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The *qdesha* in Hosea 4:14: Putting the (Myth of the) Sacred Prostitute to Bed

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Abstract

Despite a lack of evidence for the practice of sacred prostitution in the ancient Middle East, scholars have continued to understand the word *qdešɔ* in Hosea 4:14 to denote a female officiant who performed sexual acts in a cultic setting. This article argues that the understanding of the *qdešɔ* as a cultic prostitute has appealed to interpreters for over two millennia because the Hebrew word has a semantic range that includes both female cultic functionaries and prostitutes. The lexeme denotes a class of women who are employed outside of the patrimonial estate, including priestesses or prostitutes (but never both at the same time). When the prophet indicts the Israelites for sacrificing with qdešot, he deploys a pun that strengthens his metaphor of Israel as a wayward woman.

Keywords

Hebrew Bible – Hosea – prostitution – qdš – qadištu – diachronic semantics – Hebrew lexicography

For more than a century, scholars have pointed to the parallelism of זֹנָה and קְדֵשָׁה in Hosea 4:14 as evidence for the existence of cultic prostitution in Israel.[1] Understanding the קדשה in this manner has allowed scholars to interpret

1 See the following commentaries and studies on ancient religion, published over a span of more than 150 years: Simson 1851: 140; Wellhausen 1892: 109; Cheyne 1892: 68; Orelli 1893: 31; Nowack: 1903: 36; Marti 1904: 44; Harper 1905: 261; Frazer 1914: 58; Mays 1969: 74; Wolff 1974: 84-86; Andersen and Freedman 1980: 370; Jeremias 1983: 70-71; Davies 1992: 126; Macintosh 1997: 157-158; Dearman 2010: 166.

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Hosea 4:12-14a as a condemnation of a syncretistic sex cult that had infiltrated Israelite worship. More recently, however, M. Gruber and J. Westenholz, among others, have surveyed the biblical and cognate evidence and found no support for the association of the קדשה (or Akkadian *qadištu*) with sexual activity in a cultic context.[2] Nonetheless, the myth of the sacred prostitute continues to resurface in secondary literature.[3] In this paper, I argue that the interpretation of קדשה as a cultic prostitute persists because the biblical Hebrew word has a semantic range that includes both female cultic functionaries and prostitutes. Whereas the Akkadian term *qadištu* only designates female cultic functionaries, the Hebrew word קדשה underwent a process of semantic generalization and derogation. As a result, the word developed both a broader social denotation (i.e., a single woman, employed outside of the household), and a negative connotation (i.e., a sexually available woman) so that, by the Rabbinic period, the קדשה lost all cultic association and was understood to be a prostitute. The use of the word קדשה in Hosea 4:14 reflects the polysemy that results from this process of semantic change. The prophet's indictment of men who sacrifice with קדשות makes reference to a specific cultic function of the קדשות. Simultaneously, however, the parallelism between קדשות and זונות triggers the associated concept of "loose woman." The prophet thus offers a critique of cultic praxis that deploys the metaphor of Israel as a wayward woman, unmoored from her husband and family.

1 The Problem: זונה and קדשה in Hosea 4:12-14a

In Hosea 4:12-14a, the prophet lambasts specific cultic and religious activities that he juxtaposes with the theme of prostitution in quick succession:

12עַמִּי בְּעֵצֹו יִשְׁאָל וּמַקְלֹו יַגִּיד לֹו
כִּי רֽוּחַ זְנוּנִים הִתְעָה וַיִּזְנוּ מִתַּחַת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם׃
13עַל־רָאשֵׁי הֶהָרִים יִזְבָּחוּ וְעַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת יְקַטֵּרוּ
תַּחַת אַלָּון וְלִבְנֶה וְאֵלָה כִּי טֹוב צִלָּהּ
עַל־כֵּן תִּזְנֶינָה בְּנֹותֵיכֶם וְכַלֹּותֵיכֶם תְּנָאַפְנָה׃
14לֹא־אֶפְקֹוד עַל־בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי תִזְנֶינָה וְעַל־כַּלֹּותֵיכֶם כִּי תְנָאַפְנָה
כִּי־הֵם עִם־הַזֹּנוֹת יִפָּרֵדוּ וְעִם־הַקְּדֵשׁוֹת יְזַבֵּחוּ

2 The most extensive studies of the relevant biblical texts and cognate evidence are Gruber 1986 and Westenholz 1989. See also the discussions in Bird 1997; Keefe 2011: 53-57.

3 See, e.g., Davies 1992: 126-127; Macintosh 1997: 157-158; Day 2004: 12-13; Stager 2008: 567; Miller 2009: 506; Dearman 2010: 166; Claassens 2012: 670 n. 40; Kim 2012: 556.

My people ask council from their rod, and their shaft instructs them,[4]
For a spirit of horniness leads them astray, and they cheat on their god.
On the tops of the mountains they sacrifice, and on the hills they offer incense, under oak and poplar and terebinth, for their shade is good!
This is why your daughters screw around;[5] *and your brides act like sluts.*
But I will not call your daughters to account for screwing; nor your brides for acting like sluts,[6]
For it is the men who go off[7] *with sluts; and with the* qdešot *they sacrifice.*

This litany of condemnation ends with the accusation, left untranslated for the present, that the men sacrifice with קדשות. The modern reader, however, is left perplexed by this climax: who are the קדשות and how do they relate to the previous material, both conceptually and rhetorically?

Part of the difficulty lies in a lack of clarity within the broader condemnation. Although the prophet is clear regarding the metaphorical implications of the cultic actions, he never explains why the actions are problematic in and of themselves. Why are particular divination methods compared to adultery? What in particular is wrong about sacrificing in the high places? How do these cultic infractions relate to the metaphor of Israel as wayward woman?

Throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries, scholars have turned to the interpretation of the word קדשות as a way of answering these questions. These

4 See Ginsberg 1967: 74 on the double entendre of the words עץ and מקל as well as the discussion in the final section of this paper.

5 I have deliberately chosen to use colloquial English in rendering Hebrew terms here. I do so because I find that more archaic English terms (such as "harlot") often obscure the obscenity of the Hebrew text and, in many cases, renders sexual violence against women more palatable.

6 This sentence is frequently taken as a rhetorical question, and Andersen and Freedman (1980: 343) go so far as to reframe the entire sentence in the positive ("I will punish your daughters"). The interpretive choice, however, seems mainly to stem from interpreters' discomfort with the idea that the women are to escape punishment for their licentious behavior. Andersen and Freedman, for example, remark, "It is inconceivable that the women could be exculpated, even if the men were primarily responsible" (1980: 369). The statement is not morphologically marked as an interrogative, however, and the singling out of the men in verse 14a leads one to expect a contrast between the women (who will not be punished) and the men (who by implication will).

7 Because this is the only instance of the root פר״ד in the D-stem, some have repointed the verb to the N-stem (so, e.g. Mays 1969: 72n. b). The root does, however, occur in the D-passive in Esther 3:8, so there is no reason to doubt that it may occur in the D.

scholars argue that the קדשות mentioned here, as well as in Deuteronomy 23:18 and in Genesis 38:21, 23, are a type of cult prostitute who participated in fertility rituals through the use of sympathetic magic.[8] At the turn of the century, Frazer summed up the entire passage in a single sentence: "In Israel […] we know from Hosea that young married women prostituted themselves at the sanctuaries on the hilltops under the shadow of the sacred oaks, poplars, and terebinths" (1914: 58). Over fifty years later, Wolff expressed a nearly identical view, integrating all three verses into a single orgiastic scene: in verse 12, he argues, the "wood" and "staff" refer to "Canaanite cultic objects" (1974: 84) which would have been present at the cultic sites on tops of the hills in verse 13. Here the Israelites sacrificed under "sacred trees" and, in the shade of these selfsame trees, enjoyed "sacrificial meals" and "sex rites" (*Ibid.* 86). This analysis allows scholars such as Frazer and Wolff to transform a juxtaposition of themes into a full-fledged sequence of ritual actions undertaken for a specific purpose. As a result, they are able to interpret the passage as a unified whole and also to pinpoint the reason for the deity's condemnation: an orgiastic sex-cult in the name of fertility.

2 The Problem of Diachronic Semantic Development and Polysemy

Lexicographic studies of the word קדשה have tended to provide conceptual definitions of the word that are assumed to obtain over a long diachronic span. Gruber (1989: 133-135), for example, argues that the קדשה is used in biblical and post-biblical Hebrew to denote "prostitute" and never "cultic functionary." Both Westenholz (1989: 246-249) and Bird (1989: 87), by contrast, maintain that קדשה, like the masculine noun קָדֵשׁ and the Akkadian *qadištu*, refers exclusively to cultic functionaries, with no sexual connotations. In support of their conclusions, each side postulates a different "base root meaning" for קד״ש and then posits a straightforward development from proto-Semitic etymology to the semantics קדשה in First Temple period Hebrew.[9]

A potential problem with these approaches is that they privilege coherence and simplicity of definition over the usage of the word in biblical Hebrew and/

8 See the works cited in n. 1.

9 Following a line of interpretation discussed in more detail below, Gruber (1986: 171) postulates that the "base root meaning" of קד״ש is "to be separated." Westenholz (1989: 248) and Bird (1997: 58 n. 49), by contrast, maintain that the root designates holiness. Both then postulate a straightforward development based on the noun-type *qatil+at* and define קדשה as either "one who is set apart" (so Gruber) or "one who is consecrated" (so Westenholz and Bird).

or cognate languages. Thus, although both "priestess-but-not-prostitute" and "prostitute-but-not-priestess" are internally consistent and defensible on the basis of (a selection of) evidence from Ugaritic, Akkadian, or post-biblical Hebrew, neither understanding of קדשה corresponds with the usage of the word in all of its attestations in the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 38:21; Deuteronomy 23:18; Hosea 4:14). Gruber's interpretation of the קדשה as (only) a prostitute creates interpretive difficulties when applied to Deuteronomy 23:18, in which the קדשה is mentioned alongside the קדש, a cultic functionary.[10] The alternate explanation, that the קדשה is (only) a priestess, provides a smoother reading of Deuteronomy 23 but runs into difficulty in Genesis 38:21, in which Tamar is called both a זונה and a קדשה, despite the fact that she is not a priestess.

This analysis will employ a usage-based approach to diachronic lexical semantics drawn from the framework of cognitive linguistics.[11] This differs from the more intuitive approach often employed in ancient Semitic lexicography, in which a word is described in terms of its etymology, morphology, and an all-encompassing conceptual definition ("priestess-but-not-prostitute," e.g.). By contrast, the field of cognitive linguistics approaches language as a system of categorization, in which the meaning of a word cannot be determined independently from its usage by speakers in a given historical or cultural context.[12]

10 Discussed in more detail below.

11 For a discussion of the application of a cognitive linguistic framework to the problem of historical semantics, see Geeraerts 1997: 8-29 and 2010: 229-232; Curzan 2003: 133-138; Grondelaers, Speelman, and Geeraerts 2007: 989-992; Eckardt 2008: 123-133.

12 More specifically, cognitive linguistics departs from structuralist understandings of language as an autonomous system in which lexical items can be completely described based on their relationship to other lexemes. Instead, cognitive linguistic approaches conceptualize language as a system of organization and categorization, without positing a structural level of linguistic meaning that is separate from usage (Geeraerts 1997: 8). Thus whereas a structuralist or more classical philological approach might understand a lexeme in terms of an abstract definition (intensionally), cognitive linguistics describes a word in terms of its possible referents (extensionally) (Geeraerts 1997: 10). In practice, an intensional approach would seek to define the word *fruit* by offering necessary-and-sufficient conditions for membership in the class. This has the advantage of offering a conceptual framework for understanding the word; in practice, however, it is impossible to offer a coherent and consistent definition of the lexeme that accords fully with its usage (a botanical definition, e.g., would include avocado, tomatoes, and olives). An extensional approach, preferred by cognitive linguists, would approach the problem by considering commonalities within the group of items designated by speakers as *fruit*, based on prototypical examples (for American English speakers, these include apples, oranges, and bananas). The result of this process is not a simple definition but rather a list of features that a fruit may, but does not necessarily, have. For a more complete discussion of the

Although few Semitic lexicographers would fundamentally disagree with this statement, the preference for an all-encompassing definition in the case of קדשה has obscured the specific semantic development of the word. The shift in methodology proposed here amounts to building an understanding of the word's meanings based on a survey of its usage with attention to diachronic and geographical variation, rather than beginning with a definition based on etymology or usage in cognate languages and only subsequently providing an explanation for how the word functions in each of its attestations.

3 Reevaluating the Evidence for Sacred Prostitution in the Ancient Middle East

Scholars who argue that biblical Hebrew קדשה is a cultic or religious prostitute have invoked comparative data from Akkadian and Ugaritic texts as evidence for the phenomenon.[13] In recent years, however, several scholars have produced comprehensive studies of documents from all periods of ancient Middle Eastern history and found no evidence that the cognate words, Akkadian *qadištu* and Ugaritic {qdš} *qadišu*, should be associated with cultic prostitution.[14] Indeed, in no texts (ritual, literary, or administrative) is the *qadištu* ever associated with sexual activity in a religious or cultic context. Instead, the word *qadištu* designates a female ritual specialist or priest who

intensio nal verses extensional definition of the lexeme *fruit* (as well as an introduction to cognitive linguistics more generally), see Geeraerts 1997: 13-19.

13 Most recently, see Davies 1992: 126-127; Macintosh 1997: 157-158; Day 2004: 12-13; Stager 2008: 567; Miller 2009: 506; Dearman 2010: 166; Claassens 2012: 670 n. 40; Kim 2012: 556.

14 Gruber 1986; Westenholz 1989. The Mesopotamian evidence is reviewed in brief below. The Ugaritic evidence is less illuminating: the word *qdš* appears alongside *khn* (priest) in the following administrative texts: RS 3.320:3 (=KTU 4.29); RS 8.252: 2 (= KTU 4.38, UT 81); RS 8.208: 2 (= KTU 4.36, UT 82); RS 11.716: 73 (= KTU 4.68, UT 113); RS 14.084: 7 (= KTU 4.126 although the text is broken {*kh*[/ *q*[}); RS 29.097: 5 (= KTU 7.4752); RS 92.2175:4 (= KTU 4.806); and RS 94.2192: 1' (= KTU 4.838). See the discussion in Gruber (1983: 170-171) and Westenholz (1989: 249-250), both of whom cite the texts using the UT numbers (provided above); see also del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 1998: 179-181. This juxtaposition suggests that the *qdš* is a type of priest or cultic actor, but the precise function of the *qdš* is unknown. Our only clue to the role of the *qdš* is found in RS 24.256: 21 (= KTU 1.112), in which the *qdš* sings during a ritual (see the discussion in Gruber 1983: 171; Westenholz 1989: 249; Pardee 2000: 640; *idem* 2002: 249). In none of these instances is the *qdš* associated with sexual activity.

is employed in the service of a specific deity (often Adad).[15] Over the course of nearly two millennia, the *qadištu's* specific ritual responsibilities and social position varied widely. In the Middle Assyrian period, she appears as the main officiant, alongside the *šangû*, in a ritual procession for the god Adad.[16] Her authority as ritual practitioner is also apparent in a letter from the Neo-Assyrian period that describes her actions in a rite on behalf of the royal family.[17] In addition to executing these formal cultic functions, the *qadištu* appears as a paid wet nurse in several Old Babylonian legal documents[18] and may have

15 A catalogue and discussion of texts relating to the *qadištu's* ritual functions can be found in Gruber 1986: 139-142 (for a recent discussion of the *qadištu's* cultic role in general, see Stol 2016: 608-611). The following examples are not exhaustive and merely intended to indicate the range of evidence pertaining to the *qadištu's* responsibilities. In the Old Babylonian period, the *qadištu* appears as a priestess of Adad and adoptive mother (TCL 1 146: 1-6, ed. Schwemer 2001: 318-319); a devotee of Annunitum at Mari in ARM 10, 59; and a temple official of Ishtar at Sippar (MHET I [= van Lerberghe and Voet 1991] 74:10-14). In the Middle Assyrian period, the *qadištu* accompanies the *šangû* in reciting incantations and consuming sacrificial offerings in a ritual procession before Adad (KAR 154; ed. Menzel 1981 [vol. 2]: T2-T3; discussion and partial transliteration and translation in Gruber 1986: 139). Finally, the *qadištu* appears as a ritual officiant in two texts from the Neo Assyrian Period (Ebeling 1953: 43, lines 4-5 and SAA 10 246 [= ABL 1126] 13'; see the discussion below in n. 17).

16 KAR 154 (ed. Menzel 1981, vol. 2: T2-T3). See also the translation and discussion of the ritual in Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 382-384.

17 SAA 10 246 (= ABL 1126) 13' (Assyrian dialectal from *qadissu*). Others have noticed that the *qadištu* performs a ritual action on garments set out before Šamaš (so, e.g., Gruber 1986: 141 n. 31; Westenholz 1989: 254). The letter in question is missing the first several lines, but Parpola (2007: 180-182) has identified the sender as Marduk-šākin-šumi on the basis of the letter's salutation and content, which appears to pertain to the same purificatory rituals mentioned in SAA 10 245 (= LAS 186). In SAA 10 246, Marduk-šākin-šumi, the chief exorcist under Esarhaddon, reassures the king that a woman, identified as a *qadištu* in line 13', will perform a ritual in the presence of Marduk-šākin-šumi himself. As part of the ritual, the *qadištu* will pronounce the names of the king, crown prince, and his brothers (r. 3-6), and, in addition, place a purifying substance on the in garment question (*ina muḫḫi paširāti lū takrur*; the purificatory material *paširtu* appears also in the Lipšur *Litanies* (K4415+ 110 [ed. Reiner 1956: 138]); see also the discussion in Parpola [2007: 183], who expresses surprise at the presence of what he believes to be a cultic prostitute at such an important exorcistic ritual).

The *qadištu* is also attested in the Neo Assyrian period in a poorly preserved ritual text directed against a lightly sworn oath (VAT 10568a r. left. col. 5 [ed. Ebeling 1953: 41-46]). Ebeling suggests that the text may belong among the rituals for the New Year; if he is correct, this would constitute further evidence for the authority of the *qadištu* as cultic official.

18 See, e.g., VAS 7 10 (= Ungnad 1909; ed. Schorr 1913: text 78); VAS 7 37 (= Ungnad 1909; ed. Schorr 1913: text 241). In addition to Gruber's discussion (1986: 142-143), see Stol 2016:

performed rituals for women in labor.[19] These diverse responsibilities imparted a unique social status to the *qadištu*. Like other female priests (such as the *nadītu* and *kulmašītu*), the *qadištu* maintained economic independence and property rights of her own.[20]

186-188. The demon Lamaštu is addressed as as a *qadištu* in Lam II 160 (ed. Farber 2014: 180-181), which may be explained by the association of the *qadištu* with nursing and Lamaštu's penchant for offering babies her own poisonous milk (so Farber 2014: 247).

19 The evidence for the *qadištu's* role as midwife is not nearly as compelling as that for her function as wet nurse. Two texts refer to the *qadištu* in conjunction with the *šabsūtu* (midwife). The first, KAR 321, is a school text that contains an excerpt from an otherwise unattested hymn of praise to the citizens of Babylon (lines 2-11; unedited, but see translation in Foster 2005: 878). Westenholz takes line 7 as evidence for the *qadištu's* association with childbirth (1989: 253): $^{na\text{-}da\text{-}te}$LUKUR *šá ina né-me-qi ú-bal-la-ṭa re-e-mu*: ^{munus}NU.GIG *šá* ina A.MEŠ *te-lil-te i*?-[*šak*]-*ka-nu* "The nadītu's who heal the womb with skill; the *qadištu's* who perform purifications with water." The broader context of this line is a list of female occupations (including the *entu*, *nadītu*, and *qadištu*) and their contributions to the running of Babylon. In fact, the description of the *qadištu's* work continues on line 8: *an-zil-lu šu-ṣu-ru ú-kal-la ik-ki-bu* "Who guard against transgression and observe what is sacred." As a result, it seems most likely that the *qadištu* is praised for performing cultic actions in general, rather than for a specific role in the context of midwifery.

In addition to the text above, the following line from a fragmentary section of Old Babylonian Atrahasis (I 290; ed. Lambert and Millard 1969: 62-63) has been taken as evidence for the association of the *qadištu* with midwifing: *ša*[*b*]*sūtum ina bīt qadišti liḫdu* "let the midwife rejoice in the house of the *qadištu*". Westenholz (1989: 252) combines this line with I 291 and renders the following: *ša*[*b*]*sūtum ina bīt qadišti liḫdu ali alittum ulladu*, which she translates, "let the midwife rejoice in the house of *qadištu*-woman where the pregnant wife gives birth." Because, however, the conjunction *ali* is usually indefinite (see CAD *a*1: 339b; otherwise only attested in OA), I am hesitant to adopt this syntactic analysis. Instead, I understand *ali ālittum ulladu* as beginning a new syntactic unit ("Wherever the pregnant woman gives birth […] let the brick be in place for nine days so that Nintu, the birth goddess, may be honored"; similarly Lambert and Millard 1969: 63). Thus although the passage locates a midwife in the *qadištu's* house, the role of the *qadištu* herself is unclear; it is possible that the *qadištu* herself is the object of the midwife's ministrations. Consequently, it seems premature to conclude that the *qadištu's* house is a regular place of birth on the basis of this single passage.

20 LH § 141 specifies that a *qadištu* who has not received a dowry has a right to inherit property alongside her brothers. The right of inheritance is spelled out explicitly in TCL 1 146: 6-8 (ed. Schwemer 2001: 318-319): *ina bītim ša ibaššû kīma 1 aḫḫīša ileqqe* "She will take from the estate whatever there is, like one of her brothers". In another OB legal text (CT 48 2), two judges decide in favor of Mārat-erṣetim, a *qadištu* who had received a slave from her father. When the slave gave birth to a daughter, the *qadištu's* male relatives attempted, without success, to gain possession of the slave child (see the discussion in Seri 2011: 53).

As Gruber and Westenholz point out, the cuneiform materials provide specific information about the variety of social and professional roles a *qadištu* might have occupied throughout Mesopotamian history: cultic prostitute is not among them. Gruber concludes, "The Akkadian *qadištu* [...] was a wet-nurse, a midwife, a functionary (primarily a cultic singer in the cult of Adad, occasionally an archivist, and in late times even a sorceress, but by no means a prostitute, cultic or otherwise" (1986: 146). The two scholars differ, however, in how they apply these findings to the understanding of the biblical קדשה. On the basis of the frequent collocation of זונה and קדשה in the Bible,[21] Gruber argues that the קדשה was simply a prostitute with no religious or cultic function (1986: 134-135, 146). Westenholz, by contrast, maintains that the קדשה, like her Mesopotamian counterpart, was a priestess who did not engage in prostitution (1989: 248).

Westenholz has argued that the social and economic independence of the *qadištus* may have caused them to be identified as witches and sorceresses in the first millennium: "Because [*qadištus*] were under their own control, they were considered to be the mediums of evil power, a dangerous, uncontrolled female power" (1989: 253). The evidence for such a classification of *qadištu* women, however, has been overstated. Westenholz (*ibid.*: 253 n. 34), for example, cites the mention of the *qadištu* in *Šurpu* (III 116-117, VIII 69; ed. Reiner 1956) as evidence for the association of the *qadištu* with witches. These incantations, however, are intended to counteract any damaging "oath" (*māmītu*) that has been directed against the patient and is not restricted to instances of sorcery. In fact, the mention of the *qadištu* in VIII 69 is immediately followed by a statement intended to counteract the "oath" of the god, king, or other man in a position of authority.

The other evidence for the association of the *qadištu* with (evil) sorcery are found in *Maqlû*, the first millennium composition against witchcraft in all its forms. In two of the instances that Gruber (1986: 146 n. 61) and Westenholz (1989: 253 n. 34) cite, the accoutrements of the *qadištu* and *entu* seem to be used to counteract witchcraft, not to instigate it (V 51-60; VI 26-31 = 37-42; ed. Abusch 2015). This leaves us with a single, unequivocal case in which the *qadištu* is mentioned (alongside the *nadītu, ištarītu and kulmašītu*) as instigators of witchcraft. This instance seems best explained as an example of female ritual specialists using their powers for nefarious purposes. Thus, I would distinguish between the *qadištu* becoming a medium of "dangerous, uncontrolled female power" (Westenholz 1989: 253) and the *qadištu* choosing to use her (legitimately obtained) powers against another individual (for the conceptualization of "black" magic as nonconsensual spell-casting, see Farber 1995: 1898; on the prominence of witches [as opposed to male sorcerers] in *Maqlû*, see Abusch 2002: 7; Sefati and Klein 2002: 580-586).

21 Hosea 4:14 and Genesis 38:21-22 make clear that there is a relationship of some sort between the categories of זונה and קדשה. I am less certain that a clear relationship between the two words can be adduced in Deuteronomy 23:19 (discussed in more detail below).

Although both Gruber's and Westenholz's studies are widely cited, scholars have continued to refer to the קדשה as a cultic prostitute or fertility symbol.[22] For example, in his 1997 commentary on Hosea, Macintosh summarizes Gruber's work, acknowledging, "[Gruber] reviews carefully the evidence of the Accadian and Canaanite cognate terms and concludes that there is no evidence to substantiate for them the meaning or function 'cultic prostitute(s)' in the literature of the people concerned" (1997: 157-158). Nonetheless, Macintosh concludes, "We are relatively safe in accepting that there were sacred prostitutes [...] associated with Babylonian temples in the early second millennium BC. Deuteronomy 23:18ff seems to imply similar activities in ancient Israel."[23] As a result, although eschewing the formal identification of the קדשות with cultic prostitutes, Macintosh asserts, "The prophet uses the term הקדשות to denote women of loose morals who were closely associated with the syncretistic cult" (*Ibid.*: 158).

Other recent works have likewise attempted to substantiate the claim of cultic prostitution in Mesopotamia and to link biblical Hebrew קדשה to these ostensible practices.[24] Both Day (2004: 16) and Silver (2006: 657-658) argue that the Akkadian *ḫarimtu* (most often understood as a prostitute)[25] provided

22 In addition to scholars engaged directly below, see Davies 1992: 126-127; Day 2004; Stager 2008: 567; and Dearman 2010: 166. Dearman's treatment of the subject is particularly problematic. He asserts that the קדשה "may indicate a temple prostitute or a woman dedicated to the service of a deity" (*Ibid.* 364) and claims that Mesopotamian parallels support this assertion (n. 30). However, the only reference that Dearman provides is, in fact, a citation of Westenholz's 1989 study. Of course, Westenholz does argue that the *qadištu* was dedicated to a deity, but Dearman's citation represents her work as supporting his other claim, too—namely, that the קדשה could be a "temple prostitute." This is, of course, the very opposite of Westenholz's conclusion.

23 *Ibid.*: 157-158. Macintosh does not provide a citation for this claim. Similarly, in his treatment of the קדש in Deuteronomy 23:19, Nissinen notes the arguments against the interpretation of the Akkadian *qadištu* or Ugaritic *qdš* as a cultic prostitute (1998: 40, 153 n. 19). Nonetheless, he tentatively suggests that the קדשים of the Hebrew Bible may have been "men who had assumed an unusual gender role and thereby expressed their lifelong dedication to a deity. In practice, this could have meant transvestism or castration, possibly also homosexual or heterosexual sexual acts" (*Ibid.* 41).

24 For studies attempting to defend the existence of sacred prostitution in the ancient Middle East, see Wilhelm 1990: 512-516; Silver 2006: 657-658; and, most recently, Stol 2016: 422-426. Day (2004: 15-16), has attempted to link the ostensible Mesopotamian practice to the role of the קדשה in the Hebrew Bible.

25 Because the word *ḫarimtu* can designate a woman who engages in sex with male clients, scholars have tended to assume that word "prostitute" fully describes the social role of the *ḫarimtu* (so, e.g. *CAD* s. v. *ḫarīmtu*). Westenholz implicitly challenges this consensus when

regular earnings for the temple of Ištar and can hence be considered cultic prostitutes. As evidence, Day (2004: 15) and Silver (2006: 640) cite the following curse from a Tell Halaf palace inscription (AfO Beiheft 1 73 No. 8: 7 [ed. Meissner 1933]): 7 DUMU-*šú* IGI 10 *li$_8$-ši-ru-pu*[26] 7 DUMU.MUNUS-*te-šú ana* ^{d}Ištar *ḫa-ri-ma-tú lu-ra-me* "May he burn his seven sons before Adad and may he leave his seven daughters as prostitutes before Ištar". Day and Silver understand the curse to indicate that prostitution at official cultic sites was a regular occurrence.[27] Such curses do not, however, provide the best evidence for cultic

she argues that the groups of women that modern scholars designate as prostitute are, in fact, women whose sexuality is unregulated (1989: 251). Assante, who rejects the applicability of the word "prostitute" to any group in Mesopotamian society, has argued more recently that the *ḫarimtus* constitute a legal class of single woman who operate outside of the confines of the patrimonial estate (1998: 10).

The problem of understanding the semantics of *ḫarimtu* can be contextualized in terms of the broader phenomenon of semantic pejoration of words and professions describing women. This phenomenon is well documented in English, in which the female member of word pairs such as as *master/mistress* and *courtier/courtesan* takes on a sexual connotation that is not present in the male etymological counterpart (see Curzan 2003: 152-170; Borkowska and Kleparski 2007: 37-45; Kochman-Haładyj 2007: 206-221). In addition to the likelihood that the word *ḫarīmtu* itself underwent a process of semantic change and pejoration over the course of over 2,000 years, English-speaking researchers confront a second problem. That is, the same cognitive process that causes words for female occupations to take on sexual overtones likely also influences our reading of female professions in the ancient world (for a discussion of semantic pejoration in the field of linguistics more generally, see Curzan 2003: 138; Kochman-Haładyj 2007: 222-224). In particular, the fact that the *ḫarīmtu* engages in sex-for-pay in certain contexts is not sufficient evidence from which to conclude that "prostitute" is the only possible referent of *ḫarimtu.* Such an argument would be equivalent to noting that the English word *mistress* is used in 20th-century English to denote the secondary sexual partner of a married man and, as a result, to insist that all occurrences of the word *mistress* over the past 600 years have a sexual connotation.

26 On the nonstandard orthography, see Meissner 1933: 74.

27 Day (2004: 15) additionally sites the penalty in the legal document ND 496: 31-32 (copy Wiseman and Kinnier Wilson 1951, pl. XVI-XVII): 7 ^{lú}SUHUR.LAL.MEŠ 7 ^{munus}SUHUR.LAL.MEŠ *a-na* ^{d}*iš-tar a-ši-bat* ^{uru}*arba-il i-da-an* "He shall give seven male and 7 female *kezru-type officials* to Ištar of Arbela". Day's analysis provides an example of the perils of interacting with cuneiform materials through translation alone. He discusses the dedication of "prostitutes" to Ištar (2004: 15) without citing the cuneiform (^{munus}SUHUR.LAL.MEŠ [Akk. *kezrētu*]), on the basis of the summary of the tablet in Wiseman and Kinnier Wilson (1951: 117). The precise role of the *kezertu*-functionary is, however, a matter of considerable debate. Translations of *kezertu* as "prostitute" are predicated on the assumption of a link between the *kezertu* and the office of *ḫarīmūtu*, both of which appear in archival

norms, given that they are intended to describe abhorrent situations rather than the norm: tellingly, neither Day nor Silver argue that the cult of Tell Halaf included regular child sacrifice to Adad. Equally important, none of the cuneiform texts that Day and Silver cite as evidence for the formal association of the *ḫarimtu* with the cult of Ištar mention the *qadištu*. Thus, even were one to accept a formal connection between prostitution and the cult of Ištar in specific time periods or locations,[28] it certainly does not follow that other female cultic personnel, such as the *qadištu* and קדשה, were prostitutes.

4 The קדשה in the Hebrew Bible

Among those who have adopted the perspectives of Westenholz and Gruber it has become common to intimate, or even directly state, that the association of the *qadištu* with cultic prostitution has continued to dog scholarship in large

records from the Old Babylonian period (see Gallery 1980: 337-338; Yoffee 1998: 330). In fact, the *kezertus* are never associated with the *ḫarīmūtu*-office, nor is the actual role of those occupying the position of *ḫarīmūtu* well understood (see n. 28 below and the discussion in Assante 1998 262; Yoffee [1998: 330-331] similarly notes the absence of a direct link between the *kezertu* and the office of *ḫarīmūtu*, but nonetheless supposes that the rites practiced by each group included some type of sexual performance). In fact, the only evidence for the association of the *kezertu* with prostitution is the collocation of the terms *kezertu* and *ḫarimtu* in literary texts that make reference to female professions associated with Ištar (so, e.g., Gilgamesh VI: 165; Erra Epic IV 52-58). As a result, although it is possible that the *kezertus* may have performed sexual acts of some sort in a cultic context, we lack direct evidence for such a practice. When he adduces the presence of *kezertus* in ND 496: 31-32 as evidence for cultic prostitution, Day begs the question by providing a translation that already assumes the point Day seeks to make.

28 Old Babylonian legal texts from Sippar attest to the cultic office of *ḫarīmūtu*, which several scholars have taken as evidence for the formal association of the *ḫarimtu* (understood as a prostitute) with the cult of Ištar (so Gallery 1980: 337-338; Wilhelm 1990: 516). There are two potential difficulties here: first, although both nouns are formed from the same base, it does not necessarily follow that the *ḫarīmūtu*-office is held only by *ḫarimtus*. In fact, van Lerberghe and Voet (1991: 66-67) have pointed out that the majority of individuals who occupy the office in texts from the Ur-Utu archive are men and that sexual activity is never mentioned among the duties of the *ḫarīmūtu* office. Consequently, as Van Lerberghe (1982: 280-283) and Assante argue (1998: 262), it is entirely possible that the cultic office of *ḫarīmūtu* is not to be directly associated with the practice of prostitution (also termed *ḫarīmūtu*). Here, one might compare the use of the word *secretary* in English to denote both the position of administrative assistant, traditionally held by woman, as well as positions of considerable authority in the government (e.g., *Secretary of State*).

part due to the outdated sexist attitudes of scholars. Gruber himself astutely commented: "Tragically, scholarship suffered from scholars being unable to imagine any cultic role for women in antiquity that did not involve sexual intercourse" (1986: 138). In her monograph on the women's body in Hosea, Alice Keefe suggested that "[the 'fertility cult thesis'] has prevailed due to a compelling coincidence between a theological concern to promote the superiority of ancient Israelite religion and a set of androcentric associations of woman with temptation, sex, sin and nature" (2011: 50).

It is true that the field of biblical studies has been dominated by male voices and that this has certainly influenced how women's roles in religion and cult were evaluated. I maintain, however, that the failure of scholars to fully absorb Gruber's and Westenholz's insights is due at least in part to the multivalence of the word קדשה itself. As noted, although both Gruber and Westenholz provide a detailed overview of the varied denotations of *qadištu* in Akkadian, they arrive at conflicting conclusions concerning the meaning of Hebrew קדשה. Neither the interpretation of the קדשה as a "priestess-not-prostitute" (so Westenholz) nor as a "prostitute-not-priestess" (so Gruber) adequately represents the semantic range of Hebrew word in biblical and post-biblical Hebrew.

4.1 *The* קדשה *in Deuteronomy 23:18*

The argument that the word קדשה can designate a type of female cultic functionary finds support in Deuteronomy 23:18, in which the קְדֵשָׁה appears in parallel to the male קָדֵשׁ. The קָדֵשׁ appears as a cultic functionary elsewhere in the Bible (1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:47; 2 Kings 23:4) and is never associated with sexual activity. The profession is also attested in Ugaritic ritual and legal texts, in which the *qadišu*-functionaries frequently appear alongside the *kāhinu*-priests.[29] Given this evidence for the cultic role of the *qadišu*, as well as the broad attestation *qadištu* in cuneiform texts from Mesopotamia and the Levant,[30] the simplest interpretation of Deuteronomy 23: 18 is that the קדשה and the קדש are types of cultic functionaries (so, e.g., Frymer-Kensky 1992: 201).

29 For relevant Ugaritic texts, see n. 14 above. The biblical texts that mention the קדש universally condemn them but provide little evidence for their actual cultic duties. At Ugarit, the *qadišu* could be married and might occupy a high social status; in addition, their cultic duties may have involved singing. For further discussion, see Gruber 1983: 167-172; Frymer-Kensky 1992: 201.

30 The *qadištu* appears in from the following locations in the Levant: Ekalte = Tell Munbaqa (e.g., Ekalte II [= Mayer 2001] nos. 61 and 76, discussed in Marti 2006: 55); Mari (ARM 10 59 [= Dossin 1967]); and Emar (e.g., EMAR 6/3 [=Arnaud 1986] no. 124, cf. Durand 1990: 56). See also the discussion in Stol 2016: 613.

By contrast, Gruber's understanding of the קדשה as a prostitute (but never a priestess) prompts a strained reading of the passage.[31] Gruber argues that Deuteronomy 23:18 constitutes a ban on two different types of individuals: female adulterer (קְדֵשָׁה) and the male cultic functionary (קָדֵשׁ). He attempts to adduce a parallel to this juxtaposition of adultery and priesthood in the subsequent verse, where Israelites are forbidden from offering the wages of an adulterer (אֶתְנַן זוֹנָה) or the price of a dog (מְחִיר כֶּלֶב) in fulfillment of a vow. Here, Gruber equates the כלב (dog) of Deuteronomy 23:19 with the *klbm* and *grm* mentioned in a Cypriote temple tariff (KAI 37 B10) and identifies each as a type of temple servant.[32] The role (indeed, even the species) of the *klbm* and *grm* in the temple tariff is, however, far from certain.[33] In addition, given the lack of

31 Westenholz (1989: 248) Nissinen (1998: 153 n. 15) and Burns (2000: 4) have all taken issue with Gruber's understanding of קדשה as a prostitute (with no cultic affiliation) on the basis of Deuteronomy 23:18. None of these scholars, however, interact with Gruber's 1983 paper, in which he presents a detailed analysis of this passage (1983: 173-176). As a result, I have chosen to outline his reasoning in detail and provide a response above.

32 Interestingly, the identification of the *klbm* in KAI 37 = CIS I.86 as a temple servant was initially made on the basis of the verse in Deuteronomy 23:19, where both כלב and קדש were considered to be male temple prostitutes (*scorta virilia* in CIS I: *sub* 86). This suggestion was highly influential in secondary literature through the 1980's (see, e.g., to Smith 1889: 274 n. 2; Thomas 1960: 425; Astour 1966: 186; Masson and Sznycer 1972: 65-66; Gibson 1982: 130; and, more recently, Burns 2000: 6-7 and Simon-Shoshan 2011: 178).

33 Given the lack of evidence for the existence of sacred prostitution in the ancient Middle East, the standard translation of 'temple prostitute' is no longer feasible (for proponents of this translation, see n. 32 above). There are several other hypotheses for the function of the *klbm* and *grm* in KAI 37 B10:

(1) The word *klb*, in both the temple tariff and Deuteronomy 23:19, refers to a dedicated servant of a god (so, e.g., Thomas 1960: 425-426; Delcor 1979: 161). This argument is based on the common epistolary formula in which a social inferior compares himself to a dog (see, e.g., Lachish 2, 3, 5, ed. Pardee 1982; a discussion of the formula can be found in Coats 1970 and, more recently, Hutton 2003). The interpretation is not ideal (to my mind) in the case of Deuteronomy 23:19 because it is not clear why the hypothetical cultic position of *klb* should be permitted, but the price or wages (מחיר) garnered therefrom be considered an abomination to the deity (תועבת יהוה); in verse 18, by contrast, the cultic position of קדש is simply forbidden.

(2) The *klbm* in KAI 37 are temple servants dressed in dog masks (van den Branden 1966: 257-258; Peckham 1968: 317; Healy 1974: 56). Peckham in particular makes reference to the existence of Hittite temple servants who bear the title dog-men ($^{lú.meš}$UR.GI$_7$, on which see Jakob-Rost 1966: 417-422).

(3) The *klb* in Deuteronomy 23:19 and/or KAI 37 is actually a canine (this is the traditional rabbinic interpretation of Deut 23:19; for a modern study in support of the

broader attestation, it is unclear whether the semantics of *klb* in KAI 37 can be applied to Deuteronomy 23:19 or whether they should be understood as a development unique to Punic. Finally, returning to the biblical text, Gruber's understanding of קדשה as prostitute would render it the only prohibition of the four contained in Deuteronomy 23:18-19 that did not pertain to cultic norms and behavior.

4.2 *The* קדשה *in Genesis 38*

Although the understanding of קדשה as (only) a priestess works well in the case of Deuteronomy 23:18, it becomes problematic when applied to the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38. In this episode, Judah mistakes his daughter-in-law for a prostitute (v. 15: וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לְזוֹנָה) and offers her his signet in pledge. When the patriarch attempts to make good on the pledge, he sends his servant out to find the קדשה whom he had met on the on the road by Enaim (v. 21). Because there is no reference to cult or sacrifice in this passage, it is difficult to see here a reference to a ritual functionary. Westenholz nonetheless maintains that the קדשה must be understood as a priestess: "[T]he Hebrews saw all forms of religion except their own as depraved and full of debauchery. To the Hebrew author, the pagan priestess must be a harlot, and vice versa, the harlot must have been a pagan priestess" (1989: 248). Underlying this statement is a simplistic assumption about the basic unity of "Hebrew" religion and the motivations of biblical authors. In addition, it is problematic on a narrative level: Judah's attempt to find the prostitute (זונה) he has hired will certainly fail if he asks the townspeople to find a priestess. In addition, the understanding of the קדשה as a prostitute is consistent with interpretations of the word in the

canine-hypothesis applied to both KAI 37 B10 and Deuteronomy 23:19, see Goodfriend 1995: 396). In this case, the use of money obtained by the sale of dogs would be considered inappropriate for the payment of vows to the deity. Stager (2008: 567) also considers the *klb*(*m*) in Deuteronomy 23:18 and KAI 37 B15 to be dogs, but he argues that they were used by the temple in healing rites (the wages or price mentioned in each text would have been used to support their nourishment and care; similarly, Halévy 1883: 192-194; Cooke 1903: 67-68).

(4) Most recently, Schmitz (2013a: 74-75; 2013b: 208-209) has proposed that *klbm* in KAI 37 B10 is a loan from Akkadian *kallābu* ("light troops"; *CAD k*: 77b). He derives *grm* from the root *gry* (cf. Jewish Aramaic גירי, "arrow-maker, archer") and renders the pair "light infantry and archers."

Targum and Rabbinic works, which consistently equate the קדשה with illicit sexual activity in a non-cultic or religious context.[34]

Perhaps, then, it is not only sexist attitudes that have caused scholars to cling to the idea of cultic prostitution. The translation of "cultic prostitute" is appealing because it explains the usage of קדשה in a variety of contexts in a way that alternative translations do not. However, the fact that decades of Assyriological and Ugaritological scholarship have found no substantiation for the idea that cultic prostitution existed in the ancient Middle East, as well as the fact that none of the biblical passages explicitly refer to cultic prostitution, render the older translation untenable. How, then, can we understand the enigmatic reference to sacrificing with the קדשות in Hosea 4:14?

5 The קדשה in Early Exegesis

The idea that the קדשות is a cultic prostitute originated in the conflation of two distinct interpretations of the word (priestess and prostitute), both of which are reflected in the Septuagint. In the case of Hosea 4:14 the LXX renders הַקְּדֵשׁוֹת with τῶν τετελεσμένων ("initiates"). The verb τελέω, from which the participle is derived, never denotes sexual activity in the Septuagint.[35] In Genesis 38:21, by contrast, the same word, when applied to Tamar, is rendered πόρνη ("prostitute"). Most interesting of all, the translation of Deuteronomy 23:18 includes a double rendering[36] of both קדש and קדשה:

> Οὐκ ἔσται πόρνη ἀπὸ θυγατέρων Ισραηλ, καὶ οὐκ ἔσται πορνεύων ἀπὸ υἱῶν Ισραηλ· οὐκ ἔσται τελεσφόρος ἀπὸ θυγατέρων Ισραηλ, καὶ οὐκ ἔσται τελισκόμενος ἀπὸ υἱῶν Ισραηλ
>
> There shall be no prostitute among the daughters of Israel, and there shall be no prostitutes among the sons of Israel; there shall be no initiate among the daughters of Israel, and there shall be no initiate among the sons of Israel.

34 Targum Pseudo Jonathan (ed. Clarke 1984) renders קדשה in Deuteronomy 23:8 with נפקת ברא (similarly Geniza Fragment Ms. DD [ed. Klein 1986] and Targum Neofiti 1 414v). For a discussion of rabbinic understandings of Hosea 4:14 and the קדשה, see below.

35 τελέω is employed to render Hebrew כלה in both the G- and D-stems (e.g., 2 Samuel 22:39; Ruth 2:21); שלם (Nehemiah 6:15); and עשה (Isaiah 55:11). The verb is also used to translate צמד in the Baal-Peor episode (Numbers 25:3, 5; Psalm 105 [MT 106]: 28), indicating service to the deity.

36 On double readings in the LXX see Talmon 1960: 151.

What is particularly significant about the double rendering is that it recognizes two distinct connotations of the word without attempting to harmonize them—that is, it indicates that the translator of Deuteronomy understood the semantics of קדשה to include both "prostitute" and "initiate." In other words, the translator recognized that the Hebrew word could denote both a priestess and a prostitute, but he does not conflate the two ideas by suggesting that a single individual might serve both instantiations of the broader class.

In his commentary on the minor prophets, Jerome combines the distinct LXX renderings into a single image. He explains Hosea's condemnation as follows: "Note that in the present passage he refers to קדשות (i.e., prostitutes) [who are] ἱερείας (i.e., priestesses), devoted to Priapus (*Sciendum autem quod in praesenti cadesoth, meretrices, ἱερείας, id est sacerdotes, Priapo manicipatas uocet*)."[37] Cyril of Alexandria similarly sees a reference to the cult of Priapus (a Roman phallic god), though he believes that the priestesses themselves are the זונות and the word קדשות refers to the initiation of men into the cult.[38] Interestingly, both of the authors assert that the קדשות were men who, in the process of becoming initiates, were castrated and took on the role of female prostitutes.[39]

What Jerome has done, then, is to conflate these two distinct translations and overlay them with Roman traditions about the cult of a phallic god. In so doing, he alleviates the tension and ambiguity caused by the two potential Greek renderings of the word. The resolution, however, is culturally specific: one is inclined to think of the cult of Priapus only if one is already expecting to find a cult of eunuchs devoted to a phallic god in the biblical text.[40]

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37 For a critical edition of the Latin text, see CCL 76 (ed. Adriaen 1969: 45). The fact that Jerome glosses "*cadesoth*" with the Latin word *meretrices* contradicts Gruber's assertion that "Jerome does not in any way hint that the *qādēš* [...] was a person who engaged in cultic prostitution," (1986: 136; similarly *Ibid*. 1983: 173 n. 25).

38 Πόρνας δέ φησιν ἰδικῶς τὰς τοῦ Βεελφεγὼρ ἱερειας. Βεελφεγὼρ δέ ἐστιν, ὁ καλούμενος πρίαπος. αἱ δὲ τὸ οὕτως αἰσχρὸν τιμῶσαι βδέλυγμα, πόρνας λοιπόν ὁμολογουμένως "By 'prostitutes,' he [Hosea] intends the priestesses of Baalpeor—Baalpeor is known as Priapus. Those who honor that shameful abomination are already known to be prostitutes". Greek text ed. Pusey 1868: 111 (English translation available in Hill 2007).

39 So Jerome (ed. Adriaen 1969: 44): *Verbum cadesoth* [...] *nos effeminatos vertimus* (the word *cadeshoth* we render *effeminatos* [those who have been made into women]). Similarly Cyril (ed. Pusey 1868: 111): τετελεσμένους δὲ ὀνομάζει πάλιν τοὺς ἱερομυστας τοῦ Βεελφεγὼρ, ἄνδρες δὲ ἦσαν εἶναι μὲν οὐκ ἀνεχόμενοι τοῦθ' ὅπερ εἰσὶ, μεταφοιτῶντες δὲ μᾶλλον εἰς φρόνημα τὸ θηλυπρεπὲς "He calls 'initiates' [τετελεσμένους] all those initiated as priests of Baal-peor; men who are not content with what they are, but rather adopt a mind befitting a woman."

40 The early Protestant commentators make reference to Jerome's interpretation, but move away from it for reasons that are equally bound to their cultural context: these works

In the mid-19th century, the idea of sacred prostitution was reborn in a new guise, under the influence of orientalist fantasies about the ancient world.[41] Sayce, for example, searched the cuneiform texts for evidence of the Babylonian sex-rites described in Herodotus I.199, according to which every Babylonian woman had a sacred obligation to go to the temple of Aphrodite once in her life and have sex with a stranger.[42] Sayce argues that this practice was, in fact, the "natural result of the existence of religious prostitutes," whom he associated with the "*Kadisti*" in Akkadian texts. In so doing, Sayce explicitly

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sought to find reference to the excesses of the Catholic church in Hosea, not to highlight the over-sexualized worship of pagans.

Luther addresses the issue of Jerome's translation directly. In the Halle manuscript of his commentary on the minor prophets (WA 13: 20 n. 3, continued from previous page), Luther takes issue with Jerome's translation of קדשות with *effeminatis* and argues that Hosea here refers to men who frequent prostitutes but pretend at piety: *Effeminatos non puto exsectos ut putat Hieron. Est enim hic femininum. Cum effem. clarius: cum scortatr., quemadm. hodie manifesti sunt scortatores, qui cultum dei erigunt.* ("I do not think think that the *effeminatos* [Vulgate for קדשות] are eunuchs as Jerome thinks. In fact, [the Hebrew word] is here feminine. 'With *effeminanatos*' [Hos 4:14] is more clearly rendered 'with prostitutes,' just as today there are whoremongers who elevate the service of God.").

Similarly, Calvin (1559: 51) understands the קדשות to be whores (*scorta*) but does not explicitly locate their sexual activity in the cult: *Per* Meretrices *haud dubiè intelligit corruptelas quibus peruerfus fuerat Dei cultus, etiam per scorta*: Sacrificant cum scortis: *inquit, hoc est deficiunt à ver Doe, & permiscent se pollutionibus quibuslibet*. ("By 'prostitutes' he certainly perceives the corruption through which the worship of God had been perverted, and likewise by 'whores'. 'They sacrifice with whores': [the prophet] says that they separate themselves from the true God and mingle with all sorts of unclean women.").

Downame is most explicit in maintaining a separation between the physical and spiritual licentiousness described in Hosea 4:14: "By this phrase then is signified both their spirituall and corporall whoredome; their spirituall whoredome vvhich is here principally vnerstood by way of Allegorie consisted herein, that they separated and diuided themselues from the Lord their true husband, by breaking the bond of marriage, forsaking his true religion, and prostituting themselues to commit spirituall whoredome with their idols" (1608: 264).

To be certain, there were still enthusiastic adherents of Jerome's proposal. Gill, for example, provides a vivid description of the cult of Baal-Peor/Priapus, with the minor modification that the cultic prostitutes are assumed to be women rather than eunuchs (1757: 359).

41 For an overview of 18th- and early 19th-century interest in Babylonian religion in general and, more specifically, discussion on the accuracy of Herodotus I.199, see Wilhelm 1990: 505-511.

42 ὁ δὲ δὴ αἴσχιστος τῶν νόμων ἐστὶ τοῖσι Βαβυλωνίοισι ὅδε: δεῖ πᾶσαν γυναῖκα ἐπιχωρίην ἱζομένην ἐς ἱρὸν Ἀφροδίτης ἅπαξ ἐν τῇ ζόῃ μιχθῆναι ἀνδρὶ ξείνῳ.

identifies the practice of sacred prostitution as described in Herodotus I.199 with the biblical קדשות (1883: 115 n. 2).[43] Thus the theory of cultic prostitution in ancient Israel and Judah was reborn under a new guise. Like Jerome, 20th-century scholars imported a reconstructed cultic practice into Hosea 4:14 in order to explain the paradox of the קדשה. In each case, scholars attempted to solve the semantic problem by making recourse to the contemporary image of pagan licentiousness without offering textual support for their solution.

The reinterpretation of קדשה over the past centuries lends credence to Gruber and Westenholz's assertion that the association between the קדשה and cultic prostitution is a scholarly construction. At the same time, however, the long and varied history of interpretation also underscores difficulty of accepting either one of their interpretations of קדשה as only priestess or prostitute. The understanding of the קדשה as a cultic prostitute has appealed to interpreters from Jerome to Sayce because it explains how the word might have a semantic range that encompasses both cultic officials and prostitutes.

6 The Semantics of קדשה in the Hebrew: On Women Who Work and Working Women

Given the lack of evidence for the association of the קדשה or *qadištu* with the ostensible practice of cultic prostitution, the semantics of קדשה must be revisited in a way that explains the usage of the word without resorting to phantom practices and institutions. In considering its Akkadian cognate *qadištu*, Gruber and Westenholz both recognize that the word may designate a broad range of social functions in Mesopotamia. By contrast, each scholar attempts to define the lexeme by a binary opposition (prostitute but not priestess, or *vice versa*). In addition, although Gruber is careful not to simply import the Mesopotamian conception(s) of *qadištu* into biblical Hebrew, Westenholz takes the most general meaning of *qadištu* (cultic functionary) applies it to the Hebrew cognate.[44] In fact, the use of the word קדשה in biblical Hebrew and the subsequent history of interpretation suggests that the Hebrew had a broad range of referents that included both ritual functionaries and, in a non cultic

43 On Sayce's theory of the *qadištu*, see the discussions in Wilhelm 1990: 511 and Bird 1997: 38 n. 4. See also Assante (1998: 8 n. 8), who credits Frazer with popularizing the idea.

44 In her discussion of קדשה and קדש, Westenholz simply defines the term as "sacred, holy, consecrated one" (1989: 248). The definition does not account for the possibility that the etymology of a word does not necessarily correspond to its semantics.

context, single or unaccompanied women.[45] Interpreted in this light, the question posed in Genesis 38:21 makes perfect sense. Judah's friend asks where he can find the single woman (אַיֵּה הַקְּדֵשָׁה) who was out on the street at Enaim.

It is important here to differentiate between the etymology (or "base root meaning") of קדשה and its evolving semantics. Previous studies have tended to focus exclusively on the former (so Gruber 1986: 148; Westenholz 1989: ; Bird 1997: 38 n. 3). In order to explain the non-cultic referents of the קדשה Gruber, e.g., maintains that the base meaning of the term should be understood as "she who is set apart" (1986: 148). In this case, the Hebrew word would designate those set apart for prostitution, in contrast to the Akkadian *qadištus*, who were set aside for service to a deity. This interpretation relies on the theory, articulated most famously by Baudissin (1878: 20-22), that the root קד״ש primarily designates separation and only secondarily acquired the meaning of holiness. Baudissin's argument is predicated upon on the assumption that all Hebrew roots are derived from an originally biradical system through a process of supplementation.[46] Baudissin's approach has been soundly critiqued,[47] and most recent treatments of קד״ש dismiss the idea altogether because there are only a handful of cases across the Semitic languages in which the root definitively conveys a sense separation.[48]

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45 Frymer-Kensky (1992: 201) intuits this solution in her discussion of Genesis 38: "The *zonah* and the *qedeshah* clearly shared one important attribute: they were women outside the family structure, with no male to protect them."

46 Baudissin attempted to relate the root back to a biradical ק״ד, which ostensibly meant "to cut" (1878: 20-22). For a thorough presentation of the history of scholarship on the issue of biradicalism in Semitic languages, see Voigt 1988: 47-97 (see especially the discussion of what he terms "Extremer Biradikalismus" (*Ibid.*: 67-73).

47 This proposal was already thoroughly critiqued by Nöldeke (1879: 362-363), who adduced some Arabic evidence for the association of the root *qds*, with the idea of separation but ultimately hesitated to draw a firm conclusion based on the paucity of the data (similarly Smith 1895: 224 and 424 n. 9). For more recent criticism of Baudissin's theory, see Costecalde 1985: cols. 1359-1361;

48 The most commonly cited biblical passage in support of the association of holiness and separation is Leviticus 20:26, which states: וְהְיִיתֶם לִי קְדֹשִׁים כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה וָאַבְדִּל אֶתְכֶם מִן־הָעַמִּים לִהְיוֹת לִי (you will be holy to me because I, Yahweh, am holy, and I separated you from the peoples to be mine). There is also some evidence that medieval Arabic lexicographers understood the verb قدس to designate some sort of physical separation. In his 13th-century commentary on the Quran (Sur. 2:30), for example, al-Baydawi (ed. Haddad 2016: 518-519) makes recourse to an idiom قدس في الارض, which he glosses as "to travel far over [the land]" (ذهب فيها وأبعد). For a discussion of other medieval commentators and lexicographers who cite this meaning, see Haddad 2016: 519 n. 1077. Because the

The fact that קד״ש cannot be shown to designate separation in multiple Semitic languages does not, however, obviate the possibility that the semantics of the Hebrew word קדשה were generalized to include single woman of various professions.[49] In this case, the word קדשה (like its Akkadian cognate) would have referred primarily a class of female religious functionaries who operated outside of the patrimonial estate, being associated, instead, with the cult of the deity to whom they had been consecrated.[50] Over time, the Hebrew semantics shifted to include other women who occupied a social position that was not delimited within the household (and hence not controlled by husband or father). This type of semantic change is well documented in the field of linguistics more broadly, and is effected through a process known as "concept priming" (Eckardt 2008: 128), in which a word may evoke a secondary set of concepts that ultimately come to dominate its semantics. This process can be illustrated by the use of the word *princess* in modern English, which not only denotes a royal office but can also describe a young woman who is wealthy, demanding, or spoiled.[51] In this instance, the word retains its primary denotation (a royal woman), and one might consider the utterance "Stop being such a princess" to operate on a metaphorical level. In other cases, however, the secondary connotations of a word come to dominate its meaning, such that the original denotation (and even etymology) is forgotten.[52]

Like the lexeme *princess*, English words for women frequently undergo a process of semantic pejoration and even develop sexual connotations. This is particularly evident among words with a male etymological equivalent that does not undergo such pejoration, as in the word pairs *master/mistress* and *courtier/courtesan*.[53] In other instances, words that originally denoted specific positions or professions held by women come to characterize a social status more broadly. The word *spinster*, for example, derives originally from the Old English verb *spinnan* ("to spin") with the feminine suffix *-ster*, and once

meaning is attested in only a very few sources, it is entirely possible that the semantics are a development internal to Arabic.

49 Thus although although I consider Gruber's assertion that "the root meaning of the term is 'she who is set apart'" (1986: 148) to be somewhat hasty, Phyllis Bird's counter-argument, namely that the base meaning of קד״ש is "to be holy" (1997: 38 n. 3), does not prove that the word קדשה designates only female cultic servants.

50 On the dedication to a god as signifying the unattached status of the *qadištu* on earth, see Stol 2016: 610.

51 For further discussion, see Curzan 2003: 138.

52 See the examples of *hussy* and *spinster* discussed below.

53 For additional examples, see Kochman-Haładyj 2007: 214-216.

denoted the professional occupation of spinning wool.[54] In the early 17th-century, the word appears in legal contexts referring to any unmarried woman.[55] The word only subsequently developed the pejorative sense, known to speakers today, of an *old maid* (a woman too old or ugly to be marriageable).[56] A second example from English provides an even closer parallel for the semantic development posited for the word קדשה in Hebrew. The word *hussy*, glossed in Modern English by the Urban Dictionary as "a slut, ho, whore, chicken or slapper,"[57] derives from an apocopation of the final fricative in the word *housewife*.[58] The word first appears with the meaning of *householder* or *thrifty woman* in the 16th-century, and comes to designate a woman of low social status and, eventually, a prostitute.[59] Although these examples all come from the (well attested) corpus of English, they reflect a broader linguistic process by which the social connotation of a word eventually comes to dominate its semantic referents.[60] We would thus expect a similar process to be operative in ancient Semitic languages, particularly if the role of the *qadištu* or קדשה came to be associated with a lower social status.

Akkadian texts do, in fact, demonstrate a certain degree of wariness concerning the *qadištu's* social location, which is described in *Ana ittišu* as *ina*

54 See, e.g., the use of the word in a the Middle English poem *Piers Plowman* (1362, quoted in OED s. v. "spinster"): "And my wyf at Westmunstre þat wollene cloþ made, Spak to þe spinsters for to spinne hit softe."

55 See, e.g., the following definition from Mishneu's multilingual dictionary *Ductor in linguas* (1617, cited in OED s. v. "spinster"): "A spinster, a terme, or an addition in our Common Law, onely added in Obligations, Euidences, and Writings, vnto maids vnmarried."

56 For a fuller discussion of the evolution of the word, see Curzan 2003: 169-170.

57 See urbandictionary.com s. v. "hussy," retrieved 11/24/2016.

58 Underlying this contraction is most likely a regional pronunciation, in which the first vowel was reduced and the *w* was not pronounced (as in the pronunciation of modern English towns Greenwich, Southwark, and Chiswick). See the phonetic discussion in OED s. v. "housewife."

59 See the discussion in Curzan 2003: 166. The word retains the sense of *housewife* through the 18th century ("Her being so good a Hussy of what Money I had left her," OED s. v. "hussy"), even as it undergoes the process of semantic derogation. The connection between the words *housewife* and *hussy* is so far removed from modern English usage that the Urban Dictionary provides a folk etymology of *hussy* as derived from *hustler* ("prostitute").

60 For a discussion of the cognitive processes that underly semantic change, see Eckardt 2008: 123-133; Peirsman and Geeraerts 2006: 270-281; Geeraerts 2010: 229-237;

suqāti[61] ("in the streets"—i.e., not belonging to a patrimonial estate).[62] Stol has compiled a list of texts that similarly highlight the *qadištus* unattached status (2016: 613). In an Old Assyrian letter (ICK I 3 6-7 = Hrozný 1952), a man who has married a first wife in Anatolia is given permission to marry a *qadištu* back in the land of Aššur. Stol has argued that the choice of a *qadištu* as a second wife indicates the lower status of the group as a whole in this period (2016: 613). It is also possible that the *qadištu* was permitted as a second wife because she was financially independent and, consequently, would not reduce the resources devoted to the first wife. Under either interpretation, the *qadištu* is specifically signled out, not for her role as a ritual officiant, but because of her unique social standing.[63] As in the English examples cited above, it may be that the social status of the קדשה came to dominate the semantics of the Hebrew word. Through a process of generalization and pejoration, the Hebrew word shifted from designating priestesses to single women more generally, with the implication of uncontrolled sexuality.

This interpretation fits well the three attestations of קדשה in the biblical corpus. In addition, later Jewish and Christian interpretations of the root קד״ש suggest that the evolving meaning of קדשה may have been part of a broader semantic shift, in which the root קד״ש became used to designate things that were set apart.[64] At Hosea 4:14, for example, Jerome cites Theodotion's rendering of קדשה with Greek κεχωρισμένους (those who are separated), which he translates *populo separatos* (a people set apart) (CCL 76: 45). Similarly, in order to explain the Tannaitic use of the word קדושין for "betrothal," the Gemara (Kiddushin 2b) invokes the change in the social status of an engaged woman, who becomes forbidden to other men: ומאי לישנא דרבנן דאסר לה אבולי עלמא כהקדש ("What is the meaning of the rabbinic language [קדושין]?—That he makes her forbidden

61 *Ana ittišu* VII iii 7-10 (ed. MSL I = Landsberger 1937: 99-100): *arkānu qadištum ina sūqim ittaši ina râmešu qašdūssu īḫussu* ("afterwards he took the *qadištu* from the streets and married her; because of his love for her he married her in her status as *qadištu*"). On the legal terminology *ina sūqim,* see Malul 1988: 106-110; Westenholz 1989: 251.

62 Westenholz (1989: 251) notes this feature of the text but does not extend the thought to how the semantics of the Hebrew word might have changed such that Judah's friend could refer to Tamar as a קדשה in a non-cultic context.

63 The association of women with evil sorcery in the Neo Assyrian period may also have resulted in part from the suspicion of female ritual practitioners who operated outside the normal constraints of patriarchal society (so Westenholz 1989: 253).

64 This is, of course, similar to Gruber's understanding of the "base root meaning" of קד״ש. The difference here is that I understand the same evidence to demonstrate a semantic development rather than an etymological meaning (i.e., a designation that is commonly attested among multiple Semitic languages).

to the whole world, like a consecrated object"). In so doing, the rabbis emphasize the aspect of prohibition that holiness entails. Thus, rather than attributing a holy status to the betrothal process itself, the Gemara explains the use of the root קד״ש as indicative of prescription and separation.

A similar logic underlies the Targum's rendering of קדש in Deuteronomy 22:9. The Hebrew text imputes the quality of *qdš* to a field sown with mixed seed: לֹא־תִזְרַע כַּרְמְךָ כִּלְאָיִם פֶּן־תִּקְדַּשׁ הַמְלֵאָה הַזֶּרַע אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרָע וּתְבוּאַת הַכָּרֶם "You shall not sow your vineyard with mixed kinds, lest the entirety become qdš, both the seed that you planted and the produce of the vineyard". Targum Onkelos renders the Hebrew verb תקדש not with a verb designating holiness but with the Aramaic תִסְתָּאַב "lest it become contaminated". This is how Rashi understands the Targum and supplies the following reasoning:[65]

> כל דבר הנתעב על האדם, בין לשבח כגון הקדש, בין לגנאי כגון אסור, נופל בו לשון קדש
>
> Everything that is defiling to a man, either because it is elevated, such as a holy thing, or because it is repulsive, such as an prohibited thing, belongs to the language of holiness.

Rashi takes a similar approach to the interpretation of קדשה in Deuteronomy 23:18, which he understands to indicate that a woman is unattached and designated for prostitution (she is מפקרת, מקדשת ומזמנת לזנות). His choice here to gloss קדשה with "**מקדשת** ... לזנות" is significant because the verb cannot be understood to convey consecration: at no point does the idea of sacred prostitution enter into the Rabbinic discussion. Instead, Rashi's use of the D-passive participle מקדשת indicates she is dedicated to (or set aside for) adulterous relations (זנות).[66]

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65 See also the use of קדש in the Mishnaic discussion of Deuteronomy 22:9 in Kilayim VII 2; 5; and 7. In its original context, the use of קדש to describe mixed seeds may indeed have been intended to designate them as holy. Houtman has argued, for example, that the mixing of materials is forbidden because it violates the boundaries of the created world (1984: 226-228). Nelson applies this to the law in Deuteronomy 22: 9 and argues that mixing seed renders the entire crop holy and hence unfit for consumption (2002: 268-269; similarly Tigay 1996: 202, 384 n. 33). What the Targum's translation and Rashi's subsequent explanation suggest, however, is that the word קדש was eventually interpreted more generally to include objects that were set aside because they were defiling. Such a semantic development makes sense, given that holy objects in and of themselves may become defiling (so, e.g., Milgrom [1981:64-65] on Numbers 19).

66 One might also adduce here Rashi's explanation of Targum Onkelos' translation of Deuteronomy 33: 18, which renders לָא תֶהֵי אִתְּתָא מִבְּנָת יִשְׂרָאֵל לִגְבַר עָבֵד (an Israelite

The evidence reviewed above provides corroboration for understanding the semantics of קדשה in biblical Hebrew to include both female ritual practitioners and women who are otherwise occupied outside of the patrimonial estate. Such an interpretation best explains the attestation of the word in biblical Hebrew in both cultic (Deuteronomy 23:18, Hosea 4:14) and non-cultic (Genesis 38: 21) contexts. It is also consistent with the cuneiform evidence, which demonstrates that the *qadištu* belonged to a group of women who operated outside of family supervision, and with later rabbinic interpretation, which understands the root קד״ש to designate the setting apart of a woman, either for a husband (with a positive valence) or for illicit sexual activity (with a negative valence). One can thus understand the evolution of the word קדשה in Hebrew as shifting from describing a priestess to a working woman and, by the rabbinic period, a prostitute.

7 Conclusions: The קדשה and Hosea's Cultic Condemnation

If we return to the text of Hosea 4:12-14a, the structure of the surrounding verses, in which illicit sex is juxtaposed with specific cultic actions, would suggest that the word קדשה should be understood as designating cultic functionaries. This reveals a chiastic structure in verse 13-14a:

> On the tops of the mountains they sacrifice; and on the hills they offer incense, under oak and poplar and terebinth, for their shade is good!
> *This is why your daughters screw around; and your brides act like sluts.*
> *But I will not call your daughters to account for screwing; nor your brides for acting like sluts,*
> *For it is the men who go off with sluts;*
> and with the *qdešot*-functionaries they sacrifice.

Here the cultic activities frame a description of illicit sexual acts in which both Israelite men and their daughters are implicated. Read in this way, the verses, like many others in the first chapters of Hosea, accuse the men of infidelity to Yahweh by equating their actions with marital infidelity. The sex, however, is

woman shall not marry a man who is a slave). Rashi explains that such a woman would indeed be a קדשה because אף זו מפקרת לבעילת זנות היא, מאחר שאין קדושין תופסין לו בה (“this also would leave her free for adulterous relations since no betrothal can bind her to him”). In Rashi's estimation a קדשה is not just a woman who offers sex for money; the word can also designate a class of women who are free (מפקרת) to enter into adulterous relations because they are not subject to a valid קדושין.

confined to the sphere of metaphor: the problem is not that the Israelites are literally copulating at cultic centers but rather that their worship of other deities is metaphorically equivalent to infidelity.[67]

Hosea's condemnation strengthens this association by describing both male and female cultic activities in words that explicitly evoke sexual activity and promiscuity. The first of these double entendres is found in verse 12, in which the prophet decries how each man inquires of his rod (עצו) and takes counsel from his shaft (מקלו).[68] Although this double entendre has been widely recognized in the secondary literature,[69] at no point (to my knowledge) has anyone attempted to reconstruct a divination technique that involved the literal manipulation of penises. Instead, the pun is rightly understood to function on a metaphorical level. The reference to the קדשות in Hosea 4:14a should be understood in the same way. The prophetic discourse employs a word that can also designate a single woman whose sexuality is uncontrolled. In so doing, he equates cultic actions with illicit sexual activity.

The metaphor of adultery that is deployed in Hosea 4:12-14a suggests that the passage should be read in light of Hosea's broader condemnation of non-Yahwistic worship. The passage does not condemn phantom practice of cultic-prostitution or other fertility rites associated with outdoor cult spaces. Instead, it should be read in concert with oracles in Hosea that associate the worship of other deities with adultery—i.e. 'cheating on' Yahweh. The double valence of קדשה extends this metaphor, particularly when combined with the subsequent

67 Bird (1989: 86-87) arrives at a similar interpretation of the passage, although she posits that Hosea 4:12-14a contains two separate condemnations: one of the women for promiscuous behavior and one of their husbands for cultic violations. She argues that the pairing of זונות and קדשות in 4:14a does not indicate that the two actions (adultery and improper worship) occur as part of the same cultic ceremony; rather, the juxtaposition of the two actions implicitly equates non-Yahwistic worship with adultery. Given this interpretation of the final verse, I would argue that it is not necessary to read the other sexual references in verses 12-13 as addressing the social problem of adultery, except in so far as it can be deployed on a metaphorical level—that is, the pericope need not be understood to address two separate groups (unfaithful women and their husbands). Instead, all of the references to promiscuity in verses 12-14a are subsumed under the metaphorical characterization of improper cultic behaviors.

68 Noted by Ginsberg (1967: 74). Compare the use of Ugaritic *mṭ* (cognate to Hebrew מטה) to describe Ilu's erection in RS 2.002: 40 (= KTU 1.23). Interestingly, Ginsberg takes the entirety of verses 11-14a to refer to sexual debauchery with no cultic implications. He does not address why verse 13 explicitly refer to sacrifice.

69 See, e.g. Andersen and Freedman 1980: 366; Bird 1989: 83; Ben-Zvi 2005: 106; Haddox 2006: 192; Moughtin-Mumby 2008: 68.

statement that the men 'go aside' with prostitutes (יפרדו: literally, separate themselves). The use of the root פר״ד reinforces the sense of separation implicit in the social designation of the קדשה. In coupling these two words, the prophet's condemnation of Israel takes on yet another nuance: the people who should be set apart in their dedication to their divine patron, Yahweh, have instead separated themselves from him.

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