the sexual services of professional cult personnel (*qĕdēšôt*). Beeby (Grace, 56) and Wolfe (Meet Amos, 94-95) likewise cite Herodotus to support their claim that Canaanite religion was characterized by

played a major role in establishing the historicity of the Canaanite sex-cult for traditional

biblical scholars, it is worth quoting at length:[107]

> There is one custom amongst these people which is wholly shameful:
> every woman who is a native of the country must once in her life go and
> sit in the temple of Aphrodite and there give herself to a strange man.
> Many of the rich women, who are too proud to mix with the rest, drive to
> the temple in covered carriages with a whole host of servants following
> behind, and there wait; most, however, sit in the precinct of the temple
> with a band of plaited string round their heads - and a great crowd they
> are, what with some sitting there, others arriving, others going away - and
> through them all gangways are marked off running in every direction for
> the men to pass along and make their choice. Once a woman has taken her
> seat, she is not allowed to go home until a man has thrown a silver coin
> into her lap and taken her outside to lie with her. As he throws the coin,
> the man has to say, 'In the name of the goddess Mylitta' -that being the
> Assyrian name for Aphrodite. The value of the coin is of no consequence;
> once thrown it becomes sacred, and the law forbids that it should ever be
> refused. The woman has no privilege of choice - she must go with the first
> man who throws her the money. When she has lain with him, her duty to
> the goddess is discharged and she may go home, after which it will be
> impossible to seduce her by any offer, however large. Tall, handsome
> women soon manage to get home again, but the ugly ones stay for a long
> time before they can fulfill the condition which the law demands, some of
> them, indeed, as much as three of four years. There is a custom similar to
> this in parts of Cyprus.

Biblical scholars who refute the cult prostitution hypothesis note several problems with

this passage in terms of its usefulness for the reconstruction of Canaanite religious

customs. Most significantly, they claim that Herodotus' accounts of his travels to the

Near East are unreliable as a source for historical reconstruction.[108] Indeed, as I shall now

cultic sexual activity. Many scholars do not refer to Herodotus directly, but cite Wolff's work, in which
Herodotus plays a central role, as evidence for a sex cult in ancient Canaan. See for example Johnson
("Hosea," 21); Priebe ("Holy God," 127); Kruger ("Israel the Harlot," 110); Hubbard (Hosea, 106); Fisch
("Poetry," 148); Plank ("Scarred," 346 n.11).
[107] De Sélincourt, Histories, I.199, 120.
[108]Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution," 225-226; Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 32-35; Gruber, "Hebrew Qĕdēšâ,"
137; Oden, "Religious Identity," 141, 145-147; Bucher, ZNH, 59-62; Adler, Covenant, 178-182; Bird,
"Play the Harlot," 90 n. 9; Westenholz, "Tamar," 261-263; Tornkvist, Sexual Imagery, 93 (following
Oden).

illustrate, their position is buttressed by the work of contemporary classics scholars who judge Herodotus' travel accounts to be problematic in terms of reconstructing history.

Alan B. Lloyd's evaluation of the reliability of Herodotus' information concerning Egyptian architecture provides a good case in point. Lloyd attempts "to define the precise nature of statements in [Herodotus'] work" and to establish "to what extent [they are] logographic embellishment...[and] to what degree...they demand the credence of scientific statement."[109] Lloyd's method is to use Herodotus' account of various Egyptian buildings as a test case to establish the degree to which scholars can rely upon The Histories for historical reconstructions.[110]

In evaluating Herodotus' comments upon eighteen Egyptian buildings,[111] Lloyd notes various disjunctures between Herodotus' descriptions and what is generally known to Egyptologists about these structures.[112] For instance, Herodotus claims anachronistically that the pyramid builders utilized iron tools, though according to Lloyd's sources, this

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[109] "Herodotus On Egyptian Buildings: A Test Case," in Anton Powell (ed.), The Greek World (London: Routledge, 1995) 273-300.

[110] Lloyd ("Herodotus," 273) maintains that Herodotus' observations on Egyptian buildings can be verified independently to a greater extent than other Herodotean observations since many of the Egyptian buildings observed and commented upon by Herodotus are still extant (e.g. The Pyramid of Giza) and much is known to modern Egyptologists about Egyptian architecture (e.g. building techniques, tools used in building, and builders/commissioners). He proposes that his evaluation of Herodotus' account of Egyptian buildings sheds light upon the reliability of other Herodotean descriptions.

[111] Herodotus records information about Egyptian architecture at various junctures in book II of the Histories.

[112] It is worth noting that O. Kimball Armayor ("Did Herodotus Ever Go To Egypt?," Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt 15 [1978] 59-73) suggests that "Herodotus may indeed have gone to Egypt, but his narrative bears little or no relation to whatever his travels may have been on the basis of archaeological evidence now in hand" (69). Armayor, referring specifically to Herodotus' Egyptian ethnographies, claims that they resound of Greek narratives and stereotypes about Egyptians commonly found in Greek literature of the time (69). In other words, Herodotus' account of Egyptian customs did not necessitate Herodotus' travel there. In regards to Herodotus' Babylonian material, which is of primary interest to my investigation, Walter Baumgartner ("Herodots babylonische und assyrische Nachrichten," in Walter Baumgartner [ed.], Zum Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt [Leiden: Brill, 1959] 282-331) contends that Herodotus' knowledge of Babylonian customs is even less reliable than his account of Egyptian customs. (As I do not read German, I have relied upon Oden ["Religious Identity," 146] who cites Baumgartner's work.)

metal was in fact not widely used at all in this period.[113] On occasion, Herodotus errs in

ascribing buildings to certain persons and time periods. For instance, Herodotus ascribes

the Labyrinth (II.148) to the seventh-century monarch Dodercarchs though it "was

indubitably constructed by Amenemhet III" 1000 years earlier.[114] Even basic

measurements given in Herodotus' writings are at times grossly inaccurate. For instance,

in giving the dimensions of the Pyramid of Giza, Lloyd claims that Herodotus' recorded

length of this structure, 5 stades, is over 200 meters longer than its actual length.[115] Lloyd

concludes from this test case of historical accuracy that in using Herodotus' writings as a

source for accurate historical reconstructions, "we must proceed with extreme

circumspection."[116] Lloyd does, however, remind scholars that the "limitations"[117] of

Herodotus' writings are so-called only from the point of view of a modern understanding

of historical truth since "Herodotus...had his own agenda...and that brought with it a set

of priorities very different from those of most modern scholars."[118] For instance,

concerning Herodotus' measurement-making, Lloyd suggests that for Herodotus'

intended audience, rather than giving the accurate size of an object, "providing an

impression of what something is like could be quite enough."[119] In other words, scholars'

task is not simply to decide whether or not Herodotus was the "Father of History" or the

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[113]Lloyd, "Herodotus," 277. Lloyd remarks at several points throughout his essay that though Herodotus' himself fails to accurately reflect what he may have seen in Egypt according to modern, scientific standards, at times Herodotus' sources may be the locus of inaccurate information. In terms of some of the anachronistic statements Herodotus makes about ancient Egyptian building techniques, Lloyd suggests that Herodotus "may have had an Egyptian source or sources basically operating on this principle: 'This is how we have always dealt with such problems and that must be the way it was done by Cheops' " (277). Regardless of the origin of Herodotus' "inaccuracies," the fact remains that Herodotus' travel writings are unreliable in terms of constituting a source for the accurate reconstruction of history.
[114]Lloyd, "Herodotus," 289.
[115]Lloyd, "Herodotus," 278.
[116]Lloyd, "Herodotus," 294.
[117] Lloyd, "Herodotus," 296.
[118]Lloyd, "Herodotus," 296.

"Father of Lies,"[120] but to remain sensitive to the different objectives of Herodotus' Histories and modern historiography.

However, even in an analysis of Herodotus' travel accounts which is sensitive to Herodotus' cultural context and literary intentions, the value of what Herodotus allegedly witnessed is diminished in terms of historical reconstruction. In the discussion that follows, I will argue that since Herodotus clearly had an agenda to portray the institutions and practices of the ethnic groups whom he encountered as "backward" in relation to Greek cultural norms,[121] his account of the sexual customs of Babylonia cannot be used as accurate historical testimony. Herodotus' agenda certainly precludes the use of his account of cult prostitution in Babylonia for the elucidation of the role of the qĕdēśôt in Hos 4:14.

Indeed, critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis argue along with Fisher that "Herodotus is rather well known for his provincial, staunchly pro-Hellenic outlook, and must be taken with care even in his own time when treating other cultures."[122] The contention that Herodotus' travel writings reflect a pro-Greek bias or Hellenocentric perspective is certainly reflected in contemporary classics scholarship on Herodotus. For instance, François Hartog, in his book, The Mirror of Herodotus, which focuses particularly upon Herodotus' treatment of the Scythian people, proposes that one should not read Herodotus' account of the Scythians for the purposes of historical reconstruction

[119]Lloyd, "Herodotus," 296.
[120]Hooks (Sacred Prostitution, 34) records these two diametrically opposed epithets often given to Herodotus.
[121]Lateiner, The Historical Method of Herodotus (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989) 136; Stewart Flory, The Archaic Smile of Herodotus (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1987) 17.
[122]Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution," 226.

of Scythian practices.[123] For Hartog, Herodotus' Scythians must be regarded as just that, figures created by Herodotus.[124] This is not to say that Hartog considers Herodotus to be a liar. Rather, Hartog recognizes Herodotus' purpose in describing Scythian culture is to articulate, by way of contrast, Greek culture. The ethnic 'other' in Herodotus' travel writings acts as a 'mirror' for Greek culture. In the case of the Scythians, Hartog proposes that the nomadic, uncivilized Scythians, as Herodotus presents them, are a fictional foil devised to define the ideal of Greek culture, which is the culture of the *polis*.[125]

As Lateiner notes, Herodotus is not always negative in his evaluation of non-Greek customs. However, praise or disdain is conferred on particular customs according to Greek standards of normalcy.[126] In Lateiner's evaluation of the Histories, it is clear that Herodotus is far from objective in his accounts of the customs of non-Greek people. A major point, according to Lateiner, is that Herodotus' ethnographic accounts often serve the purpose of Herodotus' principle agenda, which is to explain the military and cultural superiority of the Greeks over their neighbors.[127] This, according to Lateiner, is clearly Herodotus' purpose in his lengthy description of every aspect of Egyptian culture as "upside down."[128] Lateiner regards Herodotus' portrayal of Egyptian women as a method

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[123] The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 4-5. The Scythians are a nomadic ethnic group. Herodotus' account of the Scythians is recorded in Histories 4.1-44.

[124] Hartog, Mirror, 6.

[125] Hartog, Mirror, 11.

[126] Lateiner (Historical Method, 147) states : "all Herodotean *logoi* are ethnocentric, with the Greeks at the center."

[127] See Lateiner' s chapter "Ethnography as Access to History" in Historical Method, 145-162.

[128] Lateiner, Historical Method, 148. Flory (Archaic Smile, 109) notes that Herodotus generally takes pleasure in recording strange, non-Greek behavior. He writes: "Herodotus... delights in [the story of the Amazons'] topsy-turviness and...other, similar stories of human antipodes and bizarre behavior." Armayor ("Egypt," 69) argues that Herodotus' testimony of Egyptian "backwardness" is not based on Herodotus' own observations, but rather on the literary traditions about the Egyptians that circulated in Greece. Armayor states pointedly: "[Herodotus] retained the belief that in Egypt everything is backwards, just as Sophocles said it was."

of expressing the perceived great difference between Egyptian and Greek culture. For instance, "women are the merchants while men weave at home ... they urinate standing while men squat ... women wear fewer garments then men."[129] Moreover, Herodotus paid particular attention to "exotic" features of non-Greek cultures, and at times certainly "overgeneralizes his sketchy information" for the purpose for supporting his thesis that cultural differences led to the Greek domination of the known world.[130] In the case of the Egyptians, Lateiner argues that Herodotus' elaborate account of the polarity between Greek and Egyptian culture ultimately explains the military defeat of the latter. Unlike the Greeks, who are marked throughout the Histories by their "courage and adaptiveness," and their willingness to "borrow ... customs and institutions," the backward culture of the Egyptians which refuses to change determines its "servile destiny."[131]

Both Lateiner and Flory argue that Herodotus' descriptions of women in general throughout the Histories function to establish the boundaries for what Herodotus considered to be normal and abnormal social behavior.[132] Lateiner writes that "Herodotus often seems to assume that his audience subscribes to conventional Greek ... male attitudes towards women, that they should be submissive and usually remain secluded."[133] From this perspective, women who are not submissive wives are a powerful representation of 'otherness,' and therefore are excellent foils for normative Greek

[129]Lateiner, Historical Method, 149. The account of the "backward" customs of the Egyptians is recorded in Book II of the Histories.

[130]Lateiner, Historical Method, 150.

[131]Lateiner, Historical Method, 151-153.

[132] Lateiner, Historical Method, 135-140; Flory, Archaic Smile, 44-46. (Note Lateiner's example of the Egyptian women above.) See also Vivienne Gray ("Herodotus and the Rhetoric of Otherness," American Journal of Philology 116 [1995] 185-211). Gray states that "[Herodotus'] ethnographies in particular reveal generic patterns which seem to portray women not as they were, but as part of the construction of barbaric otherness" (186).

[133]Lateiner, Historical Method, 136.

culture. Flory proposes that Herodotus' story of the Scythians and the Amazons[134] is a comic story whose comedy lies in the audience's assumption of normative Greek gender roles.[135] In this account, the Amazon women hunt and plunder, boldly initiate sexual relationships with Scythian men, and wear the same clothing as men.[136] Flory notes that Herodotus' intent was likely to divert his audience, stating that "the ancient male reader probably treated [the story] as hilarious exaggeration and comically preposterous role reversal."[137]

Building on Lateiner's and Flory's observations, I suggest that in portraying customs in which women flagrantly defy the Greek standard of submissive spousehood, such as the Babylonian women's public prostitution of their bodies to strangers, Herodotus persuades his audience to categorically define the Babylonians as ethnic 'others.' Herodotus' tendency to use anecdotes about women to establish normal and abnormal social behavior is significant in our reading of the account of prostitution in Babylonia. If indeed the intent of this account is to convince the reader of the ethnic 'otherness' of the Babylonians, it is necessary to use this tale cautiously in reconstructing Babylonian history.

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[134]De Sélincourt, Histories, 4.110-116, 306-308.

[135]Flory, Archaic Smile, 109.

[136] De Sélincourt, Histories, 4.110-116, 306-308. Hartog (Mirror) reviews Herodotus' account of the interactions between the Scythians and the Amazons in chapter six ("A Rhetoric of Otherness"). In his insightful discussion, Hartog suggests that this story provides evidence of Herodotus' maintenance of the Greek standard of normalcy at the heart of his anecdotes about non-Greek ethnic groups. In this case, Herodotus wishes to demonstrate the "otherness" of the Amazons in relationship to the Greeks. However, the Amazons interact not with Greeks, but with Scythians. Hartog suggests that "the Scythian society turns into a quasi-Greek society, as if in order to convey the otherness of the Amazons to the Greek spectator, the only thing to do was to present them with Greeks disguised as Scythians" (224). Thus Herodotus and his Greek audience impose "Greek" standards of normalcy upon the Scythians (e.g. Scythian men are expected to be masters over their wives, Scythian men hunt and plunder while women are in charge of the domestic sphere, etc.) in order to grasp the "difference" of the Amazons. Hartog argues that the point of reference that is always implicit in Herodotus' accounts is what is acceptable and non-acceptable to Greek culture. The Histories is clearly not an objective account of different ethnic groups.

In addition to the critiques of Herodotus' travel accounts by classics scholars, both Adler and Hooks raise a highly relevant point which refutes the worth of Herodotus' account of Babylonian sex rites for the purposes of historical reconstructions. Citing as evidence both Driver's and Miles'[138] and J.J. Finklestein's[139] discussions of non-Israelite ANE laws regulating sexual activity, both scholars note the widely-held expectation of a woman's virginity until marriage and the legal sanctions established to punish offenders.[140] Hooks muses rhetorically, "one wonders how these laws could have had any meaning at all if Herodotus' claim were true and if it represented general practice in the ancient Near East."[141] Adler states more plainly that if in fact a custom such as that described by Herodotus was practiced in Mesopotamia, it would have "undermined the institutions of marriage and patrilineal inheritance."[142]

In addition to the general problem of the Histories' reliability as a historical source, biblical scholars who refute the cult prostitution hypothesis note the following problems in using Herodotus' work as a source for reconstructing Canaanite customs. First, there is the issue of Herodotus' distance in terms of time and space from the cult of Canaan and the cult of Israel which Hosea addresses. Herodotus wrote about an alleged *Babylonian* custom three centuries *after* the time of Hosea. Surely, this fact alone severely undermines the usefulness of The Histories for the elucidation of the cult activities of the qĕdēšôt. As Bucher tersely comments, "writing in the fifth century B.C.E., Herodotus cannot be viewed as providing evidence that ritual sexual intercourse was practiced in the

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[137]Flory, Archaic Smile, 109.

[138]Driver and Miles, Babylonian Laws (Legal Commentary), 324.

[139]J.J. Finklestein, "Sex Offenses in Sumerian Law," Journal of the American Oriental Society 86 (1966) 355-372.

[140]Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 59 n. 208; Adler, Covenant, 179.

Iron Age monarchies of Israel and Judah."[143] Second, there is the issue of the disjuncture

between Herodotus' description of "once-in-a-lifetime" prostitution of all Babylonian

women and biblical scholars' presentation of this material as evidence for a Canaanite sex

cult.[144] As both Adler and Hooks duly note, Herodotus does not mention the marital status

of the women allegedly fulfilling a religious vow by having intercourse with those who

pay them.[145] Yet Wolff, for instance, using Herodotus' text as the only source to support

his notion of bridal initiation rites among the Canaanites, insists that the women in

Herodotus' account are virgins prostituting themselves once before marriage.[146] In

Herodotus' account, the reader is informed that "every woman" must dedicate a sexual

act to Aphrodite "once in her life."[147] Rich women, "tall, handsome women" and "ugly"

women are described, but the reader is not informed of their sexual status at the time of

their alleged fulfillment of this vow.[148] Adler further notes that Herodotus employs the

term "gunaika, 'woman,' rather than parthenos, 'virgin.'"[149] Wolff is certainly

presumptuous in labeling Herodotus' account a description of a "bridal rite."

Furthermore, as evidence for a class of functionaries who render sexual services to the

temple (i.e. qĕdēšôt), this text, in its account of how every woman in Babylonia, not

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[141]Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 59 n. 208.

[142]Adler, Covenant. 179.

[143]Bucher, ZNH, 60. See also Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution." 225; Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 44-45; Oden, "Religious Identity," 145.

[144]I refer particularly to Wolff's presentation of Herodotus' account of Babylonian sexual customs as well as to those scholars who follow Wolff in positing the historicity of a Canaanite sex cult (see n. 106).

[145]Adler, Covenant, 180; Hooks, Sacred Prostitution. 33.

[146]Wolff, Hosea, 86-87. That women identified by Herodotus are virgins is an interpretive crux for Wolff. According to Wolff. the terms "daughters" and "daughters-in-law" which occur in Hos 4:13-14 designate the virgin daughters of the men of Israel who participate in sexual rites such as those described by Herodotus before marrying.

[147]De Sélincourt, Histories, 123.

[148]De Sélincourt, Histories, 123-124.

[149]Adler, Covenant, 180.

merely temple personnel, performed this sexual rite, undermines the usefulness of

Herodotus' account as evidence for the cult prostitution hypothesis.[150]

Critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis also suggest that the tone of Herodotus'

description of the alleged sexual practice of Babylonian women clearly suggests that the

author's intent was to entertain rather to inform his audience.[151] Hooks notes that there is

a folkloric quality to Herodotus' description of the alleged Babylonian sex rites. Hooks

lists "the haughty exclusiveness of the proud rich, the huge lines of waiting patrons, and

the description of the 'uncomely' who have to wait three and four years for a willing

customer!" as evidence of Herodotus' deliberate intention to create caricatures of the

Babylonian women.[152] Fisher similarly claims that Herodotus' account is "lurid and

almost too detailed to be convincing," noting particularly that Herodotus writes "with

almost gleeful sarcasm" concerning the ugly women who wait in the temple for years to

fulfill their alleged sexual obligation.[153] Taking into consideration that Herodotus has an

obvious agenda to portray non-Greek cultures as bizarre and backward, I suggest that

both Hooks' and Fisher's readings are quite plausible.

Another classical source which alleges that cult prostitution was institutionalized in

the ANE is Strabo's Geography.[154] Writing in the first century B.C.E., Strabo is even

further removed than Herodotus from Hosea's time and place. His account of Babylonian

prostitution is as follows:

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[150]Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 33-34; Adler, Covenant, 180.
[151]Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution," 226; Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 34.
[152]Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 34.
[153]Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution," 226.
[154]H.L. Jones, The Geography of Strabo Vol.VII Book 16.1.20 227(Loeb Classical Library; London: W. Heinemann, 1969).

in accordance with a certain oracle all the Babylonian women have a custom of having intercourse with a foreigner, the women going to the temple of Aphrodite with a great retinue and crowd; and each woman is wreathed with a cord around her head. The man who approaches a woman takes her far away from the sacred precinct, places a fair amount of money upon her lap, and then has intercourse with her; and the money is considered sacred to Aphrodite.[155]

As Adler notes, and as is apparent in reading Herodotus' and Strabo's Greek texts side by side, "Strabo's report reads like a summary of Herodotus."[156] Indeed, How and Wells note in their commentary on Herodotus' Histories that Strabo's account of Babylonian prostitution for Aphrodite is in fact a condensed version of Histories 1.199.[157] Bucher remarks on Strabo's use of Herodotus as a source that "the questionable reliability of Herodotus as an observer of Babylonian practices directly affects the reliability of Strabo."[158]

The reliability of Strabo's Geography for the reconstruction of ANE practices is further problematized by the observations of classics scholar Claude Nicolet. Nicolet

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[155]Jones. Geography, 227.

[156]Adler, Covenant, 181.

[157]W.W. How and J. Wells. A Commentary on Herodotus, vol.1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912) 151. Oden ("Religious Identity," 146) also notes Strabo's apparent reliance upon Herodotus. In fact, central to Oden's thesis is that "what appears to be a list of more than a dozen [classical] sources [substantiating the cult prostitution hypothesis] may in fact be a list of a couple of sources. perhaps even and ultimately a single source: Herodotus." Beyond the work of Strabo and Lucian. which I examine in this chapter. Oden argues that at least twelve other classical and patristic sources, (e.g. Augustine. Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Valerius Maximus) that mention cult prostitution can be shown to rely upon Herodotus, either directly or indirectly, for their information (145-146). Oden implies that the ancient writers who rely upon Herodotus share his cultural biases toward people of the Near East. In the case of the patristic authors, disdain for non-Christian culture fuelled their acceptance of the notion that Eastern people participated in sexual religious rites (145).

Oden's thorough analysis of classical and patristic sources that mention cult prostitution is worthy of note in this thesis. It illustrates that all classical references to cult prostitution in the Near East are fraught with problems for those wishing to reconstruct history from them. A more central space in this thesis has, however, been accorded to the 'evidence' provided by Herodotus, Strabo, and Lucian since the works of these authors are most frequently mentioned in biblical scholarship to 'prove' the sexual role of the qĕdēśôt. As Oden himself notes in his essay, "few modern scholars cite anything like all the [classical and patristic] material" (144).

[158]Bucher, ZNH, 61.

draws attention to the fact that the Geography "is proclaimed openly as a 'political geography' written mainly for the use of the ruling groups."[159] According to Nicolet:

[Strabo's] geography is indeed the science of the appropriation of the land by man, the inventory of his home, of his resources, and of the traces he had left behind him. This geography is strictly political; it is essentially aimed at the rulers in order to allow them to govern better...and [it] explains the beginnings of an empire. [160]

Strabo's Romanocentric agenda is reminiscent of Herodotus' Hellenocentric method and purpose in writing the Histories. Care must be taken, as with Herodotus' work, in reconstructing the history of non-Roman peoples from this biased work.

Another account that has been used to support the notion of cult prostitution is that of the second century C.E. satirist, Lucian of Samosata.[161] In De Dea Syria ("The Syrian Goddess"), a work attributed to Lucian,[162] the author describes sexual activity related to the temple of Aphrodite at Byblos. The account is as follows:

I did see, however, in Byblos a great sanctuary of Aphrodite of Byblos in which they perform the rites of Adonis, and I learned about these rites. They say, at any rate, that what the boar did to Adonis occurred in their territory. As a memorial for his suffering each year they beat their breasts, mourn, celebrate the rites...They also shave their heads...The women who

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[159]Claude Nicolet, Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1991) 8.

[160]Nicolet, Space, 73.

[161]For example, Yamauchi, "Cultic Prostitution," 219. To my knowledge, explicit references to Lucian's De Dea Syria as evidence for cult prostitution rarely occur in Hosea scholarship. Critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis draw attention to Lucian's work since it is used on occasion by scholars who argue the historicity of cult prostitution in ancient Israel and Canaan (e.g. Yamauchi). For critics, Lucian's De Dea Syria is, like Herodotus' account of Babylonian sexual customs, unreliable as a historical source.

[162]Some controversy surrounds the authorship of this work. Objections to Lucianic authorship include its apparent lack of satirical flavor relative to other works, and the use of the Ionic dialect which distinguishes De Dea Syria from other Lucianic works most often written in Attic Greek. Intriguingly, these same points are used as evidence by those scholars who do attribute De Dea Syria to Lucian. According to their argument, the Ionic dialect is employed to designate this work as a satire on Herodotus' Histories. (For useful summaries of the controversy over De Dea Syria's authorship, see Harold W. Attridge and Robert A. Oden Jr., The Syrian Goddess [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976] 2-3 ,and Robert A. Oden Jr., Studies in Lucian's De Dea Syria [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977] 4-14.)

refuse to shave pay this penalty. For a single day they stand offering their beauty for sale. The market, however, is open to foreigners only and the payment becomes an offering to Aphrodite.[163]

There are similarities between Lucian's account of the customs at Byblos and Herodotus' account of those in Babylonia. Women offer their bodies to strangers, and the payment for the sexual act goes to the coffers of the temple of Aphrodite. However, Bucher correctly notes that the dissimilarity between the accounts is more significant than the parallels.[164] First and foremost, Lucian, unlike Herodotus, does not describe a religious rite that all women are expected to perform, but rather a *punishment* for their failure to engage in a non-sexual religious rite.[165] Moreover, the women at Byblos wait to prostitute themselves for a single day while the women of Babylonia must wait until their sexual services are solicited, for an indeterminate length of time. Clearly, Lucian is not describing the same alleged rite as Herodotus. This account can therefore not be construed as corroborating evidence for Herodotus' alleged observations.

As with the work of Herodotus, critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis argue that Lucian's work is unreliable as a historical source.[166] First, these scholars note that De Dea Syria contains many fantastical elements which render the work unbelievable. For instance, directly after Lucian's report of alleged prostitution for Aphrodite is an account of Osiris' head making a yearly seven-day pilgrimage over the sea from Egypt to

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[163]Attridge and Oden. The Syrian Goddess, 15.

[164]Bucher. ZNH, 71.

[165]Bucher, ZNH, 71. It is worth emphasizing that the religious rite which some women at Byblos refuse to perform is in no way sexual. The people of Byblos are said to perform acts of lamentation for Adonis such as weeping, beating their breast, and shaving their heads. The alleged *punishment* for the failure to perform these acts is an act of prostitution. The prostitution is *not* the religious act itself, which is the assumed definition of cult prostitution by biblical scholars.

[166]Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution," 225; Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 41; Oden, "Religious Identity," 142, 144-145; Bucher, ZNH, 70-71; Adler, Covenant, 183; Bird, "Play the Harlot," 90 n.9.

Byblos.[167] Elsewhere in De Dea Syria, Lucian describes the water of a Syrian river which

every year turns to blood.[168]

Intriguingly, classics scholars regard Lucian's De Dea Syria as a deliberate parody of

none other than Herodotus' Histories.[169] In fact, Robinson claims that "[Lucian's] aim is

to out-Herodotus Herodotus, and the comedy lies therein."[170] There are several elements

in De Dea Syria which suggest that indeed Lucian's aim was to create a satire on

Herodotus' work. For example, in De Dea Syria Lucian departs from his use of Attic

Greek in favor of the Ionic dialect used by Herodotus. Scholars argue that Lucian

employs this technique for the dual purpose of satirizing Herodotus' writing and mocking

the revival of this dialect among the Roman intellectuals.[171] Lucian also incorporates

phrases resembling Herodotean formulae into De Dea Syria.[172] According to Robinson's

typology, one such Herodotean formula which Lucian parodies is "'this seems probable

but I have also heard another version.'"[173] Oden considers paragraph 8 of De Dea Syria to

be an example of this. Here Lucian records both a generally-known explanation and a

particular individual's account (which Lucian judges to be more credible) of why each

year a river in Byblos turns blood red. Oden lists several occurrences of Herodotus'

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[167]Attridge and Oden, The Syrian Goddess, 15. Hooks (Sacred Prostitution, 40) and Adler (Covenant, 184) remark that the account of the floating head attests to Lucian's satirical/comical as opposed to historiographical intentions in De Dea Syria.

[168]Attridge and Oden, The Syrian Goddess, 15. See Hooks (Sacred Prostitution, 40) and Adler (Covenant, 184).

[169]Barry Baldwin, Studies in Lucian (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973) 33; Graham Anderson, Studies in Lucian's Comic Fiction (Leiden: Brill, 1976) 68; Oden, Studies, 20-22; Christopher Robinson, Lucian and His Influence in Europe (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979) 22.

[170]Robinson, Lucian, 22. It is worth noting that in other writings, Lucian refers to Herodotus and his Histories sarcastically.

[171]Baldwin (Studies in Lucian) writes that "pseudo-ionic had a revival in the second century, and Lucian took advantage of it for comic purposes" (33).

[172]Anderson, Comic Fiction, 75-78; Oden, Studies, 20-22; Robinson, Lucian, 22.

[173]Robinson, Lucian, 22. Other typical Herodotean phrases employed by Lucian are the "'I saw myself', [and] 'I am only recounting what I have been told'" formulae (22).

formula of comparing and judging variant accounts of a particular incident (e.g. 1.24, 1.70, 1.171).[174] Finally, Lucian satirizes Herodotus' penchant for the exotic and the bizarre.[175] Scholars identify the account of women's prostitution in the temple of Aphrodite as a punishment for their refusal to shave their heads as an example of such satire.[176] Anderson, taking into consideration other satirical works by Lucian and the author's unfavorable opinion of Herodotus, remarks that "it is clear that a bogus temple-legend patched together from elements of genuine cult practice, highlights of Herodotus, and novelistic motifs would be perfectly consistent with Lucian's tastes and methods."[177]

The similarities between De Dea Syria and the Histories are many. However, scholars argue that they "are not a token of the admiration felt by [Lucian] for the great historian [i.e. Herodotus]. Rather, the author of De Dea Syria is exaggerating and thus parodying the methods, eccentricities, and language of Herodotus."[178] Recognizing Lucian's De Dea Syria as a satire on the Histories severely undermines the usefulness of his account of women's prostitution for Aphrodite of Byblos as evidence for cult prostitution in the ancient Near East.

As in the case of Herodotus' and Strabo's works, there is also a significant lacuna in time between Lucian's De Dea Syria and Hosea's Israel. As critics of the cult prostitution

[174]Oden, Studies, 21 n.75
[175]Anderson, Comic Fiction, 70; Oden, Studies, 21-22; Robinson, Lucian, 22. Earlier in this chapter, I discuss Herodotus' interests in the "bizarre" customs of non-Greek cultures.
[176]Robinson (Lucian) writes: "[Lucian's] description of the temple and cult [at Byblos]. with its naive acceptance of the most implausible tales and its delight in erotic anecdote is well within the Herodotean manner" (22 - my emphasis). See also Anderson, Comic Fiction, 69, 81-82.
[177]Anderson, Comic Fiction, 80.
[178]Oden, Studies, 21.

hypothesis duly note, Lucian is separated temporally from Hosea by nearly one thousand

years.[179]

Conclusion

Critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis argue convincingly that the interpretation of

the *qĕdēšôt* as "cult prostitutes" is a fiction originating in the writings of ancient, non-

Semitic authors. Ritual and literary texts, administrative lists, and legal codes native to

the ancient Near East do not attest to the historicity of the institution of cult prostitution.

Descriptions of the sexual cult activity that modern scholars allege is the target of

Hosea's invective occur in texts written by ethnic outsiders centuries after Hosea's time.

The works of Herodotus, Strabo, and Lucian hardly support the notion that the *qĕdēšôt*

named in Hos 4:14 were "cult prostitutes."

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[179]Fisher. "Cultic Prostitution," 225; Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 40; Oden. "Religious Identity." 145; Bucher, ZNH, 71.

CHAPTER FOUR

ISRAEL VERSUS CANAAN: A RHETORIC OF 'OTHERNESS'

I have argued in the previous chapter that the ANE evidence for the *qĕdēšôt*'s identity as cult prostitutes is indeed "slight and ambiguous."[1] I have also shown that the ancient Greek texts which report alleged cultic sexual activity are suspect for their culturally-biased perspectives, and are considered to be highly polemical in their intent by classical scholars and critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that modern biblical scholars have characterized the *qĕdēšôt* as cult prostitutes largely because of their own religious and cultural biases. In the first section of this chapter, building on the work of Robert A. Oden Jr., I will argue that traditional biblical scholars, as heirs of Israel's religious tradition, have failed to analyze biblical texts condemning the Canaanites as pro-Israelite rhetoric. As a consequence, scholars have adopted an anti-Canaanite stance, and have joined the biblical authors in condemning the rites of the Canaanite people. In the second section, I will contend that modern biblical scholars approve of the Israelite cult and condemn the Canaanite cult according to their own modern Western value system, which esteems history-centered religions over nature-centered religions. In the third and final section, I will expose scholars' history/nature dichotomy as a thoroughly modern, Western construct. I will accomplish this by reviewing biblical and extra biblical texts which clearly defy such a categorization, and which attest to greater affinity between Canaan and Israel than difference.

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[1]Oden. "Religious Identity," 132.

The Pro-Israelite/ Anti-Canaanite Stance of Modern Biblical Scholars

Robert A. Oden Jr., in an essay which has "dealt a devastating blow"[2] to the cult prostitution hypothesis, suggests that "perhaps sacred prostitution ought to be investigated as an *accusation* rather than as a reality."[3] Oden maintains that traditional biblical scholars have given too little attention to the rhetorical aims of biblical texts to thoroughly denounce Canaanite religion and to affirm the superiority of the Yahweh cult. Such texts are found in abundance throughout the Hebrew Bible. A particularly explicit example of the biblical assertion of the superiority of the Yahweh cult over the Baal cult occurs in the account of the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel. With all Israel watching, Yahweh sends fire from heaven to light Elijah's sacrifice, while Baal's prophets receive no such demonstration of power from their own god (1 Kgs 18: 20-40). Yahweh's injunction to the Israelites to "utterly destroy" the Canaanites and the other ethnic groups of the promised land, since "the Lord ... has chosen [Israel] out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession" (Deut 7:1-6), is another powerful example. Hosea's invective against the Canaanite cult in chs. 1-4 is a similar castigation of Baal worship and a glorification of the cult of Yahweh.

Oden argues that such texts, so obviously hostile in their intent, should be viewed with caution, if not outright skepticism, as evidence for reconstructing aspects of Canaanite religion. The tendency among biblical scholars is rather to interpret the

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[2] Peggy L.Day, "The Personification of Cities as Female in the Hebrew Bible," in Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (eds.), Reading From This Place vol.2 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 288.
[3] Oden, "Religious Identity," 132.

statements made in the Hebrew Bible against the hated Canaanites as objective and

historically accurate descriptions of Canaanite religion.[4] Biblical scholars, who often

identify themselves with Jewish and Christian theological positions,[5] have a vested

interest in adopting the position of the biblical text on various issues.[6] The polemical

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[4] Oden, "Religious Identity," 135.

[5] I do not wish to suggest that all biblical scholars have a Jewish or Christian heritage but only to note that this is true in an overwhelming number of instances. As the discussion which follows will demonstrate. many scholars who discuss Hosea, either through direct faith statements or indirectly in their emphasis on the authority of biblical texts. demonstrate an obvious identification with a biblical theological tradition.

[6] In his book The Bible Without Theology, it is Oden's purpose to demonstrate that biblical interpreters have often been Christian and Jewish theologians who have read the biblical texts from these theological perspectives. This has undoubtedly affected the legitimacy of the reconstructions of non-Israelite religions mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. since scholars have tended to take the same point of view concerning these religious 'others' as the biblical authors. Oden proposes that modern biblical scholars align themselves as inheritors of Israel's religious tradition against the Canaanites. Hosea commentators. for instance, continue to regard the Canaanites as the 'other' by whom they measure their cultural and religious superiority. Some Hosea scholars explicitly equate the Canaanites with contemporary non-Christians, and judge the religious or non-religious character of such individuals as harshly as Hosea does the Canaanites. Beeby (Grace, 2). for instance. claims that "this religion...[of] the Canaanites...[was] what scientific humanism and technology are for people of the 20th century: essential to the means of production and for ensuring regular increase in the Gross National Product." It is clear that Beeby regards "20th century scientific humanism" as objectionable in what he perceives as contemporary society's over-confidence in its ability to support itself through technology and science. Later in his commentary. Beeby again compares the religion of the Canaanites to non-Christians or hypocritical Christians (according to Beeby's theological standpoint). He writes: "No doubt Hosea's contemporaries were expert in mouthing ascriptions of holiness, but like us they addressed them to the work of their own hands, to their pseudoscience, to sex, and of course, to nature, the great God-substitute of their age and ours" (56). To summarize, Beeby identifies non-Christian beliefs with Canaanite religion. He aligns himself against what is non-Christian, and thus identifies with Hosea. McComiskey also aligns himself with the anti-Canaanite perspective of Hosea by comparing Israel's participation in a Canaanite-styled cult to the contemporary refusal to heed the strictures of the covenant. McComiskey (Minor Prophets, 56) states: "the fact that the knowledge God is in parallel with *hesed* (loving-kindness) in [Hos] 6:6 indicates that knowledge of God involves an understanding of the ethical sphere in which God's people must live if they are to experience Yahweh's love and bounty. Even today. disobedience to the ethic of the new covenant. which is expressed in the New Testament, can hinder the blessing of God on his people." Stuart (Hosea, 13) presents a list of reasons allegedly explaining why many Israelites of Hosea's time were attracted to Canaanite "idolatry." According to Stuart, idolatry "did not seem foolish to ancient people **(as it does not seem foolish to the hundreds of millions who worship idols today)**" (15 – my emphasis). Hosea allegedly takes a desirable religious stance. according to Stuart, in denouncing idols. Stuart breathes a sigh of relief in interpreting Hos 14:8: "in the very last verse of the book (14:8), God states, predictively, 'What will Ephraim have to do anymore with idols?' **The ultimate answer, thank God, is 'Nothing'**" (19 – my emphasis). Having compared hundreds of millions of contemporary human beings to the idolaters which Hosea denounced. Stuart clearly shows his position that the non-idolatrous Christian tradition is superior to other forms of religious expression.

Besides these overt examples of the identification of non-Christians with the denounced religion of the Canaanites, other statements which Hosea commentators occasionally make about their understanding of the (moral) authority of biblical texts in contemporary history demonstrate that indeed these commentators align themselves with the perspectives of the Bible. For example, Wolff (Hosea, xxix) describes the prophecy of Hosea as "a model for the struggle carried on by Jesus' messengers on behalf of man in

intent of the texts is therefore unnoticed or ignored by biblical scholars as they "play a similarly key role in modern summaries of biblical thought written within the theological tradition."[7] This role is, of course, to glorify the religious tradition of Israel (and by extension, Christianity) while denigrating non-Israelite (or non-Christian) religious traditions.

Central to Oden's thesis is that modern biblical scholars carry on the polemical programs of biblical texts such as Hos 4, characterizing anything other than Yahweh worship as abominable. Oden asks (with an implied answer in the affirmative): "is sacred prostitution ... the extension of a cultural and theological accusation of chief service in distinguishing and thus absolutizing the religions on whose behalf ancient and modern thinkers are campaigning?"[8] Oden contends that cult prostitution is an accusation constructed by the Israelites to portray their neighbors as inferior, and thus amplify the status of the religion of Yahweh. Appealing to anthropological investigations of the creation of ethnic identity, Oden argues that group identity is constructed not only by group members sharing common cultural institutions, but also by the group's perception of those outside of the group as 'others.' According to cultural anthropologist Fredrik Barth, it is common for an ethnic group to perceive those outside of the group as having institutionalized the very practices which the defining group finds objectionable.[9] The rival group is, in a sense, the embodiment of the things that the defining group is not,

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today's world." This identification with the subject-position of the biblical texts of course entails a strong opposition to any religious expression which is not regarded as authentic Yahwism.
[7] Oden, "Religious Identity." 132.
[8] Oden, "Religious Identity," 135.
[9] Barth, "Introduction," in Fredrik Barth (ed.), Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969) 14-15.

thus creating an "ethnic boundary"[10] which functions to establish the *accusing* group's identity.[11] Cultural anthropologists de Vos and Romanucci-Ross state succinctly: "we know who we are by knowing who we are not."[12] Given that a group's derogatory characterization of another group often functions to create and maintain the ethnic boundaries of the accusing group itself, as Oden states, "ethnic boundaries are marked less by any 'objective' criteria than they are by the kinds of conduct and standards to which a group says it holds firm and from which the group charges its neighbors depart."[13] Applying this theory of group identity formation to the Hebrew Bible, Oden argues that Hebrew Bible texts that allegedly accuse the Canaanites of practicing cult prostitution must be viewed with extreme suspicion by modern biblical scholars who wish to reconstruct Canaanite cult practices. Rather than accurate descriptions of actual Canaanite practices, the Hebrew Bible texts that allegedly portray the Canaanites as sexually depraved should be understood as Israel's identity-forming rhetoric in their presentation of ethnic outsiders doing precisely what they themselves do not do.[14]

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[10] Barth, "Introduction," 15.

[11] George de Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross ("Ethnicity: Vessel of Meaning and Emblem of Contrast." in George de Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross [eds.], Ethnic Identity [Palo Alto: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1975] 366) eloquently state that "ethnic identity can be a positive affirmation containing a negative potential for becoming a hysterical or paranoid defense. As in all forms of belonging, it can be used to express one's humanness, or to deny the humanness of others."

[12] De Vos and Romanucci-Ross, Ethnic Identity, 368.

[13] Oden, "Religious Identity," 133. To illustrate this argument, Oden (134) draws attention to the work of W.Arens (The Man-Eating Myth [New York: Oxford University Press, 1979]), a cultural anthropologist who investigates cannibalism not as an institution, but as an accusation. Arens suggests that there is no unambiguous evidence to support the claim that any cultural group ever institutionalized anthropophagy, the consumption of human beings by human beings. Reviewing a myriad of alleged eyewitness accounts and descriptions, Arens persuasively argues that the accusation of cannibalism is often made by a particular ethnic group to depict the 'otherness' of a rival group.

[14] The biblical scholar E.Theodore Mullen Jr. (Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993]) similarly considers certain biblical narratives as exercises in identity-formation rather than in objective descriptions of historical events. In particular, Mullen argues that the Deuteronomistic literature is an example of an ethnic group's deliberate formation of its ethnic boundaries. He contends that the Deuteronomistic history is a re-imagined narrative of Israel's past composed during the exile in response to the threat of "complete assimilation and ethnic dissolution" (De Vos, Ethnic Identity, 5) which the exile

While I consider Oden's thesis to incisively illuminate major problems with the generally accepted notion of the historicity of cult prostitution among the Canaanites, I disagree that biblical scholars simply repeat the accusation of cult prostitution as it is made in the Hebrew Bible itself. According to Oden's argument, when Hosea denounced the presence of *qĕdēšôt* in sacrificial rites by calling them "whores," the prophet intentionally presented his audience with a fictional portrait of a Canaanite sex cult much like the sex cult that is construed by modern scholars. It is my observation, however, that the vivid descriptions of Canaanite cult prostitution are simply not found in the biblical texts. Neither Hos 4 nor the other biblical texts which allegedly describe the institution of cult prostitution offer an indication as to the setting, props, costumes, and scripts which would have been used in these alleged rites. One must turn to the commentaries for these.[15] While I concede that Hosea used sexual language to castigate apostasy and to characterize the Baal cult as abominable, I object to the notion that this was used to imply that the Canaanites engaged in ritual sex. I am convinced that the sexual language found in great concentration in the first four books of Hosea is employed metaphorically to

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entailed. For this reason, the Deuteronomistic history continually emphasizes on the one hand the awesome power of Yahweh and those upon whom he bestows his favor, and on the other hand the utterly abominable character of any non-Israelite group and the need for their complete annihilation by the Israelites (Mullen, Narrative History, 66-69).

[15] For instance, Farrar (Minor Prophets, 98), casting Gomer in the role of a cult prostitute, describes Hosea's wife several times as a "beautiful creature" who regularly took part in "the wild dances of Ashtoreth." Farrar has no evidence for his description since nowhere in Hosea are Gomer's physical attributes discussed, nor is dancing mentioned. Another Hosea commentator, McComiskey (Minor Prophets, 68) observes the following about Hos 4:11-14: "We have seen in our imagination the practices of which he speaks. His vivid style has caused us to see the blue smoke of the sacrifices hovering over the groves, and we have heard the brazen laughter of the cult prostitutes." Though not a trace smoke, blue or otherwise, is to be found in all of Hosea, nor is any woman depicted as laughing, brazenly or otherwise, McComiskey's comments treat these sights and sounds as arising quite naturally out of the text. The mental images are apparently so implicit in the text that McComiskey takes the liberty to point out to the reader that s/he sees and hears as he does in his use of the word "we." In my view, the *znh* terminology employed throughout Hosea and especially in Hos 1-4 leaves much to the imagination in terms of how exactly this

characterize apostasy as adultery, and not to criticize particular forms of Canaanite

religious expressions.[16]

The History/Nature Dichotomy

Despite my objections to aspects of Oden's argument, I agree with his contention that

modern biblical scholars adopt the antagonistic standpoint of the biblical texts against

Canaanite religion, and that this anti-Canaanite stance has been a crux in the perpetuation

of the cult prostitution hypothesis. I depart from Oden, however, in my estimation that

scholars, in delineating the superiority of Israel's religion over and against Canaan's

religion, have appealed to their modern Western cultural standards of superior and

inferior religions. Specifically, scholars regularly categorize the religion of Israel as a

'history religion,' one that values ethics and a covenant relationship with an almighty

God, while the religion of Canaan is a 'nature-religion,' centered on worldly concerns for

prosperity and pleasure, and of course, characterized by the practice of licentious sexual

rites. Far from being neutral designators of difference, the 'historical' religion of Israel is

accorded higher value than the 'magical nature-worship' of the Canaanites. In this

section, I will review biblical and early anthropological evaluations of Israelite and

Canaanite religion according to the history/nature dichotomy. In so doing, I will

demonstrate the validity of Oden's basic argument which posits that biblical scholars,

because of their Western and Judeo-Christian heritages, identify with the biblical authors,

commending the religion of Yahweh, and denouncing the religion of Baal. I will also

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"whoring" was carried out. It certainly does not support the colorful images of ritual sexual activity which modern commentators have devised.

argue that modern biblical scholars, in their habitual applauding of Israelite religion's moral fortitude and sophistication, and in their accompanying castigation of Canaanite religion's debauchery and baseness, ascribe their own modern Western cultural values to these two ANE cults.

I begin with John L. McKenzie who, in his article "God and Nature in the Old Testament,"[17] typifies the distinction which modern biblical scholars make between Israelite and non-Israelite ANE concepts of the deity's (ies') relationship to nature. According to McKenzie, Israel, uniquely among its ANE neighbors, considers the occurrence of natural events (rain, drought, agricultural fertility, famine, etc.) to reflect a universe that is ordered upon a moral code, specifically the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. For instance, draught is thought to be a consequence for broken tenets of the covenant, whereas agricultural abundance is supposedly the result of Israel's faithful worship of Yahweh and adherence to his ethical strictures.[18] In other words, according to McKenzie, ethics rather than nature are the ultimate focus of the religion and cosmology of Israel. Natural phenomena are merely the consequences of human behavior as Yahweh assesses it.

Nature itself, on the other hand, according to the traditional scholarly view as espoused by McKenzie, was at the heart of the religions of the other ANE cultures. The Canaanites did not consider natural phenomena primarily as the consequence of their relationship to their deities, but rather as a consequence of the sexual relations between

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[16] The nature and function of Hosea's metaphorical sexual language will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.
[17] "God and Nature in the Old Testament: Nature," CBQ 14 (1952) 18-39, 124-145. See also Helmer Ringgren, Israelite Religion (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966).
[18] McKenzie "God and Nature," 26.

the deities themselves.[19] According to McKenzie, the central myth of Canaanite religion,

the Baal cycle, teaches that the seasonal alternations between aridity and rain and

fallowness and fertility were the result of the cyclic death and resurrection of the

vegetation deity Baal, the latter effected through intercourse with his consort Anat.[20] To

ensure the recurrence of this cycle, a Canaanite worshipper and a cult prostitute engaged

in ritual intercourse, an act of sympathetic magic that stimulated the gods to repeat their

life-giving intercourse each year.[21] Natural disasters, that is, ruptures in this cycle of

fallowness and fertility, were understood to be effected by deities whom McKenzie labels

"capricious."[22] Unlike Yahweh, who granted or withheld fertility depending on Israel's

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[19]McKenzie ("God and Nature." 125) contends that the mere existence of goddesses in the Canaanite pantheon suggests sexual activity between the gods. He states that "sex was deified in the fertility goddesses." Yahweh, meanwhile, having no consort, is not directly "a part of the process of fertility." Yahweh's conferring of fertility upon the land does not result from a sexual union, but rather "it is a vital power, communicated from God to men: an act of the gracious will which diffuses its own goodness" (126). It is my contention that in making such statements and categorizations typical of biblical scholars, McKenzie overstates the sexuality of the Canaanite gods and goddesses. (See Hackett ["Sexist Model," 65-76], Peggy L. Day ["Why is Anat a Warrior?" in David Jobling, Peggy L. Day, and Gerald T. Sheppard [eds.], The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1991) 141-146] and Neal Walls [The Goddess Anat in Ugaritic Myth (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991)] for a critique of the unquestioned attribution of sexual functions to goddesses, regardless of their diverse and often non-sexual roles in the ANE literature.) At the same time, he understates the sexuality of Yahweh, which is far from absent in the biblical literature (e.g. Hos 1-3; Ezek 16, 23 which portray Yahweh as the sexually-betrayed husband of Israel). Marvin H. Pope ("Mixed Marriage Metaphor in Ezekiel 16," in A.B. Beck et al. [eds.], Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of his Seventieth Birthday [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995] 384-399) claims that indeed Yahweh's "non-sexuality" has been "overstated." Pope writes with intended irony: "Though male, YHWH is allegedly non-sexual. Since he has no consort, he needs no sexual organs...Yet he loves his people like an affectionate husband...and his heart is in heat for them" (385). McKenzie, remarking upon the husband-wife imagery of Hosea, 'desexualizes' the metaphor in stating that "Yahweh has a spouse: but it is the people of Israel. Their union is not the licentious union of the cult, but a union of love and fidelity" (127).

[20]McKenzie, "God and Nature," 124-125. McKenzie appeals to the Baal cycle discovered at Ras Shamra as evidence for his reconstruction of the non-Israelite conceptualization of nature and the deities. See Chapter One of this thesis (12-13) where I discuss the problems of modern scholars' reconstruction of the Baal cycle.

[21]McKenzie, "God and Nature," 125. I discuss the prevalence of this interpretation of the Baal cycle among traditional biblical scholars and of their presumption that the recitation of this myth was accompanied by ritualized sexual activity in Chapter One (13).

[22]McKenzie, "God and Nature," 134. McKenzie claims that in the ancient Near East, while sin or unethical behavior can provoke the anger of the deities, there is a "vagueness," particularly in Sumerian psalms of penitence, in terms of the psalmists' confessions. McKenzie concludes that "the worshipper does not know what it is that angers the god" (133) and that "to the Mesopotamian, the anger of the gods was capricious"

adherence to an explicit ethical code, the other ANE deities allegedly acted according to

their whims.[23]

Commentators who examine the book of Hosea also categorize Israelite religion as

history-oriented (i.e. centered upon the historical covenant relationship of Yahweh and

Israel) and ethical, while characterizing Canaanite religion as nature-oriented and

ritualistic. Walter Brueggemann. in his study of Hosea, for example, contrasts Israelite

and Canaanite religion according to this dichotomy.[24] Brueggemann engages in this

exercise with the express purpose of differentiating Israelite religion from Canaanite

religion "which is interested in fertility and which functioned by manipulation of deities

which are subpersonal."[25] He insists that, though "Israel had [blood sacrifice and magic]

in common with her neighbors, these elements do not define her worship." Rather, "the

cult of Israel is to be distinctly characterized as worship in which the Deity speaks and

Israel listens and answers ...The word of the Deity is his recital of saving deeds and his

new demands upon his covenant people." In other words, for Brueggemann, the history of

Yahweh's acts is at the heart of Israelite religion, as opposed to the performance of

rituals, which was the center of the Canaanite cult.

Wolff, in discussing Hosea's alleged appropriation of images from Canaanite

mythology,[26] demonstrates that he too is convinced that the religion of Israel does not

(134). McKenzie contrasts this capriciousness with the alleged intentionality of Yahweh's anger. which is consistently provoked by "infidelity to the covenant" (134).
[23]McKenzie, "God and Nature," 133-134.
[24]Tradition, 95-98.
[25]Brueggeman, Tradition, 96.
[26]See p. 14 Chapter One. While I concede that indeed certain Hebrew Bible texts, including the book of Hosea, contain what may be described as "Canaanite" imagery, I disagree that such images are appropriated by the biblical authors for polemical purposes. Rather. the images common to the Canaanite corpus and Hebrew Bible are testimony to the shared heritage of the Canaanite and Israelite cultures.

emphasize myth or ritual, as do the Canaanites, but rather history is the main focus. He

states:

> in spite of Hosea's daring, eristic usage of key words from the myth [of
> Baal], the certitude remains dominant that the Yahweh who acts in the
> present and future is none other than the one who has begun his covenantal
> history with Israel at the time of her youth with the exodus from Egypt
> ...with the making of the covenant ... and with the gift of divine law.[27]

Leslie's evaluation of Hosea's alleged use of "Canaanite" mythical images even more

obviously demonstrates scholars' contention that Israel was distinct and superior to

Canaan: "[the] concepts of union [i.e. of a god and a consort] and indwelling [i.e. of the

deity in human beings] which in Canaanite religion had **sensual** and **materialistic**

connotations, by Hosea are **lifted to the highest plain of ethical fellowship.**"[28]

For traditional scholars, Israelite religion is a historical and ethical religion whose

principal deity is concerned with and plays an intervening role in human affairs.

Canaanite religion, on the other hand, is described pejoratively as a nature-religion whose

practitioners participate in magical rites (notably cultic sex) to appease and manipulate

capricious nature deities. The sexual language (i.e. whoring, adultery) of texts such as

Hosea lends itself to Western correlations between nature and female sexuality, although,

as I will argue in the following chapter, the sexual language was not originally employed

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[27] Wolff, Hosea, xxvi.

[28] Old Testament Religion, 181(my emphasis). See also Claude J. Pfeifer ("The Marriage Theme of Hosea," The Bible Today 20 [1982] 139-144), whose remarks are also typical of Hosea scholars. According to Pfeifer, Hosea's use of the marriage metaphor to characterize Yahweh's and Israel's relationship "runs the risk of **contracting the very disease** which the prophet is trying to cure: syncretism" (144, my emphasis). He goes on to outline the form of Israel's apostasy in the following Frazerian manner: "The Israelites did not deny Yahweh; they simply identified him with Baal and thereby **reduced him to the level of a fertility god. and his cult to a system for getting him to do what they wanted**" (my emphasis). Hosea's goal, according to Pfeifer, was. on the other hand, to transform the sacred marriage "from the sphere of ritual to that of history."

to distinguish Israel's historical religion from Canaan's magical religion.[29] The

presupposition of Canaan's "sensual and materialistic" religion creates a context for

scholars' position that the qĕdēšôt were indeed cult prostitutes.

The fundamental construct through which scholars perceive the 'contrasting' religions

of Israel and Canaan, that is the dichotomy of Israelite=History/Canaanite=Nature, is not

new. Though Oden contends that a fictional sex cult is alleged in certain biblical texts, he

concedes that the vivid descriptions of non-Israelite, ANE religions and the activities of

their personnel is largely the product of the highly influential 19th century quasi-

anthropological works by James Frazer[30] and Robertson Smith[31] rather than any biblical

text. Oden notes that "the growth of the historical-critical biblical study within the past

century [i.e. the 19th century] coincides with a perceptible increase in the rehearsing of ...

accounts [of cult prostitution]." [32] In other words, the 19th century accounts of the

debauched cults of the (non-Israelite) ancient Near East served the purpose of

maintaining the "ethnic boundaries" of Israel (and by extension, Western Christianity),

the perceived distinctness and superiority of which were being threatened, ironically, by

the historical-critical school of biblical scholarship. Indeed, in their monumental works,

Frazer and Robertson Smith record confident accounts of cult prostitution among non-

Israelite, ANE peoples, accompanied by either no supporting evidence, or by evidence

which is dubious. The essential elements of these accounts reverberate even in

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[29] See Eva Feder Kittay, "Woman As Metaphor," Hypatia 3 (1988) 63-64; Hackett, "Sexist Model," 66; Westenholz, "Tamar," 263; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, In the Wake of the Goddesses (New York: The Free Press, 1992) 214-216.
[30] See Adonis, Attis Osiris, Third Edition, (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1919), volume six of Frazer's monumental The Golden Bough.
[31] The Religion of the Semites, Third edition, (London: A.& C. Black, 1927).
[32] Oden, "Religious Identity," 135.

contemporary Hosea scholarship. A brief review of Frazer and Robertson Smith's notions

of cult prostitution will illustrate this point.

Robertson Smith, in a short appendix to The Religion of the Semites entitled "Taboos

on the Intercourse of the Sexes," remarks without supporting evidence that "the temples

of the Semitic deities were thronged with sacred prostitutes."[33] Robertson Smith *does*

support his statement that these sacred prostitutes "were careful to retire with their

partners outside the sacred precincts," but his evidence is none other than Herodotus'

Histories, I.199 and Hos 4:14. Frazer's account of cult prostitution is more elaborate, but

no more convincing in terms of his evidence. In Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Frazer describes a

Babylonian rite of premarital sex in terms remarkably similar to those of Herodotus and

Strabo, who are the chief sources for his reconstruction.[34] According to Frazer, "at

Babylon, every woman, whether rich or poor, had once in her life to submit to the

embraces of a stranger at the temple of Mylitta, that is of Ištar or Astarte, and to dedicate

to the goddess the wages earned by the sanctified harlotry."[35] Frazer goes on to describe

the temple as "crowded with women waiting to observe the custom."[36]

Putting aside the dubious nature of the ancient Greek sources which they use and the

lack of evidence for some of their vivid details of sexual cultic rites,[37] Frazer's and

Robertson Smith's ideas about Israelite and non-Israelite religions are problematic for

their ethnocentric nature, betrayed especially in their contention of the evolution of

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[33] Robertson Smith, Semites, 455.
[34] See Frazer, Adonis, 36 n.6; 37 n.1; 39 n.1.
[35] Frazer, Adonis, 36-37.
[36] Frazer, Adonis, 37.
[37] See discussion in Chapter Three of this thesis.

societies from a primitive to a civilized state.[38] Both Oden[39] and Gary A. Anderson[40]

address the problem of the prominence the ideas of 19th century quasi-anthropologists

Frazer and Robertson Smith enjoy in biblical scholarship.[41] Anderson, in his critique of

biblical scholars' use of these antiquated and blatantly ethnocentric sources, claims that

"it is difficult, if not impossible, to find any modern anthropologist who respects Frazer's

theoretical model."[42] Though Hosea scholars rarely make direct reference to either Frazer

or Robertson Smith to support their notion that the *qēdēšôt* were cult prostitutes, their

particular reconstructions resound with the dated and ethnocentric models of both 19th

century writers.

Demonstrating his bias toward the superiority of Western culture, Robertson Smith

maintains that a "nation or tribe...emerg[es] from prehistoric darkness into the light of

authentic history."[43] He asserts that "as time rolls on and society advances, modifications

[in religious practice] take place." It is clear in Smith's evaluation of the religion of Israel

as morally superior to those of the other Semitic cultures[44] that the alleged practice of cult

prostitution identifies the Canaanites as more primitive than the Israelites. Similarly,

Frazer understands the institution of cult prostitution to be a vestige from a more

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[38] This evolutionary hypothesis is not ethnocentric for its suggestion that cultural institutions may change over time, but rather for the proposition that cultural institutions evolve toward an apex known as "civilization," the prime example of which, according to Robertson Smith and Frazer, is Western Christian society.
[39] "Religious Identity," 135-138.
[40] Sacrifices and Offerings in Ancient Israel (HSM; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987) 4 -7.
[41] Especially noteworthy is the deep influence that Robertson Smith's work had on his contemporary, the influential biblical scholar Karl Budde (Religion of Israel to the Exile, New York: Knickerbocker, 1899), whose work is used by several Hosea scholars examined in this thesis.
[42] Anderson, Sacrifices, 7. Anderson cites Mary Douglas (Purity and Danger [New York: Praeger, 1966], especially pp.24-28) and E. Evans-Pritchard (A History of Anthropological Thought [New York: Basic Books, 1981]) among those anthropologists who dismiss Frazer's contribution to their field.
[43] Robertson Smith, Semites, 30.
[44] Robertson Smith, Semites, 318-319, 194-195, 662.

primitive time, before monogamy was institutionalized.[45] According to Frazer, in a more

primitive stage of human society, marriage was communal and evolved gradually,

through the mysterious process of "civilization," into a monogamous relationship

between one man and one woman. For a culture that has 'arrived' at the 'stage' of

institutionalizing monogamy, "the revival of the ancient practice [i.e. communal marriage

in the form of cult prostitution] even for a single occasion in a woman's life became even

more repugnant to the moral sense of the people."[46] The obvious implication of Frazer's

analysis is that a culture that allowed the practice of cult prostitution [i.e.the Canaanites]

was morally inferior to a culture that denounced this practice [i.e. the Israelites]. Frazer

explicitly judges the eighth [e.g. Hosea] and seventh century prophets as instigators of

civilization, who encouraged the abandonment of more 'primitive' practices:[47]

> The great prophets...by the spiritual ideals and the ethical fervour of their
> teaching had wrought a religious and moral reform perhaps unparalleled in
> history. Under their influence an **austere monotheism had replaced the
> old sensuous worship of the natural powers**: a stern Puritanical spirit, an
> unbending rigour of mind, had succeeded to the old easy supple temper
> with its weak compliances, its wax-like impressionability, **its proclivities
> to the sins of the flesh**.

The descriptive language employed by modern scholars to describe Canaanite religion

clearly demonstrates scholars' conception of non-Israelite religion as primitive and

inferior to Israelite religion, echoing the terms of Frazer's and Robertson Smith's

evolutionary models. For instance, Leslie declares that, in denouncing the cult of the

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[45]Frazer, Adonis, 40.
[46]Frazer, Adonis, 40. See Oden, "Religious Identity," 137.
[47] Frazer, Adonis, 24-25 (my emphasis).

Canaanites and in preaching loyalty to Yahweh's covenant, the biblical prophets represent an 'advance' in religious thought:[48]

> We stand here at a **watershed in the history of religion**. The prophets were against sacrifice, for it involved a magical conception of deity and left men trembling in uncertainty and fear. They were for moral, rational conduct because that involved intelligent and growing insight into the nature of a being who made known to man's intelligence and his moral nature his character and requirements.

According to traditional scholars, the religion of Israel, in incorporating aspects of Baal worship, is "debased,"[49] "degenerate,"[50] and suffers "a **sinking back** into the morass of the common pagan conception of man and his relation to nature."[51]

Robertson Smith's conceptualization of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel as a moral contract is also shared by some Hosea scholars. Hosea scholars repeat the idea that the covenant is a moral code, and that Israel's breaking of the covenant, which Hosea laments, is also a breach of morality, specifically sexual morality. Anderson and Freedman state categorically that "sexual promiscuity in the fertility cult undermines the moral structure of covenant, and is a gross violation of the basic requirements of community life under God."[52] Strange describes the result of Israel's breach of covenant

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[48] Leslie, Old Testament, 173 (my emphasis).
[49] Beeby (Grace Abounding, 2 - my emphasis) states: "The faith of Hosea's fathers had become so **debased** that in almost every respect it was now the opposite of the great original."
[50] Wolfe (Meet Amos, 94 - my emphasis) states: "The **degenerate** religion of that day, far from condemning, glorifies these disgraceful practices with the halo of religious sanctity. Instead of being the guardian of morality and the bulwark of the home, false religion had practically destroyed marital faithfulness."
[51] Mays, Hosea, 75 (my emphasis).
[52] Anderson and Freedman, Hosea, 49.

as "a bankrupt religion devoid of moral and ethical demands,"[53] and later states that "breaking the covenant issued in a loss of moral discernment."[54]

Frazer's differentiation between and hierarchical arrangement of magic and religion also imply that human institutions can be schematized according to a sort of moral hierarchy, a conviction that continues to be shared by many Hosea scholars. According to Frazer, underlying the concept of magic and magical practices "is a faith, implicit and firm, in the order and uniformity of nature."[55] A magician, according to Frazer, believes "the same cause will always produce the same effect, that the performance of the proper ceremony, accompanied by the appropriate spell, will inevitably be attended by the desired results."[56] Religion, on the other hand, is "a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life."[57] A religious person, therefore, "acts from the love or fear of God" believing that the events of the world are in the deity's hands,[58] whereas a magician "abases himself before no awful deity" and considers him/herself a master of natural and human events through his or her art.[59] Frazer more than implies that the practice of magic is selfish and ignorant by definition, whereas religious devotion is selfless and therefore civilized. Frazer hastens to add that religion "need not consist in the offering of sacrifice...and

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[53] Strange, "Broken Covenant," 437.

[54] Strange, "Broken Covenant," 440.

[55] Frazer, The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings. Third edition (London: Macmillan, 1922), volume one of The Golden Bough. Frazer notes that this belief is "identical with [the position of] modern science" (220). He regards science as superior, however, in that it recognizes "true" causal relationships in nature whereas "false" causal relationships (such as the "sympathetic magic" of the Canaanite fertility rites) "are magic" (222).

[56] Frazer, Magic, 220.

[57] Frazer, Magic, 222.

[58] Frazer, Magic, 223.

[59] Frazer, Magic, 221.

outward ceremonies."[60] Since, as Frazer argues, the aim of religion is to propitiate a deity,

then if the deity is pleased by ethical actions, an ethical system can indeed be a religion.

This ethical side of religion was, according to Frazer, what the Hebrew prophets

emphasized in their teachings and, coincidentally enough, likely emphasized in Frazer's

own Christian upbringing.[61]

Several Hosea scholars evaluate the religion of the Canaanites as inferior to that of the

Israelites because of its alleged emphasis on magic (e.g. the consulting of a wooden

object for oracles, sympathetic magic practiced by Canaanite worshippers and cult

prostitutes). These scholars define magic as a technique of manipulation as Frazer does,

and similarly judge it as an objectionable practice. Consider Knudson's statement about

magic, which he contends the Canaanites practiced in their religion: "'Magic is selfish; it

says, 'My will be done'; but religion in its essential nature is unselfish; it says, 'Thy will

be done.' Magic seeks to bend the deity to the worshipper's will."[62] Ogilvie makes a

similar assessment of the religion of Israel's neighbors:[63]

> Canaanite religion, like most in the ancient world, connected gods and
> goddesses with forces in the natural world and considered that their course
> could be influenced by devotion and rituals of worshippers. Religion then
> takes on a **magical quality** as an attempt to **manipulate gods, which is
> characteristic of perverted religion in any place and time**.

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[60] Frazer, Magic, 223.

[61] Frazer. Magic, 223. As I will demonstrate, modern biblical scholars continue to abide by Frazer's differentiation between magic and religion, relegating the Canaanites to the magical sphere and the Israelites to the religious sphere. Frazer's overt contrast between magic and ethics also resounds throughout contemporary scholarship.

[62] In Leslie, Old Testament, 173.

[63] Ogilvie. Hosea, 3 (my emphasis). Several scholars similarly describe and condemn the Canaanite religion as magical and manipulative. Catlett compares and contrasts the religions of Israel and Canaan, concluding that "the distinction [between the two religions] is that Yahweh could not be **manipulated** by cultic acts to bring provision for the people" (Reversals, 213-214 – my emphasis). Stuart, who labels Canaanite worship "idolatry," warns that "with idolatry came its superstitions and primitive beliefs" (Hosea, 15).

Modern biblical scholars clearly regard Israelite religion as superior to Canaanite religion. This conviction originates, as Oden suggests, in scholars' loyalty to Israel's perspective of the Canaanites. Scholars elaborate upon the distinctions between Israelite and Canaanite religion in terms of a history/nature dichotomy, which has been a common way to classify these two religions, at least since the time of the influential armchair anthropologists Frazer and Robertson Smith. Frazer's and Robertson Smith's assertions that cult prostitutes "thronged" the nature-worshipping Canaanites' sanctuaries have contributed to the cult prostitution hypothesis. Contemporary anthropologists have largely dismissed the works of Frazer and Robertson Smith as inaccurate and ethnocentric, yet their ideas, most notably their evolutionary hypotheses which posit that primitive religion is ritualistic and civilized religion is ethical, are alive and well in contemporary Hosea scholarship. As I will now demonstrate, the history/nature dichotomy, to which Israel and Canaan are respectively assigned by Frazer and Robertson Smith, and by contemporary Hosea scholars, is in no way supported by biblical or ANE evidence.

The History/Nature Dichotomy As A Western Construct

Comparing the literatures of both Israelite and non-Israelite ANE cultures, several biblical scholars have challenged the applicability of the history/nature dichotomy to Israel and Canaan.[64] In this section, I will review the findings of these scholars in order to illustrate that the history/nature dichotomy, so critical to the notion that the Canaanites

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[64] See James Barr, Old and New In Interpretation (London: SCM Ltd, 1966); Bertil Albrektson, History and the Gods (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1967); J.J.M. Roberts, "Myth Versus History: Relaying the Comparative Foundations," CBQ 38 (1976) 1-13; Anderson, Sacrifices.

practiced cult prostitution, is apparently absent from the biblical and ANE texts and is

largely the product of the Western imagination.

Bertil Albrektson has produced a book-length essay which deconstructs the

history/myth and ethics/nature dichotomies which biblical scholars apply uncritically to

Israelite and non-Israelite ANE religions.[65] He argues that various ANE extra biblical

texts clearly portray the deities as acting in the political, military, and social history of

their peoples. Contrary to the contention that non-Israelite people recognized their gods

"in the eternal cyclic process of nature" while the Israelites recognized Yahweh "in

history,"[66] Albrektson demonstrates that divine intervention in human affairs "is ... a

conviction which the Israelites shared with other peoples of the ancient Near East."[67]

Though modern scholars often refer to the gods of the ancient Near East as "nature-

gods," these deities clearly have control over human events as Yahweh does in the

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[65] (See above note.) Albrektson (History, 14) notes the wealth of scholarly assertions of the ethics-centered Israel and nature-centered Canaan on the one hand, and scholars' lack of substantiation on the other hand: "It goes without saying that a determination of what is peculiarly Israelite in this field could only be made on the basis of a detailed comparison with non-biblical texts. As a rule, however, the alleged contrast between the biblical and the general Near Eastern ideas of revelation is treated as something almost self-evident, which is not in need of further demonstration of proof." Roberts ("Myth Versus History," 1) similarly observes that "the view that history was the constitutive genre of Israel's religious expression while myth exercised that function in contemporary paganism, still dominates the field."

[66] Albrektson, History, 11. Roberts ("Myth Versus History," 8) notes that "there are [ANE] texts in which the activities of the gods do appear timeless, where one is dealing with 'primordial events,' but that is not always the case."

[67] Albrektson, History, 41. It is worth noting that Albretkson exclusively reviews Mesopotamian evidence in his comparative analysis of the role of deities in Israelite and ANE cultures. In his concluding chapter, Albretkson remarks that the same emphasis on the deities' actions in historical affairs is absent in the Ugaritic texts, which may indicate that Canaanite cosmology and religious practices were in fact quite different from those of the Israelites, and perhaps closer to the traditional 'nature-religion' characterization than the religions of Mesopotamia (115-116). Roberts ("Myth Versus History,"12), however, notes that the Canaanite corpus is far less abundant than the Mesopotamian literature. Therefore, the assertion that the Canaanites did not think of their gods as acting in history and human affairs cannot be made without "much more evidence." He further indicates that epic is a literary genre known to the Canaanites, and that as Mesopotamians and Israelites were thought to have "translated" historical events "into the cosmic language of myth," so too may this have been the purpose of Canaanite epic (12).

biblical literature.[68] For instance, many biblical texts indicate that Israelite military

actions and the protection of Israel from enemy attack are the will of Yahweh.[69] From a

cylinder inscription of Sargon, it is clear that Dagan, a storm god, wills similar human

events. Sargon is described in the opening lines of the cylinder inscription as "the darling

of Anu and Dagan" and later as "the strongest of all princes, who extended his protection

over Harran and, **in accordance with the will of Anu and Dagan**, wrote its

charter."[70]Albrektson refers to two other texts related to the reign of King Sargon which

demonstrate that both the god Dagan and the god Enlil were thought to direct certain

human affairs.[71] In the first text, Sargon prays to Dagan and is thus granted control over

Mari, Iarmuti, and a portion of Ebla. In the second text, Enlil is portrayed as an active

protector of Sargon and as one who also grants the king control over certain territories.[72]

Inscriptions concerning King Esarhaddon[73] offer further evidence of the ANE deities'

involvement in human affairs. In an inscription that describes Esarhaddon's accession to

the late Sennacherib's throne, the gods "look in favor" on the new king and send him "an

oracle of confidence." The oracle instructs Esarhaddon to embark on a military

expedition, and the gods promise to "march at [Esarhaddon's] side and ... subjugate [his]

enemies."[74] In the battle that ensues, the goddess Ištar stands at Esarhaddon's side and

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[68]Albrektson. History, 16.

[69]See. for example. Josh 1:4-5. in which Yahweh promises to deliver the land of the Hittite people to the Israelites: Josh 6:2. in which Yahweh informs Joshua that he will give to him military victory over the city of Jericho; Judg 1:3-4, in which Yahweh delivers the Canaanites and the Perizzites and their land to the tribe of Judah. In Isa 31:5 and in Zech 9:15, Yahweh is portrayed as protecting Jerusalem from the ravages of war.

[70]Harper. Assyrian Literature, 59 (my emphasis).

[71]Both texts are taken from a large tablet of Sargon of Akkad. (Sec H.Hirsch's "Dei Inschriften der Könige von Agade." Archiv für Orientforschung 20 [1963] 38.)

[72]Albrektson. History, 28.

[73]The king of Assyria (681-668 B.C.E.) and son of Sennacherib.

[74]Harper, "Esarhaddon's Accession to the Throne and the Battle of Hanigalbat," in Assyrian Literature, 80-81.

breaks the bows of the enemy.[75] In another inscription of Esarhaddon, the king declares

that "under the protection of Ashur, Sin, Shamash, Nabu, Marduk, Ištar of Nineveh, [and]

Ištar of Arbela" he was able to succeed in his military conquest "without a rival."[76] It can

be argued, on the basis of these examples, that both the god of Israel and the gods of

Mesopotamia acted in history or exercised their will in human affairs through human

agents.

In the biblical literature, Yahweh's word or decree is thought to effect human

events.[77] Decrees of the deities of the ancient Near East similarly effect events among

human beings, and not merely in the natural world.[78] For instance, in an Akkadian hymn

to Ištar,[79] the word of the goddess is depicted as having a powerful influence over both

the other gods and historical events. Concerning the power of Ištar's word or decrees over

the gods, the hymn states: "Ištar among the gods, extraordinary is her station. Respected

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[75]Harper, "Esarhaddon," 81.

[76]Harper, "Cylinder A of the Esarhaddon Inscriptions," in Assyrian Literature, 81. Albrektson (History, n.44) gives several biblical examples that likewise depict the deity as willing and supporting human kingship. For instance, Albrektson refers to 2 Sam 7:4-17, the account of Yahweh's establishment of a perpetual Davidic dynasty. He draws attention to numerous Psalms that also depict Yahweh as exercising his will in human affairs through a king. For example, Ps 18:43-44 states: "You [Yahweh] delivered me [David] from strife with the peoples; you made me head of the nations; people whom I had not known served me. As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me; foreigners came cringing to me." In Ps 144:1-2, David extols Yahweh's show of might through him: "Blessed be the LORD, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle; my rock and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield in whom I take refuge, who subdues the peoples under me."

[77]Albrektson (History, 64) gives the example of 2 Kgs 9:36 in which Jehu repeats the "word of the Lord," i.e. the declaration of the manner of Jezebel's death. The phrase "word of the Lord" seems to imply, as Albrekston suggests, more than a prediction, but rather "the very force which governs the course of events."

[78]Albrektson (History, 54) notes the tendency among biblical scholars to maintain that the words or decrees of Israel's god are "active not only in nature but also - and primarily- in history," while the words and decrees of the other ANE deities are connected to "creation and nature only." As Albrektson's numerous examples of ANE deities influencing events in political and military affairs by their own words or decrees make clear, this point of view is apparently mistaken.

[79]Albrektson makes reference to this hymn in his chapter "The Divine Word and the Course of Events" (History, 233). An English translation of the hymn by Ferris J. Stephens is found in Pritchard's The Ancient Near East, 231-233. The hymn was written in approximately 1600 B.C.E., during the reign of the Akkadian king Ammiditana.

is her word; it is *supreme* over them."[80] Her 'word' is conceptualized as effecting events

in history, specifically Ammiditana's acquisition of subject peoples. The final stanza of

the poem reads thus: "By her orders, she has subjected to him the four world regions at

[Ammiditana's] feet; And the total of all peoples she has decided to attach them to her

yoke."[81] In the Annals of Ashurbanipal,[82] Istar's word is again described as the direct

cause of an event in human affairs. Ashurbanipal describes the revolt of the citizens of

Mannai against their king and his rival, Ahsheri, as "in accordance with the word of

Istar." Istar, according to this inscription, "said from the beginning" that Ahsheri would

die.[83]

The gods of the ANE clearly were thought to have acted in human history. Far from

being the capricious nature-deities of McKenzie's description, these gods, like the god of

Israel, conferred military strength and political authority upon favored kings and peoples.

James Barr offers the example of the Mesha Stone inscription,[84] which further highlights

that Israel and its ANE neighbors shared conceptions about their deities. In this Moabite

text, the god Chemosh, angry at his people, allowed the Israelites under King Omri to

occupy their land.[85] However, Mesha declares that he succeeded in overthrowing Omri's

son Ahab and in liberating the Moabite people since "Chemosh dwelt there in [Mesha's]

time."[86] In other words, as Barr remarks, Chemosh is " 'acting in history' in a manner

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[80]Ferris, "Hymn," 233.

[81]Ferris, "Hymn," 233.

[82]Harper, Assyrian Litrerature, 94-127. Ashurbanipal, the son of Esarhaddon, reigned as king over Assyria in 668-626 B.C.E. (see Introduction, xxvii).

[83]Harper, Assyrian Literature, 104. Albrektson (History) cites this text on page 64.

[84] According to Harris (Understanding the Bible), the stone, discovered in 1868, was written during the ninth-century B.C.E. reign of Mesha (148). For a translation of the Mesha Stone text, see W.F. Albright, "The Moabite Stone," in The Ancient Near East, 209-210.

[85] Omri was the father of Ahab (876-869 B.C.E. - see 1 Kings 16: 23-28).

[86]Albright, "Moabite Stone," 210.

remarkably similar to that of the God of Israel, particularly the god of the Deuteronomistic theology."[87]

Albrektson also challenges the notion of a history/myth and ethics/nature dichotomy by presenting both biblical and extra biblical texts that apparently blend these allegedly separate spheres. He presents a portion of the prism inscription of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I[88] and two biblical texts[89] by way of example. Each of the three texts attributes military strength, social order, and agricultural fertility to the control of the deity(ies). Tiglath-Pileser petitions the gods Anu and Adad to grant an "abundance of rain, years of prosperity, and fruitfulness in plenty." He asks the gods to also "bring [him] back safely from battle and from flight" and to "reduce to submission all the countries of [his] enemies."[90] Genesis 27:28-29, Jacob's unwitting blessing of Isaac, provides a striking parallel to the blessing which Tiglath-Pileser seeks from his gods: "May God give to you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you and nations bow down to you." It is apparent that for the peoples of the ANE, the gods were conceptualized as having power over the realms of both history and nature. Indeed, Albrektson contends that in the minds of these ANE people "it may be more correct to conclude that the very distinction between nature and history, so self-evident to us, is alien."[91]

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[87]Barr. Old and New, 72. Harris (Understanding the Bible, 148), like Barr. discusses the obvious parallels between the Moabite theology apparent in this text. and the theology of the Deuteronomists.

[88] The inscription, on a prism-shaped stone. was written in approximately 1100 B.C.E. (Harper. Assyrian Literature, xxxv). The lengthy inscription documents Tiglath-Pileser's military conquests with the assistance of various Assyrian gods (11-27).

[89]Gen 27:28. and Ps. 147:13.

[90]Harper, Assyrian Literature, 26. In this portion of the inscription, Tiglath-Pileser asks these favors of the gods in recognition of his rebuilding "from foundation to roof" the temple of Anu and Adad (26).

[91]Albrekston, History, 23 n.22.

Albrekston demonstrates that the concept of a deity's involvement in and concern

with the political and social life of his/her people is not unique to Israel's religion. On the

other hand, he suggests that concerns with fertility are not the exclusive realm of

Canaanite religion. Anderson addresses this issue more fully, maintaining that not only is

Israel concerned with fertility, fertility and its relationship to the deity is conceptualized

in terms remarkably similar to how it was in Canaan. Anderson uses the post-exilic texts

of Haggai and Zechariah in particular to illustrate an Israelite correlation between the

reconstruction of Yahweh's temple and the return of agricultural fertility to the

languishing land.[92] Certain Canaanite myths similarly convey the concept of the erection

of a temple and the consequent prosperity of the land. This shared concept, according to

Anderson, "has proved embarrassing to a number of commentators" examining Haggai

and Zechariah, as they wish to preserve the notion of the religion of Israel's radical

difference from Canaan's fertility religion."[93]

The book of Haggai, written ca. 520 B.C.E., is a post-exilic work which documents

the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple destroyed by the Babylonians under

Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C.E. As Anderson notes, Haggai clearly equates the poverty of

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[92] The late date of Haggai and Zechariah (6th century) relative to Hosea (8th century) bolsters the argument that Israelite and Canaanite religion were in fact quite similar. In my estimation, it is highly unlikely that the Israelites in Haggai's and Zechariah's time would have suddenly incorporated Canaanite religious and cosmogonic concepts that had allegedly been vehemently rejected two hundred years earlier in Hosea's time. A more plausible interpretation of the evidence is that distinctions between Israelite and Canaanite religion have been grossly overstated in modern scholarship. Affinities discovered among the two traditions should therefore not be surprising, even in the later literature of Haggai and Zechariah.

[93] Anderson, Sacrifice, 91. Frank Moore Cross, in his ground-breaking Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973) eloquently observes that scholars have often "overlook[ed] or suppress[ed] continuities between the early religion of Israel and the Canaanite culture from which it emerges. There has been a preoccupation with the novelty of Israel's religious consciousness. More serious, the religion of Israel has been conceived as a unique or isolated phenomenon, radically or wholly discontinuous with its environment. In extreme form, these views root ultimately in dogmatic systems, metaphysical or theological, and often serve an apologetic purpose" (vii-viii).

those who have returned to Jerusalem with the devastated temple.[94] Hag 1: 9-11 is as

follows:

> 9 You have looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the Lord of hosts. Because my house lies in ruins, while all of you hurry off to your own houses. 10 Therefore the heavens above you have withheld their dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. 11 And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the soil produces, on human beings and animals, and on all their labors.

It is clear in these verses that the prosperity of the people is portrayed as directly

dependent upon the fertility of the land. Haggai, furthermore, in 2:18-19, claims that the

fertility of the land is directly dependent upon the restoration of Yahweh's "house":

> 18 Consider from this day on, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. Since the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider: 19 Is there any seed left in the barn? Do the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree still yield nothing? From this day on I will bless you.

A similar equation between a soundly constructed temple and agricultural fertility is

made by the post-exilic prophet Zechariah, a contemporary of Haggai. The first eight

chapters of Zechariah deal with the restoration of the temple upon the return of exiled

Israelites to Jerusalem. Like Haggai, Zechariah equates the ruin of the cultic center in

Jerusalem with the fallowness of the land. Chapter 7:14 recounts the exile and its

consequences for the land: "and I [Yahweh] scattered them with a whirlwind among all

the nations that they had not known. Thus the land they left was desolate, so that no one

went to and fro, and a pleasant land was left desolate." In 8: 9-12, Yahweh pronounces

the renewal of the land's fertility upon the rebuilding of the temple (my emphases):

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[94]Anderson, Sacrifice, 96.

9 Thus says the LORD of hosts: Let your hands be strong - you that have recently been hearing these words from the mouths of the prophets who were present when the foundation was laid for the rebuilding of the temple, the house of the LORD of hosts. 10 For **before those days** [i.e. before the temple] there were no wages for people or for animals, nor was there any safety from the foe for those who went out or came in, and I set them all against one other, 11 **But now** [i.e. upon the reconstruction of the temple] I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, says the LORD of hosts. 12 For there shall be a sowing of peace; the vine shall yield its fruit, the ground shall give its produce, and the skies shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

This concept of a clear relationship between a soundly established temple and the fertility of the land occurs in Canaanite literature, especially in the Baal cycle.[95] A central part of the Baal cycle is the storm god's request for his own temple.[96] The goddess Asherah, who asks her husband El to allow the building of a temple for Baal, makes the following declaration upon El's concession to her request:[97]

> You are great, El, you are truly wise; your gray beard truly instructs you
> .... **Now Baal will begin the rainy season, the season of wadis in flood,** and he will sound his voice in the clouds, flash his lightning to the earth. **Let him complete his house of cedar! Let him construct his house of bricks!**

In the account of the actual construction of Baal's temple by the master-builder Kothar-wa-Hasis,[98] once again rain and the temple are equated. Kothar-wa-Hasis, at the time of the construction of the temple, urges Baal to have a window in his palace. Baal initially

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[95]Anderson, Sacrifice, 102-103.
[96] Michael Coogan, "Baal," in Stories From Ancient Canaan, 75-115.
[97]Coogan, Stories, 101 (my emphasis). The goddess Asherah is the wife of El, who is the principle deity in the Canaanite pantheon.
[98] Kothar-wa-Hasis (meaning "skillful and wise") is the "craftsman of the gods" (Coogan, Stories, 118).

refuses."⁹⁹ When Baal eventually concedes, it is clear that the window in the temple is conceptualized as the space through which the rains flow. Baal makes the following declaration: "Let a window be opened in the house, a casement within the palace; **then a slit can be opened in the clouds.**"¹⁰⁰ The narrative that follows elaborates upon the image of the temple window as the source of the pouring out of the life-giving rains: "He opened a window in the house, a casement in the palace. Then Baal opened a slit in the clouds. Baal sounded his holy voice, Baal thundered from his lips ... the earth's high places shook."¹⁰¹

Anderson contends that two other Canaanite myths concerning kings¹⁰² demonstrate that just as fertility is attributed to Baal's integrity as a god, symbolized in his temple, so

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⁹⁹Coogan (Stories, 82) suggests that Baal's initial refusal to have a window built into his temple stems from a "popular superstition" which gave "Death an opportunity to enter." Baal finally concedes to the window *after* he has achieved several decisive military victories. In other words, according to Coogan's hypothesis, Baal agrees to the window after he has asserted a measure of power over Death.

¹⁰⁰Coogan, Stories, 105 (my emphasis). Anderson interprets Ezekiel's account of the restored temple as another example of the Israelite equation between temple and fertility. In Ezek 47, a fertility-giving water is said to flow "from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced the east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar (v.1)." Ezekiel describes the water flowing away from the temple forming a river, and gradually merging with the sea (vv. 3-8). Ezekiel, in 47:12, describes this water, whose source lies at the temple, as responsible for fertility:

> 12 On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing.

This account is arguably even more similar than those of Haggai and Zechariah to the Canaanite concept of rain flowing from the "cosmic mountain" where Baal's temple stood. For discussion on the concept of the cosmic mountain in Canaanite mythology and its identity, in part, as the source of life-giving water, see Richard J. Clifford, The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1972) 34-97. Clifford describes one of the functions of the mountain in Ugaritic mythology as "the paradisiacal source of water that gives fertility" (97). He goes on to examine biblical texts in which "cosmic mountains" (i.e. Zion, Sinai) figure. Clifford argues that the Ezek 47:12 (see above) which "speak[s] of life-giving waters issuing from a blessed place" clearly has its roots "in the tradition of a sacred mountain in the north, Zaphon in Syria (i.e. Baal's mountain)" (102).

¹⁰¹Coogan, Stories, 105.

¹⁰² The tales are the Aqhat and Kirta cycles, named after King Aqhat and King Kirta, respectively, around whom the stories revolve. For English translations of these stories, see Coogan's "Aqhat" (pp.32-47) and "Kirta" (pp.58-74) in Stories From Ancient Canaan.

is it attributed to the integrity of the earthly kings.[103] In both stories, the fertility and sterility of the land is correlated with the physical well-being or illness of the king. In the Aqhat cycle, the goddess Anat, wishing to possess Aqhat's magnificent bow, devises a plot to have him murdered. As a result of Aqhat's death, the narrator informs us that "the first fruits of summer have withered, the ear in its husk."[104] Moreover, immediately following Aqhat's death, the granary of the threshing floor withers away.[105] In the Kirta cycle, Kirta is struck with a debilitating illness for his failure to fulfill a vow made to the goddess Asherah.[106] His illness is echoed in the failure of the land to produce its expected yield: "The plowmen lifted their heads, the sowers of grain their backs: gone was the food from their bins, gone was the wine from their skins, gone was the oil from their vats."[107]

According to Anderson, because of the resonances of Haggai's, Zechariah's, and Ezekiel's temple-building accounts with Canaanite mythology, biblical scholars who wish to uphold the concept of Israel's distinct and ethical religion tend to "spiritualize" the meaning of these biblical texts in their interpretations. For instance, the re-building of the temple as it is depicted particularly in Haggai and Zechariah is an act of spiritual atonement, and the consequence of this atonement is spiritual prosperity, symbolized by "the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, the olive tree" (Hag 2:19) and the dew from the skies (Zech 8:12).[108] According to Anderson, because of scholars' prejudice against the

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[103] Anderson (Sacrifices, 103) suggests that Baal is a sort of "divine prototype" of human kingship, and that the divine king and earthly kings were thought to have common attributes. He notes that "it has long been recognized that the Baal cycle, with its strong interest in kingship and Temple building among the gods, intends to reflect earthly kingship and Temple building as well."
[104] Coogan, Stories, 40.
[105] Coogan, Stories, 40-41.
[106] Coogan, Stories, 67.
[107] Coogan, Stories, 71.
[108] Anderson, Sacrifices, 92. Anderson cites Gerhard von Rad (Old Testament Theology, II [New York: Harper and Row, 1965] 281) and P.Ackroyd (Exile and Restoration [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975]

religion of the Canaanites, there is a tendency in the direction of "*ignoring or*

downplaying the instrumental quality of the rhetoric."[109] Biblical scholars downplay the

fact that "these prophets are most emphatic in their belief that the physical reconstitution

of the Temple building will assure a new vigor for fertility in the agricultural sphere."[110]

Anderson's interpretation of the shared Israelite and Canaanite correlation of temple

and fertility further challenges modern biblical scholars' distinction between Israel's

historical and Canaan's magical religions by challenging the terms of the distinction.

Anderson suggests that neither the Israelites nor the Canaanites regarded the temple and

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159). Indeed, commentators on the books of Haggai and Zechariah tend to gloss over the overt link made in these texts between the building of a new temple and the return of the land's fertility. Von Rad states that at face value "for these two prophets the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem is actually the necessary precondition to Jahweh's advent and of his kingdom" is an "embarrassment" to commentators (281). Von Rad explains that "Haggai's only reason for saying what he did was his belief that the eschatological Israel was to have a sacral centre, and that this alone would guarantee her existence" (282). In other words, for von Rad, the Temple was not built for the rejuvenation of the land, but as a testimony of the people of Israel's proper devotion to their god. Explained in this way, presumably to the relief of "embarrassed" commentators, the building of the Temple "was not in principle different from Isaiah's call for faith during the Syro-Ephraimitic war" (282- my emphasis). Ackroyd also appears to be uncomfortable with the apparent instrumental qualities of the Temple building as expressed by Haggai and Zechariah. Contrary to Haggai's correlation of the return of the land's fertility with the exact day on which the rebuilding efforts commenced (2:18), Ackroyd states that "there is no automatic efficacy in the Temple, no guarantee that by virtue of its existence it ensures salvation. The effectiveness of it and its worship is determined by the condition of those who worship" (169). For similar comments, see Hans Walter Wolff (Haggai, Margaret Kohl (trans.) [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988]) and Rex Mason (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977]). Exceptionally, David Petersen (OTL: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984] 54) acknowledges that "the completion of the temple and the resultant fertility is a standard motif in the ANE."

[109]See previous note. Ronald A. Simkins, who examines the description of a locust infestation in the book of Joel ("God, History, and the Natural World in the Book of Joel," CBQ 55 [1993] 435-451), similarly proposes that "this conceptual dichotomy [i.e. history/nature], ubiquitous in biblical scholarship, has restricted the scope for possible interpretation of the book [of Joel] as a whole" (436). According to Simkins, because of the tendency in biblical scholarship to downplay Yahweh's activity in the natural, non-human world, the understanding of the locust plague as an actual, integral part of the "day of Yahweh" described by Joel has been precluded. Simkins notes that biblical scholars have traditionally interpreted the plague as a metaphor for an invading army, or as secondary to Yahweh's intervention in human (i.e. *historical*) affairs on the "day of Yahweh," described in chapters 3 and 4. For instance, Joel 3:1-2 states that Yahweh will cause men and women to prophesy and to have visions (445). Simkins proposes that the higher valuation given to the events which take place among human beings undermines the all-encompassing power of the day of Yahweh, which he contends that Joel actually portrays. According to Simkins, the day of Yahweh in Joel's description has cosmic ramifications, that is, it includes catastrophic and awesome events in the natural world (i.e. the devastating locust plague) and in the human world (i.e. an army invasion, the visions of the Israelites) (450-451).

its insurance of agricultural bounty as "magical." Turning to non-mythic ANE texts, Anderson demonstrates that here also fertility and famine are correlated with a sound temple and a strong king. Presenting numerous examples, Anderson draws the following conclusions. First, in the arid lands of the Near East, the proper distribution of food and the provisioning of storehouses in times of drought were of utmost importance to the cities, and were, not surprisingly, the ultimate responsibility of the ruling monarch.[110] In Mesopotamia, irrigation systems built and maintained by kings played a major role in the land's productivity. Anderson suggests that the many epithets relating to agricultural fertility which are accorded to Hammurabi, who claims responsibility for various irrigation projects, are thus not surprising.[112] The maintenance of irrigation systems, though important in Mesopotamia, was not the only task of Mesopotamian monarchs and not the primary concern of West Semitic kings.[113] It was necessary for a king to ensure that the city storehouses were properly stocked for times of aridity or siege.[114] According to Anderson, integral to maintaining adequately supplied storehouses was the tithe, a form of taxation overseen by the temple administration. A successful tithing program necessarily required a "strong, centralized institutional structure" for both the

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[110]Anderson, Sacrifices, 93.
[111]Anderson reviews several letters from Mari which show the provisioning of the people to be the responsibility of the king (Sacrifices, 106).
[112]As Anderson (Sacrifices, 106) notes, the king is described as one who "brought about plenty and abundance," and as one who "gave life to the city of Uruk; who supplied water in abundance to its inhabitants," in the prologue to the Code of Hammurabi (see Robert Francis Harper, The Code of Hammurabi [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1904] 3-9).
[113]In fact, as Anderson (Sacrifices, 109) notes, the West Semitic people did not depend on a centralized irrigation system but rather on rain for crop production. Certainly, to a considerable extent, the people of Mesopotamia also relied upon rain for their crop production. (For more on this subject, see Alberto Soggins A History of Israel [London: SCM, 1984] 8.)
[114]Anderson (Sacrifices, 109) contends that the "folkloristic" tale of Joseph as governor of Egypt (Gen 41-45) describes an ideal administrator, one who is able to "increase his power in times of natural food shortages by keeping central storehouses in good supply."

legitimization and the enforcement of the tithe.[115] It was also most important for a king to be able to defend his city's walls and outlying fields. If those who harvested foods outside of the city walls succumbed to an attack, the city could not be provisioned. If those within the city walls were placed under siege without provisions from the outside, they would starve as a consequence.[116]

The fertility of the field and the surplus grain in the storehouses are both directly related to and perfectly symbolized by a strong temple and/or a strong king. Anderson concludes that "famine was kept at bay not by careful adherence to the ritual prescriptions of a 'fertility cult.' Rather, a strong king, by whom the proper divine being stood, could provide provisions for his people by ensuring autonomy and secure borders for the state."[117] Thus the equation of the king/temple with fertility has its root in social reality. Anderson does not deny that the Canaanite or Israelite people may have conceived the status of the temple or the king to have had an actual, instrumental effect on the land's yield. In fact, he argues that, especially in the biblical texts, the correlation between the physical structure of the temple and the fertility of the land is direct.[118] However, whereas a modern Western perspective might insist that the temple must have been construed as a symbol of prosperity *or* as the actual instrument of the fertility of the land, this was evidently not the case in the ancient Near East.[119] The correlation of the

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[115]Anderson, Sacrifices, 77, 89-90.

[116]Anderson (Sacrifices, 109-110) gives two biblical examples of famine as a direct result of a king's lack of military might. In 2 Kgs 6, the king of Israel is unable to prevent the siege of Samaria by King Ben-hadad of Aram. Famine ensues as the city is cut off from the food supply outside of the city walls, and as it is not adequately provisioned inside of the walls (vv.24-25). In 2 Kgs 25, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem, and again, famine ensues (v.3).

[117]Anderson, Sacrifices, 116.

[118]Anderson, Sacrifices, 124.

[119]Anderson, Sacrifices, 124-125. As Anderson notes succinctly, "what we as Westerners would neatly separate, the ancients saw as an integral unit" (125).

temple and the land's fertility in the biblical text is not indicative of vestiges of Canaanite 'magic' in post-exilic prophecy, but of a shared understanding in the ancient Near East that a strong monarch, with a well-ordered army and religious cult, was synonymous with an adequately provisioned or even prosperous society.

The observations of Albrektson, Barr, Anderson, and Roberts have, in my assessment, clearly challenged the notion that Israelite religion was historical-ethical while Canaanite religion was nature-centered and ritualistic. They have also effectively demonstrated that Israelites and Canaanites, who did not differentiate between history and nature in the same way as modern Western thinkers, did not define either themselves or their neighbors according to such a dichotomy.

Conclusion

A comparison of the Israelite and ANE conceptions of deities and their relationship to events concerning human beings and concerning the natural world demonstrates that neither can be relegated to categories such as 'history-based religion' or 'nature-based religion.' In the literatures from both Israel and the ancient Near East, it is clear that the deities were thought to have had control of human and natural activity, and that these spheres were interrelated. The history/nature dichotomy which biblical scholars have applied to Israel/Canaan is artificial and would not likely resonate with these ancient Near Eastern people in their self-description, nor in their descriptions of each other. This

dichotomy is simply not substantiated by extra biblical ANE evidence or even by the biblical texts themselves.[120]

The dichotomy of history/nature applied to the religions of Israel and Canaan is a modern construct. James Barr correctly observes that history, a term so often used to label the distinguishing feature of Israel's religion, is in fact "not a biblical category."[121] There is no Hebrew term corresponding to the English concept of history.[122] There are many genres in the biblical corpus that vary greatly in the degree to which they approximate a contemporary sense of history. [123] The variety of genres within the biblical corpus makes it difficult to label the religion of Israel as belonging to the category of "history," or to characterize Yahweh's actions uniformly as "revelation through history." What is more, "the term 'history' has acquired a sort of value-laden status in theology, so that it becomes more or less mandatory to use it with a high attribution of value."[124] In short, categorizing the religion of Israel as historical and ethical while portraying the Canaanites as sensual nature-worshippers does not reflect the consciousness of the

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[120] In this regard, Anderson (Sacrifices, 3) cites Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal upon Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18:19-40) as an example of the biblical literature recording identical sacrificial methods among Israelites and Canaanites. Both Elijah and the prophets of Baal are issued a bull, which they each cut in pieces, and lay upon wood (v.23).The prophets of Baal call upon their god (v. 26), while Elijah calls upon Yahweh (v.36) to light a fire for sacrifice under their respective offerings. While Baal does not respond, "the fire of Yahweh fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust" (v.38). According to this tale, the superiority of Yahweh over Baal is decisive, but the rite used by both the worshippers of Baal and the worshippers of Yahweh to assert this superiority is identical.

[121] Barr, Old and New, 69.

[122] Barr (Old and New, 69) notes that "even modern people will differ in expressing what they mean by 'history'."

[123] Barr (Old and New, 69-70) explains the problem of labeling all the various genres of the Bible as "history" in the following way: "If we take a series of outstanding narratives, such as creation, the flood, the fight of Jacob with the angel, the entry of the children of Israel into Egypt, the Exodus, the reign of Omri, and the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnessar, it seems impossible to relate these to 'history' in any unitary way. Each of them seems to stand in a different relation to what we could, by any definition, call history."

[124] Barr, Old and New, 65.

ancient Israelites, but rather serves the interests of modern commentators who, for the most part, consider themselves to be heirs of Israel's religious tradition.

Despite the similarities between Israelite and Canaanite religious and cosmogonic conceptions, it is clear that the Israelites regarded themselves as different from and superior to their Canaanite neighbors. Biblical texts such as Hos 4 are testimony to Israel's conscious attempt to portray its god favorably, and to denounce Canaan's god(s). Anderson suggests that "the distinctiveness of the Israelite cult is nothing other than the limitation of cultic activity to one particular patron deity." [125] In other words, in terms of ethnic and cult identity, it is not the form of religious expression that is the main focus of Israel's denunciation of Canaanite religion, as modern scholars contend (i.e. Israel's ethics versus Canaan's nature-rituals). It is rather that Yahweh, as the god of Israel, from Israel's perspective, is naturally superior to Baal, the god of Canaan; Yahweh therefore deserves exclusive religious devotion. The difference is not insignificant to the Yahwists who record Israel's history in the Hebrew Bible. That Yahweh is the patron deity of Israel and that Baal is the patron deity of Canaan is paramount to Israel's sense of difference and superiority over their ethnic rivals.

Deconstructing the history/myth dichotomy that is typically used to characterize Israelite and Canaanite religion creates a crisis for the cult prostitution hypothesis. Those who contend that such an institution existed in ancient Canaan rely upon the assumption that the Canaanite cult centered upon fertility, and effected this fertility through rites of sympathetic magic. I have demonstrated that this assumption is not rooted in evidence native to the Canaanite cult, but in polemical texts that have been traditionally interpreted

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[125]Anderson, Sacrifices, 3.

by biblical scholars who have a vested interest in maintaining a sense of Israelite ethnic superiority rather than in objectively describing Canaanite practices.

The following chapter will explore the persuasive power of the sexual metaphor employed in the first four books of Hosea. I will argue that it is precisely this highly rhetorical language which has led traditional Hosea scholars to conclude that Canaanite women engaged in cult prostitution, despite the dearth of evidence for a Canaanite sex cult.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RHETORIC OF THE MARRIAGE METAPHOR

Without exception, modern male biblical scholars consider the sexual language in Hos 1-4 to be at once figurative, in the sense that Israel's apostasy against Yahweh is like sexual infidelity against a husband, and literal, in that it identifies the sexual activities which allegedly went on in Israel's apostate, Canaanite-styled cult. I have demonstrated in the previous chapters that there is no unambiguous evidence that non-Israelite ANE peoples institutionalized cultic prostitution. This alone severely undermines scholars' popular understanding of Hosea's reasons for employing sexual language to condemn Israel's apostasy. What is more, I have argued that the usual contrast made between Israel's historical, ethical religion, and Canaan's nature-based, sex-ritual religion is contrived, founded on modern constructs of difference. In making this argument, I have initiated a critique of modern Western interpretations of Hosea's sexual language. These points effectively eliminate ANE texts as well as much of the secondary literature on the role of the *qĕdēšôt* as evidence for cult prostitution. However, why Hosea used sexual language to characterize Israel's apostasy remains to be explained. Indeed, the proliferation of words derived from the Hebrew root *znh* ("to be a prostitute")[1] in the first four chapters is perhaps the most important interpretive crux in reconstructing the role of the *qĕdēšôt*. I maintain, however, that the most plausible interpretation of the nature and function of Hosea's *znh* language is that it is strictly metaphorical, and that it sheds no light upon the literal cultic role of the *qĕdēšôt*.

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[1] BDB, 275.

It is my contention that the *znh* terminology of Hos 1-4 is employed in the context of

the metaphor COVENANT IS MARRIAGE. I am certainly not the first to make this

claim, as modern commentators universally concede that the sexual language is, at least

in part, a metaphor. However, I find myself in a less numerous group in insisting that the

function of the *znh* terminology is *strictly* metaphorical, giving no hint at the form of

worship it condemns or at the state of sexual morality in Hosea's time. In this chapter, I

will analyze the nature and function of the *znh* language of Hos 1-4. I will offer a

plausible explanation for scholars' consistent misinterpretation of this language as literal,

allegedly referring to cult prostitution. Building on the work of feminist biblical scholars

who have examined Hos 1-3[2] and rhetorically similar biblical texts,[3] I will argue that

traditional male scholars' empathy for the wronged husband character in Hosea's

marriage metaphor is at the root of their misunderstanding of the role of the *qědēšôt* as

literally sexual. These scholars, as males and husbands, so thoroughly persuaded to

vehemently denounce the metaphorical adulteress for her sexual transgressions, have

conflated the tenor of the metaphor (religious apostasy) with its vehicle (sexual infidelity)

and have come to regard Israel as the perpetrator of sexual cultic acts. In other words,

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[2] T.Dorah Setel, "Prophets and Pornography: Female Sexual Imagery in Hosea," in Letty M. Russell (ed.), Feminist Interpretation of the Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985) 86-95; Renita J. Weems, "Gomer: Victim of Violence or Victim of Metaphor?," Semeia 47 (1989) 87-104 and Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Gale Yee, "Hosea," in Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (eds.), The Women's Bible Commentary (Westminster: John Knox, 1992) 195-202; J. Cheryl Exum, Plotted, Shot, and Painted: Cultural Representations of Biblical Women (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Yvonne Sherwood, The Prostitute and the Prophet: Hosea's Marriage in Literary Theoretical Perspective (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

[3] Both Julie Galambush (Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992]) and Peggy L. Day ("Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel 16," forthcoming in Vetus Testamentum) examine Ezekiel 16 and 23, prophetic texts in which, as in Hosea 1-3, the people of Israel are personified as an adulteress betraying her husband Yahweh with flagrant sexual infidelity. These scholars' conclusions about the nature and function of the marriage metaphor have informed my examination of Hos 1-4.

scholars' empathy for Yahweh and Hosea has resulted in the 'death' of the marriage metaphor.

To substantiate the argument that scholars have literalized the metaphorical sexual activity of the *qĕdēšôt* language because of their misunderstanding of the nature and function of metaphor, I will proceed as follows. In the first section, I will outline the ancient Israelite concepts of covenant and marriage. In so doing, I will demonstrate how marriage is the perfect metaphorical vehicle for covenant. I will make the preliminary argument that Hosea did not necessarily use the marriage metaphor for its ability to convey information about Canaanite religious activity, as traditional scholars insist.[4] In the second section, drawing upon the work of contemporary metaphor theorists,[5] I will argue that metaphors are highly rhetorical devices which an author or orator employs in order to persuade his or her audience to adopt his or her perspective concerning the tenor of the metaphor. Hosea's choice of the marriage metaphor as the vehicle for his invective against Israel's apostasy was therefore not accidental, but it was deliberately chosen for its ability to elicit his male audience's sympathy for his cause. In the third section, I will review the work of feminist biblical scholars who argue that traditional male scholars have fully empathized with the wronged husband characters in the marriage metaphor. In the fourth section, building on the work of Julie Galambush, I will argue that Hosea scholars, in identifying with the husband subject-position of the text, have failed to

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[4] See Chapter One.
[5] Göran Eidevall (Grapes in the Desert, 19-41) offers an excellent survey of metaphor theory in the twentieth century. He notes the pivotal contribution of Max Black's "interaction theory" to contemporary discussion of metaphor (20-22). In this chapter, I will explain Black's metaphor theory and demonstrate how it elucidates both the nature and function of Hosea's marriage metaphor.

recognize the sexual language of *znh* and *n'p* as rhetorical devices used to direct their anger and disgust toward Israel's apostasy, and have therefore (mis)interpreted *znh* and *n'p* as the literal religious crimes of apostate Israel. I will conclude that traditional scholars' interpretation of Hos 4:14 as a reference to the literal sexual activity of the *qědēšôt* is grounded in their misunderstanding of the marriage metaphor.

Covenants and Marriages

Scholars readily acknowledge that the people of Israel's breach of covenant is the subject of Hosea's invective in chapters 1-4. Some scholars propose that Hos 4:1-3, the preamble to Hosea's castigation of the priesthood, indicates that the prophet had knowledge of the Sinai covenant tradition itself.[6] Here, Hosea uses terms characteristic of covenant language (e.g. *ḥesed* "covenant loyalty" and *daʿat* "knowledge" [Hos 4:1]),[7] and enumerates five offenses found in the Sinai covenant (swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and adultery – Hos 4:2).[8] According to these scholars, it was the breach of the terms of this covenant that concerned the prophet.

In order to begin to understand why Hosea adopted the metaphor of marriage to convey the nature of Yahweh's covenant with Israel, it is useful to present characteristic features of the covenant relationship itself. The landmark work on the ancient Israelite concept of covenant is that of G.E. Mendenhall,[9] who first proposed that the covenant follows the formula of the widely known ANE suzerainty treaty, assigning the role of

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[6] See for example Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew *Yada*," BASOR 181 (1966) 31-37; F.Charles Fensham, "The Covenant Idea in the Book of Hosea," Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Sud-Afrika 7 (1964-5) 35-49.

[7] Fensham, "Covenant Idea," 37, 41; Brueggeman, Tradition, 37.

[8] Brueggeman, Tradition, 38; Davies, Hosea, 115.

suzerain to Yahweh and that of vassal to Israel. Mendenhall applied Victor Korosec's

work on Hittite treaties to biblical "covenant texts" (e.g. the Decalogue tradition in Exod

20 and Deut 5, and the narrative of Josh 24) in order to demonstrate that Israel indeed

conceived its covenant relationship to Yahweh as one of vassal to suzerain.[10] Korosec

identified both the parity treaty, an agreement "concluded between kings of equal status,"

and the suzerainty treaty, an international agreement "concluded between a great king and

a vassal king," as treaty forms known to the Hittites.[11] The essential feature of the

suzerainty treaty is its lack of reciprocity between the suzerain and the vassal in terms of

rights and responsibilities. In this type of treaty the suzerain, in return for his offer of

military protection to the vassal, demanded certain obligatory services of the vassal king

and his people, foremost of which was the vassal's exclusive devotion to him.[12] The

vassal king paid tribute exclusively to the suzerain and was forbidden to form political

alliances with any power other than the suzerain himself. The suzerain, while obliged to

protect the vassal, was free to establish other political alliances. As Mendenhall notes,

"the interests of the Hittite sovereign were of primary and ultimate concern."[13]

Korosec identified "the preamble," "the historical prologue," "the stipulations,"

"provisions for deposit in the temple and periodic public reading," "a formula of curses

and blessings," and "the list of gods as witnesses," as typical constituent parts of the

suzerainty treaty.[14] Mendenhall demonstrated that indeed most of these parts are present

in the biblical covenant texts and that clearly, the ancient Israelites perceived the

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[9] Law and Covenant in Israel (Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955)
[10] Mendenhall, Covenant, 30.
[11] Mendenhall, Covenant, 28-30. See also Delbert R. Hillers, Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute. 1964) 2.
[12] Mendenhall, Covenant, 36.

covenant relationship between themselves and their god as a relationship of a vassal to a suzerain.

Conceptualized as a treaty, the covenant relationship of Yahweh and Israel casts Yahweh in the role of the superior suzerain who "impos[es] on [Israel] its obligations without binding himself to any corresponding obligations, though it is implied that he will protect them," and casts the people of Israel as the inferior vassal who is "to obey and trust their divine suzerain" exclusively.[15] Like the vassal in relation to the suzerain, an Israelite wife was to be exclusively devoted to her husband. This especially entailed exclusive *sexual* devotion, since her sexuality was considered the property of her husband. Chastity was demanded of a woman before marriage (e.g. Deut 22:13-14), and she was to maintain an exclusive sexual relationship with her husband during marriage (Deut 22:22) in order to preserve her husband's right of exclusive access to his property.[16] On the other hand, like the suzerain in relation to the vassal, it was understood that an Israelite husband was to provide a level of security for his wife. His singular devotion to her was not, however, obligatory. The Hebrew texts speak of men with several wives,[17] married men having sexual relations with slave-girls and maids,[18] and of men having sexual relations with prostitutes without legal censure.[19] While men *are* occasionally censured for having intercourse with a woman who is not their wife, the act is not

[13] Mendenhall, Covenant, 30.
[14] Mendenhall, Covenant, 32-34. See also Hillers, Treaty-Curses, 2.
[15] Hillers, Treaty-Curses, 2. See also Mendenhall, Covenant, 36.
[16] The reason for this strict insistence in a patriarchal and patrilineal society is obvious. The identity of a child's father was crucial in determining rights of inheritance. See Setel, "Pornography," 89; Yee, "Hosea," 185-187.
[17] E.g. Jacob (Gen 29:21-30), Esau (Gen 36:1-3), Solomon (1 Kgs).
[18] E.g. Gen 16:2 (Abraham has intercourse with Hagar at Sarai's bidding), Gen 30:9 (Jacob similarly has intercourse with Zilpah at Leah's bidding).

offensive because of the man's married or unmarried status, but the virgin, betrothed, or

married status of the woman (Deut 22:22-29). In fact, the strictures in Deut 22 outlining

the punishments for men who initiate sexual intercourse with a woman who is not their

wife do not mention the marital status of the man. The punishment or consequence for the

man varies depending on the status of the woman with whom he has had sexual relations.

For instance, if the man has sexual relations with a married woman, he is to be put to

death (Deut 22:22). If he violates a virgin who is engaged to be married (provided that

she had no opportunity to cry for help!), the man is to be put to death, while if he violates

a virgin who is *not* engaged, he must marry her with no possibility of divorce and give

fifty shekels as compensation to her father. In other words, the men's sexual acts are

deemed criminal because they violate the property rights of another man (i.e. father,

future or present husband) and not any marital or personal right of the adulterous or

violated woman.[20]

Marriage, like the suzerain-vassal relationship, was a fundamentally unequal

partnership where the inferior party was expected to fulfill obligations toward the

superior party. In other words, an ideal marriage, in which a woman maintained exclusive

sexual devotion to her husband, provided a perfect metaphoric vehicle for the ideal

treaty/covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel.[21] On the other hand, a woman's

adultery against her husband is like a vassal's violation of the primary tenet of the

suzerainty treaty, exclusive political/economic devotion to the suzerain. The relationship

of a suzerain to a vassal in a treaty agreement and the relationship of a man to a woman in

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[19] E.g. Gen 38. As discussed in Chapter 2 p.67. prostitution and having sexual relations with a prostitute were not illegal *per se* but may nonetheless have been looked upon with a measure of scorn.
[20] See Frymer-Kensky. "Sex in the Bible." Goddesses. pp.187-198.

the ancient Israelite marriage thus have obvious parallels, and provide a starting point for our analysis of why Hosea spoke of Yahweh's relationship to Israel in terms of a marriage. Hosea, in adopting the language of marriage and sexual infidelity to characterize Israel's religious defection from Yahweh, did not necessarily do so because the nature of Israel's apostasy was sexual. Rather, the ancient Israelite conceptions of marriage and its violation, adultery, had many elements in common with the conception of covenant and its violation, religious apostasy.

However, as contemporary metaphor theorists posit, metaphors are not mere comparisons of like objects, themes, or situations. Rather, they are highly rhetorical devices which *create* similarities between two different things in order to persuade an audience to view the tenor of the metaphor in a particular way. It is my contention that modern biblical scholars have failed to analyze the nature and function of metaphor and their role as the interpreting audience, and have thus come to the mistaken conclusion that the metaphor's sexual language refers to the literal practice of cult prostitution. I will clarify my position in the next two sections of this chapter by applying Black's interaction theory of metaphor and feminist biblical scholars' critique of Hosea's sexual language both to the biblical text itself, and to modern scholars' interpretation of the marriage metaphor.

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[21] See Adler, Covenant, 1: Galambush, Jerusalem, 33-34.

Analyzing the Marriage Metaphor

"Pivotal"[22] in the elucidation of the concept of metaphor is the work of Max Black.[23] Black builds on the work of I.A. Richards,[24] who identified a metaphor as comprised of two components, a "tenor" (i.e. the subject being described) and a "vehicle" (i.e. the figurative terms which describe the subject).[25] Black contrasts his "interaction view" of metaphor with theories of metaphor that regard the vehicle as something to which the tenor is simply being compared.[26] According to the "comparative views"[27] of metaphor, figurative language "is used to communicate a meaning [about the tenor] that might have been expressed literally," either because no word exists in the vocabulary of a particular language to aptly describe the tenor, or because the author/orator wished to enhance his or her message with decoration and style and thus give pleasure to the reader or listener.[28] In other words, according to this view, Hosea developed his invective against apostasy in terms of the metaphor COVENANT IS MARRIAGE because, as figurative language, it was inherently more engaging than a speech expounding on the subject of apostasy in literal terms.

Black contends that the comparative view of metaphor does not adequately describe the nature and function of metaphor. First, it is inadequate because it does not furnish an

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[22] Ted Cohen, "Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy," Critical Inquiry 5 (1978) 5. See Eidevall (Grapes, 19-41) on the importance of Black's contribution to metaphor theory (19).

[23] Models and Metaphors (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).

[24] The Philosophy of Rhetoric (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936).

[25] Richards, Philosophy 96. Black (Models, 28) himself does not use the terminology of "vehicle" and "tenor" (he prefers to speak of a "frame" and a "focus"). I, however, will employ these terms in discussing metaphor since they are commonly found in the metaphor literature that I have examined.

[26] Black, Models, 31-37.

[27] Black, Models, 35.

[28] Black, Models, 32-34.

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explanation as to *why* a vehicle which is analogous or similar to the tenor is employed to describe the tenor. Second, it cannot explain how figurative language gives more pleasure or seems more interesting to the reader/listener than the literal or analogous statement which might be offered by the author or orator instead of the metaphorical one. Third, the comparative view seems to assume that similarities and analogies between the tenor and the vehicle are "objectively given."[29] As Black illustrates using the metaphor MAN IS A WOLF, there are many elements in the definition of the term "wolf" which are not readily evoked by this metaphorical expression.[30] For example, a wolf is a four-legged animal, lives in northerly climates, and often lives, hunts, and travels in packs. These statements are true of wolves, and yet no one would likely pair any of these characteristics with "man" in understanding the metaphor MAN IS A WOLF (i.e. one does not understand the metaphor to mean that "man is a four-legged animal" or a being who travels in groups). In other words, *dissonance* between the vehicle and the tenor, in addition to similarity, is characteristic of metaphor.

Black's "interaction view" of metaphor,[31] and the work of those who have subsequently analyzed metaphor by building on Black's theory, more adequately explain aspects of metaphor which the comparison view fails to address, namely 1) why does a metaphor evoke a certain interpretation among several possibilities? 2) why does an author or an orator employ figurative language in the first place?

Black first observes that the relationship between the vehicle and the tenor of a metaphor is not one of simple "similarity." The metaphor, or more aptly the author/orator

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[29] Black, Models, 37.
[30] Black, Models, 40.
[31] Black. Models, 38-47.

of a metaphor. "creates the similarity [rather] than...formulat[ing] some similarity antecedently existing"[32] by causing the reader or hearer to adopt a particular perspective about the tenor through the "filter"[33] of the vehicle. As the metaphorical image of the filter implies, a metaphor indeed retains only the ingredients which the author/orator intends to use while discarding the elements which are not useful to his or her rhetorical purposes. As I have demonstrated above, many characteristics may be attributed to wolves, but only wolves' alleged fierceness and predatory nature are commonly evoked in the metaphorical expression MAN IS A WOLF. According to Black, this is because metaphors draw upon what he calls the audience's "systems of associated commonplaces" about the vehicle. Associated commonplaces are rarely exhaustive lists of traits or dictionary definitions, but rather the most commonly and most readily evoked images, beliefs, superstitions, and stereotypes about the vehicle of the metaphor for "the man [sic] in the street."[34] Wolves, for instance, are most readily associated in the popular imagination with ferocity, a carnivorous diet. and bone-chilling baying at the moon, though many other and perhaps more accurate statements may be made about wolves. In comprehending the metaphor MAN IS A WOLF, any traits other than the associated commonplaces held by the audience concerning wolves, despite their accuracy, are irrelevant. As Black states succinctly, "the wolf-metaphor suppresses some details, emphasizes others – in short, *organizes* our view of man."[35]

It is important to note that the vehicle's associated commonplaces are not without value judgement. Human beings do not dispassionately ascribe ferocity, carnivorousness,

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[32] Black. Models, 37.
[33] Black. Models. 39.
[34] Black, Models, 40.

and baying at the moon to wolves. The vehicle evokes certain commonly held feelings about or attitudes toward it (in the case of "wolf," the feeling of terror is evoked) which also play an important role in an audience's understanding of a metaphor.[36] Because metaphors are designed to evoke the common feelings and associations of an audience, the author/orator must "know" the audience. The metaphor maker must have a grasp upon the associated commonplaces an audience shares about the metaphor's vehicle. For this reason Ted Cohen, who builds on Black's theory, argues that "there is a unique way in which the maker and the appreciator [i.e. intended audience] of a metaphor are drawn closer to one another."[37] In other words, the intimacy between the author/orator and the audience necessary to the aim of the metaphor, to "organize" the audience's view of the tenor, is a crucial feature of metaphor. Cohen lists several salient points which illustrate how metaphor cultivates this intimate relationship. First, "the speaker issues a kind of concealed invitation"[38] to the audience in the use of language which is not only figurative, but which evokes shared associated commonplaces about the vehicle known by the author/orator and the audience members.[39] According to Cohen, "this transaction [i.e. of associated commonplaces] constitutes the acknowledgement of a community."[40] The sense of close community effected by the metaphor, however, does not always have a positive effect. Cohen notes that the intimacy between author and audience, and among audience members, "results not only from the shared awareness that a special invitation

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[35] Black, Models, 41.

[36] Weems, Battered Love, 23. Weems builds on the work of Max Black in developing her theory of metaphor.

[37] Cohen, "Intimacy," 8.

[38] In his use of the term "concealed invitation," I understand Cohen to be referring to what Black calls a "system of associated commonplaces" (Black, Metaphors, 40).

[39] Cohen, "Intimacy," 8.

[40] Cohen, "Intimacy," 8.

has been given and accepted, but also **from the awareness that not everyone could make that offer or take it up."**[41]

The most "successful" metaphorical vehicles, or in other words, metaphorical vehicles which so aptly evoke the author/orator's desired orientation toward the tenor, are those which the audience ceases to understand as metaphorical, but instead have come to regard as indivisible from the tenor. Lakoff and Johnson describe these metaphors as "dead."[42] To illustrate what is meant by a "dead" metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson use the example of the conceptual metaphor[43] ARGUMENT IS WAR. They contend that this metaphor underlies the Western conception of discourse. In speaking about argument, and hence, in conceptualizing argument, we employ war language. For instance, one argues with an "opponent," an argumentative point is "shot down," and criticisms may be "right on target," or on the other hand, may "miss the mark."[44] Lakoff and Johnson propose that in a culture which operates by the metaphor ARGUMENT IS DANCE, not only would argument terminology be different, the way in which argument was carried out would also be different. For instance, argument would be carried out artistically, with attention to aesthetics and complementarity. Lakoff and Johnson maintain that we, operating by the deeply-ingrained conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, would

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[41] Cohen, "Intimacy." 9.

[42] Metaphors We Live By (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1980) 4-5.

[43] Lakoff and Johnson (Metaphors, 4-5) theorize that culturally accepted metaphors underlie the way that a particular culture will conceptualize the world. They argue, for instance, that in Western culture, an important underlying conceptual metaphor is UP IS GOOD. So ingrained is this concept in our cultural imagination that experiences deemed positive are regularly conceived of as upward motions. Consider concepts such as "upward mobility," "getting *one up* on the competition," "attaining a *higher* position." UP IS GOOD is so ingrained that most people do not think of it as a metaphor; it is simply a truth about the way things are. As I will illustrate above with the example ARGUMENT IS WAR, understanding a metaphor to be literal truth is to let the metaphor "die." As I will demonstrate in my analysis of the metaphor COVENANT IS MARRIAGE, a metaphor which I contend that scholars have "killed," this can have grave consequences.

[44] Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors, 4-5.

likely not recognize this kind of discourse as argument at all. In Western culture, the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is not recognized as a metaphor. Argument is, by nature, literal war.

To summarize thus far, metaphors are not mere comparisons between two similar things but in fact the skillful bringing together of two fundamentally dissimilar things by an author/orator who exploits the associated commonplaces made by his/her intended audience. Metaphors create a sense of community among those who share the associated commonplaces and therefore "get" the metaphor. At the same time, metaphors may exclude or even act against those audience members who do not share the "knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes" of the intended audience. In a sense, metaphors can be tools of political rhetoric. The 'dark side' of metaphor is most clearly manifest when the metaphor has been so effective that it ceases to be regarded as metaphorical. In other words, the associated commonplaces of the vehicle which shape the audience's perspective of the tenor are regarded as the literal and entire truth about the tenor.

Black's "interaction view" of metaphor and Lakoff's and Johnson's concept of the "dead metaphor" are, in my view, particularly useful explaining both the nature and function of Hosea's marriage metaphor and elucidating a reason why traditional male biblical scholars insist that the sexual language is literal. I will argue in the following sections, informed by these contemporary metaphor theories and building on the work of feminist biblical scholars who have examined Hosea's sexual language, that the marriage metaphor is a deliberately chosen rhetorical device designed to consolidate rage against apostasy. Traditional male biblical scholars, who have failed to recognize the metaphor's purpose of appealing to the emotions of a male audience, have allowed the metaphor to

die and have thus conflated the metaphorical vehicle (marriage/adultery) with the literal

tenor (religious apostasy).

Feminist Biblical Scholars and the Rhetoric of Hosea's Marriage Metaphor

Feminist biblical scholars who have examined the biblical marriage metaphor argue

persuasively that modern scholars have adopted the perspective of the metaphorical

wronged husband.[45] In my view, this identification has contributed to traditional scholars'

understanding of the qĕdēšôt's alleged literal sexual role. The majority of these feminist

scholars are not primarily concerned with the reconstruction of the role of the qĕdēšôt,

but rather with the implications that traditional male scholars' sympathy for a husband

figure who verbally abuses and threatens to physically abuse his wife has for women in

communities where these texts are considered authoritative. These feminist biblical

scholars argue that in uncritically adopting the text's invitation to take up the wronged

husband position, traditional male scholars in fact legitimate violence against women.

Since I am primarily concerned with traditional scholars' interpretation of the role of the

qĕdēšôt, I will not analyze the effect of Hosea's marriage metaphor on women in

contemporary faith communities.[46] Instead, I will limit my review of the observations that

feminist biblical scholars have made to their evidence that traditional scholars indeed

align themselves with the wronged husband position in the text, and that in so doing,

traditional scholars have 'killed' the marriage metaphor, envisioning Israel as a literal

whore.

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[45] See notes 2 and 3 above.

[46] I consider this to be a laudable task, but a parenthetical one in terms of this thesis.

Feminist biblical scholars argue that it is especially evident that scholars have adopted

the position of a wronged husband in their acceptance of the violent, even pornographic,[47]

depictions of personified Israel's punishments at the hands of her wronged husband.

Yahweh's wayward wife is threatened with starvation (Hos 2:3, Heb.2:5), incarcerated

against her will (Hos 2:6, Heb. 2:8), has her possessions forcibly removed (Hos 2:9, Heb.

2:11) and committed to destruction (Hos 2:12, Heb. 2:14), and finally she is stripped

naked in front of her lovers (2:10, Heb. 2:12). Feminist scholars point out that only from

the point of view of the wronged husband might Yahweh's actions not seem to be "cruel

and unusual punishments."[48] Modern scholars clearly take up the perspective of the

wronged husband in their shared conviction that Israel's actions merit the excruciating

punishments which she receives.[49] Mays captures the sentiment of scholars toward Israel

in his terse exclamation: "What a whore is this Israel!"[50]

Traditional male scholars' sympathy for the wronged husband is also evident in their

focus upon Yahweh's wish to reconcile with his wife (Hos 2:14-23 [Heb.2:16-25]), a

desire which they take to be evidence of Yahweh's unconditional love, patience, and

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[47] This apt term is applied to Hosea's marriage metaphor by Setel ("Prophets and Pornography," 86-95).

[48] Wolff (Hosea, 44), for instance, referring to the cruel punishments enumerated above, chillingly states that "impelled by his suffering and love for his people, God seeks a variety of paths by which to lead her back."

[49] Day ("Adulterous Jerusalem"), in her examination of the rhetorically similar Ezekiel 16, argues that the punishments meted out upon Jerusalem (e.g. stripping [v.39], being cut to pieces by a mob [v.40], having one's houses burnt [v.41]) are not the literal punitive measures taken against an adulteress, as is evident in both biblical and extra biblical ANE legal texts. Rather, these threatened measures are the familiar biblical consequence of religious defection from Yahweh, Israel's destruction by and subjugation to foreign alliances. However, modern scholars, so thoroughly identifying with the wronged husband point of view, have conflated the punishments for apostasy belonging to the tenor of the metaphor with the consequences for the vehicle of the metaphor, adultery. Scholars have no problem in ascribing to the adulteress the most degrading, humiliating, and excruciating punishments because, from their point of view, she deserves them.

[50] Mays, Hosea, 39.

long-suffering on behalf of his wayward wife.[51] Descriptions like C.H. Toy's, which depicts Hosea as "a man wounded in his deepest feelings through an ill-fated marriage that saddened his life and colored his thought," are common.[52] Hosea, according to traditional scholars, is a gentle, loving man who was "suffered most innocently, most deeply"[53] and therefore shows immense strength of character in his willingness to take back his wayward wife.[54]

In order to further illustrate that the story of Hosea/Yahweh's and Gomer/Israel's marriage is told from and viewed by traditional male scholars only from the husband's perspective, feminist biblical scholars offer possible scenarios accounting for the break up of the marriage from the wife's point of view. For instance, at the level of the metaphorical story itself, they posit that some sort of inadequacy in the relationship, rather than any inherent inclination to promiscuity on the part of Gomer/Israel, may have led the wife figure to pursue other relationships.[55] Perhaps this inadequacy was precisely the husband's jealousy, possessiveness, and rage, which he clearly displays in his violent response to his wife's infidelity. Read from the wife's point of view, abandoning Yahweh

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[51] Heschel (Prophets, 50) reconciles "the tenderness of divine love with the vehemence of divine punishment" in the marriage metaphor by stating that "the Lord is in love with Israel, but He also has a passionate love of right and a burning hatred of wrong." The implication is, of course, that Israel deserves what "she" gets.

[52] "Note on Hosea 1-3," JBL 32 (1913) 70-75 (77). Leslie (Old Testament, 174) describes Hosea as having "the tenderest soul of all the prophets;" Wolff (Hosea, 40) observes that even in punishing Israel, "nevertheless, the basic accent of sorrowful regret does not entirely escape notice."

[53] Brueggeman, Tradition, 108.

[54] Gale Yee ("Hosea," 200) resists the identification with the wronged husband, and remarks that even this reconciliation initiated by Yahweh at the end of chapter two marks the husband more as a wife-batterer than a sympathetic figure. Certainly, the violent measures taken by Yahweh to punish Israel are evidence of an abusive relationship. Attempting to maintain the relationship with promises of tenderness, after committing hateful violence, is another more insidious way for an abusive partner to control the subordinate one. Yee, drawing on contemporary studies of wife battering, claims that indeed the pattern of abuse and reconciliation is typical of abusive relationships. Understood in this light, the theme of reconciliation is far from a demonstration of Hosea's/Yahweh's love, patience, and long-suffering, which male interpreters ascribe to the metaphor's intended protagonists.

may have been an escape from an abusive situation rather than flagrant contempt for his authority and pride.

These observations and resistant readings are made by feminist biblical scholars primarily because of their concern with the effect of the marriage metaphor on the contemporary imagination and its danger for women. However, they do clarify the point more relevant to my own thesis that Hosea employs the marriage metaphor for rhetorical purposes and that traditional male scholars have been ensnared by this rhetoric. By refusing to adopt the wronged husband perspective of the text in their interpretation of the metaphorical marriage story and consequently offering different reasons for the breakdown of the metaphorical marriage, feminist biblical scholars demonstrate that Hosea needed his audience's complicity to achieve his goal of utterly condemning Israel's apostasy. Had the audience, like these feminist biblical scholars, sympathetically imagined the adulterous wife's perspective about her matrimonial life and her reasons for seeking extra-martial relationships, Hosea's rhetorical aim to consolidate rage against Israel's apostasy would not have been met. Sympathizing with Israel, the metaphorical wife, would entail sympathy for the literal people of Israel and their religious activities. Feminist biblical scholars' resistant reading demonstrates how crucial it is for the success of Hosea's rhetoric that his audience adopt the intended wronged husband perspective in the context of the marriage metaphor. Furthermore, the sheer novelty of these feminist scholars' interpretations of Hosea's marriage metaphor amidst the sea of traditional scholars' assertions that Yahweh, the husband, is a sympathetic figure and that Israel was

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55 Exum, Plotted, 125-126

a 'whore,' demonstrates that Hosea's choice of the marriage metaphor as the vehicle for his rhetoric was most effective.

Znh and n'p from the Wronged Husband Perspective

In my view, the work of feminist biblical scholars on Hosea's marriage metaphor has effectively demonstrated that the metaphor is highly rhetorical, designed to consolidate a particular community of males against apostate Israelites. The metaphor deliberately casts the tenor (i.e. the apostates) in the role of the adulterous wife, a figure which preyed on the fears of Hosea's male audience, and evoked emotions of disgust and shame. They have also convincingly argued that traditional male scholars have identified with the wronged husband subject-position over and against Hosea's adulterous wife figure. Traditional scholars, in taking up Hosea's "concealed invitation,"[56] have failed to analyze Hosea's rhetoric *as* rhetoric, and have joined the prophet in condemning the people of Israel, since they are 'objectively' deserving of punishment. A further effect of male scholars' thorough identification with the wronged husband position, evident in their notion that the *qĕdēšôt* were cult prostitutes, is that scholars have ceased to regard Hosea's marriage metaphor as entirely metaphorical. In my estimation, traditional male scholars have become "so engrossed in the pathos and the details of the metaphor that the *dissimilarities* between the [tenor and the vehicle] are disregarded."[57] Scholars, in their empathy for the wronged husband, have regarded Hosea's metaphorical language of whoring (*znh*) and adultery (*n'p*) as literal descriptions of Israel's apostate actions. To

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[56] Cohen's ("Intimacy," 8) term.
[57] Weems, "Gomer," 100. See my discussion of Lakoff's and Johnson's notion of the 'dead metaphor' above.

illustrate this point, I draw particular attention to Hosea's prolific use of terminology

derived from the Hebrew root *znh*, "to be a prostitute,"[58] to describe Israel's apostasy. I

maintain that Hosea's use of *znh* is underlaid with rhetorical intentions which have been

missed by modern male scholars. These scholars consider *znh* terminology to be both an

appropriate characterization of marital infidelity as well as a reference to the actual cult

prostitution allegedly committed by apostate Israelites. Building on the work of Julie

Galambush, I will contend that neither position is accurate.

"To commit adultery" is best expressed by the Hebrew root *n'p*.[59] Yet in Hosea 1-3,

where the marriage metaphor is used most explicitly, the root *n'p* occurs only twice.[60]

Israel's metaphorical unfaithfulness to Yahweh (and the parallel unfaithfulness of Gomer

against Hosea) is overwhelmingly characterized by terms derived from the root *znh*,

"commit fornication, be a harlot." In my view, it is peculiar that Hosea uses the root *znh*

to describe *adultery*, which is more adequately expressed by *n'p*. Traditional scholars do

not problematize the use of *znh* where *n'p* is clearly more appropriate, but rather regard

the terms as essentially interchangeable designations of sexual improprieties.

Galambush, who examines Ezekiel's similar use of *znh* to characterize Jerusalem's

apostasy, proposes that the *znh* terminology, used to describe the illicit sexual conduct of

a married woman (including the sexual conduct of the metaphorical wife of Yahweh,

Israel) is itself metaphorical. She notes that it is "generally agreed upon" among scholars

that the literal meaning of the participle *zônâ* is "prostitute."[61] It is therefore problematic

that *znh* is used to characterize Israel's actions in chapters 1-4 of Hosea since, as the *wife*

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[58] BDB. 275.
[59] BDB. 610.
[60] Hos 2:2 [Heb. 2:4] ; Hos 3:1.

of Yahweh who has extra-marital relationships, Israel is metaphorically an *adulteress* and

not a *prostitute.*

Biblical evidence makes it abundantly clear that *znh* and *n'p* were conceptualized

quite differently in ancient Israel. On the one hand, although the prostitute's sexual

activity with men in exchange for payment was considered marginal, it was not

condemned by law.[62] Her activity was not legally condemned "because the sexual

activity of a prostitute, while outside formal bonds, is in fact licit."[63] In short, the

prostitute's sexual activity transgresses the authority of no man and is therefore not

subject to condemnation. Adultery, on the other hand, defined as a married woman's

engaging in extra-marital sexual relations, was certainly a legal offense in ancient Israel,

and elicited severe condemnation (e.g. Deut 22:22). Since the married woman was

considered the property of her husband, adultery shamed the husband, who would likely

be perceived by the community as one not being able to exercise adequate authority over

his property.[64] Apart from the humiliation that a woman's adultery likely caused for her

husband/proprietor, extra-marital sexual relations had serious implications for a

patrilineal society where property rights were determined through the paternal line.[65]

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[61] Galambush. Jerusalem. 27.

[62] Athalya Brenner (The Israelite Woman), interpreting Judah's encounter with Tamar (Gen 38) writes: "Associations with [the prostitute] are not forbidden but, because of the social stigma involved, are better carried out discreetly." See Setel ("Pornography," 89) and Bird ("Play the Harlot,"79) for similar assessments of prostitution as a profession which is at once legal and tolerated, yet affords a level of stigmatization to both the prostitute and her patron. Bird states eloquently that "the prostitute is the 'other woman,' tolerated but stigmatized, desired but ostracized" and notes that "attitudes toward prostitution are characterized by ambivalence in every society."

[63] Galambush, Jerusalem, 28 n.9.

[64] See Yee's description of adultery as a source of male shame in "Hosea," 197-198.

[65] See Setel, "Pornography," 89; Yee, "Hosea,"185-187.

Essentially, adultery was a "property valuation and not an ethical issue" which directly and adversely affected individual males and corporate (male) Israel.[66]

Znh and *n'p*, prostitution and adultery, though both types of sexual activity, were construed in quite different terms in ancient Israel. What then is the role of the *znh* terminology as it appears in Hos 1-4? Galambush contends that when *znh* terminology is applied to the sexual activity of women who are *not* prostitutes, such as married women or virgin daughters (i.e. women who answer to the authority of a man), the usage is metaphorical. The description of adultery in the case of the married woman or premarital sex in the case of the virgin daughter as *znh* does not fit the literal meaning of this term, which denotes the sexual activity of an autonomous woman, the prostitute. I have demonstrated above that metaphor is "a speaking of one thing in terms which are seen as suggestive of another."[67] Furthermore, I have shown that a crucial characteristic of metaphor is in fact that the vehicle and the tenor are inherently different.[68] A metaphor bringing together the vehicle and the tenor "provokes the reader to see connections where none had been seen before,"[69] while repressing aspects of the vehicle and the tenor which are not commonly associated. In Galambush's analysis, the tenor, adultery or pre-marital sex, is elucidated by the *znh* terminology (the vehicle) to the extent that, like the *zônâ*, "the woman...has allowed more than one man access to her sexuality."[70] That is, the adulteress has had intercourse with a man other than her husband, while the daughter has

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[66] Setel, "Pornography," 89.

[67] Janet M. Soskice, <u>Metaphors and Religious Language</u> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 43.

[68] Galambush (<u>Jerusalem</u>, 5 n.8) writes that "the essence of metaphor is that it says a thing *is* something that it *is not*."

[69] Galambush. <u>Jerusalem</u>, 5.

[70] Galambush, <u>Jerusalem</u>, 29.

given her sexuality to a man other than her father, who is its lawful proprietor.[71] The

wronged male in authority over the offending woman (i.e. husband, father), by calling her

zônâ, places upon her the stereotypes associated with this marginalized figure because it

helps express the way he feels about her sexual offence.[72] In this metaphor, the

(somewhat hypocritical) associated commonplaces for zônâ are multiplicity of sexual

partners and lewdness.[73] The difference between this particular vehicle and this tenor

remains: the sexual activity of the prostitute is legal and socially tolerated while the

sexual activity of the adulteress is illegal and severely censured by the androcentric

community. However, the vehicle and the tenor have been brought into such a tight

relationship because the vehicle has appealed so directly to the common imagination of

the audience, both ancient and modern, that the metaphor itself 'dies,' or, in other words,

comes to be understood literally. Israel *is* a whore.

Galambush refers to this metaphorical use of *znh* as a "first level" metaphor.[74] For

Galambush, a "second level" of metaphorical usage of *znh* terminology occurs in the use

of *znh* to denote cultic apostasy.[75] According to Galambush, the function of the *znh*

terminology at this second level is intrinsically related to its first level usage, a crucial

difference being that, used to describe apostasy, the *znh* language does not necessarily

denote any literal sexual activity.[76] In Galambush's reconstruction, the apostate male

Israelites, likened to a woman and wife in order to metaphorically define Yahweh and

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[71] Galambush, Jerusalem, 29.

[72] See Carol A. Newsom ("Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom: A Study of Proverbs 1-9," in Peggy L. Day (ed.), Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel [Minneapolis: Fortress. 1989] 142-160) for an incisive examination of patriarchal associations of sex and danger made with the strange woman, a female who. much like the zônâ, stands outside the confines of marriage.

[73] See Bird ,"Play the Harlot," 79.

[74] Galambush, Jerusalem, 29.

[75] Galambush, Jerusalem, 29.

Israel's covenant relationship, are *metaphorical* adulteresses being *metaphorically* described as prostitutes. In other words, just as a real husband might describe his adulterous wife as a *zônâ* or "prostitute" to express his anger toward her actions, Yahweh calls Israel "whore" for her adultery, which is itself a metaphor for apostasy.

The major implication of Galambush' analysis is that Israel's cultic apostasy, denounced in texts such as Hosea with *znh* language, "thus depends on a comparison between idolatry and adultery, not one between idolatry and prostitution."[77] This point is especially relevant to my critique of the cult prostitution hypothesis. I have demonstrated that, to a great extent, scholars reconstruct a cultic sexual role for the *qĕdēšôt* on the basis of Hosea's "ingenious" use of *znh* language. Traditional scholars maintain that the *znh* language both exposes Israel's worship of Baal as apostasy and elucidates the sexual nature of this apostate worship. As Galambush's persuasive analysis of the way that *znh* functions metaphorically in describing apostasy demonstrates, the *znh* language is actually secondary to the primary metaphor COVENANT IS MARRIAGE/APOSTASY IS ADULTERY. The function of the *znh* language is to give the fullest expression to the anger which Yahweh experiences at Israel's religious defection, just as a husband calls his wife "whore" upon discovering her adultery against him, though she is not a literal prostitute.[78] Scholars, because they identify with Hosea/Yahweh's pain at being sexually

[76] Galambush, Jerusalem, 29.
[77] Galambush, Jerusalem, 31.
[78] Day, "Adulterous," forthcoming in VT. Setel ("Pornography," 87), who identifies pornographic elements in Hosea's marriage metaphor, identifies the function of pornography as "a maintenance of male dominion through the denial, or misnaming, of female experience." One of the four ways in which such a denial occurs, according to Setel, is "a failure to distinguish, and hence, a denial of the difference among the terms 'prostitute' (as a non-judgmental term to describe women who use their sexuality for economic subsistence), 'harlot' (implying a woman whose sexuality is 'not subject to control'), and 'whore' (the object of male control and degradation)" (88). In other words, according to Setel, the conflation of categories of female sexual activity facilitates the objectification of female sexuality as one, easily

betrayed, call Israel "whore." For this same reason, they see no semantic problem in this label, even though Gomer/Israel, according to the logic of the marriage metaphor, is in fact an "adulteress." For scholars, the language of *znh* is not recognized as a metaphor for adultery because, from the wronged husband's point of view, it aptly conveys his feelings about her. Scholars do not recognize that language used to express feelings about the wife's actions is not necessarily an accurate reflection of what she has done. Thus, traditional scholars cease to understand even this first level metaphorical usage of *znh*. In effect, this makes the second level usage of the metaphor, ZNH IS ADULTERY IS APOSTASY easier to miss. And, as I have shown, interpreters have indeed interpreted apostasy as literal harlotry for centuries.

Conclusion

In my view, failing to adequately analyze Hosea's *znh* language as dependent on the wronged husband perspective for its sense, and as such, having a strictly metaphorical function, traditional male scholars have erroneously ascribed a literal sexual role to the *qĕdēšôt*. Galambush's insightful analysis of Hosea's *znh* terminology makes more sense of its role in the context of the marriage metaphor, and leads to a more reasonable understanding of the *qĕdēšôt*'s role in light of the overwhelming biblical and extra biblical evidence that these women were in fact not sexual functionaries. Understanding

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identifiable and easily controllable object for male manipulation. Setel's observation sheds light on the phenomenon of male interpreters' conflation of the adulteress (the primary vehicle for Hosea's metaphor COVENANT IS MARRIAGE) and the prostitute (the metaphorical and highly emotive descriptive term to *describe* the adulteress). Indeed, crucial differences between the adulteress (one who has had [an] illicit sexual relationship[s] outside of marriage) and the prostitute (one who has licit sexual relationships in exchange for payment) are overlooked by scholars who regard the language of adultery and the language of prostitution as synonymous.

Hosea's *znh* terminology as an evocative metaphor for adultery, the actual vehicle of the metaphor, one concludes that Hosea employed sexual language to consolidate male rage against the true tenor of the metaphor, cultic apostasy. The dearth of evidence for the practice of cult prostitution or sex cults among non-Israelite ANE peoples suggests that this apostasy in no way involved sexual activity. It is more reasonable to assume that Hosea's fundamental concern with the state of Israel's religion was that gods other than Yahweh were being worshipped. *Qĕdēśôt*, functionaries in this apostate, non-Yahwistic cult, were called "prostitutes" by Hosea because of their apostasy, and *not* because this designation accurately reflected their activities.

CHAPTER SIX

NO PROSTITUTE HAS BEEN HERE: RECONSTRUCTING THE ROLE OF THE

QEDESOT

In this concluding chapter, it is my purpose to bring together the evidence from my

investigation of the *qĕdēšôt* in order to offer a plausible reconstruction of their cultic

activities. In the first section, I will critique the conjecture, made by those critics of the

cult prostitution hypothesis who propose an alternative hypothesis, that the *qĕdēšôt* were

common prostitutes. In the second section, I will offer my own reconstruction of the

qĕdēšôt as cult sacrifice assistants in light of the evidence that I have presented in

previous chapters, and in reading the sexual metaphorical language of Hos 4:13-14

without the religious and androcentric biases of traditional scholars.

Recent Reconstructions of the Roles of the *qĕdēšôt*: A Critique

I have built my critique of the cult prostitution hypothesis upon the work of many

insightful scholars who have deconstructed the notion of cult prostitution as it is generally

conceptualized by traditional modern scholars. Some, though dismissing a cultic sexual

role for the *qĕdēšôt*, do not suggest any alternative role for this class of women.[1] Others,

who do propose an alternative role, despite the various challenges which they themselves

have launched against this deeply ingrained assumption, insist that Hosea's rhetoric

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[1] Fisher ("Cultic Prostitution," 236) avoids making any conjectures about the actual role of the *qĕdēšôt* and the *qĕdēšîm*, and cautiously states that "it might be appropriate to suggest that the translation 'cult prostitute' and its equivalents be dropped from usage, at least until more evidence can be brought to bear on the subject." Frymer-Kensky (Goddesses, 202), more thoroughly than other critics, rejects the notion that the *qĕdēšôt* were cult prostitutes on the basis of biblical and contemporaneous extra biblical evidence, suggesting that "the imagination and fantasies of early modern scholars created a sex cult in Israel." She does not, however, suggest a specific cultic role for the *qĕdēšôt* on the basis of the biblical and extra biblical evidence.

nevertheless condemns some sort of literal sexual activity.[2] In my view, the latter group

is mistaken. In this section, I will outline and critique the position that the qĕdēšôt were

common prostitutes.

I contend that the fundamental reason for these critics' ascription of a mistaken

identity to the qĕdēšôt is their lack of attention to the way in which the metaphorical

sexual language functions in the book of Hosea.[3] They have not adequately analyzed the

metaphorical usage of the znh language, ignoring that its function in the text is to

consolidate male rage against an apostate cult and not to assign a sexual dimension to the

activity condemned. The failure to understand the znh language of the text is reflected in

the way in which Bird, Adler, and Hooks, who are proponents of the literal sexual activity

hypothesis, define znh. Much like the majority of modern Hosea scholars, they maintain

that znh may be used as a sort of synonym for n'p. They maintain that n'p is the more

limited of the two terms, designating only the offense of a married woman or man

engaging in an extra-marital relation or relations. Znh, meanwhile, may be used to

designate a broader range of non-marital sexual activities including adultery, but also

including, for instance, relations between a prostitute and an unmarried man.

Hooks defines the verb zānâ as "primarily denot[ing] a sexual act committed outside

a formal union."[4] It can be rendered "to prostitute, to play the harlot," but can also mean

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[2] Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 185-187; Gruber, "Hebrew Qĕdēšâ," 146; Adler, Covenant, 227-243; Bird, "Harlot," 87-88.

[3] As I have demonstrated in Chapter Two (n.16), Gruber, Adler and Hooks are convinced that while the qĕdēšôt were not cult prostitutes, the term qĕdēšôt is synonymous with zōnôt and means secular prostitutes. I have argued that this is a false conclusion, in part because of their common contentious understanding of the range of meanings of biblical qdš. The false correlation between the qĕdēšôt and the zōnôt is further exacerbated by these scholars' common misinterpretation of Hosea's metaphorical znh terminology.

[4] Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 70.

"to engage in indiscriminate or unlawful intercourse, to be sexually promiscuous" and is therefore, in the case of a married woman who commits adultery, "synonymous with *na'ap*."[5] Bird similarly defines *znh* as "to engage in sexual relations outside of or apart from marriage," a broad definition which implies that *znh* could be used as the literal term for a married woman's extra-marital sexual relations.[6]

Adler's analysis of the *znh* terminology is more subtle than those of Bird or Hooks. She contends that *znh* and *n'p* have "overlapping" meanings and, for this reason, *znh* is able to replace *n'p* in the context of the metaphor COVENANT IS MARRIAGE where adultery (*n'p*) is breach of covenant. She also maintains that *znh* refers to a range of unlawful or objectionable sexual practices such as prostitution, adultery, and "perhaps it is also applied to a woman who had sex before marriage."[7] For Adler, the root *znh* is used more frequently than *n'p* in biblical texts which employ the metaphor COVENANT IS MARRIAGE precisely because of its connotations of a host of sexual transgressions which would evoke male scorn.[8] For instance, *znh*, though literally able to mean *n'p*, also evokes the "habitual" sexual activity of the prostitute, her multiplicity of partners, and the stereotype of the female sexual predator associated with prostitution. In this way, Adler recognizes that Hosea's *znh* terminology is more effective than *n'p* as a "rhetorical tool."[9] However, even this analysis, which is somewhat more sensitive than Hooks' or Bird's to the emotive force of the *znh* terminology, does not in my view go far enough in identifying its accusatory force.

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[5] Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 70-71.
[6] Bird, "Play the Harlot," 76.
[7] Adler, Covenant, 349.
[8] Adler, Covenant, 312-314.
[9] Adler, Covenant, 314.

As for Gruber, who also posits that the *qĕdēšôt* were common prostitutes, he apparently does not consider the sexual language of Hos 4:14 as metaphorical, and therein lies the reason for his miscontrual of the *qĕdēšôt* as common prostitutes. He does not even acknowledge the prominent marriage metaphor and the proliferation of terms derived from the stem *znh* in the first three chapters of Hosea. Gruber merely cites Hos 4:14 as biblical evidence for his reconstructed role for the *qĕdēšôt*, that of common prostitutes.[10] According to Gruber, the pairing in verse 14 of the terms *zōnôt* and *qĕdēšôt* indicates "that the term *qĕdēšâ* is a by-word or poetic synonym of *zônâ*, the regular Hebrew word for prostitute."[11] Not even considering Hosea's use of *znh* to be metaphorical, Gruber insists upon a literal interpretation of the sexual language paired with *qĕdēšôt*, and reconstructs the role of the *qĕdēšôt* as synonymous with the Hebrew *zōnôt*.

Black's interaction view of metaphor and Galambush's insightful analysis of *znh* as a *metaphor* for adultery, analyses which focus on the *dissonance* between rather than the *overlapping* elements of *znh* and *n'p*, more convincingly reveal Hosea's motives in employing such rhetorical language than do the scholars mentioned above. In Galambush's analysis, there is no room to consider *znh* as anything *but* metaphorical, as it is a secondary metaphor for the primary metaphorical vehicle, adultery. Hooks, Gruber, Adler, and Bird, by harmonizing the meanings of *znh* and *n'p*, two fundamentally

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[10] Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 134.

[11] Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 134. Gruber also explains the occurrence of both *zônâ* and *qĕdēšâ* in Gen 38 as evidence that the two terms are interchangeable synonyms. According to Gruber, the author of Gen 38 used both terms to identify Tamar "possibly for stylistic reasons, to avoid repetition of the same term where a synonym is available, possibly to suggest that in the dialect of Timnah a prostitute was called a *qĕdēšâ* rather than a *zônâ*" (135). As noted in Chapter Two, I contend that Westenholz's ("Tamar") interpretation of the "interchange" of *zônâ* and *qĕdēšâ* in Gen 38 as highlighting the embarrassment of Judah's and Hirah's predicament is more convincing.

different concepts, "kill" the metaphorical usage of *znh*, as have the majority of modern

scholars.[12] In effect, glossing over the differences in meaning between *znh* and *n'p*

terminology results in concealing the male-identified subject position which the *znh*

language demands. Not surprisingly, Hooks, Gruber, Adler, and Bird, who do not

recognize the entirely rhetorical and *metaphorical* usage of Hosea's *znh* language, regard

the women named in Hos 4 as *literal zōnôt*.

Another factor in the above-mentioned scholars' misconstrual of the role of the

qĕdēšôt is a reluctance to entertain the possibility that Hosea would condemn females for

anything other than a sexual offense.[13] Ironically, it seems that Bird succumbs to precisely

this sexist view in identifying the activities of women at the shrines. First, though she

acknowledges that Hosea's *znh* terminology is metaphorical throughout Hos 1-3,[14] she is

convinced that "it is only in chapter 4 that sexual language is employed in a non-

metaphorical way."[15] Why? Because in this chapter, in verses 13-14, *women* are the

subject of Hosea's invective. Bird argues that "the men's worst offense is to dishonor

God by their perverted worship ... [t]he women's worst offense is to show dishonor to

their fathers and fathers-in-law by their sexual conduct."[16] Granted, Bird claims that this

"differential assessment of male and female behavior" is a patriarchal construct, not an

absolute truth. However, this does not satisfactorily explain why the metaphorical *znh*

language, which has, for the first three chapters of Hosea and most of the fourth, referred

to cultic apostasy, suddenly shifts to a literal sense when applied to women.

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[12] See the section titled "*Znh* and *n'p* from the Wronged Husband Perspective" in Chapter Five of this thesis (p. 159 - 165).
[13] Cf. Hackett, "Sexist Model," 74.
[14] Bird. "Play the Harlot," 80-83.
[15] Bird. "Play the Harlot," 83.

Intriguingly, Bird differs from Hooks, Adler, and Gruber in ascertaining that the term

qĕdēšôt is clearly a title for a cultic functionary. She is reluctant to cast the *qĕdēšôt* in a

role which involves literal sexual activity, although she does not completely abandon the

possibility that the cultic role of the *qĕdēšôt* "did involve some form of sexual

activity...[that] was not understood by the practitioners as prostitution."[17] However, Bird

maintains that the adultery and whoring of the daughters and daughters-in-law (Hos 4:13)

is literal, and that the *zōnôt* (v.14) were most likely literal prostitutes who "found the

rural sanctuaries an attractive place to do business."[18] Though Bird does not favor the

ascription of a literal sexual role to the *qĕdēšôt*, her contention that Hosea objects to the

literal sexual activity of some women in verses 13-14 is the result of a misapprehension

of the metaphorical function of the *znh* terminology. According to Bird, the *zōnôt*

constitute an actual class of women, the "sexual mercenaries" of Adler's description.[19]

The usage of *zōnôt* ceases to be metaphorical when applied to women, and thus no longer

connotes apostasy but literal sexual activity. I maintain that this is both a sexist and

unreasonable interpretation of the text, founded on a misunderstanding of the

metaphorical function of *znh*.

Ironically, Gruber, critiquing modern scholars' insistence on the *qĕdēšôt*'s identity as

cult prostitutes, remarks that "tragically, scholarship has suffered from scholars being

unable to imagine any cultic role for women in antiquity that did not involve sexual

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[16] Bird, "Play the Harlot," 86.

[17] Bird, "Play the Harlot," 87.

[18] Bird, "Play the Harlot," 88. Bird does not qualify her characterization of the rural sanctuary as a sort of eighth century red light district. In my view, such an assertion requires support, and it is not to be found in Hos 4:13-14.

[19] Adler, Covenant, 239. In my view, Adler's description of the *zōnôt* as "sexual mercenaries" is rooted in the sexist stereotype of the voracious sexuality of prostitutes. Like Bird, Adler does not qualify her description of the *zōnôt* or their intentions with evidence, textual or otherwise.

intercourse."[20] Yet he and other critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis continue to ascribe a literal sexual role to the Hebrew *qĕdēšâ*, evidently suffering from this same "tragic" mode of thought. As I shall demonstrate in the next section, both the biblical and extra biblical evidence strongly suggest that the *qĕdēšôt* were neither practitioners of sexual religious rites, nor common prostitutes.

A Re-evaluation of the Role of the *qĕdēšôt*

Previous critics of the cult prostitution hypothesis have been, in my view, either unduly reluctant to reconstruct the role of the *qĕdēšôt* or mistaken in their contention that the *qĕdēšôt* had a sexual, though not cultic, function. In my estimation, it is possible to argue that the *qĕdēšôt* were not cult prostitutes, based on the lack of extra biblical evidence for such a practice, and also to gain insight into their actual, non-sexual roles from both the biblical and extra biblical evidence. Simply stated, I contend that the *qĕdēšôt* were female cult functionaries who assisted in the sacrificial rites of the cult.

To my knowledge, Joan Goodnick Westenholz is the only critic of the cult prostitution hypothesis who understands participation in cultic sacrifice to have been the most likely role of the *qĕdēšôt*. As I have discussed above, I consider the literal sexual activity hypothesis to be misguided, rooted in a misunderstanding of metaphor as well as in a reluctance to thoroughly abandon the notion of a sexual role for a denounced class of women. The majority of Westenholz' article is dedicated to establishing that the extra biblical cognates for *qādeš* and *qĕdēšâ* do not suggest either a cultic or secular sexual role for the Hebrew *qĕdēšôt*. In my assessment, Westenholz persuasively argues that

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[20] Gruber, "Hebrew *Qĕdēšâ*," 138.

extra biblical and biblical evidence establish that the *qĕdēšôt* were likely official assistants in sacrificial rites. First, Westenholz gleans from the Mesopotamian evidence that, at some point in Mesopotamian history,[21] the role of the *qadištu* was to assist in sacrificial rites. As we have seen, the most explicit text in this regard is KAR 154, a middle-Assyrian ritual text, which portrays the *qadištu* as active in the cult of Adad. In this text, the *qasdatu*-women make meal offerings to Adad, chant, perform a purification ceremony, lift the statue of Adad, and share the sacrificial offering with the priests.[22] Second, the Ugaritic evidence, arguably more pertinent to the reconstruction of the role of the Hebrew *qĕdēšôt*, likewise suggests the participation of the *qĕdēšôt* in sacrificial rites. A Ugaritic ritual text (KTU 1.112) portrays the *qdš*[23] as a cantor during sacrificial rites,[24] a role which is intriguingly similar to that of the Mesopotamian *qadištu*, who "intones" and "prolongs" the *inḫu*- chant in the sacrifices to Adad. The cultic role of sacrificial assistant can be further deduced from the consistent occurrences in the Ugaritic temple administration lists[25] of the plural term *qdšm*[26] after the term *khnm* (priests), whose title and role are analogous to those of the *kōhănîm* of ancient Israel. Westenholz speculates

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[21] See Chapter Three (p.76) where I discuss the evidence that the *qadištu* may have served in the capacity of midwife or wet-nurse. As Westenholz ("Tamar," 254) observes, it is not necessary to conclude that the *qadištu* was *either* a wet-nurse or a sacrificial assistant. Rather, "the *qadištu*- woman may have had more than one function during the diachronic span of Mesopotamian culture" (254).

[22] Westenholz, "Tamar," 254. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, other Mesopotamian texts ascribe a cultic role to the *qadištu* (e.g. Lambert, Wisdom, 155-164; CAD Q, 49).

[23] *Qdš* is a masculine singular term and was likely a title for a male. The feminine singular Ugaritic cognate for Hebrew *qĕdēšâ* is attested as a clan name (*bn.qdšt*) but apparently not as a cultic title. Westenholz ("Tamar," 249) contends, however, that the masculine plural term *qdšm* is an inclusive term referring to both male and female cultic personnel. She also regards the Hebrew term *qĕdēšîm* (masc. pl), which occurs in 1 Kgs 15:12; 2 Kgs 23:7; and Job 36:14, as a term referring to males and females inclusively (249).

[24] Westenholz, "Tamar," 249.

[25] UT 63, 81, 113, 114, and 169.

[26] See n. 23 above.

on the basis of this evidence that the Ugaritic *qdšm* formed a class of sacrificial assistants

subordinate to the *khnm*, much like the Levites of ancient Israelite religion.

As Westenholz demonstrates, the extra biblical evidence from Ugarit and

Mesopotamia attests that those women whose titles are cognate with Hebrew *qĕdēšôt*

were involved in cult sacrifices. I propose that the biblical evidence for the role of the

qĕdēšôt is consonant with the extra biblical evidence when one abandons the misguided

reconstructions previously made by modern scholars. The first point in favor of

reconstructing the *qĕdēšôt*'s role as sacrificial assistants is the consistently cultic

interpretation of words derived from the Hebrew root *qdš*. As I have demonstrated in my

study of this root in Chapter Two of this thesis, the root *qdš* seems to consistently denote

a person, place, thing, or time set aside for the purposes of the cult. Based on my study of

this root, I maintain that the most plausible interpretation of the term *qĕdēšôt*, derived

from *qdš*, is that it is a cultic title. From the outset, as a plural feminine noun, the most

plausible translation of *qĕdēšôt* is "holy women" or "consecrated women."[27] On the basis

of this initial translation, I take issue with Gruber's, Hooks', and Adler's positions, which

each maintain that *qĕdēšôt* is a secular title for a class of women.

Next, I contend that the two texts generally regarded as most favorable for supporting

the cult prostitution hypothesis, Gen 38 and Hosea 4,[28] actually sustain my proposed

reconstruction of the role of the *qĕdēšôt* as analogous to the cultic roles of the Ugaritic

qdšm and the Mesopotamian *qasdatu*. First, I have shown that a plausible interpretation

of the apparent interchange of the terms *zônâ* and *qĕdēšâ* in Gen 38 is that the

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[27] Bird ("Harlot," 76) concurs with this interpretation.

interchange is actually a ploy on the part of Judah's friend Hirah to avoid being stigmatized as one "had" by a common prostitute.[29] While Judah *actually* had a sexual encounter with a *zônâ* or "prostitute" (Tamar incognito), Hirah, acting on Judah's behalf (itself evidence of Judah's embarrassment over the situation) attempts to find the *zônâ* by asking the locals of Enaim, indirectly, for the *qĕdēšâ* or "consecrated woman." I suggest that Hirah hoped that in asking for a *qĕdēšâ* who had been seen on the road – the wrong kind of woman, though a woman nonetheless- a trail might have been laid before him to the *right* woman without entailing any embarrassment. A response from the Enaimites such as "There was no *qĕdēšâ* here, only a *zônâ*," might have provided a useful starting point for Hirah's trail to Tamar.[30] Of course, since Tamar's purpose in posing as a *zônâ* was to elicit no one's attention *except* that of Judah, the Enaimites, unaware that any woman at all had been on the road, inform Hirah that no *qĕdēšâ* has been there, and do not provide him with the hoped-for clue concerning the whereabouts of the *zônâ* whom he is actually pursuing.[31] Furthermore, Hirah's ruse to avoid embarrassment may have involved more than mere words. The young goat which Hirah takes to Enaim, in fact the

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[28] As discussed in Chapter Two, the texts in which the equivalent terms for *qĕdēšôt* (*qĕdēšâ*, *qādeš*, and *qĕdēšîm*) occur are either silent in terms of ascribing any sexual roles to these persons, or ambiguous to the point of being useless in attempting to carry out any reconstruction of their activities.

[29] See Chapter 2, p. 67. See also Westenholz, "Tamar," 248.

[30] The interchange of the terms in this story may have had the added effect of entertaining the Israelite audience to whom it was told, who, as we have seen in discussing Hos 4:13-14, metaphorically equated the *qĕdēšôt*, functionaries in an apostate, non-Yahwistic cult, with *zônôt* ("prostitutes"). As I discuss in Chapter Five of this thesis, I maintain that in the minds of the biblical authors and their intended audiences, the *znh* language used to label religious apostates and to denounce their actions belongs to the *metaphor* COVENANT IS MARRIAGE, where apostasy on Israel's part is characterized as illicit sexual behavior which defies the terms of her marriage to Yahweh. The denunciatory *znh* language need not have arisen from biblical authors' observation of literal sexual practices among Israelite apostates.

[31] Hooks, Sacred Prostitution, 169.

promised payment for Judah's sexual liaison with the *zônâ*, is after all an ideal prop for

his deceptive inquiry for the *qĕdēšâ*, an assistant in sacrificial rites.[32]

While Hirah's avoidance of embarrassment and his taking advantage of the fact that

he has a goat in tow are plausible interpretations of elements of Gen 38, the support

which these interpretations provide for the reconstruction of the *qĕdēšôt* as cultic

functionaries remains speculative.[33] I propose that more direct evidence for ascribing this

identity to the *qĕdēšôt* occurs in the very text which has been most widely interpreted as

supporting the cult prostitution hypothesis, none other than Hosea 4:13-14.

To recapitulate, Hos 4:13-14 (my translation) runs as follows:

> 13 Upon the mountain tops, they [i.e. male Israelites in general] make
> sacrifice, and upon the high places they make sacrifices smoke under oak,
> poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your [i.e.
> male Israelites in Hosea's audience] daughters play the whore, and your
> daughters-in-law commit adultery.[34] 14 I will not visit punishment upon
> your daughters for playing the whore, nor upon your daughters-in-law
> when they commit adultery, for they [male Israelites in general]
> themselves go aside[35] with whores, and make sacrifice with the female cult
> functionaries (*qĕdēšôt*). And a people without discernment is thrust down.

First, it should be noted that the apparently shifting subject of these verses from third

person masculine plural to second person masculine plural may not refer to completely

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[32] See Westenholz. "Tamar." 248.

[33] However, I would argue that these interpretations are *less* speculative and more firmly grounded in biblical and extra biblical evidence than those traditionally made by modern scholars who understand Tamar to have posed as a cult prostitute in order to seduce Judah.

[34] *tĕnā'apnâ* ("to commit adultery." Piel imperfect. 3 fem. pl.) is reduplicated at the beginning of verse 14 in the MT. I have followed the suggestion of BHS that this reduplication is the result of scribal error. In my own translation, I have followed the majority of English translations which insert *tĕnā'apnâ* after *al-kalôtkĕm kî* ("nor [punish] your daughters-in-law though [they commit adultery]").

[35] *yĕparēdû* ("make a separation," "go aside") is a hapax in its Piel imperfect third masculine plural form. Its sense is therefore not entirely clear. Bird ("Play the Harlot," 84) suggests that the term is used here to create a sexual innuendo in the description of what the men "do" with the *zônôt*. If indeed the language has a sexual overtone, I would argue that it belongs at the level of the metaphor and does not connote literal sexual activity between the apostate men and the apostate women metaphorically called *zônôt*. On the other hand, I think that it is possible to read *yĕparēdû* without sexual innuendo. The text simply describes apostate men and apostate women ("*zônôt*") acting in partnership at the Baalistic sacrifices.

distinct groups. Hosea 4 condemns the apostate actions of both priests and people. In my view, when a third masculine plural subject is addressed, Hosea refers to the illicit sacrificial actions of Israelite men in general, possibly inclusive of male priests. Hosea shifts to the second masculine plural address to speak directly to the men in his audience,[36] whose daughters he condemns for metaphorical adultery and whoring, i.e. literal apostasy. In verse 14, Hosea again refers to a third masculine plural subject, in my view the same third masculine plural subject of verse 13, in order to expose their (i.e. male Israelites in general) sacrificing as apostate by linking them with the Canaanite-styled functionaries, the *qĕdēšôt*. The men, as traditional commentators suggest (e.g. Wolff, Mays), set the example for illicit (though not sexual!) worship, and thus the women, merely following an example, are exculpated. Simply stated, by using the third person plural subject, Hosea indicts apostate Israelite men in general for their participation in objectionable sacrifices, with female officiants, to Baal.[37] In his use of the more direct second person, Hosea directly accuses his audience of what is in his view the grave consequence of their actions. That is, they have given license to the women in their charge to participate in the Baal cult as well.

Second, it should be noted that the act of sacrificing brackets these two verses. In verse 13, men are described as making sacrifices (*yĕzabbēhû*), and in verse 14b again a

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[36] See Davies (Hosea, 126), who suggests that the apparent shift from a third person to second person addressee "may ... be [a] case of Hosea turning temporarily towards and then away from a particular group."

[37] Though Baal is not explicitly named in Hos 4, that Hosea condemns Israelite participation in the Baal cult can be inferred from chapters 1-3. In these chapters, Israel is described as whoring after Baal or the Baals (Hos 2:16, 17 – NRSV versification). In Hos 4, Hosea employs the same metaphorical language of whoring as in previous chapters to condemn Israel's apostate activities. Moreover, in my view, the occurrence of the term *qĕdēšôt* itself secures the object of Hosea's invective as Baal-centered worship. As I have demonstrated, the *qĕdēšôt* are elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible associated with a 'foreign' cult (e.g. Gen 38).

third person plural masculine subject, in all likelihood the very same men as those identified in verse 13, are again depicted as sacrificing (yĕzabbēḥû), this time accompanied by the qĕdēšôt. Given that Hosea's invective in chs. 1-3 and certainly in ch.4[38] has focused upon Israel's apostate involvement in the Baal cult, the most plausible interpretation of this text is that it condemns sacrificial rites carried out in the name of Baal. Even if, as Bird maintains, Hosea's language in these verses is intentionally suggestive of sexual activity,[39] I contend that the euphemistic language belongs to the metaphorical vehicle znh and does not necessarily (or even most plausibly) refer to literal sexual activity. The term qĕdēšôt, the title of a condemned class of functionaries[40] whose presence in the Baal cult is attested by the Ugaritic administrative and ritual texts themselves, secures the "Baal-istic" nature of the objectionable sacrifices. The terms zōnôt ("prostitutes") and qĕdēšôt, paired in verse 14, are thus indeed interchangeable, but not as traditional biblical commentators have perceived the interchange.[41] Rather, qĕdēšôt is interchangeable with zōnôt since, according to Hosea, apostate Israelite Baal worshippers are all "whores." The qĕdēšôt's activity is spelled out literally in these verses. The qĕdēšôt perform sacrifices. Their sacrificing is condemned by the figurative language of whoring since it is directed toward Baal, and not because it involved literal sexual activity. The text does not demand a literal interpretation of its sexual language, as traditional scholars have generally insisted.

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[38] See above note.

[39] Bird ("Harlot," 85) suggests that "the message of sexual activity is carried out by innuendo, without the use of explicitly sexual language." For Bird, "the accented terms of location (on the heights, under shady trees)" suggest that the condemned 'offering' is sexual in nature, or at least polemicized as sexual by Hosea.

[40] Deut 23:18; 1 Kgs 14:24; 15:12; 22:47; 2 Kgs 23:7.

[41] As I discuss in Chapter One (p.26), some commentators argue that zōnôt and qĕdēšôt are synonymous terms since they allege that both terms are titles for women who prostituted themselves in some fashion.

As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, modern biblical scholars' interpretations of the daughters' whoring and the daughters-in-law's adultery have also played a major role in consolidating a literal understanding of the sexual language in these verses. These women are variously regarded as participants in bridal initiation rites, as cult prostitutes, as Israelite women who became prone to commit secular sexual offenses due to the lack of moral fortitude of the priesthood at the time, or as women in the priestly families who similarly engaged in unlawful sexual relationships because of the general depravity of the times. Modern scholars do not entertain what I contend is the most plausible interpretation of the offense of the daughters and daughters-in-law, i.e. that these women participated in some way in the worship of Baal. As I have demonstrated previously, the referent of both the figurative "whoring" language and the figurative "adultery" language has until this point in Hosea been cultic apostasy. Therefore, I consider it to be a most reasonable interpretation that the daughters and daughters-in-law were participants in the worship of Baal. The exact nature of their worship activity is not given in the text, but it need not be sexual. If the daughters performed *any* role in the Baal cult, it would have elicited objection from conservative Yahwists such as Hosea. Perhaps their female gender exacerbated the gravity of the situation since there was no role for females in the official Yahweh cult.[42] This may have caused Hosea to single out the daughters' participation in the apostate cult as a particularly pressing issue, and to put the blame for the activity squarely on the shoulders of their guardians who not only allowed it, but who also participated in cultic rites with *female* cult sacrificers: the *qĕdēšôt*.

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[42] Hackett, "Sexist Model," 73.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

<u>Conclusions</u>

In the preceding chapters, I have examined the widely held supposition among biblical scholars that the *qĕdēšôt* of Hos 4:14 were cult prostitutes. Building on the work of biblical scholars who have critiqued this position, I have demonstrated that this interpretation of the *qĕdēšôt* is based on a number of contentious presuppositions. First, the majority of scholars presuppose that non-Israelite ANE peoples were involved in institutionalized sex cults. These sex cults are thought to include worshippers' ritual sexual intercourse with women who functioned as cult prostitutes. But extra biblical sources yield no convincing evidence that Mesopotamian women engaged in ritual sexual activity. The evidence from Ugarit is almost silent in terms of defining the role of the *qdšm*, the cognate term for Hebrew *qĕdēšîm*, in the Canaanite cult. This silence is particularly incriminating for advocates of the cult prostitution hypothesis. They contend that Hosea condemns Israelite participation in a Canaanite-styled cult and that the institution of cult prostitution was well known among the Canaanite people. The dearth of evidence from Ugarit suggests otherwise.

I have also demonstrated that descriptions of the ANE institution of cult prostitution in ancient and modern literature are fraught with bias and, especially in the case of the ancient accounts, serious questions have been raised as to the reliability of these authors' reports as accurate historical sources. The ancient writers had a vested interest in describing the exotic and immoral (from their perspective) habits of their barbarian neighbors in order to assert the cultural superiority of their people. Modern biblical

scholars also benefit from denouncing the Canaanites as licentious and superstitious. Identifying themselves consciously with the religious tradition of Jews or Christians, or perhaps subconsciously as people of the West in whose culture the biblical literature has played a formative role, scholars represent the Canaanites as the other, the non-Christian or the unenlightened primitive whose actions are, from these perspectives, base and reprehensible. The Canaanites are a foil for the values of modern Western thinkers, at once confirming the superiority of these values and the baseness of other ways of thinking. This, I have demonstrated, is particularly apparent in scholars' consistent habit of characterizing Israelite religion as "ethical" over and against Canaanite "nature" religion. The application of this dichotomy, which I have shown to be a peculiarly Western concept, to biblical and extra biblical texts is, in my view, a primary factor in traditional scholars' interpretations of the role of the *qĕdēšôt* as cult prostitutes. Modern biblical scholars carry on the polemical program of the biblical text to denounce the Canaanite cult in order to create and maintain a Yahwistic identity, but reinterpret the language to suit modern constructs of difference.

Having demonstrated that there is a dearth of textual evidence for cult prostitution in the ANE material, and having identified scholars' reconstruction of a Canaanite-styled sex cult as fraught with prejudice and false assumptions, my final task in this critique of the cult prostitution hypothesis was to account for the undeniable pairing of the term *qĕdēšôt* with sexual language. I partially accomplished this in presenting Oden's hypothesis that the ascription of "deviant" sexual behavior to a rival ethnic group is a common polemical device which serves the purpose of establishing ethnic boundaries. I contend that this hypothesis furnishes an explanation for the persistent tendency among

Western commentators, often inheritors of Israel's religious tradition, to seize upon the anti-Canaanite thrust of Hosea's rhetoric and its explicit sexual language and to assume that the *qĕdēšôt* were sexual cult functionaries.[1] I have also delineated the nature and function of metaphor, which explains Hosea's use of *znh* language as a rhetorical device meant to consolidate male rage against Israel's apostasy. I have suggested that, in strongly identifying with the wronged husband character(s) in the text, scholars have effectively "killed" the metaphorical usage of *znh* and have mistakenly come to interpret it as a literal referent to Israel's religious crimes.

Reading Hos 4:13-14 without "killing" the metaphor COVENANT IS MARRIAGE (and consequently taking the sexual language literally) reveals convincing evidence that the *qĕdēšôt* were female functionaries who assisted in some way in sacrificial rites in a Baal-styled cult in ancient Israel. Objectionable (from Hosea's point of view) sacrificial activity is the literal target of Hosea's invective. In verses 13-14, Hosea employs his familiar figurative language of whoring to characterize the sacrificing and its participants, both the third person masculine subjects and the *qĕdēšôt*, as grossly offensive to Yahweh.

Other biblical texts clearly depict the *qĕdēšôt* as functionaries whose role was offensive to mainstream Yahwism (i.e. Deut 23:18; 1 Kgs 14:24; 15:12; 22:47; 2 Kgs 23:7), and one other biblical text, Gen 38, may also furnish evidence for a sacrificial role

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[1]Hackett ("Sexist Model," 73) makes an excellent point in this regard. She suggests that the mere "presence of female cult personnel [i.e. *qĕdēšôt*] in the rival cults makes [the sexual language of the marriage metaphor] work even better [as a description of alleged social reality]." Hackett notes that "there were no such women in the official Israelite cult; nor, for that matter, were there in the religious groups to which most nineteenth- and twentieth-century biblical scholars have belonged" (73-74). Modern male scholars therefore adopt the patriarchal tendency to regard women's roles as invariably based in their sexuality (i.e. mother, whore, nun), a stereotype which is no doubt helped by the sexual language of the vehicle for

for the *qĕdēšôt*. Certainly, extra biblical evidence for *qĕdēšôt*'s cognate terms seems to suggest that this class of women likely assisted in sacrificial rites. Short of traveling back in time to eighth century Israel, one cannot be certain of this reconstruction of the role of the *qĕdēšôt*. However, having reviewed the evidence (or lack thereof) of scholars who claim that the *qĕdēšôt* were functionaries in a Canaanite-styled sex cult, I am convinced that my conclusions about the *qĕdēšôt* are more plausible, making better sense out of both the biblical and contemporaneous extra biblical evidence.

Implications

Apart from its immediate contribution to Hosea scholarship, the implications of this thesis are three-fold. First, it contributes to the task of re-constructing women's history. Recognizing the prophetic literature to be characterized by anti-Canaanite rhetoric, this study performs the necessary action of moving beyond the prophet's polemical description of the activities of 'foreign' women, and attempts to assess their cultic role, as far as possible, from the point of view of their own cult. Moreover, the challenge that this reassessment of the role of the *qĕdēšôt* directs toward fundamental assumptions about the religion of the Canaanites and its influence upon Israelite religion suggests "a new reconstruction of the history of Israelite religion, not (merely) a new chapter on women."[2] Second, this study is significant to feminist biblical scholarship in its illumination of the particular problems inherent in identifying with the male author of texts which use metaphoric women. This critique of traditional scholarship may be instructive in future

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apostasy, to furnish a description. According to this sexist thinking, the *qĕdēšôt* must be *sexual* functionaries (66, 74).

examinations of similar biblical texts such as Ezekiel 16, 23, and Lamentations 1. Third,

this study demonstrates that the reconstruction of social reality from biblical metaphors is

not necessarily reliable. Attention must be paid to the author's social location. his/her

intended audience, and to one's own identity as a reader in the interpretation of biblical

texts.

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²Phyllis Bird, "The Place of Women in the Israelite Cultus," in Patrick D. Miller Jr., Paul D. Hanson. S.Dean McBride (eds.), Ancient Israelite Religion. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 399.

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