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Cult Prostitution in the Hebrew Bible?

by

Ingrid M. Haase

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master's of Arts in
Religious Studies

University of Ottawa, Canada

April 1990



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ISBN 0-315-68087-3



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Introduction

Modern Biblical scholarship generally has taken it for granted that cult prostitution was an established ritual among the Semitic peoples, especially in Babylonia and Phoenicia-Canaan,¹ and that this rite penetrated the Israelite religion under the influence of the Canaanite culture.²

Sacred (temple or cult) prostitution is said to have been practiced under various guises, mainly by female devotees,³ at times by male adherents, in honour of a mother goddess or a goddess of love, such as Asherah, Ishtar, Mylitta, and Aphrodite.⁴ Sometimes this act was thought to have been

¹ The footnotes will only supply short title information. The complete bibliographical data are to be found in the bibliography at the end of the paper. Astour, "Tamar" 187; Cody, "Prostitution" 2906; Davis, "Prostitution" 881; Hauck, "πορνεία" 581; Hepding, "Hierodouloi" 1465-6; Kramer, Sacred Marriage 49; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1359-63; May, "Prostitution" 587; "Prostitute" Cyclopaedia 666; Soden, "Prostitution" 642-3; Yamauchi, "Cultic Prostitution" 213-4.

² Alfonso, "Prostitution" 1244; Asmussen, "Bemerkungen" 167; "Prostitution" Cyclopaedia 666; Davis, "Prostitution" 881; Hauck, "πορνεία" 581; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1364; May, "Prostitution" 553.

³ von Rad, Deuteronomy 148.

⁴ Alfonso, "Prostitution" 1244; Brandon, "Prostitution" 512; Braxton, Oppression 3; Cody, "Prostitution" 2906; "Prostitution" Cyclopaedia 666; Hauck, "πορνεία" 581; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1357; McGuire, "Prostitution" 881; May, "Prostitution" 553; Muehlmann, "Keuschheit" 1258-9; Pinches, "Chastity" 497; Soden, "Prostitution" 642-3; Yamauchi, "Cultic Prostitution" 213.

consecrated to gods such as Baal and Moloch,⁵ gods of fertility.

The conviction underlying this ritual was that of fostering intimacy between the disciple and her/his divinity.⁶ It was also said to have been used as a prenuptial rite in order to stimulate fertility and/or virility.⁷

Kornfeld stresses that cult prostitution was a sacrifice pars pro toto - that in sacrificing the person's chastity it was considered a substitute for human sacrifice.⁸

⁵ Hauck, " πόρνη " 581; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1361; May, "Prostitution" 553.

⁶ Braxton, Oppression 3; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1357; May, "Prostitution" 553; Thum, "Erotik" 1042. The notion that cult prostitution fostered intimacy between the worshipper and his god has been refuted by Lang in Monotheism 24, but he still accepts the idea of the practice as evidence of humanitarian concern.

⁷ Baab, "Prostitution" 932-3; Brandon, "Prostitution" 513; Braxton, Oppression 3; Collins, Stem 31; Frankfort, Kingship 331; Jacobson, Tammuz 29; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1358; May, "Prostitution" 553; Pallis, Akitu 248; Yamauchi, "Cultic Prostitution" 213.

⁸ Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1358; But then a recurring accusation of child sacrifice has been linked to the שׂוֹרֵף and their supposed actions at the שִׁינָא. As part of the recitation of lists of sins for which the Deuteronomist blames Israel, 'passing a child through fire' has been one that persists but one that still generates much debate as to its meaning; for a discussion on the same problem in Assyria see Menzel, Assyrische Tempel 28-9.

Sympathetic magic, an act intended to stimulate the gods to follow one's example, and then to bless the earth with their own fecundity, is another reason given for this pious act.⁹

The term hieros gamos, originally a designation for the marriage or sexual union between two divinities¹⁰ as portrayed in the visual arts¹¹ or in literature,¹² was used eventually to label the supposed imitation of this union by cultic functionaries, such as kings or queens, with priests or hierodules.¹³ The New Year's festival in Babylonia, the Akitu festival, was assumed to be the most eminent occasion for the performance of this ritual copulation.¹⁴ In this case, the persons involved would have

⁹ Cody, "Prostitution" 2906; Frayne, "Notes" 6; Gray, Kings 342, 734; Jacobsen, Tammuz 16-7, 29, 40; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1358; McGuire, "Prostitution" 881; Soden, "Prostitution" 642; Thum, "Erotik" 1041-2; Wolkstein, Inanna 43, 189.

¹⁰ Frayne, "Notes" 11.

¹¹ Asher-Greve, Frauen 9, 33, 43, 60, 95; Winter Frau 252-272, 313-368.

¹² Adler, Background 192-3; Frayne, "Notes" 5-22; Kramer, "Cuneiform Studies" 485-527; Wolkstein, Inanna.

¹³ Renger, "Untersuchungen" 58 - evidence of the entu priestess filling this role is not extant.

¹⁴ Asmussen, "Bemerkungen" 167-8; Jacobsen, Tammuz 375 n.32, 388 n.80; ..., Treasures 39; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1358; Kramer, Sacred Marriage 49, 57, 63, 137 n.13, 148 n.19; McGuire, "Prostitution" 881; Soden, "Prostitution" 643; Wolkstein, Inanna 154; cf. Oden, Bible chapter 2, pp. 40-105 - refutes this idea and discusses the influence which the thought of the myth-ritual school had on Biblical exegesis during the last century.

practiced the act on a regular basis, once a year, but never indiscriminately.

Some scholars assert that the temples retained various classes of priestesses whose function it was to support the temple from the payment given them for prostituting themselves on a regular basis.¹⁵ Whether this activity went on within the temple precincts as part of the usual temple activities, or whether the women could have been regular prostitutes plying their trade outside the sanctuary walls and donating their earnings to the shrine in order to obtain its protection, is a detail which has occasioned some dispute.¹⁶ Since the temple in the ancient Near East was also the business centre for a town or region, it could have functioned like a syndicate or a procurer, giving protection and sanction in return for financial dues.

Most of the arguments maintaining the existence of sacred prostitution among the ancients, are based on the practice mentioned by Herodotus as occurring in Babylon, where a woman would give her chastity to the goddess in one act of sexual

¹⁵ Strabo, Geography XI, 14, 16; Alfonso, "Prostitution" 1244; Brandon, "Prostitution" 512-3; Hauck, " πόρνη " 581; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1259-60; Lang, Monotheism 24; McGuire, "Prostitution" 881; May, "Prostitution" 553.

¹⁶ "Prostitution" Cyclopaedia 666; Kapelrud, Violent Goddess 20; Driver-Miles, Assyrian Laws 44; Pallis, Akitu 247-8.

intercourse with a stranger.¹⁷ According to Herodotus this act of worship could be performed at any time during the devotee's life and therefore was not necessarily a question of her sacrificing her virginity.

Several classical writers and early Christian scholars¹⁸ have based their argumentation for the existence of sex cum religion amongst 'other' peoples on this report by Herodotus.¹⁹ Frequently an elaboration of this assumption was used by these authors as confirmation that their own belief system was the only legitimate ideology demanding a person's undivided loyalty.

¹⁷ Herodotus I, 199; Alfonso, "Prostitution" 1244; Brandon, "Prostitution" 512; Hauck, " πόρνη " 581; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1359-60; McGuire, "Prostitution" 881; Pinches, "Chastity" 498; Wolff, Hosea 87.

¹⁸ The following classical and Christian writers are cited as giving evidence of the practice of cult prostitution. Even if their writings could be accepted without demur, the customs that they mention were regional and time-wise very late when compared to the customs of the Canaanite culture or those of the Biblical passages that are being discussed.
Athenaeus, Deipnosophists XII, 521;
Augustine, City of God (Books I-VII) Book IV, 10;
 The Phoenician religion: "Lukians Schrift über die syrische Göttin" Übersetzt und erläutert von C. Clemen, 32-35, 55;
Clement of Alexandria, Protrepticus II, 13;
Diodorus of Sicily (Diodorus Siculus) I, 47, #1;
Eusebius, Church History III, 58;
Herodotus, I, 20;
Justin Martyr, First Apology XXVII;
Strabo, Geography VI, 2, 6; XI, 14, 16; XVI, 1, 20.
 The following are some modern writers who reiterate the tales advanced by these ancient authors: Albright, Archaeology 159; Astour, "Tamar" 185.

¹⁹ Oden, Bible chapter 5, pp.131-153, "Religious Identity and the Sacred Prostitution Accusation", esp. pp.140-147.

In specifying the various manifestations of cult prostitution, and citing as many authors as possible who subscribe to the hypothesis of sacred prostitution, we have attempted to demonstrate the myriad theories that have developed around this one concept.

The modern science of sociology of religion, through scholars such as Max Weber,²⁰ has tried to formulate premises relating to the role of religion in society. The function that orgiastic religions play in certain very poor nations, and among the various classes of a society, has led scholars to search for similar manifestations of such cults in the Bible.

...what men consider a demoniacal sickness, women convert into a clandestine ecstasy. ... such women's possession cults are also ... thinly disguised protest movements directed against the dominant sex.²¹

The belief communicated in the above citation expresses well one of the major reasons why many contemporary students of the Migra construe the *shien* as functionaries of sexually dominated cults in pre-exilic Israel. It would have been one of the few ways in which women could have expressed their religiosity in a patriarchal society which denied them any status as part of the cult hierarchy, and even meaning within the society at large aside from the procreational one. One of the latest studies which exhibits a propensity to this trend of

²⁰ Weber, Ancient Judaism 93, 189, 191.

²¹ Lewis, Ecstatic Religion 30-1.

thought has been written by van der Toorn (1989);²² he proposes the idea that women in a male-dominated society such as Israel and Mesopotamia had no access to financial resources, and had therefore no option but to prostitute themselves in order to earn money to fulfil their spiritual commitment.

Current research into comparative religion and ethnology has made immense contributions to our understanding of phenomena described in the Tanach which previously eluded our comprehension.²³ At the same time the comparative study with other ancient religions, for example those of Mesopotamia,²⁴ Egypt,²⁵ Canaan,²⁶ Greece,²⁷ and Rome²⁸ have questioned the presuppositions that cult prostitution was part of the liturgy of these cultures, and that they in turn could have influenced Israel in this practice.

More and more first hand resource material has come to light which casts doubt on our previous assumptions of the sex act

²² van der Toorn, "Female Prostitution" 193-205.

²³ Johansen, "Primitive Religion II" 56.

²⁴ Arnaud, "Prostitution" 111-15; Menzel, Assyrische Tempel I, 28.

²⁵ Bissing, "Aphrodision" 375-381; Blackman, "Position of Women" 8-30; Fairman, "Worship" 165-203.

²⁶ Fisher, "Cultic Prostitution" 225-36.

²⁷ Conzelmann, "Korinth" 152-261.

²⁸ Becher, "Isiskult" 81-90.

being used as part of religious functions. In the following I will scrutinize the occurrence of the *h'ie37/p'ie37* in the Tanach, from an historical, archaeological and exegetical point-of-view. This will be done by exploring the eight passages which allude to the *p'ie37*. Other texts, those using the term *713* in the MT, and *παρὰκύπτω* in the LXX, and those individual passages which for a variety of reasons have been used to bolster the contention of the existence of cult prostitution, will be surveyed for their significance.

Since it has always been assumed that Israel practiced cult prostitution under the influence of the surrounding nations, I will examine some of the religious life of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Canaan, before going into the Biblical texts. I will also examine some extra Biblical material, such as the legend of the Parakuptousa, the verb parakupto as used by Aristophanes in his comedies, as well as some iconography: the Woman in the Window originating in different countries of the ancient Near East, and the Qudshu from Egypt.

Besides trying to corroborate the idea that the *h'ie37/p'ie37* were not cult prostitutes, I will hazard a guess of who they were, and what niche they might have occupied in the society and religion of pre-exilic Israel.

Chapter ICult Prostitution in Egypt

Israel's relationship to Egypt was a crucial one from the very beginning, as is evidenced by much of the Biblical narrative, whether of historical or mythological value. There always does remain a question as to the immediate impact Egyptian ideas might have had on the development of Israel's religious thought.¹ Since the Egyptian pantheon included goddesses, and the cult supported female personnel of importance, the speculation that cult prostitution might have been part of their divine liturgy has been intimated, especially since the priestesses bore titles such as 'the god's concubine', and might have been active in a ritual labeled 'the sacred marriage'. In this chapter therefore I will investigate the veracity of these insinuations.

¹ Here Freud's book on the reliance of Mosaic monotheism on the supposed monotheism of Ikhnaton is of interest.

I. The Classical Writers

It was primarily through texts by classical authors that scholars were alerted to probe the contention of whether or not the Egyptians practiced cult prostitution.

The three classical writers who deal with Egyptian religion and who tell us something about the role of women in the various Egyptian cults, are Herodotus (born c. 480 B.C.E),² Strabo (c. 64/63 BCE-c. 23 BCE),³ and Diodorus of Sicily (flourished c. 36 BCE).⁴

(a) Herodotus has three texts in his History, that are frequently cited as evidence for the practice of cult prostitution in Egypt, but in fact do not say anything of the kind. In the first text, Book I.182, he states:

...even as in Thebes of Egypt, as the Egyptians say (for there too a woman sleeps in the temple of Theban Zeus, and neither the Egyptian nor the Babylonian woman, it is said, has intercourse with men),... but when she is appointed she is shut up in the temple during the night.

Herodotus is quite explicit in stating that temple prostitution is not a practice among the Egyptians, at least not

² Pötscher, "Herodotos" 1099-1103.

³ Lasserre, "Strabon" 381-385.

⁴ Albrecht, "Diodoros" 41-42, #12.

at Thebes, although this quotation is frequently used as testimony to the contrary.⁵

In a second passage of Book II Herodotus shows that ancient Egypt had a deep religious influence on younger countries such as his own Greece (II, 52, 54-58), and that practices such as divination, solemn assemblies and processions⁶ had been introduced into Hellas by means of the Egyptian example. He then enumerates some of the religious feasts that the Egyptians enjoyed to celebrate. The festival in honour of the cat-headed goddess Pasht at Bubastis in the Nile Delta,⁷ was the most

⁵ "The Chaldeans, who are the priests of this god" told Herodotus that their god chose the woman who was to stay in the temple, "that the god himself is wont to visit the shrine", and that the woman does not to have any intercourse with men. The Egyptians, according to Herodotus, had given him a similar report about this woman at Thebes. Much of our controversy centers around the statement by the author that he does not believe the priests when they state that the god visits the temple. Herodotus faithfully records what these people believe, and since he does not belong to the group but is an outsider, his belief or lack of it, is not the point at issue. The natives say that the women remain chaste - that is a statement of fact not belief. How the visit of the god was interpreted, either by the locals or by Herodotus, whether it was considered a spiritual marriage between the divinity and the woman, or whether priests snug in after the doors were closed and had sexual relations with the woman interpreting their action as a hieros gamos, is never resolved by the author.

⁶ Fairman, "Worship" - demonstrates throughout this study that solemn processions were an integral part of much of the Egyptian liturgy - processions within the temple precincts as well as those wending their way through the country side.

⁷ We do know that Bubastis was a cult centre for the worship of Hathor of Dendera going back to the O.K. cf. Fischer, "Daughter of the Overlords" 106.

beloved and exhuberant, and was celebrated by means of a procession making its way down the Nile on boats, picking up pilgrims as it progressed. All these details fit into Herodotus' overall composition where he compares Egypt and the Egyptians with other countries and peoples (II, 35 ff.).

Some of the women make a noise with rattles, others play flutes all the way, while the rest of the women, and the men, sing and clap their hands.... then some of the women do as I have said,... others dance, and others stand up and expose their persons.... Men and women (but not children) are wont to assemble there to the number of seven hundred thousand, as the people of the place say. (II.60)

Nowhere in the text does he say that the men or women were in any way connected with the cult as official personnel. The whole paragraph is a description of ordinary Egyptians celebrating their favourite goddess' feastday with abandon. One could compare Herodotus' report with the carnival festivities which introduce the Lenten season in Catholic countries even today. His report has nothing to do with the cult per se or with prostitution as such. The people dance, sing, play music and get drunk, and manners and morals might be getting short shrift, but that is all, according to Herodotus.

Another text in Book II, verse 126, is repeatedly referred to as supporting evidence for the rite of cult prostitution in Egypt, but the passage is quite straight forward as Herodotus describes Pharaoh Cheops' treatment of his daughter:

Cheops that for lack of money he made his own daughter to sit in a chamber and exact payment (how much, I know

not; for they did not tell me this). She, they say, doing her father's bidding, was minded to leave some memorial of her own, and demanded of everyone who sought intercourse with her that he should give one stone to set in her work; and of these stones was built the pyramid that stands midmost of the three, over against the great pyramid; each side of it measures one hundred and fifty feet.

Cheops was a pharaoh of the fourth dynasty (c. 2553-2530),⁸ and if the information were correct, it would still give us no details about Egyptian religion in the Old Kingdom. Herodotus wrote about the event approximately two thousand years after it is supposed to have happened, and therefore much of the information was probably based on myth, legend and hear-say.⁹ It is important to point out that he never mentions a religious cult at all.

In some other passages Herodotus mentions women in the cult, but is contradictory in the information that he supplies. In II.35 he says that:

No woman is dedicated to the service of any god or goddess; men are dedicated to all deities male or female.

This is certainly contradicted by himself in the following passages: I.182, and II.54, 56, 171,¹⁰ 182.¹¹

⁸ Helck, "Cheops" 1143.

⁹ Lloyd, Herodotus, Commentary 71-72.

¹⁰ Lloyd, Herodotus; Commentary 209-211.

¹¹ Lloyd, Herodotus; Commentary 235-241.

(b) Strabo in his Geography also mentions Egyptian religious practices. In Book 17.I.46 he says:

but to Zeus whom they hold highest in honour, they dedicate a maiden of greatest beauty and most industrious family (such maidens are called 'pallades' [$\pi\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\delta\epsilon\varsigma$] by the Greeks); and she prostitutes herself, and cohabits with whatever men she wishes until the natural cleansing of her body takes place; and after her cleansing she is given in marriage to a man; but before she is married, after the time of her prostitution, a rite of mourning is celebrated for her.

This passage is in complete contradiction to Herodotus I.182, where it is stated that the priestess does not have any relation with any man. Both Blackman¹² and Legrain¹³ try to explain the difference by the fact, that when Herodotus visited Egypt in c. 455- B.C.E., the priestesses of Thebes lived the way that he describes it. About four hundred years later, when Strabo visited Egypt in c. 25/24 B.C.E., during the Roman period, he might have witnessed the decline of the Egyptian religion at Thebes, or the result of a deliberate policy by the Ptolemies attempting to destroy the powerful Theban clergy by discrediting their cult, through interference in the appointments and dismissals of the priestesses, and by letting deviant practices go unchecked.

¹² Blackman, "Position of Women" 19-20.

¹³ Legrain, "Groupe d'Amon" 141-142; cf. Bissing, "Aphrodision" 380-1.

Another point in Strabo's passage is his use of the word 'pallades' - which

(c) Diodorus Siculus also uses in Book I.47.1 when he relates that:

Ten stades from the first tombs, he says, in which according to tradition, are buried the concubines [*παλλακίδας*] of Zeus.

The words *παλλάδας* ' or *παλλακίδας* ' mean: *παλλάκ-εἶς* or *-ίς, ἡ* , concubinage.
παλλάς , *ίδος* , *ἡ*

...II. maiden-priestess, Str. 17.I.46; Eust. 1742.37

....

cf. Eust. 84.43, but prob. orig. virgin, maiden.¹⁴

Bissing insists that:

παλλακεύειν niemals Hurerei treiben
 bedeutet, sondern immer einen geordneten Zustand als
 Nebenfrau oder Kebsweib.¹⁵

It is not that self evident that sacred prostitution was an Egyptian rite, judging by the classical texts enumerated here, and which are the ones used to prop the thesis that this ritual was part of the Egyptian religious life.

¹⁴ Liddell, Greek 1293.

¹⁵ Bissing "Aphrodision" 380; s.a. Ward, "Reflections" 67-74; esp. 69 n.8.

It should be taken into account, that although both Herodotus and Strabo visited Egypt, if only for a short time, Diodorus, relied completely for his information on other writers, as also did the former two to some extent, and thus their information is only as good as the sources that they used.¹⁶

¹⁶ Albrecht, "Diodoros" 41.

II. The Egyptian Sources

Having looked at the classical quotations that initiated the research on prostitution within the Egyptian cults, it now becomes necessary to examine the Egyptian documents themselves to see what they have to say about their own cultic practices and about women within the official liturgy.

When talking about any ancient primary sources a few points have to be remembered in order to evaluate the given information as correctly as possible. First, the information written down came to us from a very limited authorship of ancient society - the rich, the ones in power and the educated. Usually these three came from the same stratum of the community which comprised approximately two percent of the total population. So, the information is limited and biased.

Second, the places the modern archaeologist is able to explore are limited. For example in Egypt, the Nile valley has been covered with several meters of silt deposited by the Nile over the last three to five thousand years. Therefore in this humid soil much of the material, such as leather or papyrus, has been destroyed, or the area is covered by fields, villages and towns, in use today. Thus, much of the source material, which could clarify the everyday life of the ancient Egyptian, is not available to the modern scholar.

Third, the best area for digging for preserved records is at the edge of the Nile valley, where it goes over into the rocky escarpment and desert soil, which region also has a desert climate. It is mainly cemeteries that were situated in this part of the Nile valley, and therefore the information derived from this setting is very specialized and again limited.

Keeping these reservations in mind, it is still most enlightening to consider all the details that have become available about life in ancient Egypt.

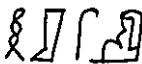
The Egyptian priesthood was considered a class of men set aside from the rest of the community in order to serve a god. Purity was considered to be an essential element in all persons or things associated in any way with the cult of the gods. The Egyptian priest was renowned for his asceticism as well as his bodily purity.¹⁷ The word for priest was 'we'eb' - 'pure person'.¹⁸ There were two main divisions in the priesthood, the we'eb and the hmw-ntr. Both classes had male and female membership.¹⁹

¹⁷ Otto, Priester I: 25, 63, II: 256.

¹⁸ Otto, Priester I: 76.

¹⁹ Blackman, "Priest" 293, 297; ... "Position of Women" 23-4; Galvin, "Hereditary Status" 48 n.32 - it seems that after the Sixth to the Eleventh Dynasty no men held the title of Priest of Hathor at Dendera or even the whole of Egypt; Kees, Ägypten 260-1; ... "Königin" 112.

The king, in theory, was the high-priest of all local divinities. He was regarded as a manifestation of the god. He, therefore, was a god and was spoken of as 'the good god'. This creed can be traced within the historical period, and from the Fifth Dynasty (2465-2323 B.C.E.)²⁰ onwards the king was regarded as the physical son of the sun god.²¹ The various classes of priests were regarded as the Pharaoh's representatives when performing their pious duty.

The priestesses of Hathor, who consecrated their dance to their patron goddess, also impersonated her, in consequence partook of her nature, and thus were able to impart her characteristics and favours to her worshippers.²² The priestesses of Edfu, during the reign of Ramses II and Ramses III, even bore the title of 'Hathors of the temple of Atum'²³ and they were evidently musicians of the temple. At Hierakonpolis in the XII Upper Nome, during the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period (2575-2040 B.C.E.), the chief god Horus whose consort was Hathor, gave the title:  - hbst 'Wife

²⁰ Breasted, Records II, 75-81.

²¹ Redford, Akhenaten 178.

²² Blackman, "Priest" 293-296; ..., "Position of Women" 10-11, 14, 23.

²³ Blackman, "Position of Women" 9; Kees, Ägypten 261.

of Horus' or 'Hathor' to the high priestess of this temple.²⁴

These wives of the god were

vornehme Personen, fast immer Königinnen von wesentlich politischem Charakter, mystisch, aber nie körperlich, mit Amun verbunden gedacht. Mit Tempelprostitution haben sie ganz und gar nichts zu tun.²⁵

The temple was the 'house of the god' - ht-ntr, and the priesthood was regarded as the domestic service. In other words the temple staff imitated a human household, and the priests frequently bore titles reminiscent of members of such a household. For example, hm-ntr, which was translated with

προϋπητης in Greek, literally means 'the servant of the god'.²⁶

The daily liturgy, to a great extent, also imitated the services that human servants bestowed on their masters. So the priests sprinkled the god with water - a ceremony derived from the servants bathing their human masters - fumigated him with incense, clothed and anointed him, applied cosmetics to his eyes,

²⁴ Blackman, "Position of Women" 11; cf. Ward, "Reflections" 73 - where he defines the meaning of the word hbsw.t as having "the technical sense of a legal wife other than the first and, ..., came to be used more or less as a synonym of the regular word for 'wife'", and since women and especially wives were highly regarded (pp. 68-9), any slur to the title of hbsw.t, whether the one of a god or of a human, would be most gratuitous; Möller, "... hbs(.t), die Ehefrau" 95-6; Pestman, Marriage 10 n.7.

²⁵ Bissing, "Aphrodision" 378; s.a. Pestman, Marriage 10-11 n.6 and 7.

²⁶ Blackman, "Priest" 300; Hornung, Conceptions 49; Otto, Beiträge 49 n.21; ..., Priester I: 81; Redford, Akhenaten 179.

and arrayed him in his regal ornaments,²⁷ thus filling the lifeless image with the god's vital powers.²⁸

Within this cult women, who like the rest of the priesthood, were usually recruited from the higher eschelon of society,²⁹ were accepted on an equal footing with men,³⁰ but the tasks that they performed within the liturgy were those that women usually performed within any well established household. The Egyptian cult laid great stress on the musical element of its service, dancing, singing, and instrument playing.³¹ Although there were male as well as female musicians to entertain the gods, this duty seems to have devolved mainly on the female members of the staff.

²⁷ Blackman, "Priesthood" 300.

²⁸ Blackman, "House of Morning" 148 ff.; Fairman, "Worship" 165-203; Morenz, Egyptian Religion 106; Nord, "'King's Concubine'" 2.

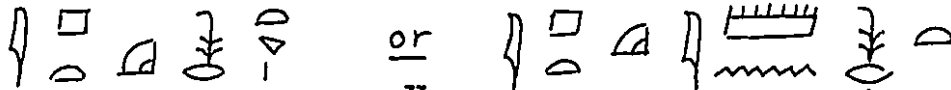
²⁹ Kees, Priestertum 4ff.; Otto, Priester 92ff.

³⁰ Blackman, "Position of Women" 7-30, esp. 24; ..., "Priest" 298; Galvin, "Hereditary Status" 42-49; Kees, Ägypten 260; Nord, "Königliche" 142.

³¹ Bissing, "Aphrodision" 379; Blackman, "Position of Women" 21; ..., "Priest" 301; Kees, Ägypten 260; Winter, Frau 261.

A. Concubines and Prophets

The gods, especially Amun, had 'human concubines' assigned to them.³² Thebes with its extensive temple complexes, although many date only to the XVIIIth Dynasty, exerted a great influence on the development of Egyptian theology, and since Egyptian history was religious, also on Egyptian politics, from as far back as the First Dynasty (2920-2770 B.C.E.). Luxor, one of its temples, where Amun was worshipped under the guise of the ithyphallic Min, was even called:



the 'Southern Harim of Amun'.³³ The priestly appellation of 'concubine', with its consequent duties, is therefore of ancient relevance. It would describe the position the priestesses clothed as 'Nebenfrauen' of the god in view of his divine consort, Hathor.³⁴ The leadership of this group of priestesses was the charge of the wife (sister or daughter) of the local high

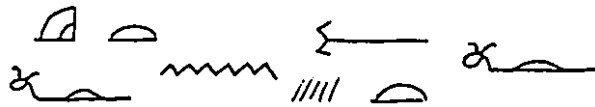
³² Blackman, "Position of Women" 15; Kees, Ägypten 260-1; ..., "Farbensymbolik" 420.

³³ Blackman, "Priesthood" 296, VII, 22.

³⁴ Bissing, "Aphrodision" 380; Kees, Ägypten 260-1; Pestman, Marriage 62 - "We saw...that polygamy does not exist in Egypt."

priest, as 'Chief of the concubines of Amun'.³⁵ She could also bear the title of 'Singer of Amun'.³⁶

The title  hnrwt has been translated with 'concubines of Amun' and it shows up again during the New Kingdom (1550-1070 B.C.E.) and the Third Intermediate Period (1070-712 B.C.E) at Thebes. These 'concubines of Amun' were musician priestesses attached to the house of the 'God's wife'.³⁷ Tomb 36 in the Theban necropolis belongs to Ibe, the chief steward of the 'Divine adoratrice' ,³⁸ this being another title of the high priestesses, and displays the inscription:



- 'His (Amun's) harim of his concubines'.³⁹

The word: , transcribed as ip.t is usually translated as 'harem' in English with its subliminal nuance of esoteric sex. Erman⁴⁰ translates it with: "1) Frauenhaus", which is what a

³⁵ Blackman, "Position of Women" 10; ..., "Priest" 296, VII, 2; Kees, Ägypten 261; ..., "Königin" 108; Möller, "Hbs'(.t), die Ehefrau" 96.

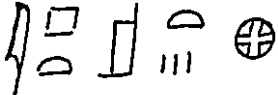
³⁶ Gitton, "Rôle" 34.

³⁷ Erman, Ägyptisches Glossar 95; ..., Ägyptisches Handwörterbuch 107; Kees, "Königin" 107-20.

³⁸ Blackman, "Position of Women" 13; Gitton, "Rôle" 35.

³⁹ Blackman, "Position of Women" 10.

⁴⁰ Erman, Ägyptisches Handwörterbuch 10; s.a. Brunner-Traut, Ägypter 202; Kees, Ägypten 77, 84-5, 199.

harem really was (or is), the part of a house restricted to the female members of a group. He then identifies a second meaning for that hieroglyph as: "2) Name von Luxor, erhalten in *(Auen)* *wf15* ; auch ip.t rs'.t." Karnak, the adjoining temple was called:  and transcribed as: ip.t-s'w.t.⁴¹

According to current research, the word harem was employed by nineteenth century scholars with the Ottoman 'harim' in mind, which usage then, had far reaching consequences on the interpretation of the social, religious and economic lives of the ancient Egyptians.⁴² It was Devéria who first used the term 'royal harim' for the ip.t-ns.w, in 1865.⁴³ Lorton suggests that the better translation would be 'royal counting house'.⁴⁴ Since the temple at Luxor was also called a ip.t ns.t⁴⁵ the same label could be attached to it: the Treasury or Bank of the region, as all temples in ancient times, including the Temple in Jerusalem, actually were.

In the Egypt of old, women were kept in high regard and monogamy seems to have been the established norm. It would

⁴¹ Erman, Ägyptisches Handwörterbuch 10.

⁴² Kemp, "Königliche Harim" 191-2; Lorton, "Königliche Harim" 98-101; Nord, "Königliche Harim" 142-5; Reiser, Der königliche Harim im alten Ägypten; Ward, "Reflections" 67-9.

⁴³ Lorton, "Königliche Harim" 98; Ward, "Reflections" 69.

⁴⁴ Lorton, "Königliche Harim" 100; Ward, "Reflections" 69.

⁴⁵ Erman Ägyptisches Handwörterbuch 10.

therefore be most unlikely that the institution of concubinage was a common practice amongst the Egyptians.⁴⁶ According to Nord⁴⁷ there is no evidence that the usage of the harem/concubinage ever existed in Egypt before the Eleventh Dynasty, and that therefore the title hnr.wt could not have been the word for concubine,⁴⁸ but it is more probable that it was a title of distinction for a lady of the court.

The term hnr.wt, which as shown above, has been translated as 'concubine of Amun' - can also mean "'a singing and dancing troupe' made up of men, or women, or both".⁴⁹ Since such troupes were attached to temples by the First Intermediate Period, it means there were groups of people employed by the temples whose primary function was to entertain the gods and to beautify the liturgical service with their singing and dancing.⁵⁰ Since the term could cover both male and female members, and even children, the translation of the term by the word 'concubine' is

⁴⁶ Reiser, Königliche Harim I-II.

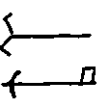
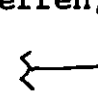
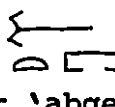
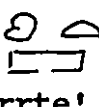
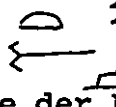
⁴⁷ Nord, "Königliche Harim" 142-5; s.a. Ward, "Reflections" 67-8.

⁴⁸ Fischer, "Daughter" 107-8.

⁴⁹ Nord, "Königliche Harim" 143; Reiser, Königliche Harim 11; Ward, "Reflections" 71.

⁵⁰ Reiser, Königliche Harim 14.

inaccurate.⁵¹ But as Erman had already shown⁵² the word could have two meanings:

"hnr (hni)  
 jem. am Zutritt hindern. hnr (hni)   absperren,
 Gefangener. hnr.t (?)    
 Gefängnis; Festung; der 'abgesperrte' Teil des
 Palastes.... hnr  Harem; Kebsweiber.
hnr.t   Kebsweib. im Titel wr.t-
hnr.t 'Oberste der Kebsweiber'."

If the word, so often, meant: imprisoned, prison, to prevent access. fortress, etc., why when applied to women could the meaning of the word not be construed as 'recluse or cloistered',⁵³ instead of being translated by the term concubine with the insinuation of prostitution?⁵⁴

Nord⁵⁵ has also studied in detail another term hkrt-nswt, which has generally been translated with 'royal ornament' or 'sole royal ornament', thus, the 'king's concubine'. She gives a history of the interpretation of these hieroglyphs

⁵¹ Ward, "Reflections" 71.

⁵² Erman, Ägyptisches Handwörterbuch 128, 130.

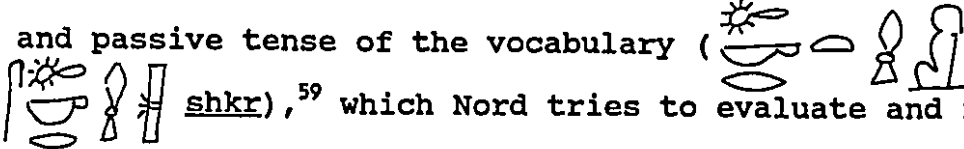
⁵³ Gitton, "Rôle" 35.

⁵⁴ Reiser, Königliche Harim 13.

⁵⁵ Nord, "'King's Concubine'" 1-16; s.a. Reiser, Königliche Harim 17-8, 88, 118.

using the archaeological material gathered over the last two hundred years, as well as the research and opinions of many of the scholars of the present day. She comes to the conclusion that hkrt-nswt should be translated with:

'She (One) Who is Ornamented by the King' (Passive Participle', i.e., in the sense of being ornamented with gold necklaces and other ornaments.⁵⁶

Erman⁵⁷ had already pointed out that the title could mean "Haremsdame o.a". ... Titel von Frauen." For the verb hkr he used the translation: "geschmückt sein; jem. schmücken; ..." Gardiner for the verb translated it also with "to be adorned".⁵⁸ There appears to have been some confusion then between the active and passive tense of the vocabulary ( hkr and shkr),⁵⁹ which Nord tries to evaluate and rectify.

Although the title hkrt was not a title attributed to women in their priestly functions, but since the institution of concubinage was not at all of an Egyptian provenance,⁶⁰ we must come to the conclusion that all the female titles were only interpreted in that manner by later peoples, the Greeks and modern scholars, because they had contemporaneous institutions in

⁵⁶ Nord, "'King's Concubine'" 12.

⁵⁷ Erman, Ägyptisches Handwörterbuch 139.

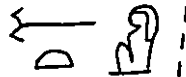
⁵⁸ Gardiner, Grammar 587.

⁵⁹ Erman, Ägyptisches Handwörterbuch 139, 170.

⁶⁰ Pestman, Marriage 3, 62-3.

mind, which however gave a false image of the society that they tried to explain.⁶¹

At Heliopolis itself the priestesses of the sun god, Re', Re'-Atum, or Re'-Harakhty,⁶² were called hnrwt hnywt - which has been translated as: '(human) concubines'⁶³:



We have already discussed the term hnrwt above, and came to the conclusion with Ward, Fischer and Nord that it meant an honoured lady of the court whose responsibility was the musical embellishment of court life.

The title 'Hand of god' originated here during pre-dynastic times.⁶⁴ 'God's wife' was another title used at this temple.⁶⁵



wrt dhnywt - 'chief of female musicians',

was the title given to the high priestess at Edfu during Ptolemaic times.⁶⁶ The appellation is probably of an older

⁶¹ Gitton, "Rôle" 31-4.

⁶² Baines, Atlas of Ancient Egypt 174.

⁶³ Erman, Ägyptisches Glossar 10 n.9, 95.

⁶⁴ Bissing, "Aphrodision" 379; Kees, Ägypten 261.

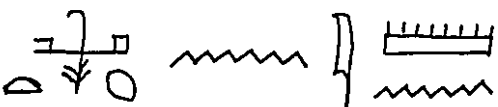
⁶⁵ Blackman, "Position of Women" 12-3; Kees, Ägypten 261; for a definition of the term within the secular society see: Ward, "Reflections" 73.

⁶⁶ Otto, Priester 93 esp. n.3.

Heliopolitan origin.⁶⁷ An abbreviated form of this title has also been found at the Edfu temple:  transcribed as hnywt.

The same hieroglyph, but transcribed as hnyt - 'musician priestess' - was found at Ptolemaic Denderah where Hathor was the chief goddess.

This honorific hnywt -  'musician priestess' was not reserved for the priestesses of the higher gods, such as Amenre, but starting during the time of the New Kingdom, the priestesses of the great variety of Egyptian gods such as Osiris at Abydos, Isis, Mut, Hapi, Horus of Anibeh in Nubia, Hathor of Denderah, the Great Ennead of Karnak, Hathor at Cusae, as well as Upwawet,⁶⁸ were accorded this title, demonstrating that the theology of Heliopolis in all probability influenced the theology of these regions, as well as the characteristics of their deities.⁶⁹

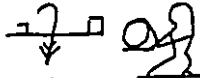
Another title which stresses the musical obligations that the priestesses had to fulfill within the cult was the appellation: 

⁶⁷ Brugsch, Dictionnaire géographique #1368.

⁶⁸ Blackman, "Position of Women" 9.

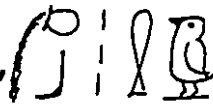
⁶⁹ Blackman, "Position of Women" 12.

sm'yt which translates as 'musician of Amun'.⁷⁰ It can be traced as far back as the New Kingdom (1550-1070 B.C.E.) and as far forward as the Temple of Edfu in Ptolemaic times. The hieroglyph at Edfu:



has been transcribed as sm'ywt, and translated as 'female officiant, who rattles the sistrum in front of him or her'.

Judging from the above accumulated information, Egyptian priestesses, throughout about three thousand years of history, were recorded under a variety of titles. Many of these titles denote a family relationship to the divinity, i.e. Wife, Mother, Concubine (? - or rather Honoured Lady) of a god. The main duties of many of these priestesses were those of musicians⁷¹ and dancers.

The hm-ntr,  translated as 'prophet', was the another major division, of the Egyptian priesthood. Women of important families bore the title of 'prophetess', as far back as the Old and the Middle Kingdom.⁷² For example, queen Meres'onkh was a prophetess of the god Thoth. During the Fifth Dynasty (2465-2323 B.C.E), the sons and daughter of a noble and high-priest served their local divinity in the capacity as prophets.⁷³

⁷⁰ Blackman, "Position of Women" 8.

⁷¹ Blackman, "Position of Women" 11, 23-4; Kees, Ägypten 260-1.

⁷² Blackman, "Position of Women" 25.

⁷³ Otto, Priester I: 203, 210; II: 326.

After the fall of the Twentieth Dynasty and during the Third Intermediate Period (1070-712 B.C.E.), the Theban principality became independent and was ruled by its powerful clergy of Amun.⁷⁴ As a matter of fact, from about the time of Osorkon III of the Twenty-second Dynasty to Psammetikhos III of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty (883-525 B.C.E.), Thebes was ruled by five sacerdotal princesses, (Shepenupet, Amenirdis,⁷⁵ Shepenupet II, Nitokris, and 'Enkhnesneferibre').⁷⁶ In order to assure a smooth succession the office holders had to adopt another princess to follow them in their office. The adopted daughters were known as 'Great daughter', whereas the high priestess herself bore the titles of 'God's wife', and 'Adorer of the god'. When Nitokris adopted 'Enkhnesneferibre', the latter assumed the title of 'First prophet of Amun'.⁷⁷

The responsibilities of the Theban high priestesses were to rattle the sistrum and to sing in the temple service. Of the last of the sacerdotal princesses it is said that she is to 'be pure handed while holding the sistrum'. The high priestess is 'to contend Amun with her voice' and she 'carries flowers in the

⁷⁴ Kees, Ägypten 257-8.

⁷⁵ Kees, Ägypten 352.

⁷⁶ Baines, Atlas of Egypt 8-9, 36-37; Blackman, "Position of Women" 18-9; Gitton, "Résiliation" 65-89.

⁷⁷ Blackman, "Position of Women" 18-19; Gitton, "Rôle" 36; Kees, Ägypten 261.

temple'. The determinative for the title of the high priestess of Napata is the picture of a priestess rattling a sistrum.

It is thus apparent that the principal duty of the high priestess within the official Egyptian cult was that of providing music to please the divinity. On some reliefs she is depicted consecrating the offerings or pouring out libations and several stelae have been found where the priestesses perform a great variety of sacerdotal functions.⁷⁸ Never is there any indication, in the pictorial matter, or in the hieroglyphs, that the sexual act had anything to do with the divine service.

If the office of the 'god's wife' was used for anything other than pure religious idealism, it was for political rather than sexual intent. These princesses were a guaranty that the royal house, which was not purely Egyptian, and could not prove its divine descent, was able to establish its legitimacy to the throne.⁷⁹

It is here that the quotation from Strabo causes problems. We have already dealt with it above, but would also like to point out that usually these priestesses lived to a ripe old age, and the adopted daughter had to wait quite some time before assuming this prestigious office. The idea of having a child shoulder such an important religious and political post, does seem

⁷⁸ Gitton, "Rôle" 36.

⁷⁹ Scholz, "Fürstin" 550.

incongruous, especially when one considers that according to Strabo the incumbent left the office at about the age of nine,⁸⁰ and her successor would have been even younger than that at the time of her arrogation of the office.

Contemplating the material gathered above it becomes manifest that the female members of the Egyptian priesthood performed a great variety of sacerdotal functions, and frequently assumed responsibilities of political as well as religious magnitude, but the role of 'holy prostitute' was not one of them.

⁸⁰ Legrain has dealt with this in detail in his article "Groupe d'Amon" 139-142.

B. 'Hieros Gamos'

The ceremonial, the *ἱερός γάμος*, when a priest or king with a priestess or hierodoule, performed the sex act in imitation of a divine marriage, is sometimes listed as another manifestation of cult prostitution. According to Fairman in "Worship and Festivals in an Egyptian Temple", where he gives an outline of the daily liturgy, as well as the major festivals celebrated throughout the year in the Ptolemaic temple at Edfu, the 'Sacred Marriage' is named as one of four annual feasts.

The walls of the temple display many inscriptions detailing the calendar of feasts and their ceremonies. During the festival of the 'Sacred Marriage' Hathor of Denderah is pulled in her sacred barge up the Nile to Edfu. During her progress she visits the divinities of the regions through which she passes. She arrives in Edfu during the New Moon in the Third Month of Summer and then proceeds with Horus to an adjacent temple. The whole procession is accompanied by burnt offerings, burning of incense, offerings of first fruits, rejoicing, dancing,⁸¹ the ceremony of the Opening of the Mouth, food offerings, the driving of calves,⁸² and the offering of Truth. These ceremonies culminate

⁸¹ Kees, Ägypten 92.

⁸² Kees, Ägypten 316.

in the marriage night of the bridal couple as they are housed together in the adjoining smaller temple.⁸³

Deir el-Bahri on the West bank of the Nile opposite Karnak had a long tradition of cultic connections with the cow goddess Hathor. Pharaoh Hatshepsut of the XVIII Dynasty chose this place as the site for her harmoniously designed mortuary chapel. The porticoes of the temple protect the reliefs showing the divine birth and the coronation of the queen. The story has been used as a verification of cult prostitution in Egypt.⁸⁴ The facts as related in these reliefs have been translated in this manner:

The Interview

Utterance of Amon-Re, lord of Thebes, Presider over Karnak. He made his form like the majesty of this husband, the King Okheperkere (Thutmose I). He found her as she slept in the beauty of her palace. She waked at the fragrance of the god, which she smelled in the presence of his majesty. He went to her immediately, coivit cum ea, he imposed his desire upon her, he caused that she should see him in his form of a god. When he came before her, she rejoiced at the sight of his beauty, his love passed into her limbs, which the fragrance of the god flooded; all his odors were from Punt.

Words of the Queen

Utterance by the king's-wife and the king's-mother Ahmose, in the presence of the majesty of the august god, Amon, Lord of Thebes: 'How great is thy fame! It

⁸³ Armour, Gods and Myths 116-118; Fairman, "Worship" 196-9.

⁸⁴ Frazer, Golden Bough 187; Desai, Erotic Sculpture in India 96.

is splendid to see thy front; thou hast united my majesty (fem.) with thy favors, thy dew is in all my limbs.' After this, the majesty of this god did all that he desired with her.

Words of Amon

Utterance of Amon, Lord of the Two Lands, before her: "Khnemmet-Amon-Hatshepsut shall be the name of this daughter, whom I have placed in thy body, this saying which comes out of thy mouth. She shall exercise the excellent kingship in this whole land. My soul is hers, my crown is hers, that she may rule the Two Lands, that she may lead all the living -.⁸⁵

Since the pharaoh was regarded as the physical son of the sun god - "son of Re" of his body" and was known as the "good god", his having intercourse with his own wife in order to produce the next heir, was interpreted as the divinity producing the next "son of Re". Thus, the wife of pharaoh, in all truth, was called 'the god's wife'.⁸⁶

The story, related above, although fitting into the general Heliopolitan theology, was deemed necessary propaganda by the rulers of the XVIII Dynasty, considering that the subsequent pharaoh was Hatshepsut, a woman,⁸⁷ to establish their credentials as legitimate heirs to the two thrones.⁸⁸ A like story has been

⁸⁵ Breasted, Records II: #196 - #198.

⁸⁶ Kees, "Königin" 108.

⁸⁷ Breasted, Records II: 76 n.c., 77 #190; Scholz, "Fürstin" 547-8.

⁸⁸ Bissing, "Aphrodision" 378-9; Breasted, Records II: #187-#212; Kees, "Königin" 107-120, esp. 107, 118.

preserved at Luxor for Amenhotep III, and in the Papyrus Westcar the idea found popular expression.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Scholz, "Fürstin" 548-9.

C. Qudshu

An art object, dating to the New Kingdom (1550-1070 B.C.E.), and representing a goddess usually called 'Qudshu', has also fostered a debate whether temple prostitution might not have been a practice among the Egyptians. Thirteen stelae of Qudshu have been discovered. She is portrayed naked, in frontal view, standing on a lion that walks towards the right of the stele, holding her arms at an angle, and usually holding lotus flowers and snakes in her hands.⁹⁰ It is known that this figure represents a goddess since the determinative, ending her name on the six steles that record it, is the sign: , denoting goddess.⁹¹ She also features various divine attributes, such as the Hathor wig, lotus flowers, snakes, and the lion pedestal.⁹² Scholars posit the idea that this goddess was brought into Egypt under the influence of Semitic peoples from the Near East, either as the aftermath of military campaigns, the result of migrations

⁹⁰ Helck, "Qudschu" 217; Stadelmann, Syrisch 110.

⁹¹ Edwards, "Relief" 49-50; Watterson, Egyptian Hieroglyphs 70.

⁹² Pritchard, Palestinian 37, 41-2; Tadmor, "Cult figurines" 161, 170.

of these peoples into Egypt, or as the effect of travelling merchants.⁹³

Although this goddess shows a variety of Egyptian attributes, there are definite reasons for concluding that she is of foreign origin. She is always shown in frontal view (except once on a Cairo stele), very un-Egyptian especially for a divinity.⁹⁴ She is naked and her arms are at her side at an angle - she reminds one of the little clay figurines, gold pendants or ivory carvings found all over the Near East.⁹⁵ In the Middle East, it is not known whom this image represents since there are no descriptions given on these tablets, although archaeologists, for lack of a better name, have frequently

⁹³ Helck, Beziehungen zur Ägäis 175, 179; ..., Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 504-5; ..., "Zum Auftreten" 11; Winter, Frau 110-11.

⁹⁴ Stadelmann, Syrisch 110-11, 114; Winter, Frau 111; Tadmor, "Cult figurines" 144-5 - Feels that the model for the Near Eastern figurines came from Egypt. She asserts that the statuettes that she researched and which show some of the same characteristics as the Qudshu stelae, except for the divine attributes, e.g., frontality, nudity, frequently a Hathor wig, originated in Egypt, or were manufactured locally imitating the Egyptian style; see also p. 157 - where Leibovitch is quoted as comparing these figurines with the Egyptian "concubine figurines".

⁹⁵ ANEP # 465, 469 a and b; Pritchard Palestinian esp. pp. 32; Stadelmann, Syrisch 110; Winter, Frau 113-4, 184, Abb. 38 - 43, s.a. Abb. 162, 163; Helck, "Qudshu" 218 - disputes the idea that the Qudshu figure could be traced to the Syrian-Palestinian clay figurines but maintains that she descended from the Syrian-Mesopotamian goddess who also stands on a lion and unveils herself. Usually the goddess in Mesopotamia stands on a bull.

labeled her a goddess or an idol.⁹⁶ Many of these clay tablets of a naked woman have been dug up in the 'sacred' areas of towns.⁹⁷

Other important indications of her foreign origin are her name, Qudshu, which can be related to the semitic root gds,⁹⁸ as well as her crown consisting mainly of a sun(?) disc and lunar crescent.⁹⁹ But in spite of all of this material evidence it is not possible to demonstrate the existence of a 'qudshu' goddess in the Near East, not even as a variation of the Astarte/Anat type.¹⁰⁰

The representations of Qudshu can be divided into two main types: Qudshu alone, and Qudshu in a triad with Reshef usually on her left hand side, and the ithyphallic Min standing on her right side. Of the latter type seven representations are extant

⁹⁶ Helck, "Qudschu" 219; ..., Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 497; Pritchard, Palestinian 3; Stadelmann, Syrisch 112-3; Tadmor, "Cult Figurines" 138-173, esp. 140, 170; Winter, Frau 266-7.

⁹⁷ Tadmor, "Cult Figurines" 164.

⁹⁸ Boreux, "Stèle" 679-80; Helck, "Auftreten" 7-8; ..., Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 497 n.146; Stadelmann Syrisch 116; Winter, Frau 111.

⁹⁹ Leibovitch, "Kent" 27 #7, 8, 9; 29 #14; 30 #16; plate I fig.1; Winter, Frau 111 n.104.

¹⁰⁰ Edwards, "Relief" 51; Fulco, Canaanite 23; Helck, "Qudschu" 217; ..., Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 497; Pritchard, Palestinian 3; Tadmor, "Cult Figurines" 140, 161-4; Winter, Frau 111.

(BM 646,¹⁰¹ Cairo,¹⁰² Louvre,¹⁰³ Turin,¹⁰⁴ Copenhagen,¹⁰⁵ Vienna,¹⁰⁶ and BM 817¹⁰⁷).

All seven images depict Qudshu in frontal view standing on a lion that walks towards her left. BM 817, the top, the right side of the stele, and the bottom have been destroyed, therefore the goddess' head, the Lion(?) and the god Reshef(?), are missing. On five of these stelae Qudshu wears the Hathor wig.¹⁰⁸ On the BM 646 and the Cairo stelae Qudshu wears no crown, except there does seem to be an indication of a sistrum on the BM 646 stele. Turin, Vienna and the Louvre show a lunar crescent with a solar or lunar disc. On the Copenhagen stele the crown is said

¹⁰¹ ANEP 304, #473; Boreux, "Stèle" 675, 685 fig. 4; Fulco, Canaanite 17; Leibovitch, "Kent" 23-4, 31-4, plate I fig.1; Pritchard, Palestinian 33; Winter, Frau 110-11, Abb. 36.

¹⁰² ANEP 304, #470; Leibovitch, "Kent" 28; Pritchard, Palestinian 33.

¹⁰³ Boreux, "Stèle" 673-687, especially plate I; also ANEP 305, #474; Fulco, Canaanite 15-6; Leibovitch, "Kent" 27; Pritchard, Palestinian 3.

¹⁰⁴ Boreux, "Stèle" 675, 682 fig.3; Fulco, Canaanite 16; Leibovitch, "Kent" 28, plate II, fig.1; Pritchard, Palestinian 34.

¹⁰⁵ Leibovitch, "Kent" 26.

¹⁰⁶ Boreux, "Stèle" 675 fig.2; Fulco, Canaanite 16; Leibovitch, "Kent" 25, 27-8; Pritchard, Palestinian 34.

¹⁰⁷ Boreux, "Stèle" 675; Fulco, Canaanite 16-7; Leibovitch, "Kent" 24-5, plate I fig.2.

¹⁰⁸ BM 817 excepted, and I have seen no photo of the Copenhagen stele.

to consist of a sistrum.¹⁰⁹ On the stele that is now in Vienna, Qudshu carries nothing in her hands. In all the other representations she carries flowers (mainly lotus flowers) in one hand and snakes¹¹⁰ in the other. On the BM 817 stele she has a bunch of lotus flowers in her right hand but her left hand has been destroyed.

The BM 646, Louvre, Vienna, and BM 817¹¹¹ show ithyphallic Min standing on Qudshu's right side. On the Turin stele Min is not ithyphallic. Behind Min, his naos is delineated on the Turin, BM 646, BM 817, and Louvre stelae. On both of the BM stelae, 646 and 817, Min is standing on a pylon. On all pictures his left arm is not depicted, while his right arm is raised and carries a flail. On a sixth stele - Cairo - Min has been replaced by the god Seth, who carries a sceptre in his left hand, nothing in his right hand. On this same stele the god Reshef, who is usually depicted as standing on Qudshu's left hand side has been replaced by a woman who carries the ankh sign in her left hand, nothing in her right hand. It looks as though this

¹⁰⁹ Helck, Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 497.

¹¹⁰ Helck, Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 497-499, on pp. 497-8 the author presents an outline of the various attributes of the several Qudshu stelae. He labels the snakes - 'Zwiebel' for BM 646 and Cairo - and for Copenhagen: 'lotus and bud'; ..., "Qudschu" 218; Olyan, Asherah 71 n.5.

¹¹¹ As noted above I was able to find four photographs of the BM 646 stele - on all of them Min is represented as ithyphallic, except in the picture from Boreux, "Stèle" 685 fig.4, where the erect phallus has been omitted.

female figure has been engraved to replace a previous image of Min, since one can still detect an erect phallus in front of her. It is on this stele also that Qudshu presents the flowers with her left hand¹¹² - to the woman who is standing on Reshef's side, and snakes with her right hand - to Seth who is standing in Min's usual position.

The god Reshef has been depicted on Qudshu's left hand side on the stelae from Vienna, Turin, the Louvre and BM 646. He has been broken off from BM 817. On the Vienna stele one can discern him only very faintly. On the Louvre monument he wears the tall white crown of Upper Egypt as he also does on the Turin stele. He carries a spear in his right hand, as he also does on BM 646 and Turin. In his left hand he carries an ankh sign on BM 646, but on the Turin impression he carries a club. The BM 646 Reshef wears a head band with a gazelle head decoration in front.¹¹³

Reshef has been depicted on four out of seven triad stelae. He looks very staid carrying a spear three times, an ankh twice, and a club once.¹¹⁴ Altogether, that is four pictures out of thirteen that portray Reshef with Qudshu - therefore Helck's remark:

Trotzdem muss sich ein spezieller Grund dahinter verbergen, und ich möchte annehmen, - da sich ja die

¹¹² Helck, "Qudschu" 217-8; Leibovitch, "Kent" 28.

¹¹³ Fulco, Canaanite 29.

¹¹⁴ Fulco, Canaanite 24-5.

Vorstellung sexueller Mächtigkeit bei einer Kombination einer nackten Göttin mit dem ithyphallischen Min und dem 'dahinstürmenden' Reschef als naheliegend einstellt.¹¹⁵

seems to be an exaggeration.

Of the first category, Qudshu alone, we possess six representations: Berlin,¹¹⁶ Winchester,¹¹⁷ BM #60308,¹¹⁸ Cairo,¹¹⁹ Ehnas,¹²⁰ and Moscow.¹²¹ Of all of them photographs are easily available, except of the Ehnas stele.

All show Qudshu en face, except the one housed in Cairo, where she is depicted in profile. Five of the six depict her as standing on a lion walking towards her left. On the BM #60308 there is no lion.¹²² On the Ehnas stele there is supposed to be

¹¹⁵ Helck, Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 498.

¹¹⁶ ANEP 304, #471; Leibovitch, "Kent" 30; Pritchard, Palestinian 33.

¹¹⁷ Edwards, "Relief" 49-55, plate III; Leibovitch, "Kent" 28-9; Tadmor, "Cult Figurines" 164; Winter, Frau 112-3, Abb. 37.

¹¹⁸ Edwards, "Relief" pl. IV; Leibovitch, "Kent" 30.

¹¹⁹ ANEP 304, #472; Leibovitch, "Kent" 29; Pritchard, Palestinian 33; Stadelmann, Syrisch 116.

¹²⁰ Leibovitch, "Kent" 30; Stadelmann, Syrisch 116-7.

¹²¹ Leibovitch, "Kent" 29-30, plate II fig.2; Stadelmann, Syrisch 117.

¹²² Edwards, "Relief" 49.

an overlarge lion but the goddess has been destroyed.¹²³ In comparison to the lions in the triad monuments, the lions in Qudshu alone are more decorative.

Four of the Qudshus wear the Hathor wig: Berlin, Winchester, BM #60308, and Moscow. The headdress does display some variation, Berlin - sistrum, pillar, crescent and disc; Winchester - not very clear,¹²⁴ BM #60308 - sistrum, Cairo - crown of feathers¹²⁵ or plants, Moscow - crescent. On the Winchester and BM #60308 stelae Qudshu carries snakes (onions?) in her left hand and lotus flowers in her right hand.¹²⁶ On the Berlin stele she is represented as holding a snake in each hand, whereas the Moscow and Cairo stelae show her as holding snakes in her right hand and lotus blossoms in her left.

On two stelae a worshipper presents himself/herself in front of the goddess. On the Cairo picture it is a female devotee and on the Moscow stelae it is a male suppliant.

The donor of the Berlin stele has caused some philological debate. The inscription has been translated as: "...la véritable épouse T3-K3 r.t la justifiée." The name T3-K3 r.t is supposed

¹²³ Stadelmann Syrisch 116-7.

¹²⁴ Edwards, "Relief" 49-50.

¹²⁵ Pritchard, Palestinian 39-40.

¹²⁶ Edwards, "Relief" 50; Helck Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 497-8.

to be translatable as "une hierodule",¹²⁷ thus relating the portrayal of Qudshu to the gds, with the interpretation that she was a cult prostitute.¹²⁸ The question is therefore, was there cult prostitution practiced in Egypt, and if so, who influenced whom in the promotion of this practice.

Having examined the thirteen (eleven) representations of Qudshu, seven in the triad context, and six where she is depicted alone, one can delineate her foreignness, i.e. similarity with the Near Eastern prototypes, as well as the Egyptian tendency to assimilate,¹²⁹ e.g. displaying symbols¹³⁰ associated with Hathor and other Egyptian divinities. Because of this variety some of the conclusions drawn previously by scholars must be examined again. For instance - Qudshu is not the only goddess portrayed nude and en face. The sky goddess Nut has been rendered in this fashion at least once.¹³¹ The god Bes is always portrayed in

¹²⁷ Leibovitch, "Kent" 23, 30; Stadelmann, Syrisch 116-7.

¹²⁸ Boreux, "Stèle" 679; Leibovitch, "Kent" 23.

¹²⁹ Boreux, "Stèle" 677; Helck, "Auftreten" 13-4; but Tadmor, "Cult Figurines" 144-145 - asserts that the figurines found in Palestine were either imported from Egypt, or were produced locally imitating an Egyptian model.

¹³⁰ Sistrum, lunar (solar) disk, lotus, snake.

¹³¹ ANEP 315, #543 - although this example is of a later date.

frontal vie. But it must be admitted that it is usually only divine children who are represented in the nude.¹³²

Helck¹³³ argues that the Qudshu figure can be traced to the goddess in Mesopotamia who stands on a lion¹³⁴ and unveils herself. It is only in Egypt where she is depicted completely in the nude, and it is through the Egyptian influence that the figure is then brought into Palestine, where again she assumes some clothing,¹³⁵ as well as some further symbolic development, e.g. holding goats instead of flowers, and not having the lion pedestal, which means, loosing her divine attribute.

It is only in the Egyptian context then that this figure is totally nude and a goddess. Keeping in mind, that the rendition of nudity in ancient times, was much more complex than the mere portrayal of eroticism, the reason for Qudshu's, as well as the clay figurines', nakedness, might theologically be more subtle,¹³⁶ than the habitual assumption that it indicated a connection with

¹³² Hornung Conceptions 121-2; Brunner, "Amarna-Prinz" 49-50.

¹³³ Helck, "Qudschu" 218-9.

¹³⁴ Helck, "Auftreten" 8; ..., "Qudschu" 218-9; Pritchard, Palestinian 35, 37-8; Tadmor, "Cult Figurines" 164-5; Winter, Frau 272-296 - in Mesopotamia she usually stands on a bull.

¹³⁵ Helck, "Auftreten" 8; ..., "Qudschu" 8; ANEP #464.

¹³⁶ Gross, "Nacktheit" 1556-7; Oepke, " " 773-6.

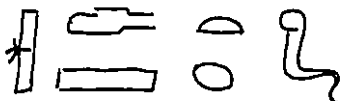
a hypothetical fertility rite.¹³⁷ Actually, the artistic canons for the portrayal of the fertility aspect are well known:

Die Merkmale sind eindeutig: ungewöhnliche breite Becken, dicke Oberschenkel und Fettleibigkeit.¹³⁸

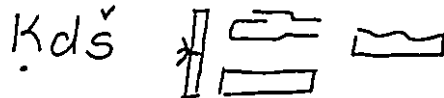
Qudshu does not exhibit any of these 'fertility' characteristics.

Since colour in the portrayal of the Egyptian divinities was of importance,¹³⁹ and on some of the stelae colour remnants have been preserved,¹⁴⁰ it might be of interest to consider this aspect in reevaluating this 'foreign' goddess in the Egyptian pantheon.

Five of these thirteen depictions have laudatory phrases addressed to the goddess. Four (the Louvre, Vienna, Turin and Berlin) name her:

variant:  transcription: kd.d.s

which translates as: Qudshu. There is one more time that this spelling has been used and that is for:



¹³⁷ Helck Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 497; Sharma, "Nudity" 7-10; Pritchard, Palestinian 87; Tadmor, "Cult Figurines" 171.

¹³⁸ Scholz, "Fürstin" 535, see also pp. 538, 540-7, 551.

¹³⁹ Griffiths, "Symbolism of Red" 81-90; Keel, Hohelied 216; Kees, Farbensymbolik 413-479.

¹⁴⁰ Edwards, "Relief" 50.

important goddesses of western Asia".¹⁴⁷ Stadelmann in his analysis¹⁴⁸ tries to show that gds is descriptive of 'Anat' and of 'Astarte', using as his basis, 1. the direction of the hieroglyphs on the stele, and, 2. the citation from II Krt 198: lqds atrt srm, "der Heiligkeit der Atirtu der Tyrier". According to Gibson¹⁴⁹ the quote should read:

(197) ...lqds (198) a[trt.]srm." - "he came to the sanctuary of Athirat of the two Tyres.

Thus gds does not translate as 'Heiligkeit' here, but as 'sanctuary'.¹⁵⁰ Although Stadelmann's hypotheses is most engaging, the question must be asked whether the word gds would have been taken over into Egyptian still meaning 'holy' of either places, things,¹⁵¹ or aspects of divinity, so that this epithet: "Die Heiligkeit der Anat" and "Die Heiligkeit der Astarte" would

¹⁴⁷ Edwards, "Relief" 50; Helck, "Auftreten" 9; ..., "Qudschu" 219-220; ..., Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 512 n.145; Pritchard, Palestinian 66-8, 78-81; Tadmor, "Cult Figurines" 170; see also: Hornung, Conceptions 33-60, 91-9 - his ideas on the word n.t.r and on Egyptian syncretism are of interest at this point.

¹⁴⁸ Stadelmann, Syrisch 113-5; Winter, Frau 112-3; see also Edwards "Relief" 51, where the author claims that no Canaanite text has been found which mentions a triune goddess; Fulco, Canaanite 23 n.116.

¹⁴⁹ Gibson, Canaanite Myths 87.

¹⁵⁰ Helck, "Qudschu" 217.

¹⁵¹ Helck, "Auftreten" 8, 13-4; Kees, Ägypten 278 - the author discusses the relationship between a god's name and his hieroglyphic sign.

have made sense to the Egyptian devotee. In Egyptian the hieroglyph commonly used to cover all the assorted aspects of 'holy' is:  dsr.¹⁵²

Out of seven dedications by the donors, three are women, three are men, one is a man and a woman. Thus the argument that it is 'mostly' women who have dedicated these stelae, which in turn has been understood as tacit confirmation of Qudshu's connections with the fertility cults¹⁵³ is not valid. The same goes for the prayers that have been engraved on the stelae. On the whole they are extremely non committal and do not stipulate any precise favour the devotee requests of the goddess, but general health and well being.¹⁵⁴

Some people have made the suggestion that Qudshu is a manifestation of the kingship idea, since she was in all probability imported by the pharaoh on his return from his Asiatic campaigns.¹⁵⁵ Others believe that she was more popular with the common people, since as a foreign import she fulfilled

¹⁵² Hoffmeier, Sacred in the Vocabulary of Ancient Egypt.

¹⁵³ Helck, Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 498.

¹⁵⁴ Boreux, "Stèle" 681ff.; Helck, "Auftreten" 9-10; ..., "Qudschu" 220.

¹⁵⁵ Fulco, Canaanite 30-2; Helck, "Auftreten" 1-14; ..., Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 499, 504 - Helck refutes this idea here.

functions for which there was no divinity in Egypt - e.g. a feminine counterpart to Min was missing.¹⁵⁶

At Thebes Amon¹⁵⁷ was worshipped under the guise of the ithyphallic Min and his consort was Hathor. Hathor was also claimed as the feminine compliment to many of the gods at a number of temples.¹⁵⁸ So, why not here, for Min the creator god, since, anyway, Qudshu assumes the emblems that are peculiar to Hathor: the Hathor wig, the sistrum, and the horns¹⁵⁹ with the sundisk¹⁶⁰ and also the lotus flowers.¹⁶¹

Some have asserted that Qudshu might have found most of her clientele among Syrian immigrants to Egypt, who were holding fast to this divinity from their former homeland.¹⁶² This avowal is

¹⁵⁶ Helck, "Auftreten" 7-9; ..., "Qudschu" 217-20; ..., Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 498-9 - the author claims, that since Hathor was the goddess of the regulated love life, she could not assume the position of the goddess of the elemental, physical eroticism that was therefore assigned to Qudshu, also p. 505; Stadelmann, Syrisch 118; Wolff, Hosea 88.

¹⁵⁷ Hornung, Conceptions 274-5, 279.

¹⁵⁸ Hornung, Conceptions 277.

¹⁵⁹ Helck Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 497-8; Stadelmann, Syrisch 115-6; Many writers interpret the crescent as horns and equate them with Hathor's cow horns - but I do not discern any cow horns on any of the Qudshu stelae, except perhaps on the Berlin impression - but that is such a difficult piece to analyze because the picture has been incised and is only in bare outline.

¹⁶⁰ Baines, Atlas of Egypt 212; Hornung Conceptions 277; Helck, Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 506.

¹⁶¹ Pritchard, Palestinian 36.

¹⁶² Boreux, "Stèle" 683.

supposed to be evident in the peculiarity of the inscription, betraying a group of people, working at the necropolis of Thebes, who are not quite 'at home' in the language and writing of Egypt.¹⁶³

The workers' colony in charge of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings has been studied extensively. Has it been found that (m)any of the workers were of foreign origin?¹⁶⁴ This privileged community of specialists was supposed to consist of natives, jealous of their prerogatives, who handed down their work and responsibilities from father to son over many generations.¹⁶⁵ If foreign artists were employed to decorate the pharaonic tombs, would the overseers not have made certain that these experts were more proficient in the sacred language and signs?!¹⁶⁶

This somewhat strange but beautiful goddess graced the divine horizon of the Two Lands for only a short time. After the Ramessid era Qudshu seems to have disappeared from the Egyptian

¹⁶³ Boreux, "Stèle" 686; Edwards, "Relief" 51; Helck, "Auftreten" 11-12; ..., "Qudschu" 220 n.1; Stadelmann, Syrisch 110, 117-8.

¹⁶⁴ Brunner-Traut, Ägypter 204 - unless they were the slaves kept by the official workers of the necropolis.

¹⁶⁵ Boreux, "Stèle" 686; Brunner-Traut, Ägypter 202-214; Helck, "Auftreten" 9-10; Kees, Ägypten 217; Romer, Ancient Lives 23.

¹⁶⁶ Kees, Ägypten 165-6; Otto, Priester I: 87-9.

religious scene.¹⁶⁷ The manifestations of her existence are too few in number, and still generate too much doubt, for us to assume easily that she is an indication that cult prostitution was an integral part of the well established official cult of Egypt.

¹⁶⁷ Helck, "Auftreten" 3, 12-13; ..., Beziehungen zu Vorderasien 499; Pritchard, Palestinian 86-7.

D. Hierodouloi and Hetaerai

Frequently, while trying to explain the role of the *πειρ* two Greek words are being used as synonyms to define them: *ἱεροδουλοι* and *ἑταῖραι*. According to Liddell the *ἱεροδουλοι* were mentioned at a very late date,¹⁶⁸ probably for the first time in the third century B.C.E., whereas the word *ἑταῖρος* has a longer history. It carries the connotation of "association, brotherhood.... of a social group in Crete.... at Athens or elsewhere, political club or union for party purposes...." It can also mean: ".... generally, friendly connexion, friendship, comradeship,.... of or belonging to companions to prostitute oneself,... keep company with,... a man,... to be a courtesan,... of a man,... factions, clubs,... ties of party,... horse guards of the Macedonian kings,... harlotry,... lewd man,.... comrade, companion, in Hom. esp. of the followers of a chief, comrade-in-arms, messmate,....pupil, disciple, e.g. of Socrates,... members of a religious guild."¹⁶⁹

Besides having a long history the word hetairai developed a great variety of meanings, but usually when used in the feminine it carries the connotation of: "(... Gefährtinnen, lat. amicae), euphem. Sammelbegriff für Frauen, die für Geld Geschlechtsverkehr

¹⁶⁸ Liddell, Greek 821.

¹⁶⁹ Liddell, Greek 700.

gewährten, meist im Gegensatz zu Dirnen (*πόρνοι*) für gebildete Halbweltdamen gebraucht...."¹⁷⁰

Since Greek wives were usually not well educated but responsible only for the household, it was not considered reprehensible for men to associate with hetairai, who were trained in music, dance, poetry, and could entertain a man intelligently. *ἑταῖραι* have frequently been depicted on Greek vases, and at least forty comedies have been named after them. Some famous hetairai were Aphasia, Phryne, and Thais. Some even were divinized after their death.¹⁷¹

It was Strabo who, while writing about the history of Corinth, equated the *ἑταῖραι* and the *ἱεροδούλοι*, and asserted that cult prostitution had been practiced at the temple of this wealthy city, which in its turn had produced even more wealth for this metropolis.¹⁷²

And the temple of Aphrodite was so rich that it owned more than a thousand templeslaves, courtesans, whom both men and women had dedicated to the goddess.¹⁷³

Conzelmann in his article analyses the various literary sources, to show that the story of the fifty (or a hundred, or a thousand?) *ἱεροδούλοι* | *ἑταῖραι* at the temple of Aphrodite in

¹⁷⁰ Volkmann, "Hetairai" 1122.

¹⁷¹ Volkmann, "Hetairai" 1122-3.

¹⁷² Conzelmann, "Korinth" 152-166, esp. 158.

¹⁷³ Strabo, Geography 8.6.20.

Corinth, is not based on the facts as described in the sources¹⁷⁴ but is still being perpetuated by modern scholars.¹⁷⁵ His contention is that Strabo, who originated in Asia Minor, knew quite well what hierodouloi were.¹⁷⁶ Because of the reputation of Corinth, as a wealthy but debauched harbour town at the cross roads of the trade routes, he was certain that the two, hierodouloi and hetairai were one and the same in this city in former times. Of the contemporary Roman town he does not make any such allegations.¹⁷⁷

The reputation of the Corinthian Aphrodite temple is based on a misinterpretation of a poem written by Pindar praising a victor of the XIII Olympiad, called Xenophon, in which it is stated that for his victory celebration this Xenophon had vowed to Athena a procession of fifty prostitutes. That he donated them to a temple bordello was asserted by Strabo at a later date.¹⁷⁸ Strabo is the only one who ever asserted that cult prostitution was practiced in Corinth. Since this type of religious observance would be foreign to Greek sensibilities, it

¹⁷⁴ Conzelmann, "Korinth" 157-162.

¹⁷⁵ Bömer, Sogenannte 82 n.3, 99 n.3, 156; Conzelmann, "Korinth" 155 n.4; Volkmann, "Hetairai" 1123.

¹⁷⁶ Conzelmann, "Korinth" 158; 164; s.a. Kreissig, "Tempelland" 378.

¹⁷⁷ Conzelmann. "Korinth" 153, 157.

¹⁷⁸ Conzelmann, "Korinth" 158-160.

is rather strange that no other classical writer ever mentioned this rite.¹⁷⁹

The same type of misinterpretation happened to the recital of the Persian wars when the city's population participated in offering sacrifices so that a future catastrophe might be averted. The names of all the participants were recorded, and Simonides composed a poem celebrating the glorious outcome. It was Athenaeus who makes out of the Corinthian women hetairai.¹⁸⁰

The more recent digs at Corinth, disprove, archaeologically, the anecdotes that vast numbers of cult prostitutes could ever have been active at the Corinthian temple, either during Roman times, or in the temple of the pre-destruction era.¹⁸¹

The hetairai certainly existed. They could in all probability be equated with the Hebrew zonot, prostitutes who practiced their trade for a number of practical and secular reasons. It is the use of the word hierodouloi in relation to hetairai which makes the whole story so much more scintillating. But the word hierodouloi is of a much later origin. The first

¹⁷⁹ Bömer, Sogenannte 181.

¹⁸⁰ Conzelmann, "Korinth" 160-2.

¹⁸¹ Murphy-O'Connor, St. Paul's Corinth 55-7.

indication of the word is recorded in the third century B.C.E.¹⁸²

Liddell describes hierodouloi as:

ἱεροδουλεία, ἡ company of *ἱεροδουλοι* ... :
 - also - *δουλεία* ... -
ἱεροδουλος, ὁ, ἡ temple-slave...; of

the Nethinim, LXX, I Es. 1.2, al; esp. of temple
 courtesans at Corinth and elsewhere, Str. 8.6.20,
 6.2.6; also of men, Id. 11.4.7, al.¹⁸³

As the mention of the *נְתִינִים* (I Esdras 5:29; Josephus Ant. XI 3, 10) which have been translated with hierodouloi, indicates, the word had been used quite loosely to describe very different phenomena in a variety of ancient religions.¹⁸⁴ As a matter of fact it is questionable whether the term hierodouloi was even considered a good translation by the author of Esdras in the LXX, since in II Esdras 2:43, 58, and 17:46, 60, he does not translate the word with hierodouloi but only transcribes the word with nathinaioi, nathinin, and nathinim.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Otto, Beiträge zur Hierodulie 9, 27.

¹⁸³ Liddell, Greek 821.

¹⁸⁴ Scholl, "IEPODOYLOS" 466; Dougherty, Shi:kûtu 90-91.

¹⁸⁵ Kreissig, "Tempelland" 379; Otto, Beiträge 48 n.14-17; Weinberg, "Netinim" 355-71, esp. 358.

In modern research the netinim have consistently been equated with hierodouloi¹⁸⁶ but Weinberg tries to show that judging by the available data found in the MT version of the Bible the netinim were not attached to the temple,¹⁸⁷ but were registered members of the community at large, albeit of the lower stratum,¹⁸⁸ therefore not hierodouloi at all. In all probability, they were artisans of the royal household and of the temple, living in the vicinity of both institutions on the Ophel.¹⁸⁹

Dougherty compares the nethinim to the shirkûtu mentioned in some Babylonian documents.¹⁹⁰

In Egypt, where the term might have originated¹⁹¹ a difference must to be made between the hierodouloi and the priests.¹⁹² There is no indication that hierodouloi participated

¹⁸⁶ Delekat, Katoche 106 n.3; Otto, Beiträge 10; Weinberg, "Netinim" 355-7.

¹⁸⁷ Weinberg "Netinim" 358-9; s.a. Delekat, Asylie 195 - "Aber Sänger und Torhüter stehen in der Liste zwischen Leviten und Tempelsklaven (nethinim), und I Chr. 15, 16-24 gehen die beiden Ämter ineinander über." Kreissig, "Tempelland" 379.

¹⁸⁸ Weinberg, "Netinim" 357.

¹⁸⁹ Delekat, Asylie 230; Weinberg, "Netinim" 368.

¹⁹⁰ Dougherty, Shirkûtu 90-91.

¹⁹¹ Bömer, Sogenannte 152, 157, 162; Otto, Beiträge 10-1.

¹⁹² Otto, Beiträge 11, 49 n.25, 18, 27.

in the cult action at all.¹⁹³ They are the lay element of a temple personnel but are not tied to a temple. They do have an undefined relationship to a specific deity.¹⁹⁴ The problem arises when one tries to delineate the responsibility of these lay people within the temple structure or the cult. What really is a cultic action or function? Is it preparing the house of the gods for the next liturgical ceremony by such actions as sweeping, making sure the lamps are lit, etc.¹⁹⁵ Do cultic acts also include such duties as, for instance, guarding the temple, 'Türhüter sein'.¹⁹⁶

Otto calls the hierodouloi 'Gotteshörige',¹⁹⁷ who dedicated themselves to a divinity for a time or for all times.¹⁹⁸ This type of consecration could be done for one person or for large

¹⁹³ Scholl, "IEPODOYLOS" 475-8, 480, 482-5, 487-8; Bömer, Sogenannte 177; Delekat, Katoche 90-3, 98-107 - the author asserts here that the hierodouloi were not able to participate in the cult because they were slaves, except for the didumai who represented the goddesses Isis and Nephthys during the funeral liturgy accorded the Apis bull; Kreissig, "Tempelland" 378-80 - states that the main difference between the katoikes and the hierodouloi is the cultic responsibility of the latter; Otto, Friester I: 116-8 - declares that hierodouloi were priests of lower ranks, but in Beiträge 32, 49 n.26 he refutes this, his former statement.

¹⁹⁴ Scholl, "IEPODOYLOS" 475, 478, 487; Otto, Beiträge 34.

¹⁹⁵ Otto, Beiträge 18, 31.

¹⁹⁶ Delekat, Katoche 24; Otto, Beiträge 36.

¹⁹⁷ Otto, Beiträge 11; Bömer, Sogenannte 183.

¹⁹⁸ Delekat, Asylie 216, 307; ..., Katoche 93-98.

groups of people by the person himself or by somebody else. Judging by the evidence of the papyri that mention the hierodouloi,¹⁹⁹ they are usually native born Egyptians or sometimes Egyptianized Greeks.²⁰⁰ From the papyri it can also be deduced that the divinity worshipped was a god/dess honoured in an Egyptian cult at an Egyptian temple.²⁰¹

In hierodoulia it is not just the religious ideas that are the important underlying concepts, but the economic and sociological ramifications were also responsible in forming the structure and ideology of this form of consecration.²⁰² The occupations of the hierodouloi, as indicated by various papyri, are the trades, commerce, and the renting of land, all of which presuppose a certain amount of legal freedom.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Some are cited in: The Oxyrhynchus Papyri Part III (1903) - 519: 13, 14, pp. 254-5; Part VII (1910) - 1050: 21, pp. 203-4; s.a.: Otto, Beiträge 28, 40.

²⁰⁰ Scholl, "IEPODOYLOS" 475, 480, 482, 484-7.

²⁰¹ Otto, Priester I: 116, 119, 409; Scholl, "IEPODOYLOS" 479-485, 487; Otto, Beiträge 32 - the asserts that there is no difference in this regard between an Egyptian or a Geek cult.

²⁰² Conzelmann, "Korinth" 164; Otto, Beiträge 10-11.

²⁰³ Bömer, Sogenannte 178; Delekat, Katoche 98-106, 158-9 - the author seems to base his whole article on the idea that the hierodouloi were slaves, and when they were released from slavery they became katochoi who still had some service obligations due their master, in this case the divinity or the temple; Otto, Beiträge 10-11, 49 n.22, 28, 33; ..., Priester I: 117, 316, II: 299 n.3; Scholl, "IEPODOYLOS" 475, 479-480, 482-3, 486-7.

Some authors assert that the hierodouloi were freed slaves who were then attached to an aphrodisium²⁰⁴ thus stressing their connection with temple prostitution and underlining the veracity of the reports in Strabo. As Bissing has demonstrated in his critique, the aphrodision was not a bordello dedicated to the pleasures of Aphrodite the goddess of love, but was a name given to festivals and to objects sacred to this foreign goddess.²⁰⁵

As already mentioned previously, Conzelmann, describes the hierodouloi and says:

Das Wort bezeichnet an sich nicht die Ausübung sakraler Prostitution, sondern ist eine religionssoziologische Bezeichnung.²⁰⁶

Since the word hierodoulos can only be traced to Ptolemaic times, scholars have tried to connect it with an older Egyptian term such as b3k,²⁰⁷ which seems to indicate some form of self dedication to a god through the means of a temple. Scholl does not agree with this alignment.²⁰⁸ Also, up to the present, any of

²⁰⁴ Delekat, Katoche 64-71; Scholl, "IERODOYLOS" 479; Otto, Priester I: 316 n.3, II: 332 n.316 A, 3.

²⁰⁵ von Bissing, "Aphrodision" 375-381, esp. 376, 378 n.2.

²⁰⁶ Conzelmann, "Korinth" 164.

²⁰⁷ Otto, Beiträge 30; 61-2 n.133, 135, 137; Delekat, Katoche 103 #11; Pestman, Marriage 171 #11; Reiser, Königliche 25-6 n.1.

²⁰⁸ Scholl, "IEPODOYLOS" 488-92.

the texts that deal with the hierodouloi do not mention women as members of this group.²⁰⁹

The širkûtu of Babylonia and Assyria offer a view of the development of a similar practice as the Egyptian hierodoulia within the culture of the Two River history.²¹⁰ Again in this geographical area, mainly because of the report given about Babylonia by Herodotus, and because so many of the slaves freed in Susa were women, has it been assumed that these women were donated to the temples as prostitutes. Bömer disagrees with this assumption for three main reasons: 1. there is no evidence that cult-prostitution was ever practiced in Susa; 2. the whole evidence shows that the documents describe a release from slavery, not a dedication to a temple, and 3. most of the women recorded were about thirty years old, or older - too old for the trade of prostitution.²¹¹

We do know from Babylonian documents that the širkûtu lived by a strict moral code and purity was exacted from them at their ordination.²¹² The dedication could be performed through a

²⁰⁹ Scholl, "IEPODOYLOS" 492; Otto, Beiträge 31; ..., Priester I: 117-8 - here the question of the two sisters, the didumai must still be evaluated, which Delekat, in Katoche does quite extensively.

²¹⁰ Bömer, Sogenannte 98-101; Dougherty, Širkûtu; Otto, Beiträge 43.

²¹¹ Bömer, Sogenannte 99-100.

²¹² Dougherty, Širkûtu 65-67, 81, 90 n.120.

variety of means to various divinities of Babylonia, either by parents dedicating their children, or masters a slave, or self dedication. The main reason for such a consecration seems to have been the honouring of a divinity, although economic reasons have also been ascertained. Some of the members of this order seem to have inherited their status from a parent who was a ✓ sirke. Within the temple cult the duties they performed were minor, such as assisting in processions or guarding the temple or working within the temple's material possessions. Even outside the temple precincts they were able to perform a variety of trades, but the trade of prostitution has never been mentioned in any of the documents.²¹³ Not much is known about their family life, although some of the members had spouses and children, and were able to adopt children and assume legal responsibilities, but the temple had ultimate control over a ✓ sirke.²¹⁴

Menzel²¹⁵ cites documents detailing consecrations as temple oblates for Assyria. She also specifies several examples where children, whose mother was a ✓ harimtu²¹⁶ had been brought up by a

²¹³ Dougherty, Shirkûtu 89.

²¹⁴ Dougherty, Shirkûtu 26-28, esp. 27 n.20, 31-32, 34, 42, 65, 88-89.

²¹⁵ Menzel, Assyrische Tempel I: 24-33; II: 23* esp. n.254.

²¹⁶ Menzel, Assyrische Tempel II: 24* n.263 - "ohne dass daraus die Institution der Kultprostitution im offiziellen NA Tempelkult sich ableiten liesse."

relative, were, when they reached adulthood, promised to a god or temple by those caretakers.

The *ἱεροδούλοι* of the Greek world should be examined independently of Egypt. Here their legal status must be defined somewhat differently. The word hieros was frequently used interchangeably with hierodoulos to describe the members of the state of *ἱεροδουλία*, and therefore it is more difficult to draw definite distinctions between the hieroi and the hierodouloi.²¹⁷ Hieroi were people, animals or things; people could be real slaves, manumitted slaves, free persons, orphans, foundlings, or freely dedicated persons. They were hieroi because they belonged to a sanctuary, but the terminology was coloured by local history and custom.²¹⁸ So, there were *ἱεραὶ γυναῖκες* in Hellas responsible for the cult to Rhea at Methydrion. They were the only ones who had access to the goddess' grotto.²¹⁹

Fauth mentions the hierodouloi in his article on the Greek cult and states that:²²⁰

Fremd ist ihr dagegen die Existenz regelrechter Tempelstaaten mit umfangreichen Hierodulenpersonal, wie sie in Vorderasien üblich sind.

²¹⁷ Bömer, Sogenannte 149, 162, 181; Otto, Beiträge 44, 71 n. 220.

²¹⁸ Bömer, Sogenannte 150-1, 161.

²¹⁹ Bömer, Sogenannte 154.

²²⁰ Fauth, "Kultus" 376.

Here also the term hierodouloi was found very late, about the second century B.C.E., although temple slaves had been mentioned earlier.²²¹

The use of the word hieroi is less numerous further East. It is the word hierodouloi which replaces it in frequency in this region, indicating its Eastern origin.²²²

In the Eastern territories of the Greek world there were temples owning large tracts of land that had to be worked for the upkeep of the temple. Large numbers of people were involved, people whose attachment to a given temple was legally defined.²²³ For example, there were whole villages of peasants or katoikountes, who worked the temple lands and who only paid a phoros to the temple in acknowledgement of their dependence on the sanctuary.²²⁴ These katoikountes had no cultic obligations, and therefore were not considered hierodouloi.²²⁵ Sometimes these katoikountes were dedicated to a temple because they went with the land or the animals, for which they were responsible, and which had been donated for temple use. This did not necessarily

²²¹ Bömer, Sogenannte 155; Otto, Beiträge 10, 49 n.20.

²²² Bömer, Sogenannte 152, 178.

²²³ Bömer, Sogenannte 149, 159; Otto, Beiträge 44.

²²⁴ Welwei, "Abhängige Landbevölkerungen" 98.

²²⁵ Delekat, Katoche 159-161; Welwei, "Abhängige Landbevölkerung" 100.

mean that they were legally unfree. They could form communities and live their lives quite normally, outside their work obligations to the temple or the divinity.²²⁶

Commagene, provides the example par excellence, for the large temple states ruled by the priesthood. A large percentage of the katoikountes consisted of hierodouloi, Strabo mentions about 6000,²²⁷ who were considered the property of a temple, or specifically a god, but slaves in the true sense of the word they could not be considered either, since the kyrios, the high priest was not able to sell them.²²⁸ These hierodouloi worked the land, and performed other jobs²²⁹ that needed to be done in communities that numbered in the thousands.²³⁰

It is here, in this geographical region, that scholars will insist that cult prostitution was practised by female members of

²²⁶ Bömer, Sogenannte 149; Welwei, "Abhängige Landbevölkerung" 101-4.

²²⁷ Strabo XII, 2, 3.

²²⁸ Strabo XII, 3, 34; Bömer, Sogenannte 168;

²²⁹ Otto, Beiträge 45; Welwei, "Abhängige Landbevölkerung" 111.

²³⁰ Bömer, Sogenannte 160, 177; Kreissig, "Tempelland" 377, 379.

the hierodoulia.²³¹ In Caria, parthenonoi were found that were hostels for the female personnel or female hierodoulai.²³²

It is impossible as yet, to determine with certainty, how one became a hierodoulos, or what variety of activities the term hierodoulia covered. Otto described the problem of the concept of *ἱεροδουλία* well when he said: "das 'Schillernde', das dem Hierodulenbegriff eigen ist".²³³ The term was used quite differently in various religious traditions, and geographical regions,²³⁴ and it also changed as it travelled through time.²³⁵ We do not know either how much personal dedication was involved in being a hierodoulos especially since the term seems to cover all sociological classes, from the aristocrats of a given society to the slaves.²³⁶

Bömer's idea is, that in Greece, slaves were often released from slavery by either being given or consecrated or sold to a god.²³⁷ But it is this study that demonstrates how even from city to city, and from island to island, the nuances of this

²³¹ Bömer, Sogenannte 82 esp. n.3, 163, 168; Conzelmann, "Korinth" 164-5; Otto, Beiträge 45.

²³² Bömer, Sogenannte 173.

²³³ Otto, Beiträge 11, 40.

²³⁴ Bömer, Sogenannte 97, 165.

²³⁵ Otto, Beiträge 44.

²³⁶ Bömer, Sogenannte 179, 183.

²³⁷ Bömer, Sogenannte 10.

terminology changed ever so slightly.²³⁸ Even the concept of freedom versus slavery, which underlies the concept of hierodoulia varies between the East and the West.²³⁹ By the time the Roman sources are examined the word does not even get used, but once.²⁴⁰

One of the major problems while doing this research has been the ambiguity of the vocabulary. Even for a common word such as 'prostitution' it was difficult to obtain a good clear definition. For older terms that literally carry thousands of years of obfuscation we are presented with practically insurmountable complications in trying to gain some understanding of the topic under discussion. 'Hierodoulia' is one such term. Modern writers will use the word as though it describes the sex act, ignoring the excellent research which has been carried on in regard to its economic, religious and social characteristics. From the evidence of the primary sources, papyri and temple documents, it can be stated with a certain amount of conviction that prostitution was not one of its earmarks.

²³⁸ Otto, Priester II: 299 n.3; Scholl, "IERODOYLOS" 488.

²³⁹ Bömer, Sogenannte 175, 178-83, 186; Delekat, Katoche 158.

²⁴⁰ Bömer, Sogenannte 178.

III. Summary

After perusing the Egyptian religion, under aspects of cult, personnel, and iconography, as it developed for about three thousand years, and as it has been recorded by the Egyptians themselves, as well as by some notable classical authors, it does not seem to be so manifest anymore that the ritual of temple prostitution was a regular part of the religious life of Two Lands.

Chapter II

Cult Prostitution in Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia is another geographical region that must be examined for the existence of cult prostitution, because it is said that Israel was influenced in this practice by her neighbour nations. Again, Mesopotamia is a country covering a variety of cultures and languages over a long span of time. Although the Sumerians imprinted their culture on the whole region in the very beginning, it being non-Semitic, its thought pattern and customs had to be adapted by the Semitic peoples that took over the leadership in the area, the Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians, etc. Both Kramer¹ and Jacobsen² give warning of the difficulty in reading and interpreting the texts that have been found.

¹ Kramer, "Cuneiform Studies" 493 n.31.

² Jacobsen, "Mesopotamian Religion" 469.

I. Herodotus

The study of the Two River Region must also begin with the classical writer, Herodotus, whose account of the religious situation in Babylonia has stimulated the research into the question of cult prostitution in antiquity, over the last two thousand years.

Herodotus, in his description of Babylonia (Book I, verses 178-200) mentions religion three times. The first time, in verses 181-2, he describes a ziggurah:

181. These walls are the city's outer armour; within them there is another encircling wall, wellnigh as strong as the other, but narrower. In the midmost of one division of the city stands the royal palace, surrounded by a high and strong wall; and in the midmost of the other is still to this day the sacred enclosure of Zeus Belus, In the centre of this enclosure a solid tower has been built, of one furlong's length and breadth; a second tower rises from this, and from it another, till at last there are eight.

Then he writes that in this main temple of Babylonia, which was within the royal compound, the cult was aniconic, and that the divinity was served by a priestess who had to remain chaste - just like the priestess in Thebes, Egypt or the prophetess of Apollo at Petara in Lycia.

In the last tower there is a great shrine; and in it a great and wellcovered couch is laid, and a golden table set hard by. But no image has been set up in the shrine, nor does any human creature lie therein for the night, except one native woman, chosen from all women by the god, as say the Chaldeans, who are priests of this god.

182. These same Chaldeans say (but I do not believe them) that the god himself is wont to visit the shrine and rest upon the couch, even as in Thebes of Egypt, as the Egyptians say (for there too a woman sleeps in the temple of Theban Zeus, and neither the Egyptian nor the Babylonian woman, it is said, has intercourse with men), and as it is likewise with the prophetess of the god ... she is shut up in the temple during the night.

Herodotus then, in verse 183, describes the second shrine in the same compound, which does contain an image of the main divinity of Babylon, which he calls Zeus. Here though, he concentrates on the wealth accumulated and displayed by the temple - somewhat in the manner of I Kings 6, where the Biblical author boasts of the wealth that Solomon expended on the house of the Lord.

In the Babylonian temple there is another shrine below, where is a great golden image of Zeus, sitting at a golden table.

The third time Herodotus mentions the religion of Babylon, is the now famous story, in Book I, 199, where the women have to sell themselves for a sexual act with a stranger.

The foulest of Babylonian custom is that which compels every woman of the land once in her life to sit in the temple of Aphrodite and have intercourse with some stranger. Many women who are rich and proud disdain to consort with the rest, drive to the temple in covered carriages drawn by teams, and there stand with a great retinue of attendants. But most sit down in the sacred plot of Aphrodite, with crowns of cord on their heads; there is a great multitude of women coming and going; passages marked by line run every way through the crowd, by which the stranger men pass and make their choice. When a woman has once taken her place there she goes not away to her home before some stranger has cast money into her lap and had intercourse with her

outside the temple; but while he casts the money he must say, 'I demand thee in the name of Mylitta' (that is the Assyrian name of Aphrodite). It matters not what the sum of money; the woman will never refuse, for that were a sin, the money being by this act made sacred. So she follows the first man who casts it and rejects none. After their intercourse she has made herself holy in the goddess's sight and goes away to her home; and thereafter there is no bribe however great that will get her. So then the women that are fair and tall are soon free to depart, but the uncomely have long to wait because they cannot fulfil the law; for some of them remain for three years, or four.

If one examines the three stories one notices the sparse factual detailing of the first two accounts, whereas in the third description, Herodotus waxes eloquent as when he relates how the rich ladies act towards their poorer sisters, or about the advantages the comelier women have over those that are less beautiful.

In both verses 181 and 182, the Babylonian woman as well as the Theban woman are just called 'woman' (*yuvh*). No special label is given them so that we might ascertain what their status is vis-à-vis the cult described. In Egypt we know that the Theban woman, the counterpart of the Babylonian woman, was the 'God's Wife'. Since in Babylon this woman is the only one allowed into the temple we would assume that she also had some status within the hierarchy of the temple personnel. What it is is not given - but we are told that she had to remain chaste.³

³ Fehling, Herodotus and his 'Sources' 123.

In verse 183 no ministrant is mentioned. The priests who supplied Herodotus with all of this information are called Chaldeans, both in 181 and 183. Once they are labeled in verse 181.

In verse 199 - the women in the market are described as: gunaika, pollai, gunaikes, gunaikon, and epammenai.⁴ No other term is used to describe them as members of the local temple personnel. Herodotus stresses that the sex act had to be performed outside (*ἔξω τοῦ ἱεροῦ*) the temple precincts.⁵ The whole escapade seems to be kept quite separate, in language and tone, by Herodotus from his first two accounts, which deal with the official cult of the city.

One must wonder whether or not, Herodotus was using the word *Ἀφροδίτη* not as though he were talking about the goddess, Aphrodite herself, but in the manner of many of the writers who have used the word Aphrodite or its derivatives to denote sexual love,⁶ and therefore the temple talked about would be a temple to the goddess of love, not the divine goddess necessarily, but

⁴ Liddell, Greek 606 and 741.

⁵ Although much has been written about 'sacred prostitution', the terminology dealing with the subject is, to a great extent, vague and unfocused. There is a question of where cult prostitution was practiced in order to make it sacred prostitution (see comments on p.7 in the Introduction). See also n.255 of Chapter IV, Israel, D. Hosea 4:14, where "the men go aside with harlots".

⁶ Liddell, Greek 293.

erotic love personified - thus a brothel, a place sacred (^cἱρὸν) to erotic love. After all, within our own context: "God is Love", but when we speak of "making love", of "being in love", we do not necessarily talk of the God who is Love.

I would, therefore, agree that Herodotus' account in verse 199 be not denied, but be treated as an anthropological record and not necessarily a religious one, and thus not be brought into line with the other two accounts in verses 181 to 183, which he himself says quite explicitly, do describe the temple and cult of Babylon.

There is, however, one aspect of Herodotus' account which could vitiate my theory. He says:

But most sit down in the sacred plot of Aphrodite, with crowns of cord on their heads;

Harris⁷ in his article tries to demonstrate that as a sign of dedication to the god Shamas the naditu woman wore a cord of Shamas. This 'cord' as a sign of dedication is mentioned only once in the indigenous sources, but, according to Harris, later on in history it was reported in a distorted manner by the classical writers.

⁷ Harris, "Naditu" 115 n.25: "References to women with wreathes of string or cord about their heads appear in Herodotus, The Persian Wars I:199, Strabo XVI:I,20 and in the apocryphal Book of Baruch 6:43. In all of these passages the women are considered to be prostitutes. But we may have here a late tradition which harks back to the Old Babylonian woman."

II. Mesopotamian Sources

Because of the authority of Herodotus' account the religious life of the Mesopotamian countries had been labeled as deviant and exciting. Before completely accepting or rejecting his report it would be most appropriate to let the natives speak for themselves through their own records. Therefore I will look at some of the rituals, myths, festivals, personnel and customs of the region of the Two Rivers, as they have been recorded mainly on cuneiform tablets, in order to ascertain whether the liturgy of sacred prostitution was part of their ceremonial which could have had a bearing on Israel's exercise of this rite.

A. 'Hieros Gamos'

The term *ἱερός γάμος*, originally a designation for the marriage of two divinities⁸ as portrayed in the fine arts⁹ and celebrated in literature,¹⁰ was used eventually to label the supposed imitation of this union by cultic functionaries, such as the rulers of the land, with a priest or a priestess.¹¹ The New Year's festival in Babylonia, the Akitu festival, was thought to be the most eminent occasion for the performance of this ceremony of ritual copulation.¹² This liturgy would have been performed at the New Year in order to compel the gods to provide the land and its occupants with the needed fruitfulness.

Some scholars believe that the ceremony of the hieros gamos was frequently celebrated in Mesopotamia in a symbolic manner, as, when for instance, the holy vestments of the high priest were

⁸ Frayne, "Notes" 11.

⁹ Asher-Greve, Frauen 9, 33, 43, 60, 95; Winter Frau 252-272, 313-368.

¹⁰ Adler, Background 192-3; Frayne, "Notes" 5-22; Kramer, "Cuneiform Studies" 485-527; Wolkstein, Inanna.

¹¹ Renger, "Untersuchungen" 58 - evidence of the entu priestess filling this role are not extant.

¹² Asmussen, "Bemerkungen" 167-8; Jacobsen, Tammuz 375 n.32, 388 n.80; ..., Treasures 39; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1358; Kramer, Sacred Marriage 49, 57, 63, 137 n.13, 148 n.19; McGuire, "Prostitution" 881; Soden, "Kultische Prostitution" 645; Wolkstein, Inanna 154; cf. Oden, Bible 68ff. - refutes this idea and discusses the influence of the thought the myth-ritual school had on Biblical exegesis during the last century.

sent from the main temple to other cities where the rite was to be commemorated.¹³ The union of the gods could also have been represented symbolically in a sacred theatrical.¹⁴

But other students of the ancient religions insist that these developments are late, having within historical times, been substituted for an earlier, actual imitation of the event.¹⁵ This point cannot be proven, but the theatrical depiction could just as well have been the prototype of the historically recorded drama from the very beginning.

Kramer¹⁶ has collected a number of cuneiform texts, dealing with the hieros gamos of the celestial couple, Inanna and Dumuzi, and has transcribed and translated them. He proposes to demonstrate the influence of these nineteenth century Sumerian

¹³ Schmökel, Heilige Hochzeit 12-3 esp. n.8.

¹⁴ Carr, "Song of Songs" 103-114; Frankfort, Kingship 296; Gaster, Thespis 77-90; Jacobsen, Treasures 27; Kramer, Sacred Marriage 67, 78-80, 84, 148; Roberts, "Freedom" 181-7; Whitley, Genius 50; Johansen, "Primitive" 67 - in the Nara cult of Australia: "Der Kult ist also ein Drama, das den Mythos zum Inhalt hat; aber die Aufführung des Dramas ist höchst unrealistisch."

¹⁵ Frayne, "Notes" 12; but: Dijk, "Sumerische Religion" 432-496, esp. 484-7 - "Es besteht kein Zweifel, daß der König in der Ur-III-Zeit Dumuzi repräsentierte und eine Priesterin Inanna-Ishtar. Wir haben mehrere Lieder und Duette, mit denen Priesterin und König einander vor der heiligen Hochzeit begrüßten. Diese Hochzeit war keine symbolische 'Götterhochzeit', wie sie in späten Ritualen erscheint.... Sie war die repräsentative rituelle Wiederholung eines Urzeitereignisses." (484-5).

¹⁶ Kramer, "Cuneiform" 485-527.

texts on Greek and Hebrew thought. Consequently they should be excellent in supplying us with evidence of this rite of and how this practice is thought to have infiltrated Israel.¹⁷

According to Kramer, who faults modern scholarship for not being able to "accept this whimsical and fanciful allegorical interpretation, attractive and inspiring as it may be",¹⁸ the 'Sacred Marriage' as described in the 'Song of Songs', was celebrated between a king and a votary of Astarte, the Canaanite goddess of love who was worshipped by Solomon.¹⁹ This supposed Canaanite rite is based on the Sumerian cult to Inanna and Dumuzi and its later development under the Semitic Akkadians.

Dumuzi was an ancient Mesopotamian god of vegetation and his feminine counterpart was Inanna (Ishtar). Whether he ever really had been a legendary human ruler cannot be proven. That the *ἱερός γάμος* took place between the two divinities Dumuzi and Inanna, which is celebrated in all of these poems, is quite acceptable, but that this mythology was then translated into liturgical practice is not as self evident as Kramer and Jacobsen propose.

¹⁷ Kramer, "Cuneiform" 486-7.

¹⁸ Kramer, "Cuneiform" 489.

¹⁹ I Kings 11:5.

The conclusion must be accepted that we really do not know what happened at the *ἱερός γάμος* ceremony.²⁰ As Kramer himself writes:

Our information on what actually took place during the ceremony is vague and contradictory. ... some of the description seems to contain more fantasy than fact.²¹

²⁰ Frankfort, Kingship 296; Frayne, "Notes" 7 - "the text nowhere describes an actual union between Sulgi and Inanna." 8, 14, 19-20, 21 - "The description of the ritual may have left out the mention of the sacred union of the priestess with the king (?) because it was not a central concern of the redactor, who was more concerned with the proper listing of the various food offerings necessary for the ritual"; Jacobsen, "Drama" 81-2 n.8; Jacobsen, Treasures 42-3; Kramer, Sacred Marriage 58, 151 n.13 and 14; Winter, Frau 252-272.

²¹ Kramer, Sacred Marriage 79.

B. The Akitu Festival

When writing about the Akitu festival and its connection with cult prostitution the same ideas as mentioned above must be reiterated. The festival, was an important celebration greeting the new year and imploring the gods for their blessings on the land and its inhabitants, human as well as animal. The reading of the whole Enuma Elish was an significant part of the many days of rituals performed in the temple.

During the recitation of this sacred epic, when describing the battle with the primal chaos²² and the subsequent conquest of the monster gods, scholars do not appear to stress that some priest needed to be murdered in order to dramatize the lessons of that story.

When therefore the reading about the union of the divine couple, the patrons of the city, is in progress, this marriage of the gods could have been represented symbolically in sacred play,²³ as has already been considered above. Also, the protagonists of the narrative, the statues of the two gods, could have been brought to the main temple and left together in the sanctuary, thus representing symbolically, the union between the

²² Gaster, Thespis 89-90; Jacobsen, "Drama" 73.

²³ Carr, "Song of Songs" 103-114; Frankfort, Kingship 296; Gaster, Thespis 77-90; Jacobsen, Treasures 27; Kramer, Sacred Marriage 67, 78-80, 84, 148; Roberts, "Divine Freedom" 181-7; Whitley, Genius of Ancient Israel 50.

divine couple.²⁴ The lines on the cuneiform tablets, which could enlighten us, have been damaged or are unclear as to their meaning.²⁵ In fact, we do not know what the agenda at the Akitu festival entailed.

²⁴ Fairman, "Worship" 197.

²⁵ Frankfort, Kingship 296; Jacobsen, "Religious Drama" 81-2, n.8; Jacobsen, Treasures 42-3; Kramer, Sacred Marriage 58, 79, 151 n.13 and 14; Winter, Frau 252-272.

C. The Qadishtu

The Semitic languages, other than Hebrew, had cognate terms of gdst, which because of their correlation to the Hebrew word have been translated as 'temple prostitute'.²⁶ According to the CAD the word gadashu in its various forms can mean:

1. to be free of claims; 2. to clean; 3. to make ritually clean, to purify - a. persons, b. buildings and divine images, or c. appurtenances for ritual. 4. To consecrate, dedicate; 5. to purify oneself.²⁷

From this root have been formed the nouns gadiltu, gadishshu, and gadishtu meaning: "a woman of special status."²⁸

In some texts such as those from Malku I, 133²⁹ persons are enumerated and the gadishtum is cited between the priestesses naditum and entu, thus proving that she did belong to the official temple personnel. According to CH 181:61 the gadishtum had the rights of a legal heir.³⁰ Various votaries are mentioned in sixteen laws which appear about seven times in the Code of Hammurabi. The gadishtum is mentioned only once, in CH 181.³¹

²⁶ . von Soden, "Hebamme" 121.

²⁷ CAD 13 (1982) 46-7.

²⁸ CAD 13 (1982) 48-50; cf. Renger, "Untersuchungen" 180.

²⁹ CAD 13 (1982) 48.

³⁰ cf. CAD 13 (1982) 48; Lyon, "Consecrated" 347, 357
n.32.

³¹ Lyon, "Consecrated" 341-360, esp. 343, 347, 349.

We also know that a gadishtum could adopt children as her own, and in later times was frequently associated with the task of nursing other peoples children. She was permitted to marry,³² and have children of her own.

Any religious responsibility within the cult of Ishtar for the gadishtum cannot be proven. She obviously did have a special connection to the goddess since her father dedicated her to that divinity,³³ but "there is no evidence of her being a prostitute".³⁴

Over the years, it has become noticeable, when reading the new information, and reassessing the knowledge that we already possessed, both from Egypt and from Mesopotamia, that many of the priestesses, that previously had been cited as participants in fertility rites, were members of the upper classes, even of

³² von Soden, "Hebamme" 119-121; Lyon, "Consecrated" 351.

³³ Lyon, "Consecrated" 357; von Soden, "Hebamme" 121; CH 181; CAD 13 (1982) 48.

³⁴ CAD 13 (1982) 50 gadishtu, section e.; Gruber, "Hebrew" 137-146; Menzel, Assyrische Tempel I, 28, II, 27* esp. n.306 - "In sämtlichen Textgattungen, die sich auf kultisches Leben in nA Zeit beziehen, gibt es keinerlei Hinweise auf Tempelprostitution, d.h. dass Prostituierte zum Tempelpersonal gehörten. In das Gesamtbild des offiziellen nA Kultes würde sich eine solche Institution nur schwer einordnen lassen; an das Tempelpersonal wurden sehr strenge Reinheitsmassstäbe angelegt, die sich auch auf die niederen Tempelfunktionäre erstreckten." Also n.308 - "'Tempelprostitution' ist aus keilschriftlichen (sumerischen, babylonischen, assyrischen, hethitischen) Quellen nicht nachweisbar."

royalty,³⁵ and that they tended to live to a ripe old age when compared to the rest of the population. By their consecration they were obligated to a life of chastity or celibacy.³⁶ Kilmer³⁷ proposes that many of these women would be dedicated to a divinity for a variety of reasons, such as a religious dedication which is difficult to prove.³⁸ Economics, so that the family inheritance would not be dispersed among other families or clans, was another recorded motivation. Kilmer devotes most of her article to the third purpose, birth control, which she proposes was essential during given periods of the history of the Land of the Two Rivers.

Population control is to be achieved by nature and the gods on the one hand, and deliberately, by man, on the other.

and

... fertility may be seen as a privilege and not a right.³⁹

³⁵ Harris, "Naditu" 123-4 - "By and large the naditu came from the upper strata of society. But, although one finds princesses among them, this class, unlike the earlier entu-priestesses, did not stem exclusively from royal families." For a similar manifestation in Egypt see: Blackman, "Position of Women"; ..., "Priest"; Robins, "God's Wife"; Sanders-Hansens, Gottesweib.

³⁶ Hooks, Sacred Prostitution 10-64.

³⁷ Kilmer, "Overpopulation" 160-177, esp. 171ff.

³⁸ Harris, "Naditu" 116-122.

³⁹ Kilmer, "Overpopulation" 173.

D. The Veil

Clothing, besides fulfilling its most obvious purpose, that of covering, protecting and ornamenting the body, has been used through the ages as a mark to designate members belonging to certain offices or groups of people. The crown of cords, as an insignia of a priestess, has already been mentioned above while we evaluated Herodotus' description of the religious officiants of Babylon. Another article of clothing that should be dealt with is the veil because the wearing of a veil by a gadishtum is an item frequently mentioned in relation to the gedeshah being a cult prostitute.

The CH stipulates that a married woman wear a veil in public, which was denied her if she were unmarried.⁴⁰ Thus the veil was considered a symbol of her married status. The CAD⁴¹ under the term 'harimtu - prostitute', Section (b) explains that

a gadistu whom no husband has married (must go) bareheaded in the street, must not veil herself, being a h. she must not veil herself

basing this on KAV 1 v 66, Ass. Code (§ 40), cf. *ibid.* 68. In *voll.* 13 (1982) p. 49 the CAD quotes the exact same Assyrian law and comes to the conclusion that:

⁴⁰ CAD 13 (1982) 49; s.a. Soden, "Hebamme" 121.

⁴¹ CAD 6 (1956) 101.

a g. who is married is veiled in public, one who is unmarried is bare-headed in public

again quoting KAV 1 v 61 (Ass. Code @ 40). The later research seems to bring in line our thinking with the overall tenet of the Code of Hammurabi, where the veil was an indication that a woman belonged to a man, whether within that contractual relationship she also had a special relationship to her god made manifest in her dedication as a gadishtum, a person of special status. The veil had nothing to do with being or not being a prostitute, but with being or not being married to a man.

III. Summary

Renger in his extensive article⁴² on the various classes of Babylonian priests, male as well as female, points out what we already know from Egypt, that many of the female priestesses (oblates?), were daughters of high ranking officials. He also stresses that chastity, temporary or to some degree permanent, was an integral part of their dedication. If any question arises as to the 'purity of intention' of their consecration within one of these priestly classes, the enigma should in all probability sought in the political realm, because of calculated interference and control of very important religious offices by the priestess' families for political gain, but never in the 'indiscriminate' use of sexual intercourse in the name of a divinity.

One aspect of the religious life of the Two River region that I did not examine, is the testimony of art. In Egypt I looked at the Qudshu stelae and tried to elaborate some of the problems that iconography contributes to the debate on the use of sex in the sacred ceremonies. In Mesopotamia the nudity displayed by the clergy in pictorial representations, has been another factor underlining the hypothesis of cult prostitution. In this paper there is not enough space to deal with that

⁴² Renger, "Untersuchungen" 58: 110-188, 59: 104-230, esp. 58:150-3.

particular problem. There are several modern scholars⁴³ who are treating the issue seriously, and perhaps these studies will help to shed some light on this topic of perennial interest.

⁴³ To mention only a two studies: Asher-Greve, Frauen in Altsumerischer Zeit; Winter, Frau und Göttin;

Chapter III

Cult Prostitution in Canaan

On the evidence of the Biblical passages that have stressed a licentiousness in polytheistic religions, it has been taken for granted that temple prostitution was practiced among the Semitic peoples in their fertility cults honouring mainly Baal or the goddess of love, especially in Babylonia and Phoenicia-Canaan,¹ and that this practice penetrated the Israelite religion because of the influence that Canaanite culture exerted on it.²

In this chapter the Ugaritic texts will be examined for evidence of such a ritual. The controversy, relating to sacred prostitution in the Bible, hinges mainly on the word *עֲרֹוּ*. Its cognate form *gds* has been found in the Ugaritic mythological texts as well as in the lists of the cultic personnel and should be scrutinized to ascertain the role these *gdsm* played within the Ugaritic cult.

¹ It has been stressed by a large number of authors that cult prostitution was practiced by the Semitic peoples. See note #1 in the Introduction.

² Alfonso, "Prostitution" 1244; Asmussen, "Bemerkungen" 167; "Prostitution" *Cyclopaedia* 666; Davis, "Prostitution" 881; Hauck, " " 581; Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1364; May, "Prostitution" 553.

I. The Mythological Texts

In the mythological texts various forms of qds have been used thirteen times.³ Qds is used as an adjective meaning 'holy'.⁴ It is the title of the goddess Athirat.⁵ It is used as a term to denote a 'holy place', a 'sanctuary'.⁶ Qds is the proper name of Athirat's servant,⁷ his full name is qds-(w)-dmrr.⁸

Throughout these mythological documents various divinities are portrayed as being sexually very active,⁹ as are also the gods of other Near Eastern nations. It is these allegories that have also been cited in support of the existence of cultic prostitution.¹⁰ This assumption is quite invalid.

³ Fisher, Ras Shamra Parallels I: 33, 34, 85, 483, 484; II: 26, 34, 92, 93, 104, 135; Gibson, Canaanite Myths 156; Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook; P. Xella, I Testi Rituali di Ugarit - I Testi. (Roma: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche. Centro di Studio per la civiltà Fenicia e Punica, 1981) 371, 380, 391.

⁴ CTA 3 A 13; 4 VII 29; 16 I 7.

⁵ CTA 2 I 21, 38; 17 I 4.

⁶ CTA 3 C 27, 14, 197; 17 I 27, 23, 65.

⁷ CTA 4 IV 16.

⁸ CTA 3 F 11; 4 IV 8, 13.

⁹ CTA 5 V 18-22; 23:33-56; 24:2.

¹⁰ Hvidberg, Weeping and Laughter 110; Kramer, Sacred Marriage 58; Lang, Monotheism 15; Pallis, Akitu 248; Roberts, "Divine Freedom" 181.

Mythological texts describe gods and heroes in a larger-than-life dimension:

... a myth is a story about gods or other superhuman beings myth is that expression of the creative imagination which interprets the real in terms of the ideal¹¹

That gods should be presented with human qualities and appetites, but on a superhuman scale, is acceptable. But, if then these gods were to be emulated in all their imagined prowess, it would only lead to frustration.

What would be the appropriate liturgical function to accompany the recitation of Anat's slaughter of the hundreds of warriors and then her wading and washing herself in their blood?¹²

Consider the proper reenactment of the most important mythological story of the fertility cult, Baal's death and resurrection as recounted in Baal and Mot (CTA 5-6).

If scholars are satisfied that these mythological texts can be interpreted symbolically as drama during the recitation of the sacred text, why then the insistence that the divine sexual exploits be reenacted realistically?¹³

¹¹ Gaster, "Myth" 481.

¹² CTA 3 B II 1-36.

¹³ Collins, Stem 39; Frankfort, Kingship 324-5; Gaster, Thespis chapter 4, 77-106; Jacobsen, Treasures 27; Rainey, "Kingdom" 119.

II. Economic and Administrative Texts (Lists)

In the economic and administrative lists the gdsm[✓] have been cited¹⁴ eight times, both male and female, as members of the cult personnel.

UT 63, 81, 82, 113, 1026 use the masculine plural ending. This grammatical form does not preclude that the groups mentioned did not consist of male and female persons.¹⁵ In UT 114¹⁶ we do not know what the exact ending might be, masculine or feminine.

UT 1004¹⁷ and 400¹⁸ cite the word in the feminine plural.

¹⁴ Fisher, Ras Shamra Parallels II, 67; Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook; Herdner, Corpus; Pfeiffer, Ras Shamra 39; Tarragon, Culte 138.

¹⁵ Collins, Stem 39 - gdst[✓] are not mentioned in the administrative lists but the gdsm denotes male and female personnel; Gray, Kings 349; Gruber, "Qadesh" 170-1; von Soden, "Stellung" 329.

¹⁶ UT 114 (CTA 73) - qd[sm][✓]: This is a list of ten lines citing corporations followed by numbers. The top part of the tablet is missing. The first decipherable line contains the name qd[sm] by itself. Since part of the word is missing, it is not known whether it ended in a masculine or feminine ending. The khnm could also have been on the missing part of the tablet, just before the qd[sm].

¹⁷ UT 1004 - [1 .] gdst[✓]: A large part of this tablet is missing, but the gdst (feminine) are listed by themselves without any khnm nearby; according to Gruber, "Hebrew" 148 - gdst here means the 'holy one' to whom the gifts are being offered - not a female gedeshah.

¹⁸ UT 400 (CTA 113) ... is a large tablet of which big pieces are missing. It lists names of corporations followed by numbers and the information is divided into columns. Column V,

Gruber¹⁹ declares, that on the occasions when the ending is feminine,²⁰ it is an indication of a proper name and not of a profession. Thus, according to him, the cultic functionaries mentioned in the Ugarit library, only appear in the masculine - no feminine members.

UT 2210 - glossary - gives the various meanings for qds[✓] - all have some connection with 'holy, or being set apart, or a divinity'. None gives an indication of the function of this cult personnel called qds[✓]m(t?).²¹

line 11, mentions the bn . qds[✓]t. The word is in the feminine. The khnm are listed later in column VI, line 21, without the bn; Gruber, "Hebrew" 147 - proposes that this is really a proper name.

¹⁹ Gruber, "Hebrew" 146-7.

²⁰ UT 400 (CTA 113) and UT 2163.

²¹ Collins, Stem 39; Gray, Legacy 213; Gruber, "Hebrew" 147; ... " עֲזָרָה " 170-1; Guglielmo, "Sacrifice" 90; Segert, Grammar 199; Soden, "Stellung" 329.

III. Summary

The word gds[✓] is used twenty-two times in these texts from Ras Shamra. Thirteen times in the mythological texts where it is used as a proper name of divinities or as denoting 'holy' as a characteristic of a person or thing.

It is used eight times in the administrative lists as a title of a class of cult personnel, without explaining their function within that cult. On these tablets, some scholars insist, the gdsm[✓] appear only in the masculine plural. The two times that the feminine form is used they are construed as personal names.

Since the Tanach has a tendency to be extremely anti-Canaanite in its tenor, it would not be acceptable to quote it as sole witness for the existence of cult prostitution amongst the Canaanites as has been done for so long.²² Thus these Ugaritic texts, having been taken as representative of Canaanite culture, give no evidence that might lead to the conclusion that prostitution was practiced as an integral part of the official cult²³ at Ras Shamra.

²² As was also done in the latest article on cult prostitution: Fauth-Stritzky, "Hierodulie" 75.

²³ Gray, Kings 343; Gruber, "Hebrew" 147; von Soden, "Stellung" 329 - "Dabei muß an eine kultische Prostitution wohl nicht unbedingt gedacht werden."

Chapter IVCult Prostitution in Israel

Through the years scholars have had a tendency to draw comparisons between Israel's traditional morally-motivated historical perception of God, with the religions of their licentious, fertility-conscious neighbours. There are several phrases and words in the Bible whose meaning has been construed as confirmation that at times the ancient Israelites were led astray, due to attractive foreign inducements, to participate in sexual fertility cults. Two of the now (in)famous Israelite institutions that are prone to be explained in a context of 'cult cum sex' are the high places and the *pe'or / shic'or*. In this chapter I would like to reexamine the *pe'or*, but also the links between them and the *shimr*, to see if their rightful 'Sitz im Leben' in pre-exilic Israel can be determined.

I. Qedeshim/Qedeshot = 'Cult Prostitutes'?

The interpretation of the gedeshim has presented problems to translators and scholars for the past two and a half thousand years. Words formed from the root קדש are used five hundred and seventy-nine times in the Tanach, and the meaning attributed to them has some aspect of 'holy, set apart, divine' in it.¹ Eleven times the word is translated with the term 'cult prostitute'.²

This equation, gedeshim = 'cult prostitute' has been challenged ever more frequently in recent times, mainly because Canaanite religion, as portrayed in the Ugaritic documents, has yielded no evidence to sustain such an comparison.

Also, newly discovered written sources from all over Asia Minor, as well as, a better understanding of previously unearthed material, are forcing a reassessment of our views on ancient religions and their mores.³ It was Herodotus' report about prostitution in connection with a temple in Babylon that made that city notorious for its religious ceremonial of sacred prostitution. The recording of this account has influenced

¹ Lisowsky, Konkordanz 1238-43.

² Genesis 38:21-22, Deuteronomy 23:17-18, I Kings 14:24, 15:12, 22:46(47) II Kings 23:7, Hosea 4:14, and Job 36:14.

³ Arnaud, "Prostitution sacrée" 111-5; Menzel, Assyrische Tempel I: 295-6; II: 27-8 n.301, 306, 312.

Biblical exegesis and theology, taking it for granted that the Israelite leaders had to wage a continuous battle against the evils of temple prostitution. As was demonstrated in the chapter on Mesopotamia this interpretation is not that self evident anymore.

In the following five divisions I will scrutinize the Biblical passages containing the term gedesh, -ah, -im, -ot to determine the problems inherent in the original MT text, as well as the problems that the translators have had with these documents.

A. Tamar: A Woman Procures Her Rights - Genesis 38

Although the word *נערה* appears three times in verses 21 to 22, all of chapter 38 must be studied if the true provenance of the word is to be decided.

When examining the meaning of the gedeshah in this story, it does not matter whether we consider the incident to be historically correct or only a saga relating the escapades of the eponymous hero-patriarchs of the future Israel. Since both words, *נערה* and *חור* have been used to describe Tamar⁴ it has frequently been made the basis for the contention that the *חור* were prostitutes, albeit a better class of prostitutes than the ordinary *חור* - they were cult prostitutes.⁵

Thus this account should be studied for some indication of pre- or early Israelite meaning or profession of the gedeshah, which would indicate that gedeshot were cult prostitutes who participated in the fertility religions of the peoples that inhabited Palestine before Israel appeared on the scene.

Genesis 38 interrupts the narrative recounting the deeds of Jacob which started with Genesis 27, and continued with the adventures of Joseph in chapter 37. Chapter 38 is an extraneous

⁴ Asmussen, "Bemerkungen" 183-4; Astour, "Tamar"; Collins, Stem 113-4.

⁵ Andersen, Hosea 370; Asmussen, "Bemerkungen" 183; Astour "Tamar" 186; Speiser, Genesis 300.

anecdote elucidating a point in Judah's genealogy.⁶ The tale is complete in itself,⁷ because Genesis 39 resumes the account of the Joseph cycle by relating his deportation into Egypt.

Because of its completeness and integrity scholars believe that chapter 38 gives evidence of the antiquity of the story, hearkening back to an old tribal account which the Yahwist retold in its entirety.⁸ As far as the time frame for the recording by the Yahwist is concerned, assumptions vary from the beginning of the Monarchy to the period of the Exile.⁹ Many scholars detect

⁶ The following authors try to illuminate the question of the genealogy within this plot using a variety of methodologies - Leach, Genesis structuralism; Emerton, "Examination" contests that method in some of its results; Luther, "Novelle" 177, 200ff. - analyzes the account as a novel and applies a literary critique to it, asserting that all the other themes of the gedeshah, and levirate marriage are all subordinate to the unfolding of the genealogy of Judah; Westermann, Genesis 37-50 43 - asserts that this narrative is not about the genealogy but that it is a story about a family and family law.

⁷ Holzinger, Genesis 227 - "... läßt sich in die Patriarchengeschichte nirgends einordnen"; Luther, "Novelle" 201, 205 - maintains that the novella was taken over by the author whole cloth and that he added verses 1-5, which do present a stylistic difference when compared with the remainder of the account; Westermann, Genesis 37-50 42 - claims that this tale ends the Jacob cycle, and that it records an anecdote about one of the sons of Jacob as Genesis 34 had done about Simeon and Levi, and the Joseph cycle will do for Joseph, Genesis 37-50.

⁸ Holzinger, Genesis 227; Luther, "Novelle" 177-206, esp. 177; Westermann, Genesis 37-50 42-43.

⁹ Lemche, Ancient Israel 57.

in the Yahwistic writings a definite similarity to the viewpoint of the Deuteronomist.¹⁰

6. And Judah took a wife for Er his first-born, and her name was Tamar. 7. But Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him. 8. Then Judah said to Onan, 'Go into your brother's wife, and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up off-spring for your brother.' 9. But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife he spilled the semen on the ground, lest he should give offspring to his brother. 10. And what he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord, and he slew him also. 11. Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, 'Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up' - for he feared that he would die like his brothers. So Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house. (Genesis 38:6-11)

Judah withheld his third son, Shelah, from a Levirate marriage to his daughter-in-law Tamar. Some scholars believe that this incident (verses 8-9) gives a clue to the changing social patterns within patriarchal Israel, and the surrounding peoples, from an acceptance of the Levirate marriage to the rejection of the same.¹¹

12. In the course of time the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died; and when Judah was comforted, he went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. 13. And when Tamar was told, 'Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear sheep,' 14. she put off her widow's garments, and put on a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; (*נחל עין*)

¹⁰ Westermann, Genesis, 37-50 42-43 - the author thinks that this tale exhibits traits evident of a strong and late oral tradition.

¹¹ Westermann, Genesis 37-50 46.

תַּחֲנִיחַ קָרָב-לָהּ רָעָה רַחֲמָנָה) for she saw that
 Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him
 in marriage. 15. When Judah saw her, he thought her
 to be a זֶנֶּחָה, for she had covered her face. 16. He
 went over to her at the road side (בְּדֶרֶךְ הַבַּיִת
 קָרָב-לָהּ), and said, 'Come, let me come into you,'
 for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law.
 She said, 'What will you give me, that you may come
 into me?' 17. He answered, 'I will send you a kid
 from the flock.' And she said, 'Will you give me a
 pledge, till you send it?' 18. He said, 'What pledge
 shall I give you?' She replied, 'Your signet and your
 cord, and your staff that is in your hand.' So he gave
 them to her, and went into her, and she conceived by
 him. 19. Then she arose and went away, and taking off
 her veil she put on the garments of her widowhood.
 (Genesis 38:12-19)

In verses 12-19, three points of interest arise which call
 for our attention: (a) Tamar's clothing, (b) the place where
 Tamar waits for Judah, and (c) and Judah's promise to send Tamar
 some payment for her services.

(a) Judah had sexual relations with the veiled woman,
 believing her to be a zonah. At this point the wearing of a veil
 becomes important because it is frequently mentioned as an item
 of clothing identifying the gedeshah as a cult prostitute.¹² But
 as has already been shown while discussing the Mesopotamian
 religion, the veil was a token that women wore to show forth

¹² Ruppert, Genesis 470 n.230; Over the years a variety
 of interpretations has been given for minor details in the
 narrative thus clouding the main issue. Holzinger, Genesis 228 -
 gives one more explication of the garment when he explains that
 when Tamar made use of the veil: ... "Es wird sich dabei um eine
 Profanierung des Brautgewandes handeln"; Luther, "Novelle" 177,
 179.

their married status. In CH the veil is not a sign of whether the woman is a prostitute or not.

Anyway, the explanation of this particular text is likely to be quite straightforward. Tamar was trying to seduce her father-in-law, in whose house she had lived for a number of years. She needed something to cover herself so that he would not recognize her (verse 16),¹³ so, she wore a veil.

(b) The phrase 'by the wayside' (*דרכו*) appears three times in the whole of chapter 38, but twice in verses 12-19. The first time it relates where, geographically, Tamar sat after having wrapped herself in a veil - 'sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah' (verse 14) - since she knew that Judah would have to come this way if he wanted to attend the sheep shearing at Timnah. Also, 'the road to Timnah' was part of the ancient roadway from Jerusalem (Jebus) to the coast, Jobneh.¹⁴ Public places, such as market places, road houses, and even sanctuaries,¹⁵ have always been considered excellent locations for *חיים* to look for business.

Verse 16 - Judah goes over to the veiled woman, 'at the roadside', whom he believes to be a *זונה*.

¹³ The RASHBAM and RASHI also interpreted Tamar's action in this manner: Adler, Background 226 n.219; also: Luther, "Novellen" 179.

¹⁴ Aharoni, Macmillan Bible Atlas 10.

¹⁵ Becher, "Isiskult" 81.

It is the third time in which *אֵלֶּיךָ* is mentioned that does present a problem and this will be dealt with in the next section.

(c) The promised payment for Tamar's services becomes a problem in the next section when the question of identification arises. In the mean time Judah gives her three items which distinguish him as a person of some importance. Eventually it is these articles which will justify Tamar's action and establish her future children as legitimate progenitors of the tribe of Judah.

20. When Judah sent the kid by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the hand, he could not find her. 21. And he asked the men of the place, 'Where is the *אֵלֶּיךָ* who was at Enaim by the wayside (*אֵלֶּיךָ* - *אֵלֶּיךָ*)?' And they said, 'No *אֵלֶּיךָ* has been here.' 22. So he returned to Judah, and said, 'I have not found her; and also the men of the place said, 'No *אֵלֶּיךָ* has been here.' 23. And Judah replied, 'Let her keep the things as her own, lest we be laughed at; you see I sent this kid, and you could not find her.'

24. About three months later Judah was told, 'Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the *אֵלֶּיךָ* ; moreover she is with child by *אֵלֶּיךָ* .' And Judah said, 'Bring her out, and let her be burned' (Genesis 38:20-24).

It is verses 20-23 that are of significance to this whole chapter. The identification of Tamar as a *אֵלֶּיךָ* when up until now she has been labeled a *אֵלֶּיךָ* presents the gist of the whole debate.

Judah sends his friend with a kid¹⁶ to pay Tamar. The friend could not find her. Hirah then "asked the men of the place: 'Where is the *נעִר* (the consecrated person, the votary, the person set apart) ...?'¹⁷ And they said, 'No *נעִר* has been here.'" (verse 21) When then Hirah returned to Judah he "said, 'I have not found her; and also the men of the place said, 'No *נעִר* has been here.'" (verse 22)

It seems that Hirah was reluctant to let the men of the village know that his friend had availed himself of the services of a prostitute,¹⁸ because the label *נעִר* is used all three times, only when talking with or about the men of the town. In the remainder of the story the actions of Tamar are again labeled that of a *נִיִּץ*. When it became known that Tamar was pregnant, having lived as a widow in her father's house, she was scolded a

¹⁶ Holzinger, Genesis 228 - elaborates the symbolism of the kid as an animal sacred to the goddess of love; so also does Westermann, Genesis 37-50 48.

¹⁷ Bird, "Image" 284 n.54; Speiser, Genesis 295-6, 300.

¹⁸ Adler, Background 229-30, esp. n.222; Hooks, Sacred Prostitution 167 - Adler cites Hooks where Hirah comes looking for a 'nun' when he really wants a prostitute. Adler argues that this ploy would have been of no avail, and anyway the word gedeshah is used in parallel with zonah. But, one can also say that in a small place, in a patriarchal society, illustrated by Genesis 38, the only women who could have had any kind of independence to receive visitors without family interference, would have been a recognized 'holy person', as well as a prostitute (Frymer-Kensky, "Law" 95). Both of them would also be very familiar with what was going on in the village. If, therefore Hirah found the 'votary' or 'nun', he could inquire of her where the prostitute might be, without letting the whole village know what he was really after.

זוֹנָה (an adulteress, secular prostitute) and her child(ren) to be, the offspring of the act of זְנוּוּת (of adultery, harlotry, - verse 24).¹⁹

Judah himself, with his friend's connivance (verse 22) tried to conceal the entire affair "lest we be laughed at" (verse 23) and pretended to have consulted a gedeshah (a consecrated person) whom now he wanted to pay. This fact though does not necessarily stipulate the fusion of these two professions.²⁰

The location of where Tamar had been active assumes importance in this context. When in verse 21 Hirah looks for the woman he asks "the men of the place, 'Where is the זְנוּוּת who was at Enaim by the wayside?'"

Since Hirah uses the exact same term for the location as verse 14 which described where Tamar the zonah sat, are the two, the זְנוּוּת and the זְנוּוּת the same after all?²¹ When the Israelite, the Yahwist, writes about Tamar he uses the word

¹⁹ Bird, "Images" 252, 258-62; Collins, Stem 87-89, 113-4, 117; Rost, "Erwägungen" 452.

²⁰ Contra: Speiser, Genesis 299-300; see also: Adler, Background 226-232.

²¹ Dion, "Cultic" 44 - the translator did not know who or what the gedeshim were, but wherever he could elicit a meaning from the context he would utilize it in his translation, thus Genesis 38, Deuteronomy 23:18 (17 in Gr.) and Hosea 4:14, he translates gedeshah with porne; Luther "Novelle" 180 - "Danach könnte man annehmen, daß die Institution der Qedesen ihren religiösen Sinn verloren haben - und daß gedeshah einfach Homonym von zonah geworden sei - wenn nur nicht die angeführten Stellen zu sehr dagegen sprächen!"

zonah, but when he lets the Canaanite Hirah talk about the same person, does he also let him use the terminology which is familiar to him, gedeshah?²² But the author nowhere gives any details about the background of Hirah or of Tamar.²³ All that is known is that both persons lived in Judah with Judah, and no clue to their origin is given. At most this is an indication of the antiquity of the tale since Israelite and Canaanite lived together in peace.

If a zonah/gedeshah used to sit regularly at that particular road side to ply her trade, it could not have been Tamar, because of her situation in her father's house. But she must have interfered with somebody else's business!?

A few questions arise which do not seem to have any answers, though it might be useful to keep them in mind. Enaim in all probability was a little place, 'on the road to Timnah'. Its present location is unknown.²⁴ Was it big enough to need the services of a נעִצָה? The profession of a zonah (secular prostitute) is more of a town's profession. A zonah who plied her trade on a regular bases in a small hamlet would have been

²² Adler, Background 331-2.

²³ Luther, "Novelle" 201-2, 205-6; Westermann, Genesis 37-50 44-45 - does not agree with the importance of the arguments whether Tamar was a Canaanite or not. By the time the story talks about her she belongs to Judah's family and her ethnic origins are therefore not important anymore. Judah's wife was a Canaanite and so in all probability was his friend Hirah.

²⁴ "Enaim" and "Enam" 100.

most disruptive to the social fabric of the area. A gedeshah, a person set apart, a votary, who was also a zonah because of her religious obligations within a (fertility?) cult, would she have found frequent enough call for her (religious) services in a place such as Enaim? Was there a temple nearby where her services would have been required? It is known that there was a temple at Ekron, which is situated in approximately the same geographical area, but historically it falls into the time of the Philistines.²⁵ But that was Ekron, whereas Enaim was small. Was this area known to have had at least a מזבח which required the services of a זונה / זונה ?

Perhaps the Yahwist is trying to show how from earliest times the Canaanites (Tamar)²⁶ with their unacceptable practices tried to influence the 'pure' Israelite religion (Judah, one of the patriarchs). But so far we have no proof that cult prostitution was a ritual practiced by the Canaanite gds. Neither can it be confirmed that Tamar was a Canaanite. Neither does the story even once refer to anything cultic, Israelite or otherwise - where then would the 'cult' prostitute come in vis-à-vis the sexual action recounted in this event? The word seems

²⁵ Dothan, "Ekron" 20-36.

²⁶ Emerton, "Examination" 90ff. - his and Leach's debate on whether Tamar was a foreigner or a pure blooded Israelite is based on Structuralist methodology.

to have been brought in artificially in such a manner as not to contribute anything to the narrative.²⁷

Most scholars who equate the *נעִטָּה* and the *זִנָּה*, will say that the gedeshah was a zonah, but not that every zonah was a gedeshah.²⁸ Therefore, Tamar wanted to act like a zonah. Judah understood her to be a zonah. If Tamar were a gedeshah, how did Hirah (Judah) know that? He did not recognize her (verse 16). That is why they had trouble finding her. If Tamar were a *נעִטָּה*, who could get married but not bear her own children due to her consecration as a gedeshah,²⁹ then why her worry to have her own children? If she were able to have her own children, physically as well as legally, being a gedeshah, she probably would have had them eventually, due to the cult prostitution she practiced.³⁰ In this event nobody could ever have been certain

²⁷ Luther, "Novelle" 204 - "Die Novelle erzählt Dinge (z.B. Qedesenwesen), deren Erwähnung der Art von J1 völlig widerspricht. Daß das Erzählte garnicht in den Zusammenhang von J1 passen würde, ist bei einem so bedeutenden Schriftsteller an sich schon Grund genug, es ihm abzuerkennen."

²⁸ Except for Gruber and Adler, who declare that gedeshah was another word for zonah, this question will be discussed in greater detail later on in the paper.

²⁹ Harris, "Naditu" 135 - The naditu was not permitted to bear children.

³⁰ Teubal, Sarah - the author contends that the Israelite matriarchs who are depicted in the Tanach as being infertile were so because of their status as priestesses enjoined to practice celibacy. When they finally did conceive, the child of blessing was a result of a union during the hieros gamos ceremony, see especially pp. 126ff.

of the paternity of her child(ren), which would have negated her desperation to have children by three men of the same family, probably relating to the ancient Near Eastern social mores, which put great value on the correct paternity of the child for reasons of inheritance and the continuance of the family unit.³¹

Could this be a literary reminder of a so-called *ἱερός γάμος*, which the Yahwist/Deuteronomist used to demonstrate from what important personage, a *נֶצֶחַ*, the ancestors of the tribe of Judah, eventually the most important tribe within the Israelite confederacy, descended.³² Other important people in ancient times frequently elaborated a descent from a divinity who had united himself with a specially consecrated person such as a 'wife of god'³³ or an entu,³⁴ but in the Israelite context instead

³¹ Here Adler's premise that the paternity of the child was extremely important in the ancient Near East culture, as elaborated in The Background for the Metaphor of Covenant as Marriage in the Hebrew Bible, is of importance because she examines its influence on Biblical writers.

³² Frymer-Kensky, "Law" 96 - the last time that divine beings consorted with human partners is when the sons of god intermarried with the daughters of men - Genesis 6:1-4; Luther, "Novelle" 180, 200 - introduces the idea that Tamar may have been Judah's bride.

³³ Since the pharaoh was regarded as the physical son of the sun god - "son of Re" of his body" and was known as the "good god", his having intercourse with his own wife in order to produce the next heir, was interpreted as the divinity producing the next "son of Re". This idea was addressed in the chapter on the Egyptian Religion under the aspect of the Hieros Gamos.

³⁴ CAD IV, entu, section b) - the legend of Sargon records "my mother was the e.-priestess, I do not (therefore) know my father" since usually these "priestesses were supposed to

of God uniting with his consort or a priestess, it was Judah with a *ḥēṣṣ*.³⁵

More official documents, such as cuneiform glossaries, have been inaccurate when equating classes or professions of persons.³⁶ An anecdote recounting the legendary origins of the people of Israel could also not be too scientific in drawing conclusions about the revered ancestors. Could the Yahwist be saying that although Tamar admittedly acted like a zonah, she was still 'holy', set aside for greater things, because due to divine choice her children of 'harlotry' became forebearers of the people of Israel?³⁷

If so, her tale to a certain extent resembles the literary pattern of the patriarchal stories where all the matriarchs have difficulty in procuring offspring (Sarah, Genesis 11:30; Rebekah, Genesis 25:21; Rachel, Genesis 29:31), and are only blessed with issue through YHWH's special intervention. Tamar also has difficulty in having a child, but this is due to man's interference. Neither is it a god who intervenes in her behalf.

live in chastity"; Frayne, "Notes" 5-22; Renger, "Untersuchungen" 131.

³⁵ Teubal, Sarah 127.

³⁶ Harris, "Naditu" 107-8.

³⁷ Harris, "Naditu" 135 - The author claims that after the naditu had disappeared from the religious scene of Mesopotamia, memory of her had been retained and was reinterpreted. "The naditu then who was not permitted to bear children was later associated with the saving of infants."

The desired outcome of her tale is due solely to her own initiative.³⁸

Thus, is perhaps too much being read into this narrative? Tamar acted knowingly like a zonah, in order to seduce her father-in-law, to secure her rights which Judah had slighted, and have children within Judah's family. Although recognizing that she employed unacceptable actions to obtain her rights, the Bible does justify her on the grounds that she had been unjustly treated.

Genesis 38 will always present a problem in regard to the interpretation of the *נִיֵּץ / נֶעֱצָר* question. In order to clarify this subject further, the inquiry into the *נִיֵּץ* and their Canaanite influence, which was raised above, will be discussed in greater detail when dealing with the relationship between the *נִיֵּץ* and the *רְעֵצָה* in the Books of Kings.

³⁸ Westermann, Genesis 37-50 51-52 - is adamant in asserting that this is a secular story: Tamar does not pray for divine help. God, nor anything religious, is mentioned anywhere in the text.

B. Deuteronomy 23:17(18)-18(19)

In this text the Deuteronomist ordained certain ideals that he deemed essential for the holy people of Israel. He proscribes the state(?) or profession(?) of the *נעִר* and the *עֵר* for the true Israelite. Since these are injunctions which have been affiliated with other social manifestations in Israel, such as the *נַיִס*, the *פֶּדְיָה*, and with *פְּדֻיָּה*, it will be absorbing to ponder the ramifications of these laws.

17. There shall be no *נעִר* of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a *עֵר* of the sons of Israel.

18. You shall not bring the *נַיִס* of a *נַיִס*, or the *פְּדֻיָּה* of a *פֶּדְיָה*, into the house of the Lord your God in payment for any vow; for both of these are an abomination to the Lord.

In chapter 23 of Deuteronomy the author deals with matters such as who may be a member of the assembly of Israel (verses 1-8) and how to behave in camp for the duration of a holy war (verses 9-14). The question of how to deal with a run-away slave who might be seeking asylum in Israel is discussed in verses 15-16. Verses 19-20 prohibit the practice of usury among Israelites, while verses 21-23 regulate the performance of personal vows. The whole chapter closes (verses 24-25) with some practical advice with regard to the stealing of food when a person is hungry.

Although this chapter deals with a variety of topics its overriding concern appears to be cultic correctness,³⁹ as verses 1-14, 21-23, as well as 17(18)-18(19) make clear. Just as verses 1,2,3, and 8, stipulate who may or may not be a member of the Israelite community, so verse 17 tells the Israelite, once she/he is a member, that she/he may not become a *נעִר* or a *עֵר*⁴⁰

There are four types of people discussed in these two verses, 1.) a *נַיִם* , 2.) a *נעִר* , 3.) a *עֵר* , and 4.) a *נָסוּ* .

The problem arises from the structure of that particular section of Deuteronomy 23. In the parallel construction of verses 17(18)-18(19), a synonymous parallelism has been seen, where the second part defines or repeats the meaning of the first part of the passage.⁴¹ Since of these four types of persons described, we know what a *נַיִם* is and does, she has been used

³⁹ von Rad, Deuteronomy .144-148.

⁴⁰ Here it would be advisable to keep in mind that the translator of the LXX considered this passage to be fraught with difficulty and therefore translated verse 17(18) twice. He translated it the first time using porne for the gedeshah in Deuteronomy 23:18a, and porneuon for the masculine singular in 23:18b, meaning 'fornicate'. Immediately afterwards, he tried again and used the term telesphoros for the gedeshah, it being translated by 'bring fruit to perfection, ... initiation in the mysteries, ... toll, custom, ... able to fulfil or accomplish' For the masculine singular he uses teliskomenos, 'an initiate, a hierodoulos'.

⁴¹ Dion, "Cultic" 44-7; van der Toorn, "Female" 200.

to define both the *עֶצֶר, תַּעֲצֵר*, as well as the *זֶדֶן*.⁴²

1.) *תַּעֲצֵר* : According to this Deuteronomic law a zonah was not allowed to use the money which she had received as her *זֶדֶן* to defray the cost of any expenses that she might have incurred making a vow to YHWH. If an Israelite is not to exact interest from a brother Israelite (verses 19-20), how then could an Israelite use another Israelite for pleasure, or let himself be used in such a manner, and then use the profit thus gained to pay him who had just redeemed Israel from slavery.⁴³ Also, if YHWH is, and Israel should be concerned about and humane to foreign slaves (verses 15-16), how then could money obtained from the usufruct of another Israelite be used in the house of the Lord?⁴⁴

Van der Toorn⁴⁵ in his recent article refutes the idea that the gedeshah was a cult prostitute but posits the idea that this law was formulated in response to a contingency in ancient religions, where women were most prone to make vows which brought

⁴² von Rad, Deuteronomy 147-8; de Vaux, Ancient Israel 384.

⁴³ Josephus, Antiquities IV, 8, 9; von Rad, Deuteronomy 148; Rudolph, "Präparierte Jungfrauen" 68 n.6.

⁴⁴ Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy" 261.

⁴⁵ van der Toorn, "Female" 193-205.

about 'socially disruptive situations'.⁴⁶ Usually the expense of vows was defrayed in movable goods. If the woman, being dependent on a man who might not want to honour her promises,⁴⁷ was not able to defray the cost of her vow, she then would turn to prostitution in order to pay the incurred expenses.

Here the question arises, why do vows necessarily entail the payment of money as presumed by the author? The devotee could promise her god, things⁴⁸ or actions which she were able, within her confines, to offer, without necessarily denigrating herself and therefore also the divinity.⁴⁹ The ancients did think that prostitution was not the most enviable job in life.⁵⁰ They used

⁴⁶ van der Toorn, "Female" 196; consider: Judges 11:30-35 - Jephthah's vow; Constantine made a vow on the injunction of a dream, the consequences of which many of his contemporaries and successors, e.g. Julian the Apostate, thought to be most 'disruptive'; Martin Luther, when in fear of a thunder storm, made a vow, which proved most 'disruptive' to the Western world.

⁴⁷ Numbers 30:7ff.; Rost, "Erwägungen" 453.

⁴⁸ Before the Deuteronomic reforms, what about offerings of loaves of bread, or small produce of the fields and gardens - Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy" 259-261; see also the sacrifices described in Numbers 6:10, 19.

⁴⁹ Here the article by Frymer-Kensky is of importance - "Any sexuality was to be kept so far from temple service that even the wages of a prostitute were not to be given to a temple as a gift." - "Law" 91, also 99 n.3.

⁵⁰ Menzel comments for the neoAssyrian that: "Nach den wenigen vorliegenden Belegen ist die Bedeutung von MI-harimtu im nA Sprachgebrauch eindeutig auf 'Prostitutierte' festzulegen, und die Tatsache, dass sie zum Gegenstand einer echten nA Fluchformel werden konnte, macht deutlich, dass deren Ansehen in Assyrien nicht positiver Art war."

to advise their young men against having recourse to prostitutes,⁵¹ and they cursed their enemy by wishing that his female family members would end up in prostitution.⁵² The author himself cites the story of Samuel (I Samuel 1:11) as evidence that women often promised their anticipated child(ren) to their god.⁵³

Deuteronomy 23:21-23 is explicit that an Israelite does not have to make any vows:

21. When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not be slack to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin in you. 22. But if you refrain from vowing, it shall be no sin in you. 23. You shall be careful to perform what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth.

Many ancient and/or so called primitive religions have a number of sexual taboos,⁵⁴ especially when approaching the domain of the holy.⁵⁵ Since the sanctuary could be polluted through the ritually impure state of a worshipper, people would be most

⁵¹ Proverbs 2:16-9; 5:3-23; 6:24-35; 7; 9:13-18; Asher-Greve, Frauen 165; Menzel, Assyrische Tempel II: 24* n.(263), 27* n.(306-308).

⁵² CAD VI (1956) "harimtu" 101 (b); Menzel, Assyrische Tempel II: 24* n.(263), 27*-28* n.(307)-(308).

⁵³ Cf. Judges 13:2-7; Menzel, Assyrische Tempel I: 23-33, esp. 27-28.

⁵⁴ Leviticus 18.

⁵⁵ Keel, "Zeichen" 186-7; Menzel, Assyrische Tempel II: 27* n.(306).

circumspect when choosing to put themselves into that dangerous state of affairs.⁵⁶ The forgotten, either inadvertently or even intentionally forgotten, state of menstrual impurity,⁵⁷ cannot be compared with a calculated act of prostitution to fulfill one's religious obligations. If there really was such a widespread abuse, laws would have been made to regulate the expense of these vows for the more indigent members of the community, as seems to have been done by the legislator anyway.⁵⁸

2.) and 3.) *עֲצֵר / נְעִיר* : The two words gedesh and gedeshah mean, 'a person set apart, a votary, a person consecrated'. It is not known what their role was. In this chapter of Deuteronomy we are told that an Israelite may not join their ranks. No specifics for this injunction are given, except the overall philosophy of the Deuteronomist, which is, one pure cult to the one holy God YHWH by the one holy people of Israel.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Johansen, "Primitive Religion" 55-57; 56-7 - "In vielen Religionen gibt es zweierlei Verhältnisse der Menschen zu den Göttern: das eine kann Pakt geheißt werden, das andere Infektion Unzeit jedoch seine Lade zu berühren, heißt, etwas in sich aufnehmen, was einem sein Leben lang eine so große Reinheit und eine solche Größe abfordert, daß man daran zerbricht und stirbt."

⁵⁷ van der Toorn, "Female" 194ff.; see Frymer-Kensky, "Law" 91, 99 n.5 - on her discussion of the separation between the sacred and the sexual in the Bible.

⁵⁸ Leviticus 12:8 and one example of its realization in Luke 2:24.

⁵⁹ Leviticus 20:7; Olyan, Asherah 73 - the author presents the idea that the Deuteronomistic school was not traditional, their aim was not to lead Israel back to the old time religion, but innovative. Their part in the monotheistic

If therefore all of Israel is to be a "people holy to the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 14:2, also 7:6, 26:18-19, 28),⁶⁰ one would not, or one should not, need to join cause with a special group within Israel, that labels itself 'holy'. After all, the injunction: "Say to all the congregation of Israel, You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2), "and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6) was addressed to all of Israel.⁶¹ And as the community had objected once before:

And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, 'You have gone too far! For all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?' (Numbers 16:3)

development of Israel needs also to be reexamined, since there are Deuteronomistic passages, Deuteronomy 4:19, 29:25ff., 32:8ff., that acknowledge the existence of other gods, and consequently the commitment of this group to a monotheistic YHWH is not that self evident.

⁶⁰ Kraus, "Heilige Volk" 37-49 - "Eigenartig und einzigartig ist - ... - im Grunde nur eines: daß im Alten Testament Israel in seiner Gesamtheit für 'heilig' erklärt und als 'heiliges Volk' bezeichnet wird." The author looks at the development of this concept as presented both by the Deuteronomist and by the Priestly author.

⁶¹ Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy" 251ff. - here the ideas of the Levites' vocation of instructing the whole people in the Law, education for children, and Judaism gradually becoming a religion of the book, are germane.

So, perhaps an antithetic parallelism should be used, in which the second part contrasts with the first part.⁶² Thus we have the Israelites who are all supposed to be holy,⁶³ contrasted with the zonot who are not even allowed to use their earnings to pay for their own vows.

At this point it might be profitable to look at the phrase: *כִּי תִזְכָּר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי תִזְכָּר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ*. It is translated as: "For both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God." (Deuteronomy 23:18(19)). Does the *כִּי תִזְכָּר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ* refer to both the zonah and the keleb only, or does it grammatically refer to both the zonah/keleb and the gedeshah/gedesh? If it refers to the zonah and the keleb, can it thus be contrasted: "the sacrifice of the wicked is a(n) *תִּזְכָּר*" (Proverbs 21:27),⁶⁴ with the holiness of the whole people of Israel?

4.) *תִּזְכָּר* : The keleb also has been defined by the zonah.⁶⁵ There are sixty-four passages in the Tanach that use

⁶² The New Oxford Annotated Bible 1523-4.

⁶³ Leviticus 19:2.

⁶⁴ van der Toorn, "Female" 200 - "The two verses are often considered to belong to a pre-Deuteronomic collection of tô'ebâ-sayings, designed to combat Canaanite cult practices. However, this view has been challenged in recent years. The use of the tô'ebâ-formula might as well be explained as a borrowing from the wisdom literature." See also: Gesenius' Hebrew 859 - out of sixteen passages cited five originate in Proverbs.

⁶⁵ Astour, "Tamar" 186; Eißfeldt, Old Testament 224; Noth, Pentateuch 26 n.55; von Rad, Deuteronomy 148; Rainey, "Organized Religion" 22; Rudolph, "Präparierte Jungfrauen" 68; Thomas, "Kelebh" 425-6; Vos, Woman 108.

the term keleb.⁶⁶ Thirty-three of these refer to Caleb, the person⁶⁷ and/or the tribe.⁶⁸

Judges 7:5-7 relates the story of Gideon and the men who lapped water in dogs fashion. The remaining thirty allusions to dogs either refer to real canines,⁶⁹ or the term is used in a figurative sense.

When using the word figuratively, Isaiah 56:10-11, compares the leaders of Israel to dumb dogs that eat a lot but lack knowledge. He also denigrates the ritually pure sacrifices offered to YHWH in the Temple of Jerusalem as worthless as if they were sacrifices made of dogs.⁷⁰ One's enemies are also compared to dogs.⁷¹ Being eaten by dogs is used to describe an historical event, as well as a metaphor for punishment to be

⁶⁶ Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches II: 453-4; Lisowsky, Konkordanz 677, thirty-two times.

⁶⁷ It is fascinating to consider that one of the heroes at the birth of the people of Israel is called Caleb, is honoured by Joshua, and is mentioned in the Tanach with the zonah who helped Israel get a foothold in the Promised Land.

⁶⁸ Numbers 13:6, 30; 14:6, 24, 30, 38; 26:65; 32:12; 34:19; Deuteronomy 1:36; Josua 14:6, 13; 15:13, 14, 16, 18; 21:12; Judges 1:12, 15, 20; 3:9; I Samuel 25:3; 30:14; I Chronicles 2:18, 19, 24, 42, 46, 48, 50; 4:15; 6:41; Sirach 46:7.

⁶⁹ Exodus 11:7; 22:30; Job 30:1; Ugaritic has a cognate form of this word, and in CTA 14, 123; 16 i 2, 15 the texts speak of real dogs.

⁷⁰ Isaiah 66:3 - McCullough, "Dog" 862 - refutes that other peoples used the dog as a sacrificial animal.

⁷¹ Psalms 22:17; 59:6(7), 15.

meted out to God's and one's own enemies.⁷² Proverbs 26:11, 17, and Ecclesiastes 9:4 seem to be alluding to popular sayings.

In six of the passages⁷³ the term is used as a description to show that one person is considered or considers himself as of a lower status than another person, usually the person addressed. This same idea is followed in two passages where David addresses Adonai and calls himself YHWH's, ךדו.⁷⁴

It is this latter idea that is of importance here. It has been said that a ךדו is a label for a servant of a god,⁷⁵ and that this servant is also a prostitute⁷⁶ or a Päderast.⁷⁷ This

⁷² I Kings 14:11; 16:4; 21:19; 21:23; 22:38; II Kings 9:10, 36; Jeremiah 15:3; Psalms 58:24; Adler, Background 214-215.

⁷³ I Samuel 17:43; 24:15; II Samuel 3:8; 9:8; 16:9; II Kings 8:13. It might be of interest here that in the article by Kornfeld, "Prostitution" 1366, passages of the Tanach are cited as evidence that the title keleb was used for royal servants or eunuchs of the temple - I Kings 22:9; II Kings 8:6; 9:32; 23:11; 24:12, 15; 25:19 - but the word keleb in its various forms has not been used in these passages; in CTA 3 D 42, Anat brags about the destruction she had wrought among the minor gods(?), and calls Ishat (fire) the dog (f.) of the gods'; see also KAI 24, 10; 192, 4; 195, 3f.; 196, 3; Adler, Background 209-11.

⁷⁴ II Samuel 7:21 and I Chronicles 17:19.

⁷⁵ Adler, Background 209-211.

⁷⁶ Gesenius' Hebrew 725; McCullough, "Dog" 862; van der Toorn, "Female" 201; KAI 37 B 7 and 37 B 10 - but the editors of these inscriptions seem to doubt this interpretation since they have put '?'s' behind the label; Fisher, "Cultic" 225 - treats Gesenius' definition by remarking that even he realized that this translation as 'sodomite' 'harlot' came from sources much later than the Biblical passages; Mendenhall, Tenth Generation 111 - "cannot be relied upon to interpret earlier practices."

idea is not inherent in these Biblical passages. David does not consider himself to belong to a special grade of priestly office, nor does he allude to any sexual activity. All he says is that God in his greatness selected him, David, who is his loyal servant, " *קדש* ", and blessed his house, and he prays that God might continue to bestow his favour on David, his servant.

The *ת'נן* of a keleb may not be used to pay for a vow made to YHWH. The term mekhir as used in the Tanach, basically has a connotation of trade. It is used twenty-two times, and three of these are proper names.⁷⁸ The remaining nineteen citations employ the term in the sense of a business transaction, even when used by the prophets to illustrate their spiritual teachings.⁷⁹ But as Adler⁸⁰ points out, *ת'נן* means a price of something, and is therefore a poor parallel construction for *שכר*, meaning the wage of a zonah. So she questions whether we are not really

⁷⁷ Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches II: 453.

⁷⁸ I Chronicles 4:11; Ezra 2:52; Nehemiah 7:54.

⁷⁹ II Samuel 24:24; I Kings 10:28; 21:2; II Chronicles 1:16; Isaiah 45:13; 55:1; Jeremiah 15:13; Micah 3:11; Psalms 44:12; Proverbs 17:16; 27:26; Job 28:15; Lamentations 5:4; Sirach 6:15; 7:18; 31:5; 42:4; Daniel 11:39.

⁸⁰ Adler, Background 211-4 - commentators usually compare the etnan, the gift to, or wage of a prostitute (Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches I: 99) with mekhir, meaning price of something, as though it were the wage of a keleb. Since mekhir means the price of something, the Tanach uses the term in this manner most of the time. Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches II: 539 - cites also Jeremiah 15:13 and Daniel 11:39 where it carries the meaning of 'Lohn, Be-lohnung' metaphorically.

talking of a genuine dog in this sentence,⁸¹ a dog, which could be bought or sold, which a cultic official could not.

The idea of a *ᾱ'ḥN* to pay for a *ᾱḏ*, who is a cultic official, should perhaps not be discarded too quickly. Bömer submitted that in Greece, slaves were often released from slavery by either being given, consecrated or sold to a god,⁸² thus still remaining in a status of slavery, now to a divinity in place of a human master. They became *ἱεροδουλοῖ* by this action. Otto calls the *ἱεροδουλοῖ* 'Gotteshörige',⁸³ who dedicated themselves to a deity for a time or for all times.⁸⁴ This type of consecration was discussed previously under the heading of the Hetairai and Hierodouloi in the chapter on the Egyptian religion.

Although, it cannot be argued back from Hellenistic Egypt or Greece that the gedesh/gedeshah of Deuteronomy and the hierodoulos were one and the same, various types of consecrations to divinities and/or temples have been certified all over the

⁸¹ Adler, Background 209 - traditional Jewish exegesis, including Josephus, understands the word to denote a real canine.

⁸² Bömer, Sogenannte 10ff., 178; Delekat, Katoche 98-106, 158-9 - the author seems to base his whole article on the idea that the hierodouloi were slaves, and when they were released from slavery they became katochoi who still had some service obligations due their master, in this case the divinity or the temple; cf. Otto, Beiträge 10-11, 49 n.22, 28, 33; ..., Priester I: 117, 316, II: 299 n.3; Scholl, "IEPODOYLOS" 475, 479-480, 482-3, 486-7.

⁸³ Otto, Beiträge 11; Bömer, Sogenannte 183.

⁸⁴ Delekat, Asylie 216, 307; ..., Katoche 93-98.

ancient Near East. Menzel⁸⁵ cites documents detailing this category of commitment for Assyria.

Dion, in his article on the gedeshim in Kings, argues that the post exilic community may have been ashamed to remember that at one point in its history it had supported orgiastic cults, and that therefore the author of Chronicles did not want to use the term gedesh(im) but circumvented it with the term asherim. When eventually the Tanach was translated into Greek, mainly in Alexandria, the Septuagint version shows signs of confusion in how to translate the word gedeshim best, by highlighting either its sexual overtones or its religious implications.

Perhaps the truth is much more basic to the Israelite/Jewish creed. Although the Israelite religion did not go against slavery, but accepted it as a given within its culture, it did frown upon slavery amongst Israelites. YHWH had redeemed them from slavery in Egypt. The Exile was a psychological nightmare in that Israel had become slaves once again to a people that practiced idolatry, in a country far away from the land which YHWH had promised them. Therefore the Deuteronomist argued that since YHWH frowned on slavery among the Israelites, had redeemed them from slavery at least twice, and wanted his people to be kind to foreign slaves, why would he want to accept slaves, the

⁸⁵ Menzel, Assyrische Tempel I: 24-33; II: 23* esp. n.254.

way the foreign gods did?⁸⁶ Here an injunction from the later rabbis under hrm is of interest:

wenn Jem. seinen Sohn oder seine Tochter,
oder seine hebräischen Knechte und Mägde,
oder sein erkaufte Feld (das am Jubeljahre
der Verkäufer zurückerhält) verbannt, so ist
es ungültig, weil Niemand dasjenige verbannen
darf, was ihm nicht gehört.⁸⁷

Thus one's own children or slaves, did not belong to oneself so that one would be able to offer them up to God. But this custom was acceptable in other cultures where frequently parents offered (sacrificed?) their own children to a divinity.

But if the term, in this case, does mean 'Lohn, Belohnung' and the keleb were a priest belonging to a non-Yahwistic cult,⁸⁸ it would still be a contradiction in terms, if he were to use the wages he had earned there to pay off his vows to YHWH. He would not be a true Israelite since he has not realized that YHWH is the only baal for Israel, demanding dedicated service and the loyalty of each Israelite.

Or, maybe the keleb was a 'dirty dog of a trader', who, just like the usurer in verses 19-20, was also prohibited from using

⁸⁶ Exodus 29:37; 30:29; I Kings. 1:50ff.; 2:28ff.; Delekat Asylrecht 94.

⁸⁷ Levy, Wörterbuch 111.

⁸⁸ Astour, "Tamar" 186; Eißfeldt, Old Testament 224; Noth, Pentateuch 26 n.55; von Rad, Deuteronomy 148; Rainey, "Organized" 22; Rudolph, "Präparierte Jungfrauen" 68; Thomas, "Kelebh" 425-6; Vos, Woman 108.

his ill gained fortune in the house of the Lord. This would not be the only time that the practices of a merchant were labeled toebah in the Tanach.⁸⁹

So both the zonah, as well as the keleb, the foreign temple oblate,⁹⁰ are an abomination within the holy community of Israel, and it is only these two that the Tanach labels thus.

In Mesopotamia the "Councils of Wisdom" was the text which gave most of the impetus to the equation amtu = harimtu = istaritu = kulmasitu. It was known that the harimtu was a prostitute. The istaritu and kulmasitu were 'holy women'. Thus by equating the two the profession of the latter was construed as 'holy prostitution'. Since in the 'Councils of Wisdom' a suitor was warned against marrying any of the four women mentioned above, it was thought that all four were prostitutes. Hooks⁹¹ elaborates on the text and tries to establish that the latter two were bad risks for a marriage: first, they were forbidden to have children, thus reducing their desirability as marriage partners; second, their devotion to their religious office could create conflict of interest when it came to loyalty to the family; and

⁸⁹ Deuteronomy 25:16; Proverbs 11:1.

⁹⁰ Whether the foreign cult priest was a sodomite and/or practiced sexual intercourse as part of his duties in the foreign cult, cannot be proven - Gruber, " " 168; Summary.

⁹¹ Hooks, Sacred Prostitution 17-23.

third, their independence would be another factor in viewing them as a poor choice for matrimony.

As already ascertained in the beginning of this chapter, Deuteronomy 23 covers an assortment of ordinances, but all emphasize attributes needed to be a good member of the community of Israel. Conceivably verses 17-18 could be compared in its literary structure to the "Councils of Wisdom", and the four people mentioned are a bad risk for Israel because the zonah is a prostitute, the keleb earns his living in a questionable manner, and the gedeshah and gedesh have a tendency to be 'holier than thou'.

Q-d-s and H-r-m: Gruber⁹² comes to the conclusion that there is no evidence that the gedeshim in Kings warrant the translation of sodomite, male prostitute, or male cult prostitute. He also asserts that the reading of any of the other ancient sources,⁹³ do not support that translation. He then proposes that Deuteronomy 23:17(18)-18(19) is an example of juxtaposition of cultic and moral prohibitions and suggests to equate the gedeshah with the zonah, and the gedesh with the keleb, who is a

⁹² Gruber, " *עֲדָשִׁים* " 167-76; ..., "Hebrew" 133-148; Adler, Background 215-7.

⁹³ The LXX, Vulgate, Targum Onkelos, Targum Jonathan or the Peshitta.

'Canaanite cultic singer'.⁹⁴ Thus, the female 'holy person' is a prostitute, whereas the male 'holy person' is a (Canaanite) 'holy' singer.⁹⁵ Both, Gruber⁹⁶ and Adler⁹⁷ support this conclusion by examining the relationship between gds⁹⁸ and hrm. Since hrm is synonymous with gds, meaning 'holy, separate', and harimtu - 'prostitute' comes from this root, a gedeshah is a zonah, because a zonah is a harimtu.

The very same word - Akk. gadishtu = Phoen. gdst = Heb. gedeshah - can mean 'the holy one' (in Akkadian, Ugaritic and Phoenician), 'devotee (of Adad or Anunitum)' (in Akkadian only), and 'prostitute' (in Hebrew only) can be explained by the fact that the root meaning of the term is 'she who is set apart' whether for exaltation or degradation. Such a range of meanings is demonstrated abundantly by the common Semitic verb h - r - m meaning 'set apart', from which is derived the Akkadian term for prostitute, harimtu, lit., 'she who is set apart'. It appears, therefore,

⁹⁴ Gruber, " *עֲרֵךְ* " 177 - the text that the author cites KTU 1.112 leaves a question whether the word used 'isr' in fact means a singer or is it based on the root 'gerade gemacht, ... Rechtschaffenheit....' (Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches 428-30), thus an 'honest or just votary'?

⁹⁵ In some older languages the feminine form of the word does sometimes carry a derogatory meaning which is not inherent in its masculine counterpart, see: Gesenius' Hebräische par. 122 f and g, 408; Liddell, Greek 700; Volkmann, "Hetairai" 1122-3; Bellen, "Hetairia" 1123-4; ... "Hetairoi" 1124; but is this really an interpretation that can be imposed unto the word gedeshim? Gesenius' par. 124 g, 416-7.

⁹⁶ Gruber, " *עֲרֵךְ* " 175-6; ..., "Hebrew" 148.

⁹⁷ Adler, Background 199-203 - explains in detail her reasons for thinking that this bifurcation of terms is acceptable, also 218, 222, 232.

⁹⁸ Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches III: 997-8; 1003-8.

that while Heb. gedeshah is derived from Proto-semitic gadishtu, the Hebrew term is the semantic equivalent of Akk. harimtu 'prostitute'.⁹⁹

In many of the various Semitic languages hrm carries the meaning of "devoted to destruction"¹⁰⁰; "to shut up, to shut in, to prohibit, to extirpate, to destroy utterly, to consecrate, to devote";¹⁰¹ "bannen, weihen, verboten, absondern".¹⁰² In Ugaritic it means 'separated'.¹⁰³

From this root also came the word for 'sanctuary' or 'holy place' in Ugaritic and Assyrian. A place set apart.¹⁰⁴

Der Ursprung des Wortes hamrum ist wohl am ehesten in jenem südost-anatolisch-nordsyrischen Substrat zu suchen, das für das Westhurritische stark prägend geworden ist. Möglich wäre aber auch der Zusammenhang mit dem theophoren Element hamr- in amoritischen Personennamen ... sub HMR hergestellt wird. Von hurritischem Ursprung des Wortes ist nicht zu sprechen, da 1. das Wort schon in Texten der aa Handelskolonien begegnet, in einer Zeit also, in der hurritische Einflüsse in Kleinasien noch kaum zu spüren sind, 2. es in althethitischer Zeit für Hassum in Nordsyrien belegt ist, 3. es in luwischen Texten mit der Göttin Ishara

⁹⁹ Gruber, "Hebrew" 148.

¹⁰⁰ Davidson, Chaldee CCLXXV-CCLXXVI.

¹⁰¹ Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee 305-6.

¹⁰² Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches I: 339-341; Gesenius, Hebräische Grammatik 305-6.

¹⁰³ Huehnergard, Ugaritic Vocabulary 89.

¹⁰⁴ Biella, Dictionary 189-90; Huehnergard, Ugaritic Vocabulary 126 - (b)/harmanu/ n. 'sacred place(?)'; Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee 303.

verbunden ist, die im westhurritisch-luwischen Milieu eine grosse Rolle spielt.¹⁰⁵

The bit hamri or the hamru were in all probability the temenos sacred to the god Addad to which cultic processions wound their way. In all likelihood it contained the chapel of the god, but what liturgy was associated with it is still unclear.¹⁰⁶ Also, a "hamru scheint ausserhalb der Stadt gelegen zu haben und muss nicht in jedem Fall ein 'Tempel' gewesen sein."¹⁰⁷ Whereas in old south Arabic it could also mean a "cemetery - a sanctuary of the dead".¹⁰⁸ In the secular sense it can mean a 'harem', a place set aside for women.¹⁰⁹

The rabbis interpreted the verb as meaning "weihen, sow. der völligen Vernichtung, als auch Gott weihen, dem Banne weihen."¹¹⁰

Forms of the root were used as proper names such as Hormah (Numbers 14:44, 21:3; Deuteronomy 1:41; Joshua 12:14, 19:4) or Hermon (Joshua 11:3; Psalms 42:7, 89:13, 133:3).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Menzel, Assyrische Tempel II: 68* n.(872).

¹⁰⁶ Menzel, Assyrische Tempel I: 67-8, 243, 262.

¹⁰⁷ Deller, "Sacrifices" 385.

¹⁰⁸ Biella, Dictionary 189-190.

¹⁰⁹ Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches I: 340.

¹¹⁰ Levy, Chaldäisches Wörterbuch 282.

¹¹¹ see also: CAD 6 (1956) 152, hamru C.

Sometimes the comparison had already been drawn between "weihen, 'verbannen', vertilgen" and " Syn. zu 'weihen' cf. gidosh".¹¹² Deller¹¹³ draws our attention to the relationship of these two words:

Betrachtet man besonders die Formeltypen [4] und [5] ganz unvoreingenommen, so muss der Parallelismus zu der Gestellung von gottgeweihten Personen (LU/MI MAS, LU/MI SUHUR.LAL, harimtu genannt) auffallen.

The CAD¹¹⁴ defines harimtu as 'prostitute' -

(I) to separate: cf. above; possibly the etymon of harimtu and harmatu,¹¹⁵ if these words designate women socially set apart.

but:

The relation of harmu to harmutu and harimtu remains obscure,¹¹⁶ especially if one connects the latter with haramu.

Baumgartner, under hrm defines: "harimtu Dirne, harmu Buhle".¹¹⁷ Huehnergard states for Ugaritic: "Perhaps, but not certainly, related is Akk. harimtu 'prostitute'".¹¹⁸

¹¹² Kapff, Hebräisches Vocabularium 51.

¹¹³ Deller "Sacrifices" 382-6.

¹¹⁴ CAD VI (1956) 101-2.

¹¹⁵ CAD VI (1956) 90.

¹¹⁶ CAD VI (1956) 104 harmu.

¹¹⁷ Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches I: 339-341.

¹¹⁸ Huehnergard, Ugaritic Vocabulary 89.

But the root hrm has also developed other meanings such as the opposite of 'holy' - "(a)/harimu/ adj. 'desecrated(?)'"¹¹⁹. Also "Netzmacher od. Fischer"¹²⁰; "Räuber".¹²¹ It can also carry the meaning of: "flat-nosed, mutilated in the nose"¹²²; "abstumpfen, stumpfnässig",¹²³ "ar. harama spalten, durchbohren, 'ahram m. durchbohrter Nasenscheidewand; ... gespaltener Nase"¹²⁴; "to bore through the cartilage between the nostrils of a camel and put in a ring, properly to draw down the nose".¹²⁵

Could the meaning of harimtu perhaps have been developed from the term that has something to do with an attribute the harimtu wore, e.g. nose jewelry? or the very opposite of 'holy', a person desecrated, and therefore not acceptable to the Deuteronomist?¹²⁶ But these other meanings of hrm were developed

¹¹⁹ Huehnergard, Ugaritic Vocabulary 126.

¹²⁰ Baumgartner, Hebräisches I: 340; Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee 306; Levy, Wörterbuch 112.

¹²¹ Levy, Wörterbuch 112.

¹²² Davidson, Chaldee CCLXXV.

¹²³ Levy, Chaldäisches Wörterbuch 282; ..., Wörterbuch 112.

¹²⁴ Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches I: 340.

¹²⁵ Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee 305.

¹²⁶ That is after all how Delitzsch had defined both the kadištu (gadištu): "Hierodule, eine dem Dienste d. Göttin Ištar geweihte u. dadurch entweihte Jungfrau (vgl. gedeshah)."
Assyrisches Handwörterbuch 581; - Also the Greeks never elected a person who was known to have been a prostitute at one time, not because they thought negatively of his sexual activity, but since

in Hebrew. Due to what thought processes the Akkadians, who lived a good thousand years, at the other end of the Fertile Crescent, before the Israelites, used the root hrm to develop their connotation for a prostitute, is not known. Hebrew, though, does have a perfectly acceptable term for prostitute, zonah. This second term, gedeshah, especially constructed from the root 'sacred', and then used solely in the feminine, and only in three passages of the Tanach, has created and will continue to create much controversy when translated as zonah.

In the chapter on the cult of ancient Egypt, I alluded to a similar problem which had arisen when scholars tried to elicit the meanings of 'god's wife', 'god's concubine' and 'the harem of the god'. As a matter of fact, it has become quite noticeable on several occasions while conducting this study, that there seems to be a discrepancy in the idiom used. Words that have a positive meaning in the masculine, display a denigrating, insulting or just negative insinuation in the feminine, for example such words as: hetairai,¹²⁷ hierodouloi,¹²⁸ and hnr.t.¹²⁹ Now the word gds has

he had sold himself for a price to be used by other people, it was thought that he could not be trusted with a public office since he might always prove to be amenable to bribery.

¹²⁷ Besides having a long history the word hetairai developed a great variety of meanings (Liddell, Greek 700), but usually when used in the feminine it carries the connotation of: "... euphem. Sammelbegriff für Frauen, die für Geld Geschlechtsverkehr gewährten...." (Volkmann, "Hetairai" 1122).

been added to this array.¹³⁰ It would, eventually, make an interesting study to determine whether this difference is actually inherent in the ancient languages themselves, or whether it has it been imputed by commentators since classical times.

Perhaps, it would help to clarify the idea by drawing on a modern analogy. In some North-Western African cultures traditionally much of the market economy has been the responsibility of women. The division of labour between men and women was dependent on a land-based agricultural economy, and in a country such as Ghana, on matrilineal lines of descent. The queen mother was the major power in the community, and after the Asantehene had more authority than any man in that society. Such tasks as marriages, births, children's education, adultery, divorce, female initiation ceremonies, preservation of traditions and genealogy were her domain. The daily administration of the group lay in her hands when the king was away. Since most

¹²⁸ Liddell, Greek 821; It was Strabo who, while writing about the history of Corinth, equated the hierodouloi and the hetairai; cf. Conzelmann, "Korinth" 152-166, esp. 158.

¹²⁹ Erman Ägyptisches Handwörterbuch 128,130; Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar 585.

¹³⁰ Adler, Background 221-3; Gruber, "Hebrew" 148 n.84 - Gruber bases his argument on Krebernik, "Syllabar" 4 #100, but that author writes: "In diesem Sinne ist vielleicht die weitere Glosse 'à-mu als zu hebr. haram 'Bann', 'Geweihetes' ... zu deuten." (*Italics mine*); but also note: Keel, Hohelied 43 - "Die Unterscheidung zwischen 'profan' und 'heilig' spielte zwar im israelitischen Kultus eine große Rolle (Ez. 22,26)." as well as the article by Frymer-Kensky, "Law".

ethnographic studies on these societies have been conducted by Western men, the women's roles have not been observed or correctly commented upon. "Westeners, prejudging the matrilineal system, also assume that in the 'natural' order of things only men can take on the burdens of public affairs and women must be relegated to domestic tasks."¹³¹ This state of affairs has been underlined by the missionaries' attitude that polygamy is an inferior spiritual and social development. Thus the colonial powers, missionaries, merchants, and today's government agents assuming the inferiority of women's positions, have undermined their status in their own community, and undercut the economic development of the North African nations with dire consequences.¹³²

There are still a few problems with this equation of the gedeshah = zonah = harimtu, if we say that the Adullamite used the word gedeshah only because it was familiar to him because of his own ethnic background. There is no indication that in Canaanite gdsh meant harimtu. Or if the Yahwist used the term in Genesis 38 in order to be cynical and to poke fun at weird Canaanite customs, of which there is no epigraphic evidence, why would the Deuteronomist have used (cynically) that term in a legalistic/cultic text? or the prophet when correcting typical

¹³¹ Callaway, "Ghana" 191.

¹³² Callaway, "Ghana" 190.

Israelite customs?

C. I Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46(47); II Kings 23:7

Four times the *פ'עצן* are mentioned in the Book of Kings. Each time it is obvious that the government of the day does not like them. The kings try to eliminate them. Since it has always been presumed that the *פ'עצן* were cult prostitutes, it was taken for granted that the three kings mentioned in connection with them wanted to rid the country of deviant and harmful religious contamination. Along with the *פ'עצן*, the *פ'ינן* were also judged to be of foreign influence that polluted the religious life of Israel and therefore needed to be cut out by reform measures. Thus, according to Deuteronomistic historical writing, the kings of Judah were assessed as either 'good' or 'bad' depending on their policy of eradication of the bamot. In this section of the paper I will look at the bond among these three institutions to see whether it is possible to discover whether the role that the gedeshim and the bamot played in pre-exilic Israel was really that contrary.

And there were also *עצן* in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord drove out before the people of Israel.
(I Kings 14:22-24)

He put away the *פ'עצן* out of the land and removed all the idols that his father had made. (I Kings 15:12)

And the remnants of the ^{עֲזָרָה} who remained in the days of his father Asa, he exterminated from the land. (I Kings 22:46[47])

And he broke down the houses of the ^{נְעִימָה} which were in the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah. (II Kings 23:7)

The Deuteronomist, through his revision of Biblical history has forever moulded our perception of how the people of Israel responded to the vicissitudes of history.

A case may be made for dating the present Deuteronomy not earlier than the sixth century, and since the Deuteronomic redactions admittedly extend over several decades, their contemporaneity with the changing historical situations is not improbable.¹³³

Szikszai¹³⁴ detects nine sources that contributed to the make-up of the present Books of Kings: 1. The Book of the Acts of Solomon; 2. The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel; 3. The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah; 4. Davidic court narrative; 5. the Elijah cycle; 6. the Elisha cycle; 7. the Ahab source; 8. the Isaiah source; 9. a prophetic source.

These various sources were fused by an editor of Deuteronomic conviction and under the influence of King Josiah,

¹³³ Cook, "Simeon" 386; cf. Cross, Canaanite chapter 10: "The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History" 274-289.

¹³⁴ Szikszai "Kings" 26-35.

who in the sixth century made a serious attempt at cultic reform and the revival of the Davidic kingdom.¹³⁵ It is thought that the Book of Kings was edited by a second Deuteronomist, approximately about 550 B.C.E., while he was living in Exile. Although the present work certainly exhibits different strands of authorship, it also displays definite spirit. A spirit of one Israel for one YHWH, which pervades the whole book.

Jepsen thinks that:

in seiner heutigen Form ist es (das Buch der Könige)
nach 561 entstanden und muß wohl vor 400 abgeschlossen
sein.¹³⁶

He labels five sources and redactions in the composition of the book: 1. synchronistische Chronik; 2. Annalen der Könige von Israel und Judah; 3. priesterliche Redaktion; 4. nebiistische Redaktion; 5. die levitische Redaktion.

The historical books, influenced by Deuteronomic theology, use a formulaic style of writing,¹³⁷ in which lists of abominations, which include the bamot and the gedeshim, are part of the formula.¹³⁸ The passages dealing with the gedeshim are either preceded or followed by verses mentioning the bamot: I Kings 14:23; 15:14; 22:44(43); II Kings 23:5, 8a, 9, 13, 15,

¹³⁵ See the study by Jepsen Quellen 9 ff., 24-25; Szikszai, "Kings" 34-35.

¹³⁶ Jepsen, Quellen 4, 59, 105.

¹³⁷ Gray, Kings 12-3, 15-20, 39-43; Long, Kings 264-265.

¹³⁸ Olyan, Asherah 22 n.22.

19, 20. Hence a connection has been sought between the two, assuming that since one was considered toebah in the eyes of the Deuteronomist, so, therefore, was the other.

In I Kings 14:22-24 we are told that "Judah did what was evil in the sight of the Lord..." (verse 22) because the people built: *חִינֹת* , *חִיזִיִּן* , Asherim, on every high hill and under every green tree, and "and there were also *עֲצֵי* in the land" (verse 24).

In this list of sins which provoked YHWH to eventually banish his people among a nation that practiced *חִיזִיִּן* *חִינֹת*, the first three items are an enumeration of the appurtenances always mentioned in the formulaic description of the high places. And then, there were also *עֲצֵי* in the land.

This passage puts the responsibility for holding on to outdated practices, practices that should have no more meaning in Israel since the building of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, a generation previous, squarely at the door of the whole people of Judah. It does not ascribe it to Rehoboam, the king as representative of the people.

In the Septuagint, gedesh, masculine singular in Hebrew, is rendered by *εὐδεσμος* "that which binds together, a bond of union, fastening, that which is bound together, bundle," and for

"LXX 4 Ki.11.14, al. conspiracy," but for "3 Ki.14:24 sodomy" (?).¹³⁹

Dion¹⁴⁰ has examined this passage in some detail:

Qades is rendered by syndesmos at 3 Kgdms 14:24, and veter-haggades by ta loipa ton symplokou at 3 Kgdms 16:28d. Montgomery suggested that these words mean 'sexual copulation' and that they show a correct understanding of the Hebrew. As far as syndesmos is concerned, it seems better to assume, with some critics, that the translator read geser, 'conspiracy;' this is well in keeping with the use of syndesmos in other passages of the Greek OT, while, to the best of my knowledge, this word is nowhere documented as meaning 'copulation.'.... and the etymological similarity of syndesmos and symploke suggests that the LXX translator read geser at both places. In any case, even if he had read qades and correctly grasped that sex was involved, his rendering of the original would be somewhat wide of the mark;

Γύνδεσμος is certainly a much better translation of *גֵּשֶׁר* if the translator of the LXX did misread gedeshim. The authors, who debated this problem of translation, do presume that the gedeshim were involved in sexual activity. Could the Greek translator perhaps still have grasped the meaning of the *Γύνδεσμος* as *ρ'εστ*, a group of people within Israel who were bound together by a 'Weltanschauung' which brought them to the notice

¹³⁹ Liddell, Greek 1701; see also Dion, "Cultic" 45 esp. n.15 where he concurs with other authors in stating that the translator must have read gesher for gedesh and thus the translation of 'conspiracy' which agrees with other passages of the Tanach, 4 Kgdms 11:14; 12:21; and Jeremiah 11:9, in which passages sundesmos is used in the sense of religious-political treason.

¹⁴⁰ Dion, "Cultic" 45.

of the Deuteronomist who for whatever reason did not approve of them. But then neither did he approve of *אֲשֵׁרִים*, A(a)sherim/ot, *אֲשֵׁרִים*, or the terebinth tree, although the Tanach records these as having been acceptable to YHWH at one time.¹⁴¹ If 'copulation' is not a good term for *ἐνδεσμός*, it does not have to be translated using the wrong word. What about, "and there were groups of people called 'holy, separate ones' in the land. The nuance of 'conspiracy' could be kept if this group of 'votaries' were conspiring against or just disapproving of what the kings, who followed the Deuteronomist advice, were envisioning the ideal Israel to be.¹⁴²

Now Asa (I Kings 15:9-15) was a good king. He, Asa, put away the *אֲשֵׁרִים*; removed the *אֲשֵׁרָה* made by his father; deposed the queen mother because she had had an image made for Asherah; he cut down the asherah and had it burned; he did not destroy the *אֲשֵׁרִים*; he gave presents to the temple.

Again it can be noted that these are abominations, except for the last, that are being enumerated. They do not necessarily

¹⁴¹ Olyan, Asherah.

¹⁴² The footnote in the Cambridge edition of the Septuagint gives 'oblaciones factae sunt' as a translation - The Old Testament in Greek II: The Later Historical Books Part 2, 34.

have any connection with each other, except for the queen mother and the fabrication of an image for the Asherah.¹⁴³

The Greek editor of this passage translates the word gedeshim with the phrase:

καὶ ἀφείλεν τὰς τελετὰς ἀπὸ τῆς ἡγῆς

'... of or belonging to initiation ... rite, esp. initiation in the mysteries.'¹⁴⁴

Jehoshaphat (I Kings 22:41-46) was also a good king. He made peace with the king of Israel, although this relationship and the resultant war are rather ambiguous in their goodness. He exterminated the remainder of the gedesh, but he did not destroy the bamot where the people continued to sacrifice.¹⁴⁵

This verse does not exist in the Septuagint but the gedesh is translated by verse 16:28d: kai ta loipa ton symplokou has epethento - "1. intertwining, complication,

¹⁴³ At one time in Israel's history Yahweh did have an Asherah. We still do not know what this A(a)sherah is, but obviously there had been a time when she/it was not 'an abomination to Yahweh' - Lemaire, "Who or What" 42-51; Meshel, "Consort" 24-35.

¹⁴⁴ Liddell, Greek 1771; Dion, "Cultic" 44-5 - suggests that the translator was aware of the cultic meaning in gedeshim but that he confused the rite of initiation with the person, the officiant.

¹⁴⁵ This assertion is contradicted by II Chronicles 17:6 where it is stated the he 'took out the bamot and the asherim out of Judah - see Dion's treatment of the interrelationship between Kings and Chronicles "Cultic" 41-44.

combination, ... 2. struggle, ... 3. embrace, sexual intercourse, 4. combination of letters¹⁴⁶

In II Kings 23 we have a recital of all the Deuteronomic reforms that Josiah tried to put into effect after Hilkiah the high priest had found the book of the law while repairs were being made to the temple. The Greek translator of this passage does not try to translate the word gedeshim but only transcribes it with *Kαδηςιμ*.¹⁴⁷

Josiah, destroyed the *חִינֹן* (verses 8a, 8b, 13, 15, 19). He destroyed the vessels that had been made for Baal and for Asherah (verse 4). He brought out *אֲשֵׁרָה* from the temple and had her burned (verse 6). He broke into pieces *חִיֹּנֹן* (verse 14). He cut down *אֲשֵׁרָה* and had their places defiled (verse 14). Asherah in Bethel met with the same fate (verse 15). He defiled the *חֲבֵלֵי* (verse 10). He removed the sun-horses, and he burned the sun chariots (verse 11). He destroyed the roof altars, and the altars in the court (verse 12), as well as the altar at the *חֵנֶן* at Bethel (verse 15). He removed the priests that had

¹⁴⁶ Liddell, Greek 1684; Dion, "Cultic" 45 esp. n.16 and 17, where the author states that the combination of epethento with sumplokōn does present an awkwardness if sumplokōn is translated by 'sexual intercourse'. Cannot the concept of 'entertwining, struggle, complication' be used in translating if the sexual aspect creates 'complications'?

¹⁴⁷ Dion, "Cultic" 46, in note 19 the author discusses the reasons for the transliterations of a number of Hebrew terms into Greek, but since this particular manuscript dates from about the first century C.E. the results cannot be grouped with the other LXX manuscripts under discussion.

served at *חִינֹת* (verses 5, 8, 9, 20), and he broke down the houses of the *בְּעֹתֹת*, that were in the temple precincts, where women wove hangings for Asherah (verse 7).

Again, in this list of abominations from which Josiah is trying to cleanse the country, there are no necessary connections among these *חִיֹּת וְיִחִי* except for the vessels that had been made for Baal and Asherah, the priests and the high places, and, the houses of the gedeshim and the women who wove clothes for the Asherah.

Thus, one king accepts the gedeshim in the land (Rehoboam) in I Kings 14:24, two kings try to eliminate them (Asa and Jehosaphat) in I Kings 15:12 and 22:46. However, they keep on reappearing. In II Kings 23:7 it is said that now they had penetrated even into the holy precincts of the Temple itself. They are not just "in the land" anymore. For nearly three-hundred years kings had sporadically been trying to eliminate them but without success. As a matter of record, they seem to have grown in prestige. So, Josiah, destroys their property. The gedeshim are not connected with the bamot. Once they are connected with the temple, and, in the same excerpt, distantly with the Asherah.

The דְּשִׁים

In the last ten years, two scholars, Dion¹⁴⁸ and Gruber¹⁴⁹, have addressed in detail the problem of the gedeshim in Kings.

Gruber's conclusion, that the דְּשִׁים were foreign cult personnel, and therefore persecuted by the kings of Judah, has already been addressed in the chapter on Deuteronomy.

Dion compares the passages of Kings with their parallel passages in Chronicles and highlights that in Kings the gedesh(im) all four times appear only in the masculine. The feminine counterpart is never mentioned,¹⁵⁰ and that in the parallel passages of Chronicles the gedeshim are not mentioned at all but have been replaced by the A(a)sherah.¹⁵¹ He then tries to answer the question why the Chronicler deleted the mention of the gedeshim. The author concludes that after the Exile, when reediting the history of his people, the Chronicler was not only ashamed to admit that orgiastic rites could ever have existed in

¹⁴⁸ Dion, "Cultic" 41-8.

¹⁴⁹ Gruber, " דְּשִׁים " 167-76; ... "Hebrew" 133-148 - although in this second article the author deals mainly with Hosea and Genesis 38 as well as the cognate terms for gedeshah in other Semitic languages.

¹⁵⁰ But the masculine plural in Semitic languages may mean that the group of people can consist of male as well as female members - Collins, Stem 39; Gray, Kings 349.

¹⁵¹ II Chronicles 17:1-19, 18:1-34, 19:1-3b8; Dion, "Cultic" 43 n.7.

Isr' 3716 and hence did not like to mention the functionaries of the castigated cult,¹⁵² but also "the temptation of cultic prostitution was no longer felt in the land of Judah."¹⁵³

Asherah was a great goddess and the consort of El within the Canaanite pantheon at Ugarit.¹⁵⁴ The significance of A(a)sherah in Israel is still enigmatic in spite of the discovery at Kuntillet Ajrud¹⁵⁵ and Khirbet el-Kom,¹⁵⁶ but what if at a time before Israel's monotheistic development were completed,¹⁵⁷ YHWH did have a consort?¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² Barr, "Seeing" 11-20, esp. 13ff., 14 n.1 - When discussing the variety of interpretation of ashel the author concludes that a certain "embarrassment arose from the similarity to the term asherah".

¹⁵³ Dion, "Cultic" 48.

¹⁵⁴ Olyan, Asherah chapter 3, pp. 38-61 - the author examines in detail the position of Asherah in relationship to the whole Canaanite pantheon but primarily in regard to El and Baal.

¹⁵⁵ Lemaire, "Who or What" 42-51; Meshel, "Consort" 24-35.

¹⁵⁶ Lemaire, "Who or what" 42-51.

¹⁵⁷ Lang, Monotheism; Lemche, Ancient Israel; Olyan, Asherah 3ff., 71 - The author doubts that the elimination of A(a)sherah was particularly due to the monotheistic development within Israel. The A(a)sherah like Nehushtan (p. 70ff.) and the high places were objects(?) that the Deuteronomistic school identified for removal, but that other groups within Israel accepted as genuinely Israelite.

¹⁵⁸ Smith, "God Male" 333-340 - deals with the pros and cons of this question, and comes to term with the idea that YHWH at one point in Israel's development might have had a consort.

Lemaire in his article tries to prove that within the Israelite context the Asherah never was a goddess, a consort of YHWH, but only a sacred tree or a grove of sacred trees.¹⁵⁹ According to him the direct article - $\aleph$ is never used with a proper name in Biblical Hebrew,¹⁶⁰ but only with objects. In the passages¹⁶¹ that he cites, Asherah is always preceded by the article - $\aleph$, thus making $\aleph \aleph e/k$ a thing, and not a person.

Both Olyan¹⁶² and Emerton¹⁶³ also deal extensively and expertly with the linguistic and grammatical challenges that the above mentioned discoveries imply, and the ramifications the various interpretations might have on further research into the monarchic Yahwistic religion.

Lemaire suggests that the reforming kings wanted to purify the land from the $\aleph \aleph e/k$ and had them cut down and burned,¹⁶⁴ because:

¹⁵⁹ Barr, "Seeing" 15 - "The most outstanding is the case of the asherah itself, which was commonly translated by alsos in the LXX and nemus in the Vulgate. ... It is at least a likely speculation that its origin lay in the atmosphere of Hellenistic religion, where a grove of sacred trees was a characteristic phenomenon".

¹⁶⁰ Lemaire, "Who or what" 47-50; neither could proper names end in a possessive suffix, Adler, Background 395ff.

¹⁶¹ Judges 6:25, 26, 30 and I Kings 16:33 also 18:19; II Kings 13:6; 18:4.

¹⁶² Olyan, Asherah.

¹⁶³ Emerton, "New Light" 2-20.

¹⁶⁴ II Kings 18:4; see also Lemaire, "Who or what" 50.

the objectification of aspects of the divine and the personification of cultic objects is a common phenomenon in the history of religions.¹⁶⁵

Authors¹⁶⁶ who subscribe to the proposal that the asherah in the Bible was an inanimate object which could be destroyed, but that YHWH had had one in earlier times, suggest that this indicates the asherah to have been a syncretistic addition to the Israelite cult. Since so little is known about the Yahwistic cult previous to the Exile, we cannot assert with any amount of certitude what was a syncretistic addition to this cult and what was indigenous, or what needed to be removed only at a later date due to changed suppositions in the religious development of the people,¹⁶⁷ or the philosophy of a certain power group within the nation. Basic objects, such as the A(a)sherah and the $\aleph$ ¹⁶⁸ still escape our complete understanding.

II Kings 23:7 is very explicit about what Josiah did with the priests of the high places, but it says nothing about what he did with the gedeshim. He only destroyed their houses that were in the House of YHWH. Did he do that, to get the gedeshim away from the Jerusalem cult because religiously they were a bad

¹⁶⁵ Lemaire, "Who or what" 51.

¹⁶⁶ Adler, Background 295; Goff, "Syncretism" 151-161.

¹⁶⁷ see proposals formulated by Olyan, Asherah 3ff.

¹⁶⁸ Fowler, "Bama" 203-213.

influence? or, because they had connections with the A(a)sherah and thus again were a disruptive influence on the royal cult? or, because they now were too close to him in his palace, did not always approve of his Deuteronomistic inspired policies, and were thus a thorn in his side?¹⁶⁹ The Tanach does not explain that. Neither is it clear on whether the women who wove the hangings were members of the gedeshim or whether the gedeshim let them use their houses so that they might have a place where they could weave the clothes for the A(a)sherah within cultically correct precincts.¹⁷⁰ Since we still do not know what the A(a)sherah(im/ot)¹⁷¹ was or were, that tenuous connection does not help to clarify who the gedeshim were or what they did, or whether they were connected with any official cult at all.

When surveying the occurrences of the gedeshim in Kings they appear to be mentioned only with the first three kings of the Davidic dynasty in Judah. All three kings are concerned with establishing and preserving the boundaries of their kingdom after the split which tore the country apart under Rehoboam and Jeroboam (I Kings 14:25-28; 15:16-24; 22:1-45). For the

¹⁶⁹ Here Olyan, Asherah 73 - "The deuteronomistic school were innovators, and not conservatives attempting to purge the cult of Yahweh of 'foreign' or 'pagan' elements."

¹⁷⁰ Gray, Kings 507, 664 n.b, 668.

¹⁷¹ Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches 263-4; Emerton, "New Light" 2-20; Lemaire, "Who or what" 42-51; Olyan, Asherah mainly the first three chapters; Rad, Deuteronomy 148.

remaining kings the gedeshim are not mentioned again until we come to Josiah who also has great nationalistic, political, and religious aspirations for his dynasty and kingdom. It would seem that the only time these 'votaries' get into trouble is with the kings that are extremely ambitious for their house, country and religion, and who seem to be influenced by the Deuteronomistic school of thought.

Therefore the Greek translation of I Kings 14:24 *σύνδεσμος* for the actions of the *ס'עצד* might be better translated by 'conspiracy',¹⁷² or by 'treason',¹⁷³ because these kings feared their criticism of royal policies and their influence on the people. The same idea then would hold for I Kings 16:28d, where the nuance of 'struggle, complication' might fit very well.

¹⁷² Liddell, Greek 1701; Dion, "Cultic" 45 - sundesmos has already been translated with 'conspiracy' in IV Kings 11:14.

¹⁷³ The New Oxford Annotated Bible, 470.

The pin?

Before hazarding a guess as to who the gedeshim really were it is necessary to examine the bamot in greater detail, since as was noted above, the gedeshim and the bamot are frequently thought to be interrelated. The Biblical writers present bamot as a fatal threat to Israel's relationship with YHWH, due to the foreign influence they are presumed to exert.

As part of the formulaic writing of the Deuteronomic historian the kings were judged as either 'good' or 'bad'. Their stance towards the bamot was considered to have been the deciding factor.¹⁷⁴ Twelve kings of Judah are mentioned in connection with the high places, but only three of them are condemned.¹⁷⁵ The other nine are assessed positively¹⁷⁶ in spite of preserving the bamot. The bamot are mentioned twenty-eight times in the Book of Kings.¹⁷⁷ When contemplating these texts it can be inferred that in general the kings were inclined to be neutral towards the

¹⁷⁴ Jepsen, Quellen 30, 56-57, 69; Welten, "Kulthöhen" 32.

¹⁷⁵ Rehoboam, Ahaz and Manasseh.

¹⁷⁶ Solomon, Asa, Jehosaphat, Jehoash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Hezekiah and Josiah.

¹⁷⁷ I Kings 3:2, 3, 4; 11:7; 14:23; 15:14; 22:44; II Kings 12:4; 14:4; 15:4, 35; 16:4; 18:4, 22; 21:3; 23:5, 8, 9, 13, 15, 19, 20.

bamot.¹⁷⁸ The author was recording an historical fact, even if he did not like it, and tried to colour the telling of it with his own theological bias.¹⁷⁹ The bamot though had been in existence at the time of the kings and the people used them as places of worship. The kings, as a rule, did not interfere.

The word בָּמוֹת , pl. בָּמוֹת ,¹⁸⁰ has over the years escaped attempts at definition, since there is no basic Hebrew verbal root to which the meaning of the word could be traced,¹⁸¹ - "just as the architectural form and the archaeological identity of the high-places have eluded us".¹⁸² The translations into modern languages, such as high places in English, and Höhen in German, are dependent for their meaning on the understanding the translator of the LXX had of this word, which he usually

¹⁷⁸ Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy" 249; I Kings 19:10, 14; Contra: Haran, Temples 20, n.13, as well as virtually all other scholars.

¹⁷⁹ Alt, "Heimat" in Kleine Schriften II, 250-275; Olyan, Asherah 22; Smith, "God Male" 336-7.

¹⁸⁰ Fowler, "Bāmā" 203-213 - the author surveys some of the major research into the existence and the meaning of the bamot. He tries to elucidate the meaning the different forms of the plural of the word might have on the understanding of the structure and its supposed cult.

¹⁸¹ Fowler, "Bāmā" 203-213; Oestreicher, "Reichstempel" 12; Vaughan, Meaning of 'bama' 3-9, 13-15, 57-58, n.4-6; Vaux, Ancient Israel II, 284-288.

¹⁸² Haran, Temples 22.

translated with *אלהים*, especially in the Books of Kings.¹⁸³

Baumgartner¹⁸⁴ delineates four related meanings of bamah: 1. the back of an animal, 2. the back or heights of the land, 3. a Canaanite 'grave', and 4. a cultic place.

I Kings 3:2 gives the author's reason for the condemnation of the bamot. The people sacrificed at the bamot (*דך העם* (*מנצחין דדנחות כי לא נבנה בית לשם יהוה דה' מ'ס דה' מ'ס דה' מ'ס*) because the central sanctuary, the Temple in Jerusalem, had not been built as yet. So, in the eyes of the author, once the temple had been built the bamot ceased to have any validity.¹⁸⁵

In the next verse, verse 3, Solomon is praised for being a good king, loving God and following in David's footsteps - only he sacrificed at the bamot (*ו'איהך שלמה את-יהוה אל כח*)

(*דחקות ד'ס א' דך דדנחות ד'ס מ'ס ד'ס מ'ס ד'ס מ'ס*).

But then in I Kings 3:4 it is stated, as a matter of course, that Solomon went to the "great" bamah at Gibeon to initiate his reign by offering a great sacrifice to the Lord. Yahweh, in

¹⁸³ Prat, "Hauts-lieux" 449; Daniel, "Bamah," 33-53, esp. 38, 45-46; Vaughan, Meaning 33-35.

¹⁸⁴ Koehler/Baumgartner, " *דנך* " and " *ד'ס* " Hebräisches I, 130-131; Fowler, "Bama" 203-213; Welten, "Kult-höhe" 30; Wright, "Pre-Israelite" 19; Iwry, "Massebah" 232.

¹⁸⁵ Jepsen, Quellen 69; Jones, Kings I, 124; Long, Kings 57-62.

spite of the future Deuteronomist, approved and confirmed Solomon in his kingship (verses 5-15).¹⁸⁶

In I Kings 11:7, Solomon is condemned for building bamot for the worship of foreign gods, on a hill east of Jerusalem, overlooking the City of David, the city which Yahweh had reserved for himself (I Kings 11:32).¹⁸⁷

It is in the next generation that both kings and the bamot are condemned. Rehoboam of Judah and Jeroboam of Israel are both reprimanded for causing and aggravating the rift which tore the nation apart (I Kings 12).

Rehoboam is condemned in I Kings 14:22-24, for giving poor leadership, and the bamot are condemned because there the people are able to revert to former cults as practiced by the indigenous peoples of the land before Yahweh gave this land to Israel,

For they also built for themselves *ה'ינן* They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord drove out before the people of Israel. (I Kings 14:23-24)¹⁸⁸

Solomon's grandson, king Asa, was judged to be a good king

(*ה'ינן - כל ה'ינן - כל ה'ינן - כל ה'ינן - כל ה'ינן*) - the only blemish to his record was his neglect in destroying the

¹⁸⁶ Jones, Kings I, 124-125.

¹⁸⁷ Long, Kings 122-125; contra: Jones, Kings I, 235-236.

¹⁸⁸ Jones, Kings I, 277-278; Long, Kings 158-165.

bamot (*לִבְנוֹת הַבָּמוֹת*)
 (I Kings 15:14)¹⁸⁹

This stylistic judgment, he was a good king,

(*וְיֵשׁוּפָת הַמֶּלֶךְ הַזֶּה לֵבְנוֹת הַבָּמוֹת לֹא הָרַס וְלֹא הָרַס*)
וְלֹא הָרַס וְלֹא הָרַס

but he did not destroy the bamot as places of worship (*בָּמוֹת*)
לִבְנוֹת הַבָּמוֹת) is repeated for
 Jehoshaphat, (I Kings 22:44(43)),¹⁹⁰ Jehoash, who was guided in his
 affairs by Jehoiada the priest (II Kings 12:4(3)),¹⁹¹ Amaziah (II
 Kings 14:4),¹⁹² Azariah (II Kings 15:4),¹⁹³ and Jotham, son of
 Uzziah (II Kings 15:34-35).¹⁹⁴

Hezekiah, the good king (II Kings 18:3), expanded his
 kingdom (verses 7-8),¹⁹⁵ "eliminated foreign cult objects", and
 even "broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made"
 (verse 4). Nehush'tan, a reminder of YHWH's loving care of his

¹⁸⁹ Jones, Kings I, 284; Long, Kings 165-170.

¹⁹⁰ Jones, Kings II, 373; Long, Kings 241-242.

¹⁹¹ Jones, Kings II, 490-491.

¹⁹² Jones, Kings II, 507.

¹⁹³ Jones, Kings II, 517-519.

¹⁹⁴ Szikszai, "Kings" 30.

¹⁹⁵ Jones, Kings II, 556-561, 563.

people in the desert, had had Moses' and therefore YHWH's approval.¹⁹⁶

So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live. (Numbers 21:9)

Eventually this sacred Israelite institution fell victim to the reformer's zeal. Hezekiah ...

... broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until these days the people of Israel had burned incense to it (II Kings 18:4)

Even if the Nehush'tan had at one time been assimilated into the Yahweh cult on its entrance into Jerusalem as Rowley¹⁹⁷ has tried to demonstrate, the Deuteronomist considered it a Yahwistic emblem and described as such at this time of writing.

"He removed the high places" (verses 4, 22). When Sennacherib attempted to conquer the city of Jerusalem, his general, Rab'shakeh, utilized psychological warfare by reminding the people of Jerusalem and the elders of Judah, that Hezekiah had removed the *ginn*? and consequently deprived Judah of its places of worship to its own God Yahweh (II Kings 18:22).¹⁹⁸ The

¹⁹⁶ Jones, Kings II, 561-562; Hölscher, "Levi" 2164 - the brazen serpent was supposed to have been a symbol of the tribe of Levi.

¹⁹⁷ Rowley, "Zadok" 132-141 - according to this author the brazen serpent was a symbol of the Canaanite god, who was the god of Jerusalem, before it was conquered by David. After the conquest it was assimilated into Yahwistic theology, and Numbers 21:6-9 had been composed to explain its origins.

¹⁹⁸ Jones, Kings II, 566-571.

fact, that the Judean leadership wanted the diatribe to be given in Aramaic (verse 26) so that the people would not be able to understand it, and indeed, that silence was imposed on the population when they were being baited by Rab'shakeh (II Kings 18:36),¹⁹⁹ seems to indicate a sense of insecurity on the part of Hezekiah, in regard to the reaction the populace might exhibit to this royal interference in their religious lives.

II Kings 23 records the Deuteronomic²⁰⁰ reform that Josiah initiated under the guidance of Hilkiah, the high priest. In this chapter alone the bamot are mentioned seven times. Verse 5 records his deposition of all priests ($\rho'7N7$),²⁰¹ other than Yahwistic priests, who had been in charge of the liturgies at the high places dedicated to foreign gods in Jerusalem and Judah. In verse 8 Josiah also went against the high places and their priests ($\rho'777$), in Judah, that had been devoted to Yahweh.²⁰² He defiled the bamot,²⁰³ withdrew the priests ($\rho'777$)

¹⁹⁹ Kennett, "Aaronite Priesthood" 176; Jones, Kings II, 573 - I do not agree with Jones here, after all the king had to impose silence!

²⁰⁰ Hollenstein, "Literaturkritische" 321-336; Jepsen, Quellen 27; Jones, Kings II, 614-628.

²⁰¹ Jones, Kings II, 618; Wolff, Hosea 175.

²⁰² Haran, Temples 23; Jones, Kings II, 619-621.

²⁰³ Barthélemy, Critique I: Josué II R 23, 8.

out of the local towns, and broke down the bamot near the gates of Jerusalem.²⁰⁴

Although the author stresses that this reform had been inspired by Deuteronomic laws and ideals (II Kings 22:8-23:3)²⁰⁵ Josiah was not able to enforce a strict adherence to them, as the treatment of the priests (פ'ו נז) of the high places so well shows. According to Deuteronomy 18:6-8,²⁰⁶ the priests were entitled to officiate at any Yahwistic sanctuary if they happened to come to a place that had one. Through this reform they were deprived of their sustenance, as well as their vocation in life,²⁰⁷ because the Jerusalemite priesthood prevented them from serving as priests in the Temple (verse 9).²⁰⁸ Thus, a great percentage of the country's priests and leaders, who could trace their lineage to the beginnings of Israel's history, were reduced to a second class status in favour of the Zadokite priesthood of Jerusalem.

At least, that is the interpretation that is frequently given to this passage, because the centralization of the cult

²⁰⁴ Jones, Kings II, 621; Ottosson, Temples 98-99; Vaughan, Meaning 14.

²⁰⁵ Jones, Kings II, 602-617.

²⁰⁶ Kennett, Old Testament Essays 71-72.

²⁰⁷ Alt, "Heimat" in Kleine Schriften 255-256, 258-262; Hölscher, "Levi" 2174-2175.

²⁰⁸ Jones, Kings II, 621; Kennett, "Aaronite Priesthood" 161.

under Josiah, is a presumed fact. Oestreicher denies this centralization, stating that it was not necessary. Since the Temple had always been an unique institution in Israelite life, eliminating the *הינן* would not increase the importance of the Temple. Therefore his contention is, that the priests were not called to Jerusalem to fill secondary positions in the Temple hierarchy, but that they were invited (induced) to come to Jerusalem to share the newly reformed Paschal feast with their Jerusalemite brethren and thus exhibit a united front, in support of Josiah's domestic reforms and his revolt against the Assyrians, both at home to the Israelites, as well as to their enemies abroad.²⁰⁹

Judging by the information contained in verse 15, Josiah must have obtained power over a large part of Northern Israel, since he was able to destroy the bamah and the altar at Bethel.²¹⁰ He proceeded to do the same in all the cities of Samaria, even murdering the priests (*הכהנים*) that had been active at these centres of worship (verse 20). Some of these *הינן* , as for

²⁰⁹ Oestreicher, "Reichstempel" 37-38.

²¹⁰ Aharoni, Macmillan Bible Atlas 102; see also: Alt, "Heimat" 259-260; ... "Judas Gaue" 276-288 in Kleine Schriften Barthélémy, Critique II R 23, 15; Jepsen, Quellen 98-99; Weinfeld, "Josiah" 289-292; contra: Kennett, Old Testament Essays 80.

instance the bamah at Bethel,²¹¹ could trace their eminence and renown to the sojourn of the Patriarchs in the Land of Israel.

It should be noted that Josiah only destroyed the bamot, which to a great extent were Yahwistic (II Kings 17:32), in Northern Israel, as well as the *היכל* at the gates of Jerusalem.²¹² The bamot in Judah he only defiled, including the ones East of Jerusalem built to venerate foreign gods. This dichotomy in professed ideals and subsequent action, seems to indicate more of a political reason for the elimination of these sanctuaries, than a reason consequent on religious inspiration and conviction. Perhaps Josiah was afraid to antagonize, too greatly, his constituents in Judah, who were his power base,²¹³ by demolishing their local places of worship. He only defiled the bamot, a deed which could be rescinded by having these sacred places cleansed again. After all, he, himself, had done this to the *היכל*, the Temple of Jerusalem, when he purified it from all the Pagan abominations (II Kings 23:1-4).²¹⁴

The bamot are categorically condemned in six passages, although they have been mentioned in Kings within the framework

²¹¹ Eißfeldt, "Bethel" 1-30.

²¹² Jepsen, Quellen 65.

²¹³ Alt, "Jerusalems Aufstieg" in Kleine Schriften 243-257, esp. 244; Rad, "Deuteronomy" 838.

²¹⁴ Also: King Hezekiah in II Kings 18:4b, and later on the Maccabees in I Maccabees 4:36-61 and II Maccabees 10:1-9; Jones, Kings II, 615-619.

of Deuteronomic historiography and the tenor of their depiction has usually been disapproving. Three of these six texts refer to the three "bad" kings, Rehoboam, Ahaz and Manasseh, and the other three are associated with the three superlatively "good" kings, Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah.²¹⁵

It is interesting to note when examining these six passages that, again, it is a formula²¹⁶ which is repeated to describe the actions of both the 'good' kings, as well as those of the 'bad' kings.

The phrase, "on the high hills and under every green tree", (*187 גר-לכ תחת, תירצח-לך*) seems to be a phrase stereotyping the location where these bamot can be found.²¹⁷

The Deuteronomist claims that Israel was swayed in this choice of place of worship by the indigenous population that Israel conquered (infiltrated or rebelled against²¹⁸), as she took possession of the land pledged to her by YHWH. The influence of these peoples on the Israelites was feared by the Deuteronomist.

²¹⁵ Szikszai, "Kings" 30.

²¹⁶ Jepsen, Quellen 7, 75.

²¹⁷ Iwry, "Massebah" 231-232. Also in: Deuteronomy 12:2; I Kings 14:23; II Kings 16:4, 17:10; Isaiah 57:5; Jeremiah 2:20, 3:6, 13, 17:2; Ezekiel 6:13; II Chronicles 28:4.

²¹⁸ Gottwald, Tribes of Yahweh; ... "Two Models for the Origins of Ancient Israel" 5-24 in The Quest for the Kingdom of God.

In order to curtail this enchantment Deuteronomy 7:2-5 gives specific instructions on how to deal with this threat. There was to be no treaty made, or intermarriage gone into, with these peoples (verses 2-4).²¹⁹ The Israelites were instructed to break down the altars (verse 5), dash to pieces the pillars, cut down the asherim,²²⁰ and burn the graven images.

This injunction is picked up again by the Deuteronomist in chapter 12. The Israelites are obliged to:

surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains and upon the hills and under every green tree, (*וְכָל הַמָּקוֹמֹת אֲשֶׁר עָבְדוּ אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם הַהֵם עַל הַהָרִים וְעַל הַבְּרִיחִים וְתַח הָעֵץ הַיָּרֵק*).
(Deuteronomy 12:2)

Verse 3 follows then with the same list as cited in chapter 7: tear down their altars; dash in pieces their pillars; burn their asherim; hew down the graven images of their gods, and thus "destroy their name out of that place."²²¹

The prophets, Hosea²²² and Jeremiah, draw upon this imagery when reprimanding *לְיִשְׂרָאֵל* for abandoning her *אֲשֶׁרָה* by adopting the practices of the former peoples of the land.

²¹⁹ Adler, Background - here her thesis of the marriage metaphor is of importance. Just as a woman is to cleave to her husband alone, so Israel must separate herself from everything that is not Yahweh.

²²⁰ Iwry, "Massebah" 230-231.

²²¹ Olyan, Asherah 22 n.62.

²²² Alt, "Heimat" 270-75; Olyan, Asherah 19-22; Widengren, "Early" 149-203, esp. 177.

Hosea (c.730 B.C.E.) in chapter 4:12-13 says to his audience:

My people inquire of a thing of wood,
and their staff gives them oracles.
For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray,
and they have left their God to play the harlot.

They sacrifice on the tops of mountains,

(*וְעַל-הַרְעֵב הָקִידוּ לְכַלְחָל*)
and make offerings upon the hills,

(*וְעַל-הָעֵץ הָעֹרֵב וְעַל-הַיָּדָבָר*)
under oak, poplar, and terebinth,

(*וְכִי-יִשְׁכַּח וְיִשְׁכַּח וְיִשְׁכַּח*)
because their shade is good.

Although Hosea was an important influence on the Deuteronomistic school of thought, he never singles out the A(a)sherim for censure. Labelling them worthy of anathema is a Deuteronomistic innovation.²²³

Jeremiah (c.627 - B.C.E.) in chapter 2:20 bemoans Israel's apostasy with these words:

For long ago you broke your yoke
and burst your bonds;
and you said, 'I will not serve.'
Yea, and upon every high hill

(*וְעַל-הָעֵץ הָעֹרֵב וְעַל-הַיָּדָבָר*)
and under every green tree

(*וְעַל-הָעֵץ הָעֹרֵב וְעַל-הַיָּדָבָר*)
you bowed down as a harlot.

²²³ Olyan, Asherah 4ff., 22.

Although many commentators have interpreted these quotes as referring to fertility cults that Israel practiced under the influence from other nations, especially Canaan, this is not the point at issue here. The point of contention is that Israel, in the eyes of the Deuteronomist, has acted like a harlot by abandoning YHWH and sustaining cults²²⁴ that the Deuteronomist has judged to be invalid. Ezekiel also elaborates on this theme in chapter 6.

So, when it comes to the three kings Rehoboam, Ahaz, and Manasseh, assessed as 'bad', it is because they continue to permit the existence of the bamot (

וְיָדוּ אֶת הַבָּמוֹת הַזֵּסִים), and:

Judah did what was evil in the sight of the Lord,

(*וְיָדוּ אֶת הַבָּמוֹת הַזֵּסִים*) and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. For they also built for themselves

וְיָבִינוּ לָהֶם on every high hill and under every green tree

(*וְיָבִינוּ לָהֶם*); ... they do according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord drove out before the people of Israel. (I Kings 14:22-24)

This happened during the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, who caused the schism in the land of Israel.

²²⁴ Daniel, Recherches 40-43, 46-47; Jepsen, Quellen 93; Widengren, "Early" 178, 180; Wolff, Hosea xxviff.

Of Ahaz it is said:

And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the

Lord his God (*לדוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*),
as his father David had done, but he walked in the ways
of the kings of Israel according to the abominable
practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out before
the people of Israel. And he sacrificed and burned
incense on the high places, and on the hills, and under

every green tree (*תַּחַת כָּל עֵץ יָרוֹק*).
(I Kings 16:2-4)

Ahaz, son of Jotham, was a bad king (*מֶלֶךְ רָע*)
(II Kings 16:2).

He, himself, "sacrificed and burned incense on the high places,
and on the hills, and under every green tree" (verse 4).²²⁵ "He
even burned his son as an offering, according to the abominable
practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the
people of Israel" (verse 3).²²⁶

Manasseh,²²⁷ the son of Hezekiah, rebuilt the bamot destroyed
by his father Hezekiah.²²⁸ Manasseh though went to another
extreme. Besides rebuilding the bamot he also imposed cults to

²²⁵ Jones, Kings II, 531-535.

²²⁶ Jones, Kings II, 533-534.

²²⁷ Cross, Canaanite 285-286, 288.

²²⁸ Olyan, Asherah 9 n.26 - Manasseh is considered the
conservative and Hezekiah and Josiah are the radicals who weeded
out legitimate Yahwistic cult symbols such as the asherim/ot, the
bamot with the massebot - cited from G.W. Ahlström, Royal
Administration and National Religion in Ancient Israel (Leiden:
Brill, 1982) 68-80.

foreign deities (II Kings 21:3)²²⁹ on these local centres of worship, which obviously caused further resentment and estrangement between himself and his subjects. He was considered a bad king (*ה'יה' 'J'87 877 88'1*) (II Kings 21:2-3). The treatment that he accorded his subjects (verse 16)²³⁰ was in all probability the crowning aspect in this negative judgement by the author:

And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord,

(*ה'יה' 'J'87 877 88'1*)
 according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel. For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he erected altars for Baal, and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them And the graven image of Asherah that he had made he set in the house of which the Lord said and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations had done whom the Lord destroyed before the people of Israel. (II Kings 21:2-9)

In this passage the mountains, the high hills and the green trees are not mentioned, but the judgment has been made most specific in that the authors states that Manasseh seduced the people "to do more evil than the nations had done whom the Lord destroyed before the people of Israel" (verse 9), and he does

²²⁹ Jones, Kings II, 592-596.

²³⁰ Jones, Kings II, 600.

mention in detail the furniture associated with the bamot as it is described in Deuteronomy, chapters 7 and 12.

The reference to child sacrifice has been associated with the bamot. Of Manasseh it has been said, and "He burned his son as an offering" (*עלך ישר-אלך י'רדך*) to some unknown deity (verse 6) and consorted with mediums and wizards.

It had also been recorded of Ahaz that "he even burned his son as an offering" (*עלך י'רדך ישר-אלך י'רדך*)

(II Kings 16:3). A third time that this action is alluded to is under Josiah when he defiles the tophet in the Hinnom valley in

order "that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech." (*י'רדך-אלך ישר-אלך ע'לך י'רדך י'רדך*)

י'רדך עלך) (2 Kgs. 23:10). Whether this action really describes child sacrifice or is a technical (liturgical) term for some more prosaic form of dedication, is still under debate.²³¹ The phrase

in Hebrew is *עלך י'רדך* which can be translated as "to pass through the fire".²³² Could it perhaps be interpreted that both Manasseh and Ahaz were old fashioned and reactionary and consecrated their children to YHWH in a ceremony

²³¹ Menzel, Assyrische Tempel I: 28 - in Assyrian studies this formula also presents problems as to its proper interpretation.

²³² New Oxford Annotated Bible 477, n.z.; Jones, Kings II, 533-534, 597, 621-622; Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches III, 737.

frowned upon by the Deuteronomist and the reforming king Josiah?²³³

When scrutinising the 'good' kings, Hezekiah and Josiah,²³⁴ it becomes evident that the same formula has been used in order to show these kings' reforming zeal.²³⁵ Again the mountains, high hills and green trees are not mentioned here, but the accompanying furniture of these sanctuaries are listed in the same manner as in Deuteronomy chapters 7 and 12.

<u>Deuteronomy 7 & 12</u>	<u>II Kings 18</u>	<u>II Kings 23</u>
	<u>Hezekiah</u>	<u>Josiah</u>
break down altars	removed altars	destroyed altars
break pillars	broke pillars	broke pillars
destroy asherim	cut down asherim	cut down asherim
destroy graven images	destroyed Nehush'tan	destroyed horses, chariots

²³³ Could a comparison be drawn between this predicament and what happened in Medieval Christianity when parents dedicated their children to the priesthood or the religious life, frequently causing a innumerable problems, until the Council of Trent tried to rectify the situation by legislating that only persons who had come to these vocations of their own free will could be accepted.

²³⁴ Cross, Canaanite 283-287.

²³⁵ The debate by: Widengren, "Early" especially pp. 157-164, 177; also: Szikszai, "Kings" 31; Wolff, Hosea 15f, 34, 44.

In Deuteronomy, this type of literary schema indicated a warning against former cults and not so much the fact of the factual destruction of the (Yahwistic) bamot. When Hezekiah removed the bamot without distinction, he did call forth resentment and an extreme reaction which manifested itself under Manasseh and the revitalization of the bamot.

Josiah destroyed the bamot in a selective manner. He also made certain that he explained to (imposed on?) the priests and leaders, these new ideas which motivated him. That is probably why, in the long run, his reform finally did have more effect. The time in Exile completed the process.

Solomon, the third good king, is also mentioned in connection with this formula - but with him it is the time that he is being reprimanded by the prophet, and by YHWH, for building bamot with all of their furniture, just outside Jerusalem, the city chosen by YHWH for himself, for the alien gods that his foreign wives imported into the land of Israel.

The King of Israel

The kingdom of Israel did not have a chance with the Deuteronomic historian.²³⁶ Jeroboam, to all intents and purposes, sounds like a person who would have made a good king. He had the well being of his people at heart (I Kings 12:2-4, 12, 20), he had accepted the kingship with a prophetic blessing (I Kings 11:29-31, 37-39) and the wishes of the people (I Kings 12:20), but he helped bring about the division of Israel (verses 20, 25-33). He revived former Yahwistic cults at the ancient holy places of Bethel and Dan (I Kings 12:29-33) in opposition to the now established and accepted cult centre at Jerusalem (I Kings 11:32; 12:26-27). Therefore everything he did was considered a sin (I Kings 13:1-10, 33-34; II Kings 17:20-23).²³⁷

Five times the bamot are mentioned in chapter 12 and 13 in connection with Jeroboam establishing his own dynasty and his own Yahwistic cult centres (I Kings 12:31, 32; 13:2, 32, 33; also II Kings 17:32). Each judgment condemns Jeroboam, not so much for erecting the bamot, but for installing priests (כֹּהֲנִים) to officiate at these high places,²³⁸ priests who had no claim to the

²³⁶ Szikszai, "Kings" 30.

²³⁷ Cross, Canaanite 282; Jones, Kings I, 231-269; II, 551-552; Long, Kings 125-152.

²³⁸ Jepsen, Quellen 6, 103; Jones, Kings I, 260-269; II, 555.

Levitic priesthood. At least that is what the author would like us to believe, although we know that a majority of the Northern priests were of Mosaic and/or Aaronite descent (e.g. Judges 17-18).²³⁹ By supporting a local priesthood these centres were able to develop as shrines independent of Jerusalem.

Another detail that the Deuteronomic author finds so reprehensible is the fact that Jeroboam set up the two calves at Bethel and Dan (I Kings 12:28-29 also II Kings 17:16). These two images were not any more idolatrous than the cherubim²⁴⁰ in the Temple at Jerusalem, the serpent which was only destroyed by Hezekiah, and the twelve bulls or oxen supporting the brazen sea in the Temple court removed by Ahaz (II Kings 16:17).²⁴¹ It is more for his part in tearing Israel asunder that Jeroboam has been condemned by the Deuteronomist,²⁴² than for specific acts, such as the construction of the golden calves,²⁴³ or the revitalizing of the old cults at the bamot at Bethel and Dan.

Four more times the bamot in Israel are mentioned and all four citations occur in chapter 17 of the Second Book of Kings

²³⁹ Cook, "Simeon" 375-376; Hölscher, "Levi" 2166; Kennett, "Aaronite Priesthood" 167.

²⁴⁰ Widengren "Early" 166.

²⁴¹ Cook, "Simeon" 375-376; Kennett, Old Testament Essays 70-71; ..., "Aaronite Priesthood" 166-167.

²⁴² Jepsen, Quellen 69.

²⁴³ Cross, Canaanite 73-75; Jaros, Stellung 222-225.

(verses 9, 11, 29, 32). These verses reprimand the people of Israel themselves for worshipping at the bamot. None of the individual kings are mentioned. In verses 11, 29, 32, Yahweh is worshipped at these high places, but the influence of the peoples that Israel had conquered (verse 11), or the new ones imported into Samaria by the Assyrians (verses 29 and 32), is cited as part of the condemnation.²⁴⁴

The bamot, since they are centres of worship for the local population, not just of foreign import, but indigenous to Israel and her patriarchs (Gen. 28:18, 22; 23:13; 35:14),²⁴⁵ are supported by Rehoboam and are not destroyed by Asa and Jehosaphat. It is only Josiah, while centralizing the Yahwistic cult in Jerusalem, who dares to defile and destroy some of the bamot²⁴⁶ in Northern Israel. Even he is careful not to destroy the bamot in Judah, his power base, probably remembering the sad consequences of Hezekiah's reform when that king had not hesitated to remove many of the Judaic bamot.

Considering what is known of the bamot, the A(a)sherim/ot, and Nehush'tan, perhaps the reason for the royal reformation should be sought in the suppression, not so much of foreign

²⁴⁴ Jones, Kings II, 543, 548-549, 554-555.

²⁴⁵ Albright, Archaeology 104-5; Gray, Kings 311; Harrelson, Fertility Cult 37; Jagersma, History of Israel 28, 85, 113-4, 132, 137, 165, 168-9.

²⁴⁶ Gray, Kings 12.

imports, but in the later development of viewing even perfectly good Yahwistic appurtenances as *אֲשֵׁרִי*, which also included the sacrifices at Jerusalem, and the gedeshim/ot. It is perhaps easy to see how physical installations such as high places, trees, pillars, sacrifices, or carvings, could lend themselves to misuse in the eyes of the reformers. How the institution of the *אֲשֵׁרִי* had become toebah the writers never clarify.

D. Hosea 4:14

Hosea, the prophet, who is known for portraying YHWH as the husband of Israel, and who pictures Israel's actions as those of a prostitute, is frequently said to have been influenced in his imagery by the fertility cults of surrounding Canaan. In this part of the chapter I will look at Hosea's one mention of the *היעזב* to see whether there might be some truth in that assertion.

I will not punish your²⁵⁰ daughters
 when they play the harlot (*היחלל*),
 nor your brides when they commit
 adultery;
 for the men themselves go aside with
 harlots (*היחלל*),
 and sacrifice with *היעזב*
 and a people without understanding
 shall come to ruin (Hosea 4:14).

This is the only pericope out of the eleven citations in which the word *עזב* is being used in the feminine plural, gedeshot, and it is also the only passage that gives some indication that there might have been some religious (cultic?) aspect to these gedeshot.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ Some scholars believe that the -chem (your) might be a substitution for -hem (their) starting with verse 13 - Biblia Hebraica 995.

²⁵¹ Gray, Kings 311 n.24; Wolff, Hosea 87, 209; Rost, "Erwägungen" 455ff. - the author presents the theory that the daughters and daughters-in-law gave themselves up to prostitution

The LXX translates the term with *ΤΕΤΕΛΕΓΜΕΝΩΝ* - "fulfil, accomplish, execute, ... perform a dangerous feat, ... fulfil one's word",²⁵² again substituting action for a person.

The Book of Hosea is the only prophetic book originating in the Northern Kingdom. Perhaps some characteristics other than traces of a more archaic language²⁵³ are unique to it. One of these is the remembrance of the *7/c*, the head of a family still offering sacrifices, and another one might be the remembrance of the gedeshim/gedeshot being held in such high esteem that they were considered important enough to be invited to attend (participate in) cultic actions celebrated by the community.

Hagedeshim are mentioned four times in the Books of Kings, but always in connection with Judah. Up until the time under discussion they had appeared during the reigns of Rehoboam, Asa, and Jehosaphat. At this time, when Hosea was preaching in the North, Hezekiah was trying to 'reform' his kingdom by eliminating such 'Israelite' institutions as the bamot (II Kings 18:4, 22), and the Nehush'tan (verse 4), and the asherah (verse 4), because of genuine or alleged misuse of these institutions.

on a temporary basis, while the gedeshot performed this service on a more permanent basis in honour of the goddess.

²⁵² Liddell, Greek 1771-2; see also Dion, "Cultic" 45 n.11 - "one might be tempted to surmise that the Greek translator read haggiddusim, 'the consecrations,' instead of haggedesim."

²⁵³ Andersen/Freedman, Hosea 313; Rudolph, Hosea 21.

Hoseah also found fault with Israelite institutions such as priests (Hosea 4:4-10), prophets (verse 5), family patriarchs who bear moral and religious responsibility in the family (verses 13-14)²⁵⁴, and the gedeshot (verse 14). He labels their actions with znh, nine times in this chapter alone. Twice he scolds the priests and people using the term znh (verses 10-11). Twice again, in verse 12, he describes the peoples actions with the self same term. In verses 13 and 14, the actions of the daughters are described using znh. Israel as a whole is reprimanded for playing the zonah in verses 15 and 18.

Over the years the gedeshot have been labeled zonot because of the parallel construction of verse 14 where the men are described as going aside²⁵⁵ to visit with zonot and also as offering sacrifices in the company of gedeshot.²⁵⁶ This alignment

²⁵⁴ Rost, "Erwägungen" 455 - accuses the 'pater familias' of leading astray his own daughters, still living in his house, as well as his daughters-in-law, into harlotry. In his argument the author contends with the question of whether these women were still in the state of virginity or not. The real problem lies though with the fact that these men misused their authority and responsibility; Wolff, Hosea 87.

²⁵⁵ Hooks, Sacred Prostitution 181 - discusses the double meaning the word parad might have, either, denoting 'to go aside' with a prostitute, or a technical term designating sacrificial actions. But as the writer demonstrates, combining the two does not make much sense if then the priests (men) go away from the altar, with the prostitutes, to practice cult prostitution; Wolff, Hosea 87.

²⁵⁶ Heschel, Prophets 45; Lang, Monotheism 24, 31; Rost, "Erwägungen" 451-460; Wolff, Hosea 87, 209-10.

therefore was perfect for supporting the contention of cult prostitution.²⁵⁷

Verse 14 reprimands the patriarchs²⁵⁸ of the family for availing themselves of members of two established institutions, the zonot and thus giving bad moral example to the members of their household, and the gedeshot, who in the prophet's view had no business to be near to, or be participants in the cultic action. If we also insist that the officiant was the abba and not necessarily an Aaronite priest, who was sacrificing at (on) a bamah, would the prophet perhaps be condemning that oblation because the patriarch himself, as officiant, was not tolerated anymore? Since Hoseah and Job are so similar in their use of archaic idiom and the reporting of Patriarchal mores this verse could then be read in parallel with Job 1:5 and 42:8. Certainly

²⁵⁷ Adler Background 232ff. - gives a short survey of the interpretations of verses 13 and 14 that have been popular. She then goes into greater detail analyzing Hosea's use of words such as gedeshot and zonot. As she points out it is usually the masculine plural form of the root znh that Hosea utilizes when speaking of Israelites in general (Hosea 4:10, 18), the masculine singular when addressing Israel collectively (Hosea 4:15; 5:3; 9:1) and the feminine singular when describing Gomer as a representative for Israel (Hosea 2:7; 3:3). Since in this pericope the Biblical writer uses the feminine plural, thus indicating real action, the passage presents a problem when wanting to interpret it metaphorically.

²⁵⁸ Hooks, Sacred Prostitution 179ff. - goes along with the thought that the men rebuked are the priests mentioned in verse 9. Are the daughters and daughters-in-law then the 'daughters of Jerusalem', the small rural villages which make up the community of Israel, and are being neglected by their leaders as they play their political power games?

about a hundred years later Josiah eliminated priests from the Northern kingdom under the pretext that they did not belong to the lawful class of priesthood.

When we examined the cognates of the gedeshah in the other Semitic languages and religions of Mesopotamia and Canaan, the conclusion had been reached that, first, they did not practice cult prostitution, and second, these people had in all probability been integrated into the hierarchy of their temple personnel because the lists enumerate the gdsm, and the gadishtu, among other priestly classes, such as the khnm, and the entu. This development never transpired in Israel or Judah. Why? Is it due to the unfolding of monotheism, where a diversified pantheon is missing, and thus a diversified temple personnel is not needed? Since YHWH the one god is being represented as a male deity, official female cult personnel are not wanted, therefore all status within the cult is denied them?

Over the centuries that *hienp* has been translated as 'cult prostitutes', it was thought that the men were participating in a syncretistic cult in which they were availing themselves of the services of these sacred prostitutes in order to encourage the fertility of the land.²⁵⁹ Hosea, with his

picturesque language and his constant use of words based on had encouraged this interpretation.²⁶⁰

The prophet uses the word znh in its various forms twenty-one times throughout the whole book; nine times in chapter four alone,²⁶¹ because that is what Israel is doing. Hosea was the foremost exponent of the covenantal relationship between YHWH and Israel as a marriage contract.²⁶² Therefore, whenever Israel ignores and turns aside from her one and only true *דָּר*, she acts like an adulteress. In Hosea, Israel's guilt is exposed as unfaithful apostasy from YHWH, but not as participation in cult prostitution.

Exegetes have thought that this concept of cultic prostitution was accentuated by the usage of the imagery of the bamot²⁶³:

They sacrifice on the tops of mountains,

(*'הָרִים' וְעַל הַרְרֵי 'עֵלֶי-דָּר*)
and make offerings upon the hills,

(*וְעַל הַרְרֵי 'הָרִים-דָּר*)

²⁶⁰ Dion, "Cultic" 44; Wolff, Hosea 13-17.

²⁶¹ Collins, Stem 275-6; Andersen/Freedman, Hosea 323.

²⁶² Adler, Background - contends in her dissertation that Israel was unique among the ancient peoples in describing her relationship to her God, YHWH, as a marital union, and that it was not just due to the prophets developing this theme, but inherent in the basic monolatry/monotheism of Israel; see also Andersen/Freedman, Hosea 369; Wolff, Hosea 16, for further ideas.

²⁶³ Rost, "Erwägungen" 455.

under oak, poplar , and terebinth,
 (*לְחֵטְאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְחֵטְאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*)
 because their shade is good.
 Therefore your daughters play the
 harlot,
 and your brides commit adultery.

But at the present there is no evidence of cult prostitution having been practiced by the Canaanites. The bamot were a historical reality and not anymore dangerous to the Yahwistic faith of the people than the sacrifices and the ritual at the Temple in Jerusalem.

The last years of Jeroboam II's rule and the subsequent reigns (750-722 B.C.E.),²⁶⁴ were the time when Hosea, in all probability, delivered his message. It was a time of great upheaval since Assyria threatened as a conquering power. The internal situation of Israel was one of virtual anarchy. During the fourteen years following Jeroboam's death four kings were assassinated.²⁶⁵ The leaders, kings and priests, during this time of confusion, were prostituting Israel to whomever or whatever manoeuvre might save her from the final collapse. They were forgetting their primary duty of guiding the people in the observance of *לְחֵטְאֵי* .

The people, left to themselves in their ignorance were confounded by various cults and 'philosophies' presenting

²⁶⁴ Rudolph, Hosea 25; Smart thinks that Hosea's ministry was completed before 734 B.C.E. - "Hosea" 651.

²⁶⁵ The New Oxford Annotated Bible 1088.

themselves from without and within. The prophet describes these cults as 'whoredoms'.²⁶⁶

The ignorance of Israel vis-à-vis YHWH is demonstrated by the fact that Israel still does not understand that YHWH is the *ד'ך* of the land. YHWH is both *ד'ך* (verse 1) who transcends human understanding, as well as the *ד'ך* who gives and withholds the treasures from the land. He is also Israel's one and only true baal who is concerned for and loves Israel and is jealous for her devotions.

The gedeshot are not in the wrong because they perform the sex act as part of the liturgy of a fertility cult. The wrong lay in Israel and its leaders, who included the gedeshim, lacking *ד'ךך ד'ךך* (verses 1, 6 [2x]), and rejecting *ד'ךך* of *ד'ךך* (verse 6). It is this lack of understanding which would bring ruin on the people (verse 14).

In his study on the prophet Hosea, Swaim,²⁶⁷ as cited by Lang²⁶⁸, emphasizes Hosea's political acumen in regard to the conflicting loyalties that were vying for Israelite allegiance. He claims that Hosea was against any political alliance both with Egypt and Assyria. Seeing no hope in the indigenous leadership,

²⁶⁶ Wolff, Hosea 16.

²⁶⁷ G.G. Swaim, "Hosea the Statesman", in G.A. Tuttle, ed. Biblical and Near Eastern Studies. Essays in Honor of W.S. LaSor (Grand Rapids, 1978) 177-83.

²⁶⁸ Lang, Monotheism 85-6.

who were slaughtering each other, he turned hopeful eyes to Judah where a Davidic king was still leading the true believers of YHWH.

Perhaps Hosea's position was that the best answer to both the internal chaos of kingship by brute force and usurpation, and the external threat of Assyria lay in a reunion of all those who truly worshipped Yahweh, i.e. Israel and Judah.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ Swain, "Hosea" 180.

היעזר = הילל ?

All three occasions when the gedeshah/ot are mentioned in the feminine, the text does present a dilemma by having the word zonah in its parallel phrases. This does not occur the five times the term is used in the masculine. Is Gruber therefore correct in asserting that the gedeshah was a zonah?

Since all of these texts are polemical, stressing the Deuteronomist's point of view, could his attitude to people be showing through here? The male 'holy people', whether priests, prophets, Levites, or gedeshim, could be murdered, integrated or rotated in the ideal cult that the author (king) envisioned. Other men's mothers, daughters, wives or sisters, could not be treated in such a manner without drastic repercussions. One still did not want to see them too close to the thrones of power, but they were still needed to make a multitudinous nation out of a small people. So their contributions to the body politic were denigrated. Even if they themselves were not labeled 'prostitutes', they were always put in close literary proximity to undesirable people.

Comparisons can be odious, especially when drawn too rigorously between two different social systems, but the gedeshim/gedeshot might perhaps be likened to a group within medieval Christianity, the beguines/beghards.

This religious lay movement of the Late Middle Ages consisted of both male and female members, but was being dominated by its female component due the numerical preponderance of women after the human destruction of the Crusades. The members lived in communities freely accepting poverty and chastity without being bound by vows to any particular conventional order. They devoted themselves to charitable works such as the care of the sick.²⁷⁰

Sie waren besonders empfänglich für die Mystik, auch gegen deren häretischen Überschwung nicht gefeit. Von früh an oft verdächtigt, wurden die B. ... verboten.²⁷¹

Seitdem verbreiteten sie sich - trotz wiederholter Anklagen wegen Häresie (s.u.), Verfolgung u. selbst kirchl. Verurteilung -....²⁷²

This movement was inherently good. It had connections with recognized theologians, such as Meister Eckhart and Albertus Magnus, and produced acceptable figures such as Mechthild von Magdeburg, and it was "eine allg. Bewegung, welche allmährl. aus wirtschftl. u. bes. rel.-mystischen Beweggründen gewachsen ist".²⁷³ The institutional Church though, annihilated this undertaking because she was not able and/or willing to cope with

²⁷⁰ Cohn, Pursuit of the Millennium 159-162; Ruh, Meister Eckhart chapter 7, pp. 95-114.

²⁷¹ Grundmann, "Beginen" 959.

²⁷² Mens, "Beginen" 115.

²⁷³ Mens, "Beginen" 115.

the freedom of spirit that these assemblies exhibited, nor with the popular adulation generated by them. One of the ways of condemning the fraternities to eventual oblivion was to undercut their prestige with the people by denigrating their theology insinuating that it would lead to an unorthodox morality.

E. Job 36:14

As the various translations of this passage of Job reveal, the ס'עצן presented a problem to the writer, but the passage is quoted as evidence that cult prostitutes as sodomites did exist in Israel.

The godless in heart cherish anger;
They do not cry for help when he binds them.
They die in youth
and their life ends ס'עצן (Job 36:13-14).

Pope in his commentary on this passage alludes to the usual interpretation of gedeshim but also points out the problem that the translator of the LXX had and that he had translated the word with 'angels'. The RSV renders it with 'and their life ends in shame', but in the footnote "gives the more exact rendering 'among the cult prostitutes'".²⁷⁴

Again, it is the parallel arrangement that makes the explication of this document perplexing. Since the people, the gedeshim are made analogous to נעורי youth(?), commentators have been puzzled as to the understanding of this excerpt.²⁷⁵

Structurally the two books, Hosea and Job, have much in common. Both present problems to the scholar due to the poor

²⁷⁴ Pope, Job xxxvii-xxxviii, 233 n.1 b; RSV 648; Dion, "Cultic" 44.

²⁷⁵ Hooks, Sacred Prostitution 184-185.

preservation of the original texts.²⁷⁶ Both present linguistic features which for a long time had puzzled scholars in their attempt to analyze a Hebrew strongly coloured either by local dialects, such as one stemming from the Northern Kingdom²⁷⁷, or Aramaic.²⁷⁸

The book of Job has a long literary history in the ancient Near East, from which styles, language and thought pattern in all probability influenced the author. It is not even certain that the author of this particular rendition was an Israelite,²⁷⁹ although, naturally, over the centuries the text was edited and revised by Jewish writers to answer the needs of their audience. The addition of the Satan would demonstrate a post Exilic emendation.²⁸⁰ From the rest of the Tanach the author also had many examples on which to model his dialogues or laments. Even a wealth of proverbial wisdom was employed by him, thus, frequently rendering the text more incomprehensible but also more colourful, since proverbs and axioms are notoriously difficult to relay from one language or culture to another.

²⁷⁶ Pope, "Job" 912; Rudolph, Hosea 19.

²⁷⁷ Rudolph, Hosea 21.

²⁷⁸ Pope, "Job" 912-3.

²⁷⁹ Pope, "Job" 914-7.

²⁸⁰ Pope, "Job" 913.

The saying of dying *ר' עֲזַרְיָה* , was being used by the author of Job like a proverb whose meaning is lost on too close a scrutiny, but whose import everyone understands, as a description of disgrace and utter abandonment by YHWH of the person who had rejected the knowledge of YHWH. That, after all, that is the whole contention of Elihu's harangue.

If it is agreed that the Patriarchal colouring of the Book of Job is still quite strong in many of its passages, especially in showing a lack of organized cultic religion, similar to the descriptions about the religious practices of the Patriarchs,²⁸¹ then the interpretation of the gedeshim does not really present a problem at all. They might still have been mentioned as being part of the scene, just as the sacrificial offering celebrated by the patriarch of the family was in 1:5; 42:8. They had also been mentioned in the other book harking back to the Patriarchal age, Genesis 38.

Elihu and his compatriots are really chiding Job, who had been known for his rectitude, and was still appreciated by God for such, for his lack of understanding of YHWH's divine plan. Conceivably all Elihu is saying to him: "Look, even the holy men (*ר' עֲזַרְיָה*) of ancient times, died abandoned by YHWH when they were too stubborn to contemplate God's knowledge and fall in line with it!"

²⁸¹ Pope, "Job" 913.

All in all, Job seems to be closest in spirit to Hosea, in that both stress the point, that either associating with, or dying among the gedeshim/ot is a shameful thing. Neither explains why he considers any relationship with the gedeshim/ot to be so shameful, but both discussed at length in the text preceding the verses in question (Job 36:14; Hosea 4:14) the evil of the lack of knowledge of YHWH's ways. Again it is the lack of לֹא יָדָע (Job 36:12) which is the undoing of the godless who perish beqedeshim.

In this book, therefore, there is no indication which would lead to the conclusion that hagedeshim were 'cult prostitutes'. What is interesting though is that in the three texts that do preserve a strong Patriarchal colouring, Genesis, Hosea and Job, the gedeshah/ot/im are mentioned as if 'by your leave'. They are there, but all three passages pose the question: 'Why are they mentioned at all?' Is it perhaps because there still was a strong tradition of their one time prestigious existence which people did not quite know how to integrate into their own social world anymore?

II. Other Biblical Passages

Besides the passages dealing with the gadeshim, eight in all, excerpts containing the words formed from the root זנח, meaning 'to prostitute oneself', have long been used by exegetes to support the claim of temple prostitution within Israel. I will quickly peruse some of these texts to determine the truth of these claims.

A. All Passages containing 'znh'

- sich m.e. anderen Mann einlassen, buhlen.... 2.
im Verhältnis zu Gott treulos sein....²⁸²
buhlerisch nachlaufen c. זנח²⁸²

In the Hebrew Bible the root זנח in its various forms is used one hundred and thirty-four times.²⁸³ Twenty-nine times the word is used in its most literal and factual sense²⁸⁴ according to the first part of the above dictionary definition.

²⁸² Koehler/Baumgartner, Hebräisches 263-4; Gesenius, Hebrew and English 275-6.

²⁸³ Collins, Stem 272-7.

²⁸⁴ Collins, Stem 70 - Genesis 34:31; 38:15, 24a, 24b; Leviticus 19:29a, 29b; 21:7, 9, 14; 22:21; 23:18(19); Joshua 2:1; 6:17, 22, 25; Judges 11:1; 16:1; 19:2; I Kings 3:16; 22:30; Isaiah 23:15, 16; Ezekiel 16:33a; Hosea 1:2a, 2b; Proverbs 6:26; 7:10; 23:27; 29:3.

The other one hundred and five times znh is being deployed in its symbolical sense as describing Israel's religious and/or political infidelity.²⁸⁵ This assertion is borne out by the fact that the preponderance of znh being used metaphorically, can be found mainly in the writings of the later prophets and in the legal texts of the Pentateuch²⁸⁶: Jeremiah (nine times), six times in chapter 3; Ezekiel (forty-seven times), twenty-one times in chapter 16, and twenty times in chapter 23; and Hosea, twenty-one times.

²⁸⁵ Collins, Stem 63, 65, 70; Lang, Monotheism 79; Preuss, Verspottung 121, 131 n. 33; - Exodus 34:15, 16a, 16b; Leviticus 17:7; 20:5a, 5b, 6; Numbers 14:33; 15:39; 25:1; Deuteronomy 31:16; Judges 2:17; 8:27, 33; II Kings 9:22; Isaiah 1:21; 23:17; 57:3; Jeremiah 2:20; 3:1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9; 5:7; 13:27; Ezekiel 6:9a, 9b; 16:15a, 15b, 16, 17, 20, 22, 25, 26a, 26b, 28a, 28b, 29, 30, 31, 33b, 34a, 35, 36, 41; 20:30; 23:3a, 3b, 5, 7, 8a, 8b, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19a, 19b, 27, 29a, 29b, 30, 35, 43a, 43b, 44; 43:7, 9; Hosea 1:2c, 2d, 2:4, 6, 7; 3:3; 4:10, 11, 12a, 12b, 13, 14a, 14b, 15, 18; 5:3, 4; 6:10; 9:1; Joel 4:3; Amos 7:17; Micah 1:7a, 7b; Nahum 3:4a, 4b, 4c; Psalms 73:27; 106:39; I Chronicles 5:25; II Chronicles 21:11, 13a, 13b.

²⁸⁶ Hooks, Sacred Prostitution 66; Collins, Stem 62-63.

B. Individual Passages

But besides the passages that have been mentioned above, eight dealing with gadesh (-ah, -im, -ot) (eleven times), and one-hundred thirty-four dealing with zonah, theologians and Biblical exegetes have frequently cited further Biblical quotations in support of the theory of the existence of cult prostitution in Canaan and Israel.

There are twenty four such passages and they can be divided into five categories.

1. The first category deals with Israel symbolically acting like a harlot by turning away from YHWH: Hosea 5:6 ff; 8:1; Zechariah 13:4-6. Although foreign idols are mentioned in Zechariah 13:2, the remaining chapter addresses the problem of the people being without honest leadership and the consequent failure of Israel to know YHWH.

In Hosea 5 the leadership is addressed again in: "O priests! O house of Israel! O house of the king!" and is reprimanded not so much for going after foreign gods but for being too self-satisfied in its observance of the Yahwistic ceremonies, and for political prostitution (verse 13). In verse 7: "They have dealt faithlessly with the Lord; for they have born alien children" the term zarim, an indication of treachery against YHWH,²⁸⁷ whether it

denotes ethnic foreignness, or strangeness in going astray in regard to YHWH's teachings, has generated some discussion which will be handled in greater detail when the *אֲשֶׁר* *אֵלֶיךָ* in Proverbs VII will be examined.

Hosea 8 censures Israel for breaking her covenant with YHWH by anointing kings and princes without first obtaining YHWH's approval (verse 4); making idols of silver and gold, a denunciation of the cult at Bethel (verses 4-5); seeking an alliance with Assyria (verse 9); and building fortified cities and placing her trust in these (verse 14). For all of these failures YHWH will revoke the Exodus and Israel will return to Egypt (verse 13, also 9:3, 6).²⁸⁸ Although Israel "has multiplied altars for sinning" (verses 11-13) it is approved sacrifices that are being censured and not foreign cults. Cult prostitution is not the issue in any of the passages mentioned so far.

2. The next category again deals with Israel symbolically acting like a prostitute by not listening to her *אֵלֶיךָ*, YHWH, instead she puts her trust in the external performance of sacrifice. Although certain cultic rites are mentioned which are frowned upon by the prophet they do not necessarily have to pertain to foreign cults: Isaiah 65:3-5, 11; 66:3, 17.

In Hosea 9:1-3, 15-17, the prophet warns Israel that if she deserts YHWH, YHWH will desert her in the end, and she will have

to dwell among foreign people who practice $\pi\pi\zeta \pi\pi\iota\pi\chi$. That is a threat of punishment, it does not necessarily presume that she is already subscribing to pagan idolatry.

In some of these passages sexual activity is indicated but never cult prostitution. The Biblical writers appear to want to say that by not obeying YHWH's injunctions the people and their leaders will eventually adopt the loose morals of their neighbours in their everyday lives: Leviticus 18:24 ff; Hosea 7:14; Amos 2:7.

3. The passages in the third category definitely reprimand Israel for deserting YHWH and serving the gods of the surrounding peoples: Judges 2:11-13; 10:6, 10; II Chronicles 24:17-18; I Kings 11:5-33; Ezekiel 8:14. They decry the intermarriage with the daughters of the heathen neighbours, Deuteronomy 7:3; Judges 3:5-7, 12; Ezra 9:2. They warn the people that although they might be praying to Baal, the former lord of the land, he is not the one who will provide them with progeny, Hosea 4:10; 9:10-11. Although they warn against the loose morals that are the result of $\pi\pi\zeta \pi\pi\iota\pi\chi$, Ezekiel 18:6, 11, 15; 22:9, cult prostitution is never mentioned.

4. The next two quotes describe the destruction of foreign cult centres by Gideon (Judges 6:25-32), and under Hezekiah (II Chronicles 31:1) and also indicate a subsequent return to the stricter Yahwistic morality by the people under the leadership of

their reformers. Cult prostitution is not mentioned as one of the rites that needed to be eliminated.

Isaiah 57 is a definite condemnation of Israel for being heedless of YHWH's commands. The wording of verses 7-8 is difficult and seems to support the argument that favours the existence of cult prostitution. Until there is clear irrefutable evidence that cult prostitution was a rite practiced in Canaan-Israel, this passage should be interpreted as a prophetic reprimand to Israel, describing her, in unflattering terms, as a harlot who relies on external observances of the various cults, both indigenous and foreign, practiced at the bamot, instead of listening to YHWH's instruction and obeying his injunctions.

I Samuel 2:22

This dichotomy between Israel's morals and her cultic performance is especially reprimanded in I Samuel 2:22f and Proverbs 7:14f. Proverbs VII shall be dealt with later on when discussing the *Παπακὺπτοῦρα* .

The story of the of Eli's sons, though, as related in I Samuel 2:22-25 is of interest, as it has frequently been interpreted as a demonstration of cult prostitution which Eli's sons practiced with the women who served at the entrance of the tent. Some scholars think that I Samuel 2:22b was only added much later because the author was influenced by the thought of Exodus 38:8.²⁸⁹

Exodus 38:8 reads - "And he made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the mirrors of the ministering women who ministered at the door of the tent of meeting". Because, for one, the mirror was seen as a symbol of the goddess, this passage has been interpreted as evidence that the people gave their possessions to enhance the services of a foreign cult. Winter²⁹⁰ has a good review of the various theses put forward during the last century trying to elucidate the question of the mirrors of the women and YHWH's tent. Although Winter then goes into detail

²⁸⁹ Winter, Frau 47, 58-9.

²⁹⁰ Winter, Frau 47-65, esp. 58-9.

trying to answer the question: ... "wozu dienten die Spiegel?"²⁹¹ nobody seems to have asked the basic question, why did the mirror ever become the symbol of the goddess? If the goddess is the complimentary part of the male divinity, and the mirror became her attribute which retained its meaning well into Roman times,²⁹² is it perhaps because it was thought that the mirror was a very feminine object used to reflect²⁹³ the beauty of the beholder. So there must be an innate meaning to the object itself before ever it was used as a divine symbol.²⁹⁴

The mirrors from ancient times that have been found, have been crafted from bronze and other precious metals, and are rich in ornamentation, demonstrating the owners' wealth and station in their society.²⁹⁵ Thus, in Exodus 38:8,²⁹⁶ the women gave their most precious material possessions to help supply YHWH's tent and

²⁹¹ Winter, Frau 58.

²⁹² Winter, Frau 64.

²⁹³ In the divine sphere it could also be interpreted as the goddess 'mirroring' the omnipotence of the all encompassing god head.

²⁹⁴ Winter, Frau 61.

²⁹⁵ Winter, Frau 60 - people have seen in 'the women at the entrance of the tent' women who performed menial tasks needed for the proper maintenance of the tent and its services. As Winter points out, if these women were rich enough to own mirrors, they in all probability did not just perform menial tasks, but they were members of the nobility and the upper classes; see also: Gross, "Spiegel" 309-10.

²⁹⁶ see also Exodus 36:3-7.

thus honour him.²⁹⁷ Even in the stories told in Exodus 32:2f. and Judges 8:24-28 the point is that people gave of their most treasured belongings, their jewellery, to honour their god, That it then was misused by Aaron and Gideon is another point.

A phrase of importance in I Samuel 2:22 is 'the entrance of the tent'.²⁹⁸ Keel in his article²⁹⁹ on the development of the interpretation regarding the mezuzah and the tefillin, has shown that the duties of a priest in ancient times, besides the offering up of sacrifices, was the teaching of the correct observances regarding ritual purity to the people before they approached the shrine, thus preserving and protecting the sanctuary from pollution.³⁰⁰ His contention is that the passages of sacred books frequently written or carved near, over, or

²⁹⁷ Winter, Frau 65 - says that the Priestly writer of Exodus 38:8 had no reason to mention the goddess in this context and thus only labels the mirrors as raw material for the manufacture of utensils sacred to Yahweh, eliminating the pagan object and rendering it acceptable to a male god. Even this idea is far fetched. Why cannot the richer women of the community just offer their most treasured belongings to their god, whom they adore?

²⁹⁸ van der Toorn, "Female" 195 - the author mentions that the MT speaks of women who 'ministered at the door of the tent of meeting', the Syriac and Aramaic specify that they 'prayed' or 'came to pray'. Baudissin, Geschichte 36-7 - the author draws attention to the verb tzba which is of the same root as that describing the service of the Levites, Numbers 4:3, 30, 35, 39, 43; 8:25, at the tent of meeting.

²⁹⁹ Keel, "Zeichen" 159-240.

³⁰⁰ Keel, "Zeichen" 184ff.

around door jambs of temples, was one way of alerting people to their obligation of being in the state of ritual purity when approaching the holy place. He demonstrates that sculptures of genii such as the kerubim of many of the Mesopotamian cultures, and the colossi of Egypt, which guarded the temple entrances fulfilled this function in a very graphic manner. In Egypt, besides the colossi, the pharaoh, in his role as the priest of the local deity, is frequently carved in relief on the door frames with a quote warning the worshipper that he must be pure when approaching his god.³⁰¹ The types of impurity that were to be avoided are enumerated, and these lists would often include various sexual impurities.³⁰²

In the Temple of Jerusalem of the Second Temple Period this idea was actualized by the low balustrade with signs on it warning that the pollution of strangers was to be kept outside of this wall.³⁰³ The steps leading up to the Huldah Gates were designed in such a manner that the worshipper had to walk slowly

³⁰¹ Keel, "Zeichen" 184-6.

³⁰² Keel, "Zeichen" 186-7; also Exodus 19:15 where Moses enjoins the Israelites to abstain from any sexual activity before approaching God on the mountain; I Samuel 21:4-5 where David assures Abimelech that his followers had abstained from sexual activity since three days and thus would be able to eat of the showbread; Frymer-Kensky, "Law" 89-102 - "Sexuality was desacralized and kept as far away from the cult as possible. ... Sexuality was a serious threat to social and cosmic boundaries, and violations of these boundaries were death-worthy offenses."

³⁰³ Josephus, Antiquities XV, 417.

and with concentration and thus enter the *עֲצָרָה* in a certain state of mental purity and preparedness.³⁰⁴

All of these artistic realizations only represented the actual priest, who in smaller temples performed this duty himself, as Eli did in I Samuel 1:9, sitting at the entrance of his temple, instructing the worshipper on the correct approach to the deity.³⁰⁵

I Samuel 2:12-25 reprimands Eli's sons for defiling and stealing the sacrifices offered to the Lord (verses 12-17). In verse 22 the stress of the exegesis should therefore be put on Eli's sons and not on the women at the entrance. The point is, that Eli's sons not only did not preserve the sanctuary from contamination by instructing the people to be in the proper state of ritual cleanliness, but they themselves carried ritual impurity into the sanctuary by seducing female worshippers, thus putting the women and themselves into a state of ritual pollution and carrying that into the holy place.

³⁰⁴ Ritmeyer, "Reconstructing" 36, 39.

³⁰⁵ Keel, "Zeichen" 184.

Exodus 32

Exodus 32:6-25, "... and they rose up to play" (verse 6) has been used to condemn Israel for getting involved in cult prostitution so soon after the promises of the Sinai covenant. "Play" does not necessarily indicate sexual activity, but if there was any, it was done this once, after a Yahwistic rite, under the stress of intense emotional mass hypnosis, and would not satisfy the definition of 'prostitution'. The real point of the story is that Israel, as a group, deserted the ideals and morals of the Yahwistic worship so soon after the promises of the Covenant.

The authenticity of the passage as whole has been questioned.³⁰⁶ It has been submitted that it might be a conglomeration of a variety of traditions and editions which were compiled as a polemic against Jeroboam (also Aaron) and his bull cult at Bethel,³⁰⁷ which was being presented as a polytheistic cult reverencing the despised symbol of Baal. If therefore both renditions of the narrative I Kings 12:25ff. and Exodus 32 are suspected to be of a disputed veracity, then the one phrase which shows the people displaying behaviour which is supposed to be evidence of worship of the fertility god Baal, is in all

³⁰⁶ Motzki, "Problem des Stierkultes" 477 n.33 & 34.

³⁰⁷ Dohmen, "Heiligtum" 19; Motzki, "Problem des Stierkultes" 177.

probability not to be trusted either.

III. Summary

To sum up the study of the occurrences of gadesh -ah, -im, -ot, in the Hebrew Bible let it be noted first that the word appears eleven times in eight passages.

In Genesis 38:21-22 (three times) the word refers to Tamar and is therefore in the feminine singular. In these two verses the connotation seems to be positive or at least non-judgemental, since Judah prefers to say he had visited a gadeshah instead of admitting to his neighbours where he had really been. So here the gadeshah was accepted as part of the social milieu without saying what her modus vivendi was. It is later translators, LXX, and scholars who have tried to equate the zonah and the gadeshah because both terms were used of Tamar and people did not know anymore what a gadeshah was.

$\pi e \gamma \pi / e \gamma \pi$ is used both in the masculine and feminine singular in Deuteronomy 23:18. At this point in time (c. sixth century B.C.E. ?) the $e \gamma \pi$ and $\pi e \gamma \pi$ were definitely not favourably regarded by the Deuteronomist. His contention was that no good Israelite boy or girl would ever want to become one. No explanation is given for the prohibition.

I Kings 14:24 accepts the existence of the gadeshim in the land, but they are cited as part of the evil things that Israel (Judah) did under Rehoboam.

Whereas in I Kings 15:12 and 22:46(47) the writers are most definitely negatively inclined to the gedeshim since the kings Asa and Jehosaphat tried to eliminate them from the land. Why the kings wanted to eliminate them is not stated.

II Kings 23:7 also judges the *g'edeshim* negatively because Josiah, during his reform, destroyed their houses that were within the temple precinct. This piece of information, as well as the remark that women gathered in these houses to weave cloths for Asherah could indicate that they were involved in some cultic function. That is not definite, because they could have just lived in the temple like the prophetess Anna (Luke 2:36-38). Neither does the passage elaborate on what happened to the gedeshim, after the destruction of their property, in the rest of Jerusalem or the country.

Hosea (4:14) is the only one who suggests a cultic connection that the gedeshim might have had. He does not specify what the cultic responsibility might have been. Did they offer sacrifice in their own right as persons 'holy, set apart'. It seems rather that the prophet is reprimanding the men for offering sacrifice in a questionable state of religious integrity and that they are compounding their hypocrisy by performing these rites in the company of undesirable persons. Why the *g'edeshim* are undesirable Hosea does not say. He is also the only one who uses the feminine plural form.

"Qedeshim" in Job 36:14 has become a colloquial expression synonymous with 'shame' (RSV) in modern languages. Why the writer of Job considers the gedeshim such a disgrace that a godly person would not be 'caught dead' in their midst he does not say. One gets the impression from Elihu's speech that the word gedeshim was inserted because of the symbolical meaning of 'disgrace, humiliation, shame', that the word had acquired, and not because Elihu knew who or what the gedeshim were or had been.

So, twice the gedeshim are accepted by the Biblical writer in at least a neutral manner - just stating they existed (Genesis 38:21-22 - three times, I Kings 14:24). Four times it is made known that the gedeshim certainly were disliked in official circles, to such an extent that the reformers try to eliminate them (I Kings 15:12; 22:46(47); II Kings 23:7) and that the prophet considers them unfit company while performing ones religious obligations (Hosea 4:14). They certainly were the only company that the ungodly person could expect if he died unrepentant (Job 36:14). All in all, the קִדְּשִׁים were not good company for a faithful Israelite (Deuteronomy 23:17(18)). In none of these passages do any of the writers make it clear why the gedeshim were being condemned.

So, this group of 'holy, set apart' persons was comprised of men and women. It is not known what their function was within the community of Israel at any one time. We do know that officially they suffered a decline in fortunes, although judging

by their continuous reappearance they were accepted by the people of Israel.

Chapter V

Further Influences on the Concept of Cult Prostitution in
the Bible

In this part of the paper I propose to examine the problem of cult prostitution under the aspect of the *παρὰ ἑὸν τὸν ὄρα* in both the MT and the LXX versions of the Book of Proverbs, Chapter VII.

There is no indication in Proverbs VII that the sacred marriage ceremony, in which cultic officials would emulate the divine union, was performed in this excerpt of the Bible.

Since the woman in Proverbs wants to dissimulate her actions (Proverbs 7:18-20), the category which denotes the continuous practice of prostitution by certain cult personnel in order to support a temple financially, does not seem to apply either.

Proverbs VII does not give any indication that any money was given to the woman. Herodotus,¹ who is usually cited as the authority for the existence of cult prostitution in ancient times, does stipulate that some money be given as part of the whole ceremony.

So, if at all, the problem of the *πρὸς τὴν* in Proverbs VII, would fall into the category of a woman offering

¹ Herodotus I, 199.

her chastity once in her life time in connection with a temple or cultic action.

Before looking at the question of cultic prostitution in chapter 7 of Proverbs, the word *παρὰ κῦπτον* itself should be studied.

It is this word which heralds a change in speaker from the Hebrew version, where it is the Teacher of Wisdom who relates the story, to the Septuagint, where it is the 'strange and wanton' woman who is both the speaker as well as the observer of the action that transpires. There seems to lie some importance in this change of narrator in the Greek text.²

Since in the LXX, the title, the *παρὰ κῦπτον*, was used for the woman in the window, and this imagery had a long literary and artistic history, the ideas inherent in it have influenced the exegesis of Proverbs VII, both in the MT and in the LXX.³ The image of the *παρὰ κῦπτον* has been interpreted as the goddess, or her devotees, the temple hierodoules, putting themselves on show in order to attract lovers.⁴

Therefore, I will be looking at two aspects of the in the Hellenistic literature:

² Boström, Proverbiastudien 106ff.

³ Fauth, Aphrodite Parakuptusa 331ff.

⁴ Boström, Proverbiastudien 121.

1. the παρακύπτουσα legend, and
2. the verb παρακύπτειν, and then,
3. how both aspects were used by Greek and Latin authors at the turn of our era. This must be done before the Biblical passages, using this visual description, can be probed.

Finally, I hope to show that Proverbs VII in the Septuagint does not deal with cult prostitution, but that it is another injunction by the Teacher of Wisdom against adultery, such as were given in many of the previous, as well as the subsequent chapters of Proverbs.⁵

⁵

Proverbs 2:16-19; 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 9:1-6.

I. The ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΟΥΣΑ in Hellenistic Literature

The postulate that cult prostitution did exist, especially in the Near East and on Cyprus, has been supported by extra Biblical imagery and mythical narrative. The story of the ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΟΥΣΑ although hailing only from Hellenistic times, has had a strong influence on the interpretation of cult prostitution in the Bible, because it intertwines literature, language and the visual arts. Here I will look at all three aspects of this image to discover its pervading inspiration.

A. The Legend of the Parakuptousa

Herbig⁶ builds his article on the assumption that cult prostitution was a given on Cyprus since the practice had been established there under Mesopotamian influence. He states:

Dazu kommt nun, dass die Verehrung der Aphrodite unter der Erscheinungsform der Parakuptusa ausdrücklich bezeugt ist. Ihr Kult ist auf Kypros lokalisiert.... Welcher Art war nun der Kult der Aphrodite Parakuptusa? Wir wissen es nicht, dürfen uns aber daran erinnern, daß die Verehrung der Liebesgöttin auf Kypros sich stets in irgendwelcher Form der Prostitution manifestierte.⁷

Plutarch is one of the ancient authors who mentions the legend of the Parakuptousa on Cyprus. "The Dialogue on Love" (²¹ΕΡΩΤΙΚΟΣ) in his Moralia, discusses the punishment meted out to those who reject the god of love. He mentions three versions of the legend in which, ^{c 21}ὁ ΕΡΩΣ, punishes a person for resisting him.

In one of the versions the couple is called Euxynthetus and Leucocoma. Plutarch only mentions them, as also, does Strabo⁸ who says he received his information from Theophrastus.

Then Plutarch goes on to say:

Or repeat the story of the girl who is still called Paracuptousa (ΠΑΡΑΚΥΠΤΟΥΣΑ) in Cyprus?

⁶ Herbig, "Aphrodite" 917-22, 918 n.1.

⁷ Herbig, "Aphrodite" 918.

⁸ Strabo, The Geography 10, IV, 12.

.... except that the latter was turned to stone at the moment when she peeped out ($\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\upsilon\psi\alpha\gamma\alpha$) of the window to watch the funeral procession of her lover.⁹

Here Plutarch refers to the version of the same legend as recounted by Hermesianax and cited by Antoninus Liberalis in The Metamorphoses (Arceophon - Ἀρκεοφών) 39.

Hermesianax gives more details than any of the other writers. The young man is called Arceophon, son of Minyrides of the city of Salamis on Cyprus. He falls in love with Arsinoe, daughter of Nicocron, king of Salamis. When after his rejection by Arsinoe Arceophon dies, it is the goddess ($\eta^c \theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$) who punishes Arsinoe by turning her into a stone image while Arsinoe is watching ($\epsilon\kappa\kappa\upsilon\psi\alpha\gamma\alpha$) the funeral procession of her rejected lover from the window of her house. The title of Parakuptousa as a proper name is not mentioned by Hermesianax.

Plutarch briefly mentions a third person punished by for despising him. She comes from the island of Crete and also seems to be called a Parakuptousa. This young woman's proper name was Gorgo.¹⁰

In Plutarch it is the god of love ($\omicron^c \epsilon\rho\omega\varsigma$) who punishes the wayward party. Whereas Hermesianax relates that it was the goddess, $\eta^c \theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, who was the agent of punishment.

⁹ Plutarch, " $\epsilon\rho\omega\tau\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ 20" 410-1.

¹⁰ Plutarch, " $\epsilon\rho\omega\tau\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ 20" 766 D.

The legend of Leucocoma and Euxynthetus mentioned both by Plutarch and by Strabo is also mentioned by Conon¹¹ but here the lovers are called Promachos and Leucocoma. Promachos loves Leucocoma who rejects him but in the end when Promachos transfers his gifts to another man Leucocoma commits suicide.

Athenaeus¹² mentions two similar legends in which it is the woman who loves a man who rejects her. She commits suicide.

Finally, it is Ovid who relates the story in his Metamorphoses (XIV, 698-764). He, like Antoninus Liberalis recounts the story in detail. Both authors entitle their books Metamorphoses. In both versions of the story it is a man of the lower classes who falls in love with a beautiful woman of the upper class. She rejects his advances. He dies (Hermesianax) or commits suicide (Ovid). In both stories the woman watches the funeral procession of the man (Ἑκκρύψατα - Hermesianax). Both women are turned into stone by ἡ θεός (Hermesianax) or by ultor deus (Ovid). Hermesianax finishes his story here, but Ovid ends with:

... domine sub imagine signum servat adhuc Salamis;
Veneris quoque nomine templum Prospicientis habet.
(Metamorphoses XIV, 758-60).

¹¹ Radke, "Promachos" 645, #13.

¹² Athenaeus, The Deipnosophists (Ἀδηνφαίου δαιτυμνοφίλων) XIV, 619e.

This has been interpreted to mean that there was a temple at Salamis dedicated to Aphrodite, the goddess under the title of 'Prospiciens'.¹³

Before we continue to accept this idea as given let us examine the chart through which I have tried to obtain an overview of the legends mentioned by the various authors and which are still being referred to by scholars today.

There are nine versions of more or less the same legend. When it is a woman in love with a man who rejects her, she commits suicide (two times).

In the three versions of homosexual love, the rejected lover commits suicide (once), and two texts do not relate what happened in the end.

In the three versions (Hermesianax, Ovid, Plutarch) where it is the woman that rejects the advances of the man, motives of conceit are imputed to her. In one version (Hermesianax) the man

¹³ Barnett, Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories 145-51; Boström, Proverbiastudien 106; Cazeaux, "Anarexete et Iphis" 237-47; Dümmler, "Aphrodite" 2759-62; Eißfeldt, "Bk. Rev. W. Fauth, Aphrodite 302-9; Enmann, Kypros 25; Fauth, Aphrodite Parakuptusa 331ff.; Helck, "Bk. Rev. W. Fauth: Aphrodite 217-20; Herbig, "Aphrodite" 917-22; Herter, "Ursprünge des Aphroditenkultes" 66; Horn, "Respiciens per Fenestras" 33, 35-8; Humbert, "Femme étrangère" 55-6; Karageorghis, "La grande déesse" 204; Neiryneck, "Παπαρυψδε ΒΛΕΤΤΕΙ" 122-40; Plöger, Sprüche Salomos 77; Schottroff, "Bk. Rev. W. Fauth, Aphrodite 206-8; Thimme, Phoenizische Elfenbeine xxiii-xxiv, 12-6; Turcan, "Bk. Rev. W. Fauth: Aphrodite 79-81; Winter, Frau 296-301, 613-25, Abb. 307-17; Zimmermann, "Die babylonische Göttin" 1-3.

AUTHOR	PLACE	WOMAN	MAN	STORY	CONSEQUENCES
1. Athenaeus (c. 200 C.E.)	1. Leucas	Calyce	Euathlus	She loves him He rejects her	She commits suicide
	2. ?	Harpalyce	Iphiclus	She loves him He rejects her	She commits suicide
2. Conon (1st. cent. B.C.E.- 1st. cent. C.E.)	3. Knossos		Promachos Leucocoma	P. loves L. L. rejects P.	L. commits suicide
3. Strabo (1st. cent. B.C.E.- 1st. cent. C.E.)	4. Prusus		Leucocoma Euxynthetus	E. loves L. L. rejects E.	?
4. Hermesianax (4th.-3d. cent. B.C.E.) Antoninus Liberalis (2d. cent. C.E.)	5. Cyprus	Arsinoe	Arceophon	He loves her She rejects him (ΕΙΝΗΛΥΨΑΝΑ)	He dies, The goddess (ΛΕΩΣ) turns her into stone
5. Plutarch (49 - 119 C.E.)	6. ?		Euxynthetus Leucocoma	?	?
	7. Cyprus	Paracryptousa	?	She rejects her lover. The god (ο ερως (ΠΑΡΑΚΡΥΠΤΟΥΣΑ)) turns her into stone	
	8. Crete	Gorgo	?	The author insinuates that the story is the same as that of the Paracryptousa	
6. Ovid (43 B.C.E. - 18 C.E.)	9. Cyprus	Anaxarete	Iphis	He loves her She rejects him (Prospexerat- Prospicientis)	He commits suicide The god (deus ultor) turns her into stone

dies. According to Ovid the man commits suicide. Plutarch does not say what happened to any of his three rejected lovers.

It is also at this point that the divinity always interferes to punish the woman for rejecting the man.

This changing of a human being into a non-human creature is a popular motif in ancient literature. When human beings did not comply with the gods' demands or whims they were changed in order to teach them a lesson or to make them more compliant.¹⁴ This is the leitmotif of the two books entitled Metamorphoses by Ovid and Antoninus Liberalis.

So, in the legend the god(dess) changed the woman into a stone image as a punishment for having been so hard-hearted:

Paulatimque occupat artus, quod fuit in duro iam pridam
pectore, saxum. (Ovid, Metamorphoses XIV, 757-8).

καὶ ἡ μὲν εὐεῶτο, μισήσασα
δὲ τὸ ἦθος Ἀφροδίτῃ μετέβαλεν
αὐτὴν καὶ ἐποίησεν ἔξ
ἀνθρώπου λίθον καὶ τοὺς πόδας
ἐππίσσωσεν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν.

(Antoninus, Metamorphoses XXXIX, 10).

¹⁴ Ovid, Metamorphoses VI, 90f. and X, 238f.

As can be seen from the outline the legend seems to have been well known. It appears in various guises and geographical regions.

The oldest extant version is the one by Hermesianax (fourth century B.C.E.) but preserved only in the anthology by Antoninus Liberalis (flourished c. second century C.E.). All the other authors wrote around the turn of our era.

Hermesianax uses the verb ekkupsasa to describe the action of the girl at the moment when the goddess (*ἡ θεός*) changes her into a stone image. Parakuptousa is not used here as a proper name or title, either of the girl or of the goddess.

When Plutarch mentions the legends he definitely calls the girl a Parakuptousa. He also seems to insinuate that the girl from Crete was also called by that title. The god who changes the girls into stone images is called *ὁ ἑρως*.

Ovid, who came between these two writers, but who wrote in Latin, may have gotten his story directly from a then extant manuscript of Hermesianax. He is as detailed as that author and even embellishes the story poetically.

Since the other two authors use the parakuptousa, -ein in connection with the girl - it is most likely that the prospicientis (761) of Ovid also refers to the girl, because that is what she was doing - prospexerat (753), at the time the deus ultor punishes her.

As already mentioned, Hermesianax has the goddess ($\eta^c \text{Deos}$) punish the girl at the moment of her watching (ekkupsasa) the funeral procession. In Plutarch it is the god, θEpos , who is the one who punishes the girl called Parakuptousa, for her failure to comply with the demands of love.

With Ovid it is not quite clear who really does the punishing. He has Apollo relate the story in order to demonstrate to the nymph the punishment meted out by the deus ultor for rejecting love. In lines 693-694 of Book XIV he equates the deus ultor with Venus¹⁵:

ultoresque deos et pectora dura perosam Idalien
memoremque time Rhamusidis iram!

The Loeb Classical Library translates these lines thus:

And have thought for the avenging gods and the Idalian
goddess who detests the hard of heart, and the
unforgetting wrath of Nemesis.¹⁶

Here the agents of punishment are, the avenging gods, and Venus, and Nemesis.

The German translation reads as follows:

"Fürchte die rächenden Götter, wie Venus, sie, der die
harten Herzen verhasst, und den wachen Zorn der Herrin
von Rhamus."¹⁷

¹⁵ Cf. Fauth, Aphrodite 3 n.3: "Vermutlich ist Eros (Amor) von Ovid mit dieser Umschreibung gemeint."

¹⁶ Ovid, Metamorphoses vol. II, 349.

¹⁷ Ovidius, Metamorphosen 549.

In this translation the agents of punishment are: the avenging gods, like Venus, and Nemesis.

The German translation presupposes the identification of Venus and Mars which occurred through Hellenization about 217 B.C.E.¹⁸ It was Augustus who emphasized the syncretization of these two divinities when he combined the Venus Genetrix with the Julian god Mars in his temple which he dedicated to Mars Ultor.¹⁹

When therefore Ovid indicates that it is the deus ultor (Mars)²⁰ who punishes the girl, it would be quite acceptable to include Venus, his consort, in this title, as scholars have been doing.²¹

But, to say that Venus punishes the girl by turning her into stone and then is pleased to be worshipped at a special temple under this title of disgrace, the *Παρακυπτοῦσα*, is a somewhat debatable hypothesis.

As Ovid says, Salamis preserved the image of the girl turned into stone and:

¹⁸ Radke, "Ultor" 1046, 35-6; Ziegler, "Mars" 1048, 20-30.

¹⁹ Cassius Dio, Roman History LIII, 27, 2; Livy XXII, 10, 9; Ovid, Fasti III, 681-2; Boer, "Venus" 1178, 29-51.

²⁰ Ovid, Fasti V, 550-1, 577, 595.

²¹ Barnett, Catalogue 149; Dümmler, "Aphrodite" 2759; Eißfeldt, "Aphrodite" 303; Helck, "Aphrodite" 218; Herbig, "Aphrodite" 918.

"Veneris quoque nomine templum Prospicientis habet."
(760-1)

Meaning, and thus, it also has a temple, a place, not dedicated to the goddess Venus, under a title of disgrace, but to the preservation of the image of the "Venus... Prospicientis" - of the beautiful girl looking out of the window.

The word Venus can also be used to describe:

"The quality of attracting sexual love, charm....
b (without sexual connotation) charm, grace."²²

Therefore, it could just as well be the girl who is the Venus, having had qualities of charm and grace which attracted sexual love.

This place, this temple, of preservation of the image of the charming Venus looking out, was also a place, a reminder or warning, to women not to reject the 'god of love' coming to them in the guise of their lovers. For Ovid concludes his story with these words:

-quorum memor, o mea, lentos pone, precor, fastus et
amanti iungere, nympe.... (761-2)

One thing that must still be mentioned in regard to the legend of the Parakuptousa, is the fact that although the

²² "Venus" The Oxford Latin Dictionary II: 2031-2, #3; see also: "Templum" OLD II: 1914-5: "2.b. such a place set apart for public business. c. (poet.) a sacred precinct (in general). ... 4. A zone, space, region, quarter. b a region inhabited by particular beings. c a region of the body." Thus, a 'templum' is not just a space dedicated to a divinity.

geographical regions change for all the other versions, Cyprus is a constant for the legend of the girl turned into stone by the divinities. All three, Ovid, Plutarch, and Antoninus Liberalis mention it.

To underline this consistency, modern authors like to quote Terence to back the argument for cult prostitution on Cyprus. They usually cite The Brothers, Act II, Scene II, Lines 229-230:

I've bought a shipload of Women and other goods here to export to Cyprus.

But the play explains that Sannio is a merchant and these women besides 'other goods'(!) are his legal cargo for a fair on Cyprus. These women could have been intended as slaves, servants, or prostitutes, but the play does not specify this, neither does it mention a temple. Cyprus was, in all probability, considered to be the ideal place for any trade fair because of its location so central to other international shipping routes.²³

Before leaving the reading of this saga I would like to propose one other interpretation of this legend as told by Hermesianax and recorded by Antoninus Liberalis. Arceophon, the young man who lives in Salamis, is rich and of Phoenician descend. He falls in love with Arsinoe, the daughter of the king of Salamis. This house is of Greek origin and can trace its

²³ Danoff, "Kypros" 405, 1-30; Enmann, Kypros 32.

ancestry back to the heroes of the Trojan war. When Arceophon approaches the father of the girl to let him know that he loves the daughter, he is rejected by the father because of the young man's Phoenician background. Since he is so smitten with love, Arceophon pursues his goal persistently and even tries to enlist the help of the girl's nurse. When Arsinoe finds out about this conspiracy she, like a good daughter, reports it to her parents. The father has the nurse horribly mutilated and then driven out of the house. It is here that the first indication of the goddess' anger are given.

The young man, eventually, dies of starvation, and as he is being carried to the tomb the young woman decides to 'haughtily' watch the funeral procession. It is here then that the anger of the goddess finally spills over, and the girl is punished for being hard hearted.

This is really not a love story. It is a tale reporting the interrelationships of two different ethnic groups vying for leadership within a town. The love story is only the crystallizing agent precipitating a resolution. It is the father who should have been punished because it was his inhuman actions, towards a member of his own household, that triggered the goddess' anger. The young woman, probably in her early teens, could not have acted otherwise in a Greek patriarchal society but

to report her suitor's behaviour.²⁴ So, perhaps one could consider the punishment as having been intended for her father. He, as head of the household and as king of the city, was castigated with the destruction of his progeny.

Thus, the argument that the story reveals the disciplining of a person who rejects love, does not stand up to scrutiny any longer, because of the antiquity of the legend. It is only Ovid and Plutarch, who so late reinterpret the tale to fit the main thought of their books, and neither of them could have had any influence on the translator of the LXX, but only on future interpreters.

²⁴ Rohde, Griechische 64-77.

B. The Verb ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΕΙΝ in Aristophanes

Although the word ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΟΥΣΑ is neutral in its meaning,²⁵ having no sexual overtones, some studies have tried to show that since Aristophanes (beginning of the fourth century)²⁶ uses it in his comedies as part of the dialogue of the prostitutes, it acquired a specialized meaning with which it is used in the Septuagint.²⁷ Wytttenbach²⁸ defines ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΟΥΣΑ with: "Hoc erat meretricium."

Es bestand also sichtlich die Möglichkeit, aus dem an sich harmlosen ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΕΙΝ einen pikanten Untersinn herauszuhören, die erotische Anspielung in den Worte zu verstehen ... dass geradezu ein *ΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΟΝ ΠΟΡΝΙΚΟΝ* bezeichnet.²⁹

The word ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΟΥΣΑ is the present participle, singular, feminine of ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΕΙΝ which is usually translated by:

²⁵ Boström, Proverbiastudien 120; Humbert, "Femme étrangère" 56.

²⁶ Horn, "Respiciens" 35-6; Michaelis, "ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΩ" 812-3; Neyrinck, "ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΑΕ" 135 n. 90-3; Schottroff, "Aphrodite" 207; see also: Becher, "Isiskult" 83 - "Die Vorwürfe der Sittenlosigkeit sitzen von Aristophanes an in der Antike bei allen Frauenkulten sehr locker und dürfen nur mit Vorsicht als schlüssige Beweise herangezogen werden."

²⁷ Herbig, "Aphrodite" 921; Plöger, Sprüche 77.

²⁸ Wytttenbach, Lexicon Plutarcheum II: 1187.

²⁹ Herbig, "Aphrodite" 918.

to stoop sideways, ... to stoop for the purpose of looking at, and so, to look sideways at, cast a careless glance on a thing....³⁰

At this point it would therefore be advisable to examine systematically how Aristophanes used *παράκλιντεν* and then decide the kind of influence his writings might have had on the Greek translator of the Book of Proverbs.

In The Acharnians Dicaeopolis uses *παρέκλυσε* in line 16 in a very neutral manner when he says:

But of this year I nearly cracked my neck,
When in slipped Chaeris for the Orthion Nome,
But never yet since first I washed my face
was I so bitten - in my brow with soap, (15-18).

In The Thesmophoriazusae the word is used three times (*ἐκκλύψαν, παρὰκλινόμεν, παρὰκλύψαν*) by the women as they deride men for vilifying women as "the plague of their lives", but still are not able to live without this 'plague'.

Why, if we're really a Plague you're so anxious to have us for wives:
And charge us not to be peeping, (*ἐκκλύψαν*)
(790)
nor to stir out of doors for our lives. (789-91)

O, how you rummage about; what a fuss your lost Plague to discover.
Every one stares (*παρὰκλινόμεν*) (797) at your Plague
if she happens to look on the street:

³⁰ Liddell, Greek 1133; see also: Dahood "Hebrew-Ugaritic" 351-366; Michaelis, "*παρὰκλιντω*" 812-14; Neirynck, "*παρὰκλύψε*" 116, 122.

Stares (παρακύψας) (799) all the more
 if your Plague
 thinks proper to blush and retreat.
 Is it not plain then, I ask, that women are really the
 best? (796-800)

At most, the meaning here should allude to an idle lolling
 about. Herbig³¹ defined it well when he wrote:

Ein fester Topos der aristophanischen Komödie ist das
 der müssigen Weiber, das leidige Im-Fenster-Liegen...

The rest of his sentence:

... nicht nur aus Neugier natürlich, sondern in der
 deutlichen Hauptansicht, die Blicke der Liebhaber auf
 sich zu ziehen.

has already been refuted by the women themselves in lines 797-9.
 Also, lines 797 and 799 using the verb παρακύπτειν ,
 are not speaking of the women in the window at all, but of others
 staring at them.

In The Peace Aristophanes uses the word three times again
 (διακύψας and παρακύπτουσι (2 times)).

The first time it is used by the servant who observes her
 master grooming the beetle.

Now I'll peep (διακύψας) (79) and see what's
 he about.

Line 79 certainly has no erotic or pornographic intent.

³¹ Herbig, "Aphrodite" 917.

Finally, Aristophanes uses *παράκρυπτον* twice in The Peace, in the prayer the slave addresses to the goddess of peace ("das freche Gebet"³²).

O mistress dear, we beseech you hear,
And act not you as the wantons do:
They love to spy (*παράκρυπτον*) (981) at
the passers by
Through the half-closed door
And then if you heed, they are gone with speed:
If you turn away, in an instant they
Peep (*παράκρυπτον*) (985) out once more as
they did before.
But deal not thus unkindly with us. (979-986)

Here, certainly, the word is used in a flirtatious sense, of somebody leading the observer on and then playing a game with him.

In The Ecclesiazusae (written 392 B.C.E.?) Aristophanes uses *παράκρυπτε* twice.

Girl: This once then, Mother Mouldy, you've
forestalled me,
And peeped (*παράκρυψα*) (884)
out first;
thinking to steal my grapes. (877-884)

Hag: Aye, aye, sing on: keep peeping (*παράκρυψ*)
(924) peering out
Like a young cat. They'll all come first to
me. (924-5)

παράκρυπτε is here definitely used by two prostitutes while discussing their methods of seduction.

In all Aristophanes uses *παράκρυπτε* nine times:

³² Herbig, "Aphrodite" 917.

<u>The Archanians</u>	1	line 16	neutral
<u>The Thesmophoriazousae</u>	3	line 790 line 797 line 799	"lolling about" others staring others staring
<u>The Peace</u>	3	line 79 line 981 line 985	neutral flirtatious flirtatious
<u>The Ecclesiazusae</u>	2	line 884 line 924	seductive seductive
<u>The Wasps</u>	1	line 168	not found ³³

This very limited overview demonstrates that Aristophanes was a master of the Greek idiom who was able to manipulate and modulate his language in order to communicate a great variety of ideas and emotions even with the use of a single word.

In his comedies Aristophanes expounds serious, life and death situations facing the Greek world of his day.³⁴ The play The Ecclesiazusae, which is the only one where the verb parakupto carries a shade of 'seduction', deals with the failure of the men to bring about a speedy and humane end to the civil wars. The women try to solve this dilemma by finally taking matters into their own hands. Disguising members of their group, they attend a people's forum on which they enjoin a sort of communist

³³ Herbig, "Aphrodite" 918 - cites The Wasps, line 168, but I was not able to discover *παράκυπτεῖν* in any form in that part of the play.

³⁴ Kraus, "Aristophanes. 3" 376-379.

society. Scholars are not doing this writer any favour when they restrict his influence on the Bible to pornographic use alone.³⁵ Aristophanes (c. fourth century B.C.E.) wrote at a time when the Greek language was being formed by many diverse and great thinkers and writers from within Greece, and events and influences from outside the country.³⁶ Greek became the vehicle for philosophical and literary expression, in the then known world, for many centuries to come. To, therefore, narrow the influence of one author on the translator of the Book of Proverbs to one word and that in the slang usage of the underworld, is not very complimentary to Aristophanes, nor to the translator of that section of the Bible. As a matter of fact it is not even known whether the translator had read Aristophanes at all. Rather, it is evident that there are

valuable... proofs of the stylistic ambitions of the translator. The language of the LXX Prov., actually, is more literary than is normally to be found in the LXX³⁷

Just as the original author(s) of the Book of Proverbs had a message to convey, the translator of the book had the obligation, not only to translate the text from one language to another, but

³⁵ Gerlemann, Studies in the Septuagint III: 4.

³⁶ Fuhrmann, "Komödie" 281-91; Rumpf, "Aristophanes" I: 575-580, #3.

³⁷ Gerlemann, Studies 4.

to make intelligible the Semitic mind set to the Greek speaking population of his time.³⁸

³⁸ Gerlemann, Studies 12, 25, 27, 28.

C. The Archaeological Evidence

For some time now, modern scholars have tried to show that the *παρὰ κύπτουρα* legend and artifacts portraying a woman looking out of a window are proof of the existence of a cult to the Aphrodite Parakuptousa, in Hellenistic times.³⁹ The last detailed study which set out to prove this point was done by Fauth in 1967. In this wide ranging investigation Fauth covers a vast amount of classical and archaeological research, linking a variety of pictorial descriptions of the 'Woman at the window' with the *παρὰ κύπτουρα* of the legends.⁴⁰ These studies should be indicated, although it is beyond the scope of this examination to investigate their interrelationships in any detail. Suffice it to say, that since there does not seem to be much evidence in the legends themselves that the *παρὰ κύπτουρα* was a manifestation of the goddess herself, neither do the artifacts, showing a 'Woman at a window', therefore bolster the assumption of the existence of a cult using prostitution as its main rite. None of these archaeological finds have any literary

³⁹ Barnett, Catalogue 149-151; Boström, Proverbiastudien 120-3; Dümmler, "Aphrodite" 2759; Herbig, "Aphrodite" 918-9; Herter, "Ursprünge" 66, 69; Horn, "Respiciens" 35; Zimmern, "Babylonische Göttin" 1-3.

⁴⁰ Fauth, Aphrodite; see also reviews: Eissfeldt, "Aphrodite" 302-9; Helck, "Aphrodite" 217-20; Schottroff, "Aphrodite" 206-8; Turcan, "Aphrodite" 79-81; Winter, Frau 297-301.

descriptions attached to them. The only known use of these

παράκλυττοι finds, that can be determined so far, is that some of the ivory plaques were used as furniture inlay.⁴¹

The little temple with the female figurine in the doorway,⁴² which was interpreted by Herbig as the Parakuptousa waiting for clients, could just as well be a model of a temple, as Herbig claims, but with a priest(ess) at the door of his(her) shrine making sure that no corruption would enter it (Samuel 1:9).

The artistic treasures, especially the ivory plaques of the 'Woman at the window' are usually dated two or four centuries before the recording of the legend by Hermesianax. Also they have been found at various places in the Near East, but at the temple of the great goddess in Salamis a *παράκλυττοι* icon has not been located.⁴³

It does look as though ever since Welcker⁴⁴ scholars have been trying to find a classical illustration for a popular legend, which has left its mark on modern literature,⁴⁵ including the literature of Biblical exegesis.

⁴¹ Barnett, Catalogue 173 (C.13, C.14, C.15); Decamps de Mertenfeld, Inventaire II: 142; Herbig, "Aphrodite" 916, 919-22; Mallowan, Nimrud I: 211; II: 437; Thimme, Phönizische Elfenbeine X-XIII, #12-13; Weippert, "Elfenbeine" 67, 71.

⁴² Herbig, "Aphrodite" 920-921, Abb. 5.

⁴³ Karageorghis, "La grande deesse" 203-13.

⁴⁴ Rohde, Der griechische Roman 87 n3.

⁴⁵ Kraus, "P. Ovidius Naso" 387, #12-32.

D. Summary

In this first section on the *ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΟΥΓΑ*, three possible influences from the Hellenistic culture on the *ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΟΥΓΑ* of Chapter VII of the Book of Proverbs in the Septuagint were examined.

1. The legend of the *ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΤΟΥΓΑ* : The first written evidence that of this legend is Hermesianax's version, fourth to third century B.C.E., as recorded by Antoninus Liberalis, around the second century C.E. - about six centuries lie between the source and the conserver of that source. About half way between we have the legend as recorded by Ovid (43 B.C.E. - 18 C.E.). His version of the story is always cited because of his reference to the temple to "Veneris ... Prospicientis". But since "Venus" could also mean "the quality of attracting sexual love", and since the girl Anaxarete, certainly had this quality, the temple referred to by Ovid, if it existed at all, could be a place dedicated to the preservation of the stone image of the girl, warning women not to reject the attractions of sexual love. Any rejection of this kind would be severely punished by the gods.

There is no evidence that Venus, the goddess of love, would have been pleased to have been worshipped under the title of the punishment she meted out to the one who rejected her gifts.

Plutarch (49-119 C.E.), enforces this line of thought, for he definitely calls the girl, not the goddess, *παρὰ κῦπτον*.

As for the contention of prostitution, cult or otherwise, being practised in the temple at Salamis, there is absolutely no hint of this rite in any of the stories examined for this paper. After all, the girls were punished for exactly the opposite ... not being promiscuous enough.

If one also agrees with Thakeray⁴⁶ that Proverbs was probably translated about 100 B.C.E., then Ovid's Metamorphoses could not have had much of an influence on the translator and he Ovid, is the only one who mentions the temple. Also, he wrote in Latin about a Greek/Phoenician legend⁴⁷ which he used in order to idolize Augustus and his house gods. Plutarch who wrote after Ovid, in Greek, does not mention the temple at all.

2. The Verb *παρὰ κῦπτεῖν* was also examined, especially as used by Aristophanes in his comedies. This was necessary since it is Aristophanes' influence that has been cited as indicating that the Biblical translator was using *παρὰ κῦπτεῖν* with the meaning with which Aristophanes' prostitutes were using the word. After considering the nine (eight) times that the word had been used by Aristophanes in his plays, it became evident that, since he used the word only twice with an obvious seductive

⁴⁶ H.St.J. Thakeray. Journal of Theological Studies (1912) 60 as cited in Gerleman, Studies 58.

⁴⁷ Barnett, Catalogue 149; Fauth, "Aphrodite" 332.

meaning, it would be limiting the translator of the Book of Proverbs in the extent of his educational and literary interests, and Aristophanes in the versatility of his use of the Greek language.

3. The archaeological evidence: Although there always was a cult to the great goddess at Salamis there is no archaeological evidence that supports the cult of the *Παράκλυπτος*.⁴⁸ The written evidence is very late - Ovid wrote around the turn of our era, and Hermesianax and Plutarch do not mention any temple.

The archaeological finds which have been interpreted as a likeness of the *Παράκλυπτος* come from all over the ancient Near East but not from Salamis.⁴⁹ The little ivory plaques that go under the title of the 'Woman at the Window' or the *Παράκλυπτος* have usually been dated to about the ninth to eighth century B.C.E.⁵⁰ None of them carry any description indicating that they be offerings to, or icons of the goddess. The cow ears or Hathor wig are not consistent enough on all images to label her as a goddess. The symbol on the piece of jewelry in her hair are not consistently shown nor are they

⁴⁸ Karageorghis, "La grande déesse" 203-13.

⁴⁹ Barnett, Catalogue; Descamps, Inventaires; Mallowan, Nimrud; Thimme, Phönizische.

⁵⁰ Barnett, Catalogue 149-51; Mallowan, Nimrud I: 211; II: 437; Thimme, Phönizische Elfenbeine XIV-XVI.

always clear enough to draw any definite conclusions from them.⁵¹

It is known that many of these ivory plaques were used as furniture inlay.⁵² Since that is the only exact evidence that we have so far, we must content ourselves with accepting that fact.⁵³ And, since the legend did not really exalt a cult to a goddess *Παρακύπτουσα* at Salamis, neither can the ivories be therefore interpreted as an image or icon of this manifestation of the goddess. The verb *Παρακύπτειν* is also too broad in meaning to be used solely as describing what cult prostitutes did do in a cult whose existence is not that self evident.

⁵¹ Contrary to: Keel, "Zeichen" 193-212.

⁵² Helck, "Aphrodite" 219; Thimme, Phönizische Elfenbeine VII-XV.

⁵³ Helck, "Aphrodite" 218-9.

II. The Παρὰ κούτων in the Tanach and the Septuagint

With the study by Boström the image of the Parakuptousa has been accepted as the portrait of the cult prostitute active in Israel, and the words Parakuptousa and parakupto in the LXX have also had their effect on the interpretation of the Tanach. It is in Chapter VII of the Book of Proverbs where the identification of the ishah zarah with the Parakuptousa takes place that the inspiration of this Hellenistic literature is seen most clearly.

A. Proverbs, Chapter VII

Say that wisdom is thy sister,
and gain prudence as an acquaintance of thyself;
that she may keep thee from the strange (ἄλλοτριᾶς)
and wicked (πονηρᾶς) woman,
if she should assail thee with flattering words.
For she looks from a window out of her house into the
streets (παράκλυπτουα).
(Proverbs 7:4-6)⁵⁴

In chapter VI, the Wisdom Teacher warned against illicit dealings with married women and against the consequences of such behaviour. In verses 1-3 of chapter VII he continues to admonish his pupil to listen to his advice, and to adopt Wisdom as his life's companion. Wisdom will then preserve her disciple from the wiles of the strange woman (ἄλλοτριᾶς).

In the original Hebrew version⁵⁵ the pupil is assured that Wisdom will protect him from the נָשִׁי נֶעֱמָה and the נִיִּצְנִי. Both words denote the woman strange to the basic tenets of one's society.⁵⁶

The translator of the Septuagint Proverbs translates the above two words with:

γυναικὸς ἄλλοτριᾶς καὶ πονηρᾶς

⁵⁴ Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apogrypha with an English Translation.

⁵⁵ Gerleman, Studies 25.

⁵⁶ Humbert, "Femme" 63.

... "the strange and wicked woman". He does not only translate, but he also interprets for his reader how the 'strange woman' should be regarded by the pupil of Wisdom. The strange woman is *πονηρα*, is wicked, and then the translator continues to describe the actions of this *ἀλλοτρίας καὶ πονηρᾶς* woman.

Whereas in the Hebrew version it is the Teacher of Wisdom who continues talking, relating the subsequent story which he observed from his window, in the Septuagint the translator changed the action from the first person singular: *'נ'ן* and *יִשְׁמַעְיִל 'נָעִמָּה*, to the third person singular feminine. It is still the strange woman the text is discussing, but in the Greek story she has not only become wicked, but she is also the subject as well as the object of the narrative.

Some scholars consider the possibility that in this instance the Septuagint version contains the original text of Proverbs.⁵⁷ This does create a problem for many, in that the woman has already been introduced in verse 5 and is reintroduced in verse 10, thus creating an awkwardness in the flow of the story.⁵⁸

This awkwardness, which does seem to be there, is not great enough to invalidate this idea of the originality of the Greek text, anymore than the question of how the Teacher of Wisdom in

⁵⁷ Boström, Proverbiastudien 106; Dahood, "Hebrew-Ugaritic" 363-4; Ringgren, as cited by Plöger, Sprüche 75.

⁵⁸ Plöger, Sprüche 75-7.

the MT would be able to know what the woman thought and said in verses 14-20.

More serious a problem than verses 4-10, is the question of interpretation by the translator, as for example:

π'ῆν πῆν πῆν πῆν

translated as:

ἴνα γε τηρήσῃ ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἁλλοτρίας καὶ πονηρᾶς

Many of these changes though are due to the Greek conception of good literary style as compared to the Semitic idea of what constitutes good literature.⁵⁹

Once the Greek writer had decided that the woman was πονηρᾶς he then, in verses 10-12 and 16-18, describes what such a woman would look like and how she would act. This description is the same in the MT except for some refinement, e.g., verse 17,⁶⁰ but the combination reminds one of the description Aristophanes gives of the prostitutes in Ecclesiazusae, lines 877-883. Since this play details the actions of 'common' prostitutes it therefore does not provide the basis for the interpretation that the strange woman was a 'sacred' prostitute.

Although various forms of the verb κύπτω have been used in the Septuagint⁶¹, the παρακύπτουσα of

⁵⁹ Gerleman, Studies 18-9, 27, 38.

⁶⁰ Gerleman, Studies 24.

⁶¹ Neiryneck, "παρακύπτει" 123.

Proverbs 7:6 has been treated as though it were a proper title of the person doing the looking, but implying that she was doing more than that. This interpretation has always been done in reference to classical antecedents.⁶²

If we continue to insist that the LXX was influenced in its wording by the Parakuptousa legend the only version that could have been responsible is the one by Hermesianax ... that is, if the translator had had access to a manuscript of the original, since the version preserved by Antoninus Liberalis is about three hundred years too late. As has been mentioned already, Hermesianax does not use the word *παπακύντουσα*, to either label the girl or the goddess. Neither does he mention a temple or a cult. He only describes the action of the girl with *ἐκκύνουσα*.

Plutarch is the only one who uses the title *παπακύντουσα* to name the girl, but he is a good hundred years too late to have had any influence on this translation of Proverbs. This same argument holds true for the influence that Ovid's version might have had, besides he wrote in Latin.

Also, it should be remembered, that the *παπακύντουσα* of the Hellenistic literature was punished for rejecting the advances of lovers. That is not the problem of Chapter VII of

⁶² Boström, *Proverbiastudien* 120; Fauth, *Aphrodite* 3; Herbig, "Aphrodite" 917; Horn, "Respiciens" 35.

Proverbs. Here the Teacher of Wisdom warns against the advances of female lovers, especially the married variety.

As far as the verb *παράκύτειν* itself is concerned, it has been dealt with extensively enough while looking at Aristophanes plays. It was my considered opinion then that the Aristophanes' use of the word in his own plays was being interpreted too narrowly by modern scholars, and even more so, when the term is then being used by an Alexandrian(?) translator of the Hebrew Bible for a Jewish audience.

B. Other Biblical Passages using the παρακύπτουσα
Image

In the Bible there are several other window scenes which in the Septuagint employ a variant form of the verb *κύπτω* and have reminded scholars of the παρακύπτουσα.⁶³

When he had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of a window (παρακύψας) and saw Isaac fondling Rebecca his wife. (Genesis 26:8)

In this case a man is looking out of a window and accidentally observes an action of erotic content. He certainly had not anticipated, nor did he like, what he saw. So, this scene could not be cited as a sample of a seductive prostitute in the window.

"Out of the window she peered (διεκύπτεν), the mother of Sisera gazed through the lattice"⁶⁴:
(Judges 5:28a)

⁶³ Winter, Frau 299.

⁶⁴ It might be of interest here to highlight the phrase 'at the opening of the lattice' in connection with the naditu women, since Herbig ("Babylonische Göttin" 1-3 esp. the two footnotes) had already alluded to a similar imagery. Previously it had been interpreted as evidence that the naditu lived a very cloistered life and was only allowed to receive visitors 'at the lattice'. It has been proven that this idiom in all probability is a scribal fad without any real meaning (Harris, "Naditu" 130-131).

This verse ends Deborah's song by showing the mother of Sisera, the enemy of Israel, waiting impatiently near a window, for her son's victorious return - but the reader already knows that this son has been killed ignominiously.

As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul looked out of the window, (*διδρυττεν*) and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart. (II Samuel 6:16)

There is a second version describing this event:

And the ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window (*παρεκυψεν*), and saw King David dancing and making merry, and she despised him in her heart. (I Chronicles 15:29)

In both versions Michal, David's wife, observes the triumphant procession from her window, but not with the intention of seducing David her husband: she despises him

When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it: and she painted her eyes, and adorned her head, and looked (*διδρυψεν*) out of the window. (II Kings 9:30)

Superficially speaking this scene⁶⁵ seems to be the closest to a seductive *παράκρυπτος*. Although Jezebel does adorn herself before confronting Jehu, it is done to deride Jehu,

⁶⁵ Winter, Frau 585-8.

rather than to seduce him. Perhaps one could compare her to the Hellenistic *παπακύντωσα*, in that Jezebel like the *παπακύντωσα* receives punishment from the divinity for rejecting male advances. She certainly does get punished by the rejected male, not by being turned into stone gazing out of a window, but by being thrown out of a window and eaten by dogs.

My beloved is like a gazelle,
or a young stag.
Behold, there he stands behind our wall, /
gazing in at the windows (*παπακύντων*),
looking through the lattice. (Canticle 2:9)

A man, a lover, is looking in at the window from the outside, seducing his beloved with words.⁶⁶

A boor peers (*παπακύντει*) into the house
from the door,
but a cultivated man remains outside. (Sirach 21:23)

The action and the idea here are self evident.

He who peers (*παπακύντων*) through her
windows will also listen at her doors. (Sirach 14:23)

Here a lover of Wisdom is described as he looks in at the windows of the house of Wisdom.

⁶⁶ Loretz, Das althebräische Liebeslied 18 n.10.

Out of the eight quotations in which παρακύπτειν is being used, one describes a man observing an erotic action by mistake (Genesis 26:8). Three texts describe two women stationed in a window observing a man, important in their lives, but despising him, and certainly not trying to seduce him (II Samuel 6:16; II Kings 9:30; I Chronicles 15:29). The third woman is a mother awaiting the return of her son who has been dead for some time (Judges 5:28).

There are three more quotes that use παρακύπτειν. All three times the action is performed by men looking into the window from the outside: the lover of wisdom, the lover in the Canticle, and the boor who is being rebuked.

This short overview demonstrates that the Hellenistic translators of the Bible were also able to manipulate Greek in order to bring out the great variety of ideas inherent in the different books of the Tanach. They certainly were not so limited in their vocabulary as to use a common word such as παρακύπτειν in one way only, as a γυμνασιον.

C. The Sacrifice (172)

The next problem presented by the Septuagint Proverbs VII lies in the verses 14-20. Verses 14-15 have been written in the present tense:

I have a peace offering,
today I pay my vows
therefore I come forth to meet thee.

Παγία εἰρηνικὴ μοί ἐστιν ἡμέρον ἀποδίδωμι
τὰς εὐχάς μου. ἕνεκα τούτου ἐξῆλθον εἰς
συνάντησίν σοι, προσούω τὸ σὸν πρόσωπον
εὐρηκά γε.

If exegesis is based on the Greek text it must content with the idea that the woman has been searching for the man because she needs or wants him as part of her cultic action.

The Hebrew version relates the same action in the past tense:

לָקַחְתִּי מִנְחָה הַיּוֹם וְעַתָּה אֵלֵךְ לִפְגֹּעַ בְּךָ
וְעַתָּה אֵלֵךְ לִפְגֹּעַ בְּךָ
וְעַתָּה אֵלֵךְ לִפְגֹּעַ בְּךָ

I had to offer sacrifices,
and today I have paid my vows;
So now I have come out to meet you,
to seek you eagerly, and I have found you.

Here the actions of offering the sacrifices ('חֲבִיב) and of paying vows ('חֲבִיב חֲבִיב), lie in the past. So when the woman went out to search for the man it can be interpreted as that she was looking for him in order to have somebody to celebrate with after the temple services. As she says in verse 18:

Come let us take our fill of love till morning
let us delight ourselves with love.

A celebration usually followed the sacrifice. It consisted mainly of a joyous meal⁶⁷ which included parts of the sacrificial meat from the חֲבִיב , which had to be consumed within twenty-four hours (Leviticus 7:16-8) after having been offered at the altar. Since, as she says, her husband was away and could not celebrate with her (verses 19-20), she was looking for a substitute.

If we therefore accept the argument that the Septuagint preserves the original text⁶⁸ rather than the Hebrew, the present tense of the Greek version does leave some questions regarding 'cult cum sex'. On the whole, scholars do posit a Hebrew original for the Septuagint Proverbs.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Lang, "חֲבִיב zabhach; חֲבִיב zebhach." 10-12, 19, 21-3.

⁶⁸ Boström, Proverbiastudien 106.

⁶⁹ Gerleman, Studies 25.

The problem is also negated in verses 19-20. The English translation of the Greek text reads:

For my husband is not at home, but is gone on a long journey, having taken in his hand a bundle of money: after many days he will return to his house.

Boström⁷⁰ argued that the woman was a married cultic prostitute of foreign origin living in a colony of foreign merchants in Jerusalem. Even if the woman were foreign,⁷¹ 775 being translated as foreign only, and observed a foreign cult, it is impossible from this text to reconstruct of which cult the woman was a member and in what the liturgy of this supposed cult consisted.

Assuming that she and her husband were members of a foreign group, practising a foreign cult, one could presume that her husband knew and understood the requirements of her office within that cult. Then verses 19-20 do not make sense when they are interpreted as her wanting to seduce the youth and allaying his misgivings by saying that her husband was not about. If her actions resulted from the cultic demands her religion placed on her she would have indicated that it was proper what she was

⁷⁰ Boström, Proverbiastudien 95-6.

⁷¹ Boström, Proverbiastudien 32-52; Humbert, "Les adjectifs 'zār'" 259-266; ..., "La femme étrangère" 49-64; Snijders, "Meaning" 1-154. Here it should be noted that the interrelationship of the exegesis of the Greek (Greek grammar and text) and Hebrew (meaning of Hebrew zar) text at one and the same time does tend to create some confusion in this particular passage.

asking the young man to do. The youth should have no fear since it was an accepted practice within her ethnic group and especially within the cultic community to which she was trying to 'convert' the young man.⁷² Her words though, in verses 19-20, indicate the guilty conscience of someone breaking an accepted code of behaviour by trying to tempt her (willing) partner into an adulterous affair.

Van der Toorn's⁷³ hypothesis that it is no cult prostitute that is being discussed here but a woman who had made a vow which now she was not able to honour financially since her husband took all the money with him and thus had to prostitute herself with the youth, does not receive scriptural support since there is no mention of remuneration by the youth for the services of the woman.

⁷² Boström, Proverbiastudien 114.

⁷³ van der Toorn, "Female" 197-201.

D. Summary

In this part of the research I looked at the use of *παράκ' ὕπτείν, - οὐγα* in the Septuagint. Frequently other window scenes in the Old Testament had reminded scholars that the *παράκ' ὕπτουγα* was being used as a scheme or a symbolic description to show a woman trying to seduce a man - usually with cultic overtones. Out of the eight quotations usually cited, four deal with three events when a woman is watching at a window for a man of some importance in her life.

The story of Sisera's mother waiting near a window for his victorious return cannot be used to bolster the argument for an 'erotic' watching.

The three passages dealing with Michal and Jezebel are not perfect examples for this argument either. The complete texts make it quite clear that neither woman was erotically interested in the man she was watching. As a matter of fact, she despised him while she was watching him.

The remaining four passages deal with male persons doing the watching. In the case of Abimelech, he is watching an erotic scene, but he had not anticipated seeing what he beheld, nor did he appreciate what he learned as a consequence of his watching.

Of the three last citations two deal with lovers looking into a room from the outside. The actions are so self evident

and do not leave any room for further interpretation re cultic prostitution.

So, all in all, these eight window scenes cannot be used as support for the exegesis that the *παρὰκῦπτουσα* has been used as a *ἑστία πορνικόν*.

The question of the *נָשָׂא* and the invitation to the young man to participate sexually, only presents a problem in the Greek text because it is written in the present tense. Since the original Hebrew was written in the past tense, the invitation to a night of love, is that and nothing more. It does not present a cultic problem.

The translator probably adjusted the tense of his translation⁷⁴ in order to make the flow of the story more intelligible to his Greek speaking audience, without considering the problems he was creating for future exegetes. Also, the presupposition of the *נָשָׂא* cum sex is negated by the obvious guilt exhibited by the woman as she invites the youth to her house.

⁷⁴ Gerleman, Studies 18.

Summary and Conclusion

The study of the pre-exilic Yahwistic religion held the premise that fertility cults and the practice of sacred prostitution, enacted at the high places in honour of God (the gods), was a wide spread phenomena. The sexual ceremonies, with their supporting theologies, were supposed to have been an integral part of a variety of religions originating in Asia Minor. Although it was contrary to the creed of the Israelites to take part in these rites, it was thought that they were frequently induced to participate in these ceremonies, or even to include sacred prostitution into their own Yahwistic ritual. The prophets are considered to have been in opposition to, and the reform kings to have legislated against, these ideas of divine manipulation by the worshipper and the debased ceremonials that accompanied such concepts.

To verify these ideas about the Near Eastern religions and the influence that they might have exerted on Israel I looked at the term, *ר'עצד*, identifying a certain group of cultic dignitaries appearing in eight passages of the Miqra. Very briefly I then recapitulated the passages containing words based on *רע*, because due to the implication of 'prostitution' within the term the texts containing the word had been used to underscore the concept that cult prostitution was being practiced in Israel. Then there were also an assortment of

individual passages which for a variety of arguments had been construed as witnessing to sacred prostitution. The exegesis of one of the lengthier of these texts, Proverbs VII, had been, to a great extent, inspired by Hellenistic literature and imagery.

Before attempting the Biblical texts, I first looked at the religions of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Canaan to verify the existence of sacred prostitution amongst these peoples. The epigraphic data that is still in existence recording the details of their divine ceremonies, feasts, and cult personnel were scrutinized, as were also certain ideas intrinsic to the visual arts. The writings of classical authors who had dealt with the topic of temple prostitution were also considered. The deduction reached after this survey showed that the practice of cult prostitution among the ancient people cannot be taken for granted anymore without more explicit source material to the contrary.

The first text in the Tanach, Genesis 38:21-22, refers to Tamar as a gedeshah and the word is therefore in the feminine singular. Since during the remaining narrative Tamar is called a zonah, this grouping has been used to define the gedeshah as a zonah. Scholars give the recording of the text a wide time span, from the beginning of the Monarchy to the Exile. Since it registers old Patriarchal material preserved very late in an oral tradition, it displays attitudes towards Canaanites which are positive, indicates changes in family law, and mentions the gedeshim in a neutral manner. The identification of the same

person as a *זניב* and as a *זעזע* will always present a problem, until we can get a more definite identification of what a gedeshah was, from inside Israel and not just try to elicit the meaning from cognate languages and their underlying thought patterns.

Qadesh/gedeshah is used both in the masculine and in the feminine singular in Deuteronomy 23:18. At this point in time (c. sixth century B.C.E. ?) the qadesh/gedeshah was definitely not favourably regarded by the Deuteronomist. His contention was that no good Israelite, man or woman, would ever want to become one. No explanation is given for the prohibition except for the Deuteronomist's general attitude of one holy people for the one holy God YHWH. The parallel construction of the text has always been made to define the gedeshah as a zonah, and the qadesh as a *זד*. I would propose that that literary construction can be utilized in such a manner so that the usual meaning of the term, 'holy, set apart' is still evident without necessarily idealizing the state of prostitution for the ancient woman. It is the Deuteronomist who was negatively inclined towards this group of people without explaining his partisan bias.

I Kings 14:24 accepts the existence of the gedeshim in the land, but they are cited as part of the evil things that Israel (Judah) did under Rehoboam.

Whereas in I Kings 15:12 and 22:46(47) the gedeshim are part of the list of abominations that the kings want to oust from the

land. According to the writers, the Kings Asa and Jehosaphat, are most definitely opposed to the gedeshim, but they also try to eliminate other establishments admissible in Israel in earlier times.

II Kings 23:7 also judges the gedeshim negatively because Josiah, during his reform, destroyed their houses that were within the temple compound. This piece of information shows that the government, for over three hundred years, had not been able to eradicate them. The sentence as recorded does not demonstrate that they were involved in the royal cult. They could have just lived in the temple or have owned property there. The passage does not elaborate on what happened to the gedeshim, in Jerusalem or the rest of the country, after the destruction of their property.

It is always intriguing trying to comprehend the reasons why rulers choose certain religions, or their diverse manifestations, and then impose their choice on their subjects. For instance: what was the rational behind Constantine's espousal of Christianity, Asoka's embrace of Buddhism, Frederick the Wise's adoption of Luther's reform, Charles V's preference for Catholicism, and the Kings' of Judah support of the Deuteronomic reform? Was it primarily owing to a mystical experience which convinced them of the value of their decision? Was it due to political acumen?

Hosea (4:14), who preached in Israel during the time that Hezekiah was ruling in Judah, is the only one who comments on the cultic connection that the gedeshot might have had. He does not specify what their religious responsibility might have been. Did they offer sacrifice in their own right as persons 'holy, set apart'? It seems rather that the prophet is reprimanding the men for offering sacrifice in a questionable state of religious integrity, after being poor moral models to their families by availing themselves of prostitutes, and then compounding their hypocrisy by fulfilling their pious obligations in the company of undesirable persons. Hosea is the only one who uses the feminine plural form of עֲשֵׂה . Why did he consider these people inappropriate? Was it because they were women too close to the cultic action? Was it because they were a group of people aspiring to a certain amount of religious leadership without letting themselves be controlled? By whom? The Davidic scion in Jerusalem? The kings of Israel? The prophets?

"Dying among the gedeshim" in Job 36:14 is problematic. The translator of the Septuagint has the impenitent person die among the 'messengers' (ἄγγελων). Messengers from whom, for what? Why has it become synonymous with 'shame'? This colloquial expression defies a clear solution, as do the other texts of a more archaic derivation: Genesis and Hosea.

So, twice the gedeshim are accepted by the Biblical writers in at least a neutral manner - just stating they existed (Genesis

38:21-22 - three times, I Kings 14:24). Four times it is made known that the gedeshim were certainly disliked in official circles, to such an extent that the reformers try to eliminate them (I Kings 15:12; 22:46(47); II Kings 23:7) and that the prophet considers them unfit company while performing ones religious duties (Hosea 4:14). They certainly were the only company that the ungodly person could expect if he died unrepentant (Job 36:14). All in all, the gedeshim were not good company for a faithful Israelite (Deuteronomy 23:17(18)). In none of these passages do any of the writers articulate their reasons why they consider the gedeshim worthy of condemnation. Since it has already been stated that cult prostitution was not the prevalent mode of worship among the ancients, neither can it therefore be presumed for any of these texts.

Before trying to assign the gedeshim a role within Israel, there were other subject areas which influenced scholars to label them (cult) prostitutes. Some of the impressions originated in the classical culture. Although they are too late to interpret actions or peoples of Canaanite or Biblical times, it has been thought that the classical writers were recording later manifestations of similar events, or accounts as they had been preserved over the centuries.

In part of the research the function of *παρὰ κύπτιους* in the Septuagint was surveyed. After examining the legend it was concluded that it was a lovely piece of literature, but did

not witness to any cult honouring the goddess of love in which the sex act was used as a means of adoration.

The verb *παρὰκλύπτειν*, especially as used by Aristophanes, is too broad in meaning to be able to support the argument that it is its erotic connotation which influenced its usage in the Bible.

The finds of images of the 'woman in the window' cannot be used as a justification for a cult to the goddess of love, since there is no primary evidence that such a cult, including the rite of prostitution, ever existed. These little, delightful ivory carvings were usually found in a secular setting and used as furniture inlay.

Frequently other window scenes in the Old Testament have reminded scholars that the verb *παρὰκλύπτω* was being used as a scheme or a symbolic description to show a woman trying to seduce a man - usually with cultic overtones. Out of the eight quotations usually cited, four deal with three events when a woman is watching at a window for a man of some importance in her life. The story of Sisera's mother waiting near a window for his victorious return cannot be used to bolster the argument for an 'erotic' vigil. The three passages dealing with Michal and Jezebel are not perfect examples for this argument either. The complete texts make it quite clear that neither woman was erotically interested in the man she was watching.

The remaining four passages deal with male persons doing the looking. In the case of Abimelech, he is observing an erotic scene, but he had not anticipated seeing what he beheld, nor did he appreciate what he learned as a consequence of his watch.

Of the three last citations two deal with lovers looking into a room from the outside. The actions are so self evident and do not leave any room for further interpretation.

So, all in all, these eight window scenes cannot be used as justification for the exegesis that the Parakuptousa, as a manifestation of the goddess of love to whom a cult fostering a liturgy of temple prostitution had been dedicated, has influenced the translation of the Bible. None of the eight settings have anything to do with a cult or a religion.

The idea of the sacrifice combined with sexual intercourse in Chapter VII of Proverbs could present a challenge in the Greek text due to its being written in the present tense. This problem is negated though by the woman's obvious discomfort as she invites the man into her house. Anyway, how could this invitation to her own house be construed as a cultic action. Neither was she paid any money with which she could have brought support to a shrine.

The original Hebrew does not present this quandary, since that text was written in the past tense. Therefore, the most obvious interpretation of Chapter VII is, that it is a

continuation of Chapter VI, in which the Teacher of Wisdom warns his disciples against the pitfalls of adultery.

After having investigated the Hellenistic as well as the Biblical sources for the Parakuptousa image, one is bound to reach the following conclusions. In ancient times there was a very popular legend concerning a woman who had been turned into a stone image by the gods. It does not record anything about a cult to the goddess Aphrodite, a cult in which prostitution was to have been part of the liturgy.

In conclusion I would like to present the suggestion that the gedeshim/gedeshot were a group of people, 'holy, set apart, dedicated' as their name indicates, both male and female, going back to the very origins of Israel.

In the surrounding countries similar groups of people (e.g. gadishtu in Mesopotamia, gdsm in Canaan) existed, but by the time they were being recorded they had become institutionalized as part of the temple hierarchy. This never happened in Israel. There were a number of other groups of 'holy' people within Israel, e.g. the Levites, the Rechabites, the Kenites, the prophets, and the Nazarites. What therefore would be the essential difference between these groups and the gedeshim?

The groups mentioned above are recognized, structured companies, harking back to a founder or progenitor of the group. They have laws and rules that govern their membership in the assembly of Israel.

Since the Levites and Kenites were tribes, a person became a member by virtue of his birth. The Rechabites had definite laws which formed them into a band. Although there were a variety of prophets, ecstatic, cultic and also individual, they still had a very definite, recognizable function within Israel. The Nazarites could be permanently or temporarily affiliated to the association. Although they did not function as a group they were identifiable as such, and they had legislation governing their term of consecration.

I would speculate that the gedeshim/gedeshot, were not a structured company but a group of individuals who felt that they had received a calling, a gift from God, which they accepted and their neighbours recognized. They did not organize themselves and let themselves be organized by the government/institutionalized religion. Their roots lay in the villages and towns of the countryside where they were appreciated as leaders.

Since their 'vocation' was God-given, and God's spirit blows where it will (I Kings 19:12-13; cf. John 3:8) these groups-set-apart, holy, were comprised of both sexes. Eventually, because they possessed less mobility than their male colleagues, the female component of this band either faded out of the picture or their place of activity was restricted to the rural areas, whereas some of the men gradually attained prestige even in the

larger urban centres. I do not think that they were ever officially constituted cult officiants.

It is thought that Israel became a more legalistic religion, a religion of the book, during the Exile and under the influence of its Persian overlords. Frequently developments such as these are germane in the social organism but take a long time to mature and only come to the fruition under the impact of some traumatic experience. This configuration had supposedly been evolving all during the Monarchy (e.g. the emphasis on the book of the covenant under Josiah) but only matured because of the ordeal of the Exile.

The bamot have been labeled as agents of false ideas and corrupt practices. The debate has gone on for some time as to the value of their centralization, with the recognition that this process could have spelled financial doom to the local economies, and therefore also be injurious to the nation as a whole. Perhaps, all the kings and their advisers wanted to do was to control them, to legislate these meeting places. That proved to be impossible due perhaps to the tenacity of the old-fashioned prestige that these meeting places held. As a result, it might have been easier to destroy them than to bring them into line.

The same can be surmised for the gedeshim. They were a group of people that could trace their existence to the very beginnings of Israel, to the Patriarchal Age. They had an innate prestige, like the bamot. They would not be legislated to, nor

be organized. Therefore, according to the Deuteronomist, they, both the gedeshim as well as the bamot, were anathema to the holy community of Israel, as he envisioned it, and eventually had to be eliminated, either by absorption or destruction.

Abbreviations

Afo	Archiv für Orientforschung
AJSLL	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
AJT	American Journal of Theology
ANEP	Pritchard/The Ancient Near East in Pictures
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ARCE	American Research Center in Egypt
ATD	Acta Theologica Danica
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BEvTh	Beiträge zur Evangelischen Theologie
BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire
BRL	Galling/Biblisches Reallexikon
BSFE	Bulletin de la Société Française d'Egypte
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
CBQ	The Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CH	Code of Hammurabi
CNRS	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
CTA	The Sigla of the Ugaritic Tablets employed by Mlle. Herdner in her Official Edition

DA	Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie
DB	Dictionnaire de la Bible
DB Suppl.	Dictionnaire de la Bible Supplément
DS	Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Ascétique et Mystique, Doctrine et Histoire
DW	Grimm/Deutsches Wörterbuch
Eph. Th. Lov.	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
EPRO	Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain
ER	Encyclopedia of Religion
ERE	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
GGA	Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen
GM	Göttinger Miszellen ... zur ägyptologischen Diskussion
HUC	Hebrew Union College
IDB	The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
IESS	International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JARCE	Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient

JEVThS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JIR	Jewish Institute of Religion
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland
JRH	Journal of Religious History
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KAI	Donner/Röllig, Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften
KP	Kleiner Pauly
LIMC	Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologicae Classicae
LThK	Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche
MVAG	Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen-Ägyptischen Gesellschaft
NGGW	Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen
OA	Oriens Antiquus
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
OLZ	Orientalische Literaturzeitung
Or	Orientalia
PAPS	Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Journal
PW	Pauly/Wissowa, Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum
RB	Revue Biblique

RdE	Revue d'Égyptologie
Rec. de Trav.	Recueil de Travaux Relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes
RGG	Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart
RhM	Rheinisches Museum für Philologie
RHR	Revue de l'Histoire des Religions
RLA	Reallexikon für Assyriologie
RVV	Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten
SAK	Die Sumerischen und Akkadischen Königsinschriften
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SMSR	Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni
SOTS	Society for Old Testament Studies
SVT	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
ThDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
ThEv	Theologica Evangelica
ThHWAT	Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament
ThLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung
ThSt	Theological Studies
ThWAT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament
ThWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
TS	Theologische Studien
UF	Ugaritische Forschungen
UT	Gordon/Ugaritic Textbook
VT	Vetus Testamentum

ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Verwandte Gebiete
ZÄS	Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina- Vereins

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