

## THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SEPTUAGINT TO BIBLICAL SANCTIONS AGAINST HOMOSEXUALITY

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As the public debate over the place of homosexual behavior in western society intensifies, various attempts are being made to justify homosexual behavior on the basis of ethics or religious belief as derived from Scripture. Several writers have sought to reinterpret passages of Scripture that seemingly condemn homosexual behavior as a sin and/or a crime.<sup>1</sup>

The reinterpretation of OT passages has included an appeal to the LXX. On the one hand, it is claimed that English translations have erroneously translated certain OT passages so as to give them a homosexual meaning when the Hebrew has no such meaning. Appeal is made to the LXX as evidence that these early translators saw no homosexuality in the text and rendered the Hebrew by Greek terms void of homosexual meaning.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, some hold that where the LXX does use terminology denoting homosexuality it erroneously translates the Hebrew, which lacks any homosexual meaning. At these places the LXX translation was influenced by the antipathy of the Jewish translators toward the expression of homosexuality in the Greek culture around them in the third century B.C. or later.

The net effect of these positions is the same. English translations signifying homosexuality (such as "sodomite" or "have sexual relations with") are in error, it is claimed. Since the claim is that the Hebrew text is void of a homosexual meaning, it is the LXX that is the key to this linguistic debate and its ethical consequences.<sup>3</sup>

This study focuses on the meaning of "to know" in the account of the sin and fall of Sodom (Gen 19:5, 8) and the meaning of "sodomite" as found in the KJV at Deut 23:17-18 (LXX 18-19) and elsewhere (1 Kgs 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kgs 23:7; Job 36:14) where the term *qādēš* and its cognates occur.

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<sup>1</sup> See D. S. Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (London: Longmans, Green, 1955) 1-8; J. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980) 92-99. For additional Protestant and Catholic supporters (J. B. Nelson, C. Curran, J. J. McNeill, etc.) see *Homosexuality and Ethics* (ed. E. Batchelor; New York: Pilgrim, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> Bailey, *Homosexuality* 50-51; Boswell, *Christianity* 98-99.

<sup>3</sup> For implications of the use of "abomination" and "lawless" by the LXX see my comments elsewhere (J. B. De Young, "The OT Witness to Homosexuality: A Critical Assessment of the Prohomosexual Interpretation of the OT," paper presented in Portland, Oregon, to Evangelical Theological Society, northwest section [May 4, 1985] 18-21).

Since these passages describe both Gentile practice (Genesis 19) and Jewish legal proscription (Deuteronomy and Kings), they have not only significance for contemporary ethics and civil law regarding homosexuality but also importance for English translations.

### I. THE MEANING OF "KNOW" IN GEN 19:5

Two verses in Genesis 19 are pertinent to this study:

And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations (mg., have intercourse; *wēnēdē'ā*) with them" (Gen 19:5 NASB).

Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations (mg., had intercourse; *yādē'ū*) with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof (19:8 NASB).

In the above references both the KJV and the RSV translate the Hebrew terms as "know." The NIV in 19:5 renders "have sex with" and in 19:8 "slept with." The NEB reads "have intercourse with" and "virgins."

The LXX translates the Hebrew term in 19:5 by *syngenōmetha* ("we may know") and in 19:8 by *egnōsan* ("have known"). Two different Greek words are used to render the same Hebrew term. What is the significance of this variation?

For some this translation by the LXX, including the fact that two different words are used to render the same Hebrew word, argues that homosexuality was not the sin of Sodom or the cause of its destruction.<sup>4</sup> The Greek terms simply mean "to become acquainted with" and faithfully represent the Hebrew. The Hebrew means nothing more than the Greek, and the evil perpetrated by the Sodomites was their breach of "the rules of hospitality."<sup>5</sup> Verse 8 cannot be used to interpret v. 5 in a sexual sense, for the connection with v. 5 is "purely imaginary." Lot spoke "on the spur of the moment" to offer this "tempting bribe."<sup>6</sup>

1. *The meaning of yāda'.* What does the Hebrew word mean? Of the 943 occurrences of *yāda'* only a dozen or so have a sexual sense (besides the

<sup>4</sup> Bailey, *Homosexuality* (5-18, 27-28), argues that sin was not the cause of Sodom's destruction, that it suffered a natural catastrophe, that the account is part of universal folklore, and that homosexuality was later read into the narrative in the first or second century B.C. by the pseudepigrapha (*Jubilees*; *T. Naph.* 3:4-4:1). Yet without going into a full defense of the traditional supernatural view, I would simply observe that Bailey is influenced by higher critical views of the nature of Scripture, that the earliest texts associate Sodom with evil (Sodom is a descendent of cursed Canaan, Gen 10:19; cf. 13:13), that the divine initiative in Sodom's destruction is drawn out (18:16-33), that God's character as just (18:25) is imperiled if the righteous and wicked alike perished in an accidental and natural event, and that the rest of the OT and the NT, including our Lord, assume this to be a special divine intervention.

<sup>5</sup> Bailey, *Homosexuality* 4-5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

passage under discussion and its counterpart in Judg 19:22).<sup>7</sup> In addition the term occurs five times in combination with *miškāb* (from *šakab*, “to lie with”), having a sexual sense.<sup>8</sup>

Writers such as Bailey use these statistics to find a sexual meaning “exceptional.” Bailey also observes that *yāda*<sup>c</sup> “always refers to heterosexual coitus” whereas *šakab* is used of homosexual, bestial and heterosexual unions.<sup>9</sup>

BDB cites under three groupings more than a dozen occurrences of *yāda*<sup>c</sup> with the meaning to “know a person carnally”: (1) It is used of men knowing wives or women in intercourse (Gen 4:1, 17, 25—Adam, Cain, Adam; 24:16—of Rebekah; 38:26—Judah; 1 Sam 1:19—Elkanah and Hannah; Judg 19:25—men of Gibeah “raping” the concubine; 1 Kgs 1:4—David and Abishag). (2) It is used of women knowing men sexually (Gen 19:8—daughters of Lot; Num 31:17, 18, 35—women of Midian; Judg 11:39—daughter of Jephthah; 21:11—women of Jabesh Gilead). (3) Finally, it is used of sodomy, with men as subject and object (no lesbianism; Gen 19:5; Judg 19:22).

Of these sixteen occurrences, ten are in the Pentateuch and four are in Judges (three of the latter are associated with the incident at Gibeah).<sup>10</sup> In light of the fact that the incident at Gibeah is so similar to that described at Sodom, it is not unwarranted to suggest that the terminology of Judges 19–21 was consciously chosen by the author to reflect that of Genesis 19. The reference in 1 Sam 1:19 may well be attributed to a common author of the passages in Judges and Samuel.

A sexual meaning for “know” is not limited to Hebrew. The Egyptian equivalent is *rh*<sup>11</sup> and the Ugaritic is *yd*<sup>c</sup>.<sup>12</sup> Both may mean “to know sexually” in certain contexts. The Aramaic *yēda*<sup>c</sup> apparently has the same breadth of meaning as the Hebrew. For example, it occurs in Gen 4:1 as, according to Jastrow, a “euphemism” for “to have sexual relations.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> BDB 394. The references are Gen 4:1, 17, 25; 19:8; 24:16; 38:26; Judg 11:39; 19:25; 1 Sam 1:19; 1 Kgs 1:4. M. Jastrow (*A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* [New York: Pardes, 1950], 1. 564–565) cites the Aramaic *yēda*<sup>c</sup> as having the meaning “to love” (Gen 4:1) in *Yebam. 57; Esth. Rabb. 3:7*.

<sup>8</sup> Num 31:17, 18, 35; Judg 21:11–12.

<sup>9</sup> Bailey, *Homosexuality* 3. It is to be noted also, according to *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (ed. R. L. Harris; Chicago: Moody, 1980), 2. 921, that *šakab* itself and its derivatives are always used, apparently, of illicit sexual relationships (as in Lev 18:22; 20:13).

<sup>10</sup> Actually the idea of carnal knowledge may be assumed elsewhere, based on parallel expressions. For example, in Gen 4:2 the words “and again” introducing the birth of Abel assume the words of 4:1: “Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived.” Especially does this seem to be the case in light of 4:25. It should also be assumed in Judg 21:12 in light of the parallel in v. 11.

<sup>11</sup> J. Bergman, “*yāda*<sup>c</sup>,” *TDOT* 5.455.

<sup>12</sup> G. J. Botterweck, “*yāda*<sup>c</sup>,” *TDOT* 5.460. He cites Gen 19:5 and Judg 19:22 as places where *yāda*<sup>c</sup> is used for homosexual intercourse. He comments that the “sexual reference has been explained as deriving from the unveiling of a woman on her wedding night or first intercourse, but these explanations are not convincing. More likely we are dealing with a euphemism for sexual relations” (5.464).

<sup>13</sup> So Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1. 564–565.

In light of the preceding, several observations are in order regarding the use of *yāda*<sup>c</sup> in Gen 19:5. First, it is plausible that the author of the events at Sodom intended a sexual meaning to the term. In Genesis there are more occurrences (seven) of a sexual meaning than anywhere else. Second, a few occurrences point to something other than sexual relations within marriage, including adultery or prostitution (Gen 38:26; 1 Kgs 1:4; Num 31:17, 18, 35) and rape (Judg 19:25). Indeed Gen 19:8 points to what would have resulted in rape. Therefore it is not implausible to see homosexuality as the meaning for the term in Gen 19:5. This would mean that eight of the sixteen occurrences would refer to sexual relations outside of marriage, and three (perhaps six) of these have violence accompanying the relationship. It is totally unjustified for Bailey to say regarding the sin of Sodom that "there is no reason to suppose that it was sexual—still less, that it was homosexual."<sup>14</sup>

Why was not *šākab* used in Gen 19:5? Perhaps because euphemism was thought more appropriate for unnatural sexual relations (cf. 19:32 ff.) this early in the Abrahamic account. Also the context is narrative in form (*šākab* is used of homosexual conduct in Lev 18:22; 20:13 and may be due to the apodictic or casuistic legal nature of the passage).<sup>15</sup>

Ultimately context determines the meaning. Both in Gen 19:5 and Judg 19:22 "to know sexually" is in the immediate context (Gen 19:8; Judg 19:23-25; 20:5-12). In addition the words of Gen 19:4 emphasize male participation. It was "the men of the city, the men of Sodom" who surrounded the house; they were "both young and old, all the people from every quarter." The homosexual setting seems unmistakable.

In addition, one must ask whether the sin of inhospitality is sufficiently evil to cause such a description of Sodom and to warrant its destruction (cf. Gen 13:10, 13; 14:21-24; 18:16-33). It would seem that the one delivered (Lot) is, by this interpretation, more wicked (in light of Gen 19:8) than the men of Sodom who perished.

Also the NT supports a homosexual interpretation. 2 Pet 2:7-10 links Sodom with "sensual conduct of unprincipled men," "lawless deeds" that tormented Lot "daily" and "those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires." Jude 7 identifies Sodom as indulging in "gross immorality" and going "after strange flesh." Clearly the text deals with sexual vices, not inhospitality.

Finally, the sin of Sodom is identified as "abomination" (*tô<sup>c</sup>ēbā*) in Ezek 16:49-50, in addition to other vices. Consideration of the use of this term and its translation by *bdelygma* ("abomination") and *anomia* ("lawlessness") in the LXX shows that a homosexual meaning is intended. *Tô<sup>c</sup>ēbā* is the only term used in both Lev 18:22 and 20:13 to describe

<sup>14</sup> Bailey, *Homosexuality* 8, 27-28. Virtually all commentators are in agreement in understanding sodomy here.

<sup>15</sup> Also *šākab* does not occur in the parallel incident at Gibeah (Judg 19:22-25).

homosexuality among all the other vices, and the targums link Leviticus with Genesis 19.<sup>16</sup> It is reasonable to assume that homosexual vice is the sin meant by *yāda*<sup>c</sup>.

2. *The meaning of synginomai.* If the Hebrew term can have a sexual sense in Gen 19:5, 8, then what about the use by the LXX of the verbs *synginomai* (19:5) and *ginōskō* (19:8)? What do they mean, and why the variation in translation?

It is clear that the latter term has a sexual sense,<sup>17</sup> and this is uncontested.<sup>18</sup> Indeed it is the variation in 19:5 that has led to the claim that the LXX "makes no implication of carnal knowledge but uses a Greek expression connoting simply 'making the acquaintance of' (becoming familiar with)."<sup>19</sup> Hence the implication is that the Jewish translators of the LXX understood the Hebrew term to mean the same thing also.

Yet an investigation of the usage of *synginomai* yields other results contrary to this claim. This compound term occurs in canonical literature only twice (Gen 19:5; 39:10) and in the apocrypha three times (Jdt 12:16; Sus 11, 39; the term does not occur in the NT). Four of these passages are here translated (Gen 19:5 is rendered above):

And it came about as she spoke to Joseph day after day, that he did not listen to her to *lie* beside her, or be with her (Gen 39:10 NASB).<sup>20</sup>

So Judith went in and lay down, and Holofernes' mind was amazed at her and his heart was stirred, and he was exceedingly desirous of intimacy with her, for he had been watching for an opportunity to deceive her ever since he had seen her (Jdt 12:16).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel* uses the same term it and *Targum Neofiti* use in Lev 18:22; 20:13 to translate Gen 19:5 into Aramaic. *Targum Neofiti* uses *hākam* in Genesis 19, literally "to be wise" but with the metaphorical sense "have sexual intercourse." Hence the targums understand Gen 19:5 as a reference to homosexuality. So R. Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 77. For substantiation of a "homosexual" meaning for *tō'ebā* in Ezek 16:50 and for the terms of the LXX see De Young, "OT Witness" 14-22.

<sup>17</sup> *Ginōskō* is the term used in every place cited above where *yāda*<sup>c</sup> has a sexual meaning: Gen 4:1, 17, 25; 19:8; 24:16; 38:26; 1 Sam 1:19; 1 Kgs 1:4; Num 31:17, 18, 35; Judg 11:39; 19:25; 21:11. Of the two remaining places (Gen 19:5; Judg 19:22) Gen 19:5 alone uses the term *synginomai*.

<sup>18</sup> So Bailey, *Homosexuality* 6; Boswell, *Christianity* 95.

<sup>19</sup> Boswell, *Christianity* 94 n. 4.

<sup>20</sup> W. L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 79, says that the Hebrew (*hāyā 'im*) here means "to be at someone's house sexually." BDB 227 concurs, citing 2 Sam 13:20 as "implying sexual intercourse" along with Gen 39:10. The verb is rendered "be with her" also by the NIV and RSV and "be in her company" by the NEB.

<sup>21</sup> "Of intimacy with" represents *synginomai* and could be more literally rendered "to be with." The translation is that of E. J. Goodspeed, *The Apocrypha* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1938) 156. The NEB *Apocrypha* renders the clause "he was filled with an ardent longing to possess her." For "to deceive her" it has "to seduce her." *APOT*, 1. 262, has "her company."

They [two elders] were both smitten with her [Susanna], but they could not disclose their pain to each other, for they were ashamed to reveal their passion, for they desired to have relations with her (Sus 11).<sup>22</sup>

Though we saw them together, we could not hold him (Sus 39).<sup>23</sup>

These latter words are explained by v. 37: "A young man . . . came to her, and lay down with her." Thus a sexual meaning is clear in Sus 39. There is also a variant at Lev 20:16 that uses this Greek term: "If there is a woman who approaches any animal to mate with it."<sup>24</sup> This is read in place of the better attested *bibasthēnai*. This context of bestiality follows the references to homosexuality (20:13), incest (v. 14) and bestiality by men (v. 15).

When consideration is extended to secular sources it is clear that a sexual meaning for *synginomai* is even more plausible. The word *syngignomai*, later *synginomai*, can mean various things including (1) "to be born with," (2) "to associate" or "keep company with" or "hold converse with," and (3) "to become acquainted" or "conversant with."<sup>25</sup> Under the second meaning various ideas are possible including "coexist," "cohere," "hold converse with" a master, "consult" him; "come to assist" someone, "come together," "meet," and "have sexual intercourse with" a woman. The last meaning occurs in Xenophon *Anabasis* (fifth to fourth centuries B.C.) 1.2.12; Plato *Republic* 329c; Epidaurus (fourth century B.C.). It is used of the woman in Herodotus (fifth century B.C.) 2.121.e; Plato *Laws* 930d; Plutarch *Solon* 23 (first to second centuries A.D.).

Plato *Republic* 329c uses the term in a context that may allude to homosexuality. Cephalus addresses Socrates about the disadvantages of old age. Yet the poet Sophocles is cited as one who had a different, more positive attitude toward old age. Sophocles felt that old age is "only moderately burdensome" if men "are temperate and cheerful" in character. The word *synginomai* occurs in a question regarding old age put to Sophocles: "How about your service of Aphrodite, Sophocles? Is your natural force still unabated (*Echeis pros taphrodisia? Eti hoios te ei gynaiiki syngignesthai?*)?" To this question Sophocles replied: "Hush, man, most gladly have I escaped this thing you talk of, as if I had run away from a raging and savage beast of a master." The reference to Aphrodite may be an allusion to homosexuality, whereas the second part of the question clearly refers to heterosexual intercourse.<sup>26</sup>

Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.2.12 recounts the ill-fated expedition of Cyrus (401 B.C.) against his brother Artaxerxes II, king of Persia, as Cyrus tried

<sup>22</sup> The NEB translates the last clause: "They were ashamed to confess that they wanted to seduce her." *APOT*, 1. 648, has "They desired to have to do with her."

<sup>23</sup> NEB: "Though we saw them in the act"; v. 37: "lay down with her." *APOT*, 1. 649: "saw them together."

<sup>24</sup> So Hatch and Redpath (*Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983*), 2. 1298.

<sup>25</sup> *LSJ* 1660.

<sup>26</sup> *Plato*, vol. 5, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard, 1969). In *Plato Symposium* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, n.d.) 180c-181c, Aphrodite is both the goddess of common love (heterosexuality) and heavenly love (homosexuality-pederasty).

to gain the throne of Persia. At one of his encampments Epyacha, the wife of the king of the Cilicians, visited Cyrus and gave him a large sum of money to pay his troops. It is then recorded: "And people said that Cyrus had intimate relations with the queen."<sup>27</sup>

Herodotus 2.121.e recounts how King Rhampsinitus sought to catch the thief who was stealing from his royal treasury. He arranged to have his daughter ensnare the thief by having him confess to her "before she had intercourse with" him (*prin syngenesthai*).<sup>28</sup>

Plato *Laws* 930d discusses the alternatives that should prevail by law in dealing with a couple having irreconcilable differences. Children in such a marriage are to be properly disposed of. He first addresses the matter of a slave woman and then turns to that of a free woman: "If a free woman mates with a slave (*ean de tis eleuthera douloi syngignētai*), the issue shall belong to the slave's master." This is clearly sexual intercourse, being used in parallel to the preceding line where a slave woman "has been mated" (*symmixēi*) with a slave or a free man.<sup>29</sup>

The geographical setting and the date of these sources have some bearing on the question of what meaning the translators of the LXX intended for *synginomai*. Regarding geography, it is the commonly accepted view that the LXX was produced in Alexandria, Egypt.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, Herodotus traveled widely in Asia Minor, Egypt and elsewhere, and the account he relates is an Egyptian story (2.123). Xenophon traveled to Asia Minor from Athens. Plato was from Athens and traveled to Egypt, Sicily and elsewhere.

In regard to date, most place the making of the LXX, particularly the Pentateuch, around 250 or perhaps as early as 280 B.C.<sup>31</sup> As indicated above, the dating of the secular sources ranges from the fifth century B.C. to as late as the first or second century A.D. In light of both considerations, therefore, it is entirely appropriate to suggest that the translators of the LXX knew of the sexual nature of the term *synginomai* when they did their work in Egypt in the third century B.C.

Scroggs admits that the LXX term in Gen 19:5 can have the meaning "to have sexual intercourse with," both for homosexual and heterosexual acts, in addition to such ideas as "associate" or "keep company with."<sup>32</sup> He says, however, that it has "the same ambiguity of meaning as *ginōskō*"

<sup>27</sup> *Xenophon*, vol. 3, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard, 1968).

<sup>28</sup> *Herodotus*, vol. 1, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard, 1966).

<sup>29</sup> *Plato Laws*, vol. 2, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard, 1968). This is just a sampling of sexual contexts for *synginomai*. A preliminary search of *Ibycus* reveals that such a meaning is not infrequent.

<sup>30</sup> See S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968) 52-56, 59-73.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Scroggs, *New Testament* 87. He says a pederastic context for the verb is found in *Inscriptiones Graecae*, Editio Minor, vol. 4, fasc. 1 (ed. F. H. de Gaertringen; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1929), inscription 2, 121, lines 104-105. Evidently the term does not occur in other *koinē* secular literature, according to MM. The word does occur in the patristics, according to *LPGL* 1266, but not with the sexual meaning. *LPGL* 315 also has no sexual meaning, such as "to know carnally," for *ginōskō*.

and therefore nothing can be learned from the LXX to show what the translators understood the intended act of the Sodomites to be.<sup>33</sup>

But in light of the preceding study the term is not as ambiguous as Scroggs believes. Certainly Boswell (cited above) is wrong when he denies that there is any implication of carnal knowledge. More specifically, on the basis of both Septuagintal and secular sources it seems clear that the verb *synginomai* in Gen 19:5 has the meaning "to know carnally." Rather than being ambiguous there is strong evidence that the LXX translators wished to be very explicit in order to communicate a sexual sense, even a homosexual sense. The ambiguity of the Hebrew (if present) is removed by the special term of the LXX, which everywhere else in the LXX refers to carnal knowledge.

On the basis of the study of both the Hebrew and Greek terms it is reasonable, if not necessary, to conclude that both of the terms refer to homosexual relationships. They cannot simply mean "to get acquainted" or "to associate with" in senses devoid of any carnal knowledge. It is not a reference to hospitality *per se*.

Even Philo interpreted Gen 19:5 as a reference to homosexuality. He says that the literal meaning of *yāda*<sup>c</sup> is "unseemly and male pederasty." Surely Philo had also the *synginomai* of the LXX in mind. Commenting on Gen 19:8 Philo reiterates that the literal text "very clearly shows that the Sodomites were pederasts."<sup>34</sup>

There are additional considerations that support this conclusion, although at first they would seem to be contrary to it. For example, why the LXX does not use some clearly explicit term available from the cultural milieu is explainable. They wish to translate as literally as possible, as they do the rest of the Pentateuch. Hence they had to use a term with the basic significance of the Hebrew *yāda*<sup>c</sup>, "to know." Yet it seems reasonable to suggest that they did not wish to leave the translation ambiguous and wished to signify a form of carnal knowledge even more flagrant and abusive than that of v. 8 (fornication). The LXX translators make the reference to sexuality more explicit.

Why the translators did not use the term in the somewhat parallel incident at Gibeah in Judges 19-21 is explainable in perhaps two ways.<sup>35</sup> First, almost all uses of *yāda*<sup>c</sup> and *ginōskō* with the sense of carnal knowledge occur in the Pentateuch, so it would be unexpected to see *ginōskō* or *synginomai* elsewhere. Second, the visitors to the old man in Gibeah were a man and his concubine, whereas the visitors to Lot in Sodom were actually two angels who appeared as men (Gen 19:1-2, 8). Perhaps the LXX wished

<sup>33</sup> Yet Scroggs, *New Testament* 73-74, concludes against Bailey, Boswell and McNeill in favor of the traditional view that homosexuality is involved, but he limits it to homosexual rape (as in Judges 19). He cites approvingly A. M. J. M. Herman van de Spijker, *Die gleichgeschlechtliche Zuneigung* (Olten: Walter, 1968) 67-74, who supports the "homosexual" interpretation.

<sup>34</sup> Philo *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, LCL, 4. 37-38.

<sup>35</sup> Bailey, *Homosexuality* 54-55, discounts any reference to sodomy at Gibeah, just as he does with reference to Sodom.



to make the distinction between unnatural carnal love (19:5) and natural carnal love (19:8). Perhaps this also explains why Lot makes such an offer of his daughters: He recognized the distinction. Perhaps there is even a retrospective glance to the context of the causes of the flood (6:1-4) when the enormous evil of angels marrying the daughters of men occurred. This association of the two events is made in later Jewish literature and by our Lord himself and his apostles.<sup>36</sup> Both are to be a perpetual warning.<sup>37</sup>

The above conclusions have several implications for ethics and English translations. These are discussed at the end of this study.

## II. THE MEANING OF "CULT PROSTITUTE" IN DEUT 23:17-18 AND ELSEWHERE

There are about a half dozen occurrences of the Hebrew *qādēš* or its plural. In almost every case a different Greek term is used by the LXX to translate it. This phenomenon prompts some to observe that the LXX is unreliable in its rendering: It uses "mistranslations" and is uncertain, imprecise and misrepresentative.<sup>38</sup> It is claimed that the LXX terms are devoid of any homosexual reference, as is the Hebrew *qādēš*. There is no evidence that sodomy was ever practiced by pagan religious prostitutes. Hence such passages are irrelevant to the discussion of attitudes toward homosexuality in the Christian Church. English translations using "sodomite" are totally without warrant.<sup>39</sup>

It is clear that such writers support their conclusions by appealing both to linguistics or grammar and to history or culture.<sup>40</sup> Both of these areas must be addressed.

1. *The historical context.* Those who oppose "sodomite" as a translation for *qādēš* or its LXX equivalents make their case most strongly by appealing to historical or cultural matters. A somewhat elementary survey of the culture and history makes it quite clear that homosexual practice and related perversions were known at the time of the exodus<sup>41</sup> and later

<sup>36</sup> *Jub.* 20:5-6; 7:20-21; *T. Naph.* 3:4-5; *T. Asher* 7:1; Luke 17:26-37; *Jude* 6-7; 2 *Pet* 2:4, 6-8; *Gen. Rab.* 50:7.

<sup>37</sup> The second advent of Christ is compared to these events (Luke 17:26-37).

<sup>38</sup> Boswell, *Christianity* 99.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* Bailey, *Homosexuality* 50-51, 53, is even more pronounced in his criticism than is Boswell. He claims that the terms not only lack "any particular reference to homosexual practice" but that there is "no positive evidence" that homosexuality was ever practiced in connection with religious prostitution.

<sup>40</sup> Actually such writers as Bailey, Boswell and Scroggs have a third basis for their views: a hermeneutical presupposition that is antisupernatural, that the Bible is a mere product of its time. They reject the idea that the moral code and theological truth of the Bible could be unique. They have inadequate views of the relationship between the Testaments. I view Scripture as supernatural and unique, transcending its times (Deut 4:7-8), although linguistics and history are the focus of this study.

<sup>41</sup> Here taken as the mid-fifteenth century B.C.

during the monarchy. It was practiced among many ancient societies.<sup>42</sup> According to Durant, homosexuality existed in ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, Phoenicia, Persia, India and China. Sometimes this included pederasty. Religious or temple prostitution existed throughout western Asia, and male prostitution existed in China.<sup>43</sup>

At Deut 22:5 S. R. Driver cites ancient religious rites where "simulated changes of sex" occur. There is the worship of a bearded Venus, considered to be of both sexes, to whom sacrifice was offered by men dressed as women and by women dressed as men. Also, processions of Galli (eunuch priests of Cybele, the mother of the gods) paraded throughout Syria, Asia Minor and other places, attired as women and soliciting the people to unholy rites. Finally, Eusebius recounts how Constantine put down a temple of Aphrodite at Aphaka in Coelesyria because of the character of the rites carried on at it. He described the priests as "certain men who are women, not men, denying the dignity of nature."<sup>44</sup> There were "temple boys" at Carthage.<sup>45</sup>

Greece was perhaps the most homosexual society of ancient times.<sup>46</sup> Plato said that a male's devotion to his male lover transcends devotion to office, money, parents, comrades, anything or anyone else in the world, and even transcends death itself.<sup>47</sup> The Greeks idealized such love, believed that their gods engaged in it, and believed that some people were homosexual by nature.<sup>48</sup> Pederasty was even institutionalized within the educational system. In addition, lesbianism was represented and transvestitism was known.

Now if the gods were engaged in homosexual conduct it is not unreasonable to propose that worship of such deities (Zeus and Ganymede, Heracles and Isolaus, Apollo and Hyacinth) should involve homosexuality between humans at the temples. Male prostitutes were scorned and even prohibited (unsuccessfully) by law, but it was simply the mercenary aspect that was opposed.<sup>49</sup> This is basically descriptive of fifth-century-B.C. Greece.

Although the preceding brief survey deals with a time period often much later than that of Moses, it does provide the setting during which the

<sup>42</sup> It is probably an accurate statement that sodomy "may be regarded as having always existed" and that it is virtually universal; V. Bullough, *Homosexuality: A History* (New York: Meridian, 1979) 52, 60.

<sup>43</sup> W. Durant, *The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), 1. 166, 244-248, 275, 296, 373-374, 401, 789.

<sup>44</sup> S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895) 250. The translation is mine.

<sup>45</sup> E. Yamauchi, "Prostitution, Cultic," in *The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* (ed. E. M. Blaiklock, R. K. Harrison and D. R. Douglass; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 369-371.

<sup>46</sup> There were various forms, with religious approval. J. K. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1978) 19-31, 37, 63, 99, 166, 171-173, 203.

<sup>47</sup> Plato *Symposium* 178c.

<sup>48</sup> Aristotle *Problemata* 4.26 (789b-880a), in *The Works of Aristotle* (ed. W. D. Ross; Oxford: Clarendon, 1927), vol. 7. See Bullough, *Homosexuality* 55-57; Plato *Laws* 636a-c; 836a-c.

<sup>49</sup> P. E. Slater, *The Glory of Hera* (Boston: Beacon, 1968) 11, 60-61. He adds that "the gods themselves were much addicted to pederasty" (p. 61 n. 26).

LXX was made. Yet there is clear evidence of homosexuality from the period of Moses or even earlier. Egypt, Assyria, the Hittites and Ugarit provide evidence that homosexuality was practiced in various ways.<sup>50</sup> From Egypt comes the folktale dating from 2000–1900 B.C. that tells of the rivalry between the gods Horus and Seth.<sup>51</sup> Homosexual conduct was practiced perhaps to humiliate the conquered, Bailey suggests. Ceremonial pederasty is probably referred to in a collection of spells from the fifth or sixth dynasties.<sup>52</sup> Finally, in the “Protestation of Guiltlessness” (c. 1750–c. 1580 B.C.) there are two confessions of men who deny having had sexual relations with boys (A20 and B27; also A21 and B20, “I have not defiled myself,” could have a sexual meaning).<sup>53</sup>

A female sacred prostitute is referred to in an Akkadian proverb: “An Ishtar-woman vowed to a god, a sacred prostitute whose favors are unlimited, will not lift you out of your trouble.”<sup>54</sup> From Assyria and Babylonia, the code of Hammurapi (c. 1700 B.C.) and the Gilgamesh epic (c. 2000 B.C.) may have references to homosexuality, although Bailey disputes this.<sup>55</sup> In ancient Babylon there were male sacred prostitutes, those “whose manhood Ishtar had changed into womanhood.”<sup>56</sup>

In the Middle Assyrian laws belonging to the time of Tiglath-Pileser I (twelfth century B.C.), however, there are prohibitions against homosexual behavior that probably go back to the fifteenth century. Tablet A, section 19, addresses the case of a false accusation of homosexual conduct by a seignior against a neighbor and the penalty for it. Section 20 gives the penalty for a convicted seignior who commits homosexuality with a neighbor.<sup>57</sup>

From the Hittites comes at least one tablet. It says, “If a man violates his son, it is a capital crime” (tablet 2, section 189).<sup>58</sup>

The strongest historical support comes from Ugarit, for it is geographically and chronologically near to the setting of the Pentateuch. Ritual prostitution was practiced at Ugarit, and among the cultic functionaries are references to priests and “consecrated persons” designated as *qdšm*.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Bailey, *Homosexuality* 30–37, is followed here initially.

<sup>51</sup> *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, 11.3–4; 12.3, in *The Chester Beatty Papyri* (Oxford, 1931), 1. 21–22.

<sup>52</sup> From G. D. Hornblower, “Further Notes on Phallism in Ancient Egypt,” *Man* 27 (1927) 151; cited by Bailey, *Homosexuality* 32.

<sup>53</sup> *ANET* 34–35.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 427.

<sup>55</sup> Bailey, *Homosexuality* 33.

<sup>56</sup> Yamauchi, “Prostitution” 369–371.

<sup>57</sup> See *ANET* 181, where Lev 18:22; 20:13 are cited in the margin.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* 196. Tablet 1, section 36, may also refer to a homosexual union between a slave and a free youth, but this is doubtful (*ibid.* 190).

<sup>59</sup> The term occurs in a list of “guild names” in text 169 (= 1026) in *UT*. See J. Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan* (Leiden: Brill, 1965) 53. The *qdšm* are important enough to be listed in second place after the priests and before temple clerks, singers, etc.; see W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1956) 159. He identifies the *qdšm* as the *cinaedi* (“catamites, sodomites”) or *galli* (mentioned above by Driver) of classical writers.

These were dedicated to the temple service.<sup>60</sup> The term *qdš* probably means simply "holy one."<sup>61</sup> In other contexts it may mean "sacred" or "special"—that is, "sacrosanct in the widest sense."<sup>62</sup> The "sons of holiness" are "gods." Evidently the compound *qdš-w-amrr* is the name of a male deity meaning "holy and blessed."<sup>63</sup>

Indeed, according to Kaiser, the Canaanite Ugaritic texts speak of gods copulating with animals as well as of bestiality among men. In Egypt, Rameses II claimed to be the son of the goat-god Ptah.<sup>64</sup>

This survey of extra-Biblical evidence for homosexuality is adequate to show that sodomy was widespread. But the most significant testimony comes from Scripture itself and from within the Pentateuch.<sup>65</sup> In the holiness code (Leviticus 18–20) there is repeated reference to the fact that the Egyptians and the inhabitants of Canaan indulged in all the sexual vices listed. These include various forms of incest, adultery, bestiality, homosexuality, child sacrifice, and so on. "All the nations" around Israel "did all these things" (Lev 18:3, 24, 27, 30; 20:23). This witness is sufficient in itself as evidence of widespread homosexual practice. In addition, Genesis 19 attests to the prevalence of homosexuality in Canaan at Sodom and perhaps at the other cities of the plain destroyed with Sodom (Gen 19:24–29; see also Deut 9:5).

In light of the foregoing, it is hardly fair for Bailey to treat the statements of Leviticus 18 and 20 about Egypt and Canaan as unreliable, as "an example of the rhetorical denigration to which an over-zealous patriot will sometimes descend."<sup>66</sup> Nor is it true that the extra-Biblical evidence is so sparse as to be "moot."<sup>67</sup>

2. *The linguistic contexts.* In the six passages under discussion the term *qādēš* or its cognates occurs seven times and the term *keleb* occurs once (Deut 23:18). The translation of these passages is here set forth as rendered by the NASB, with alternatives of other translations indicated.

None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute (*qēdēšā*; LXX *pornē*) [so RSV; KJV whore; NIV shrine prostitute; NEB temple-prostitute], nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a cult prostitute (*qādēš*; LXX *porneuōn*) [so RSV; KJV sodomite; NIV shrine prostitute; NEB prostitute himself in this way]. You shall not bring the hire of a harlot (*zōnā*; LXX *pornēs*) [so RSV; KJV whore; NIV female prostitute; NEB common prostitute] or the wages of a dog (*keleb*; LXX *kynos*) [mg., i.e. male prostitute, sodomite; RSV dog; mg.,

<sup>60</sup> Gray, *Legacy* 213.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 39. Earlier Gray claimed that the Ugaritic texts do not specify their functions; see *I and II Kings: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963) 311.

<sup>63</sup> *UT* 477.

<sup>64</sup> W. C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 114; see also pp. 118–119.

<sup>65</sup> I date this legislation with the rest of the Pentateuch about 1450 B.C. and accept Moses as the author.

<sup>66</sup> Bailey, *Homosexuality* 37.

<sup>67</sup> Boswell, *Christianity* 99.

sodomite; KJV dog; NIV male prostitute; mg., dog; NEB male prostitute] into the house of the LORD your God for any votive offering, for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God (Deut 23:17-18 [LXX 18-19]).

And there were also male cult prostitutes (*qādēš*; LXX *syndesmos*) [so RSV; KJV sodomites; NIV male shrine prostitutes; NEB male prostitutes attached to the shrines] in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel (1 Kgs 14:24).

He also put away the male cult prostitutes (*qēdēšim*; LXX *teletas*) [so RSV; KJV sodomites; NIV male shrine prostitutes; NEB male prostitutes] from the land, and removed all the idols which his fathers had made (1 Kgs 15:12).

And the remnant of the sodomites (*qādēš*; Hexapla *endiellagmenou*) [RSV male cult prostitutes; KJV sodomites; NIV male shrine prostitutes; NEB male prostitutes attached to the shrine] who remained in the days of his father Asa, he expelled from the land (1 Kgs 22:47).

He also broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes (*qēdēšim*; LXX *kadesim*) [so RSV; KJV sodomites; NIV male shrine prostitutes; NEB male prostitutes] which were in the house of the LORD, where the women were weaving hangings for the Asherah (2 Kgs 23:7).

They die in youth, and their life *perishes* among the cult prostitutes (*qēdēšim*; LXX *titrōskomenē*) [RSV life ends in shame; mg., among the cult prostitutes; KJV the unclean; NIV male prostitutes of the shrines; NEB male prostitutes] (Job 36:14).

From the preceding it is clear that most English translations understand *qādēš* to have a religious nature except the KJV; at one place (1 Kgs 22:47) it is joined by the NASB. The NEB usually omits the religious idea in its simple "male prostitute." Interestingly, the TEV renders all four terms in Deut 23:17-18 as "temple prostitute" and views the Hebrew as a collective in all the other passages so as to refer to religious prostitutes of both sexes.

One other observation about English translations is in order: The rendering "sodomite" does not begin or end with the KJV. The Geneva Bible also usually has the rendering "sodomite" and may have influenced the choice of terms found in the KJV. The NASB is alone among modern translations to keep "sodomite" in the text at 1 Kgs 22:47 and in the margin at Deut 23:18.

Related to *qādaš* ("to be set apart, consecrated") and *qōdeš* ("apartness, sacredness"), the term *qādēš* means "temple prostitute (man)" and *qēdēšā* is the feminine form meaning "harlot" (pl. *qēdēšôt*).<sup>68</sup> The references cited above are the only ones found, except that *qēdēšôt* also occurs

<sup>68</sup> BDB 873. Holladay, *Lexicon* 314, defines the word group as "consecrated person," "cult prostitute," both male and female. T. E. McComiskey, in *Theological Wordbook*, 2, 788, renders it "temple prostitute, male or female," and comments that the word reflects the "licentiousness of Canaanite worship." He acknowledges that Gen 38:21-22 may extend the usage to "prostitution in general."

in Hos 4:14 and *qēdēšā* occurs three times of Tamar (Gen 38:21 [twice], 22; LXX *pornē*). These references in Hosea and Genesis are not pertinent to this study, which focuses on the question of whether the masculine forms point to a homosexual union at a sacred place.

From the citations of the lexicons it is apparent that, although none give as a definition "homosexual" or "sodomite," homosexual behavior is possible in the meaning "male cult prostitute." The word *qādēš* is broad enough to include homosexual behavior. It is now necessary to consider each context where the Hebrew and Greek terms are employed.

The use of *qēdēšā* and *qādēš* in Deut 23:17-18 (LXX 18-19) points to a shrine or cult prostitute, female and male. Cult prostitutes of both sexes were available at the sanctuaries. Such sacred prostitution was "firmly embedded in the fertility cult (Ishtar-Astarte) of the whole ancient East from Cyprus to Babylon."<sup>69</sup> The context of v. 18 seems to make the meaning "cult prostitute" in v. 17 "fairly certain."<sup>70</sup>

In v. 18 (LXX 19) the word "dog" is commonly taken as a "male prostitute"<sup>71</sup> and denotes service on behalf of a god.<sup>72</sup> Von Rad suggests that the phrase "wages of a dog" probably does not have a derogatory sense but indicates a cult individual dedicated to a deity.<sup>73</sup> Yet a derogatory sense is probable.<sup>74</sup>

The Targum Neofiti translates 23:18 as a prohibition of "secular male as well as female prostitution, and that must mean male homosexual prostitution," Scroggs observes.<sup>75</sup> The rabbinical discussion treated 23:18 as a reference to sodomy. The rabbis utilized the verse in their discussion of Leviticus 18 and 20 for justifying the penalizing of both the active and passive partner in homosexuality.<sup>76</sup>

In the larger context there seems to be support for a homosexual reference. There is a reference to sexual mutilation in v. 1. In 22:5 the prohibi-

<sup>69</sup> G. von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966) 147-148. See also J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy* (London: Inter-Varsity, 1974) 242 (he compares Num 25:1-9); D. F. Payne, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985) 132.

<sup>70</sup> So P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 301.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* 302.

<sup>72</sup> A. Phillips, *Deuteronomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1973) 157.

<sup>73</sup> Von Rad, *Deuteronomy* 148. He cites as support D. W. Thomas, "Kelebh, 'Dog': Its Origin and Some Usages of It in the Old Testament," *VT* 10 (1960) 424-427. Thomas believes that the origin of the word is onomatopoeic (pp. 413-414). He also observes that the Ishtar cult had pederastic priests, "whose manhood Ishtar has changed into womanhood" (p. 426). Driver, *Deuteronomy* 264, says that the term "dogs" occurs in an enumeration of the ministers and attendants attached to a temple of Ashtoreth at Larnaca in Cyprus and is probably the Phoenician designation of the *qēdēštm*.

<sup>74</sup> See below. Usage here and elsewhere in Scripture of the parallel *qādēš* (cf. Job 36:14) supports a derogatory sense, whether the person is called a prostitute or a dog, especially if this includes homosexual union. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1. 639, cites as one of the meanings of the Aramaic *kēlēb* "a mean person" but does not cite Deuteronomy 23. Holladay, *Lexicon* 157, renders "dog" as a "male cult prostitute (pederast)." BDB 477 renders "male temple-prostitutes."

<sup>75</sup> Scroggs, *New Testament* 76-79. Scroggs regards this as a mistaken interpretation. *Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel* uses a more general term, and *Targum Onqelos* refers it to marriage of male and female slaves (p. 76 n. 22). Yet could these be temple slaves?

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* 78. The linkage of the passages may have been based on the idea of repetition of the same terms, a process called *gēzērā šawā* ("pearl stringing"). The term is "abomination."

tion of cross-dressing is given weighty sanction. Appeal is made not to what is unseemly or a rule of nature but to the fact that it is an abomination of Yahweh, "a cultic offence."<sup>77</sup> The worship of Astarte involved such masquerading, according to later sources.<sup>78</sup> Craigie concurs and points to some evidence in Assyrian wisdom sources. It is associated with certain forms of homosexuality in the worship of certain deities—especially where the deity was a goddess, not a god.<sup>79</sup> Driver also appeals to Lev 18:22 (cf. 20:13), which prohibits the lying of a male with another male, as probably aimed at the same practice as that of Deuteronomy, although there the wording is more general in referring to sodomy.<sup>80</sup>

When one considers the terms employed by the LXX, religious sexual ideas are strong. The term *porneuōn* (LXX Deut 23:18) is a unique use of the participle derived from the verb *porneuō*. The noun *porneia* means (1) "prostitution, fornication, unchastity" and is (2) metaphorical for "idolatry." The verb is used most often in the passive, of both women and men, meaning "prostitute oneself" or "become a prostitute."<sup>81</sup> The participle probably has the force of a noun ("a prostitute") in 23:18.

Interestingly there is only one masculine cognate to the feminine *pornē* meaning "prostitute"—namely,  *pornos*. This is given the meanings (1) "catamite, sodomite, fornicator" (LXX and NT) and (2) "idolater."<sup>82</sup> Apparently the LXX translators had only two ways, using a *porn-* stem, to identify a male religious prostitute: the masculine participle, and the noun. They are apparently synonymous, and both suggest a religious significance and allow for "sodomy." The translators believed that a participle of the verb was more appropriate than the use of the noun  *pornos* (found in the LXX at Sir 23:16–18 as "prostitute"), perhaps because the participle stressed the activity involved. In any case the word is meant to be explained by the words in the next two clauses.

The term *teliskomenos* is a participle used by the LXX in one of two added clauses in Deut 23:17 that have no text in the Hebrew. Apparently these are intended to elaborate the first two clauses. The only differences in the first four clauses are the four terms in parallel constructions: *pornē* and *porneuōn*, *telesphoros* and *teliskomenos*. The last two terms are unique for the OT.

The participle comes from *teliskō* which is equated by LSJ to *teleō*. As a passive *teliskō* means "to be initiated, dedicated, offered," and so the participle means "an initiate," a *hierodoulos* (here Deut 23:17 [LXX 18] is cited). *Teleō* has these same meanings.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Von Rad, *Deuteronomy* 141. See Driver, *Deuteronomy* 264.

<sup>78</sup> Von Rad, *Deuteronomy* 141.

<sup>79</sup> Craigie, *Deuteronomy* 288 n. 5.

<sup>80</sup> Driver, *Deuteronomy* 264.

<sup>81</sup> LSJ 1450. So Scroggs, *New Testament* 89 n. 1.

<sup>82</sup> LSJ 1450.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 1772. This source cites as the third major definition of *teleō* "initiate in the mysteries," "to be initiated," e.g. "to be consecrated to Dionysus" (Herodotus 4.79). It is associated with magic, "enchant," "perform sacred rites," as by a priest, and with "orgy" (*orgia*). Herodotus 4.79 reads: "He conceived a desire to be initiated into the rites of the Bacchic Dionysus"; *Herodotus*, LCL, 2. 278. The worship of Bacchic Dionysus involved sexual orgies, drunkenness, drugs and,

The form *tetelesmenōn*, used in Hos 4:14 to translate the feminine *qādēšōt*, also derives from *teleō*. Obviously this is a conscious attempt by the LXX translators to link Hos 4:14 with Deut 23:17 and other passages.

The feminine parallel in *telesphoros* is defined by LSJ as a "sorceress" for Deut 23:17 (LXX 18). This appears to be unfortunate, for they give other meanings such as "dedicated" and even its use as a title of a deity or a priest at Cyrene. A cognate, *telesphoria*, means "initiation in the mysteries." References to deities are frequent for the cognates.<sup>84</sup>

The LXX *kyōn* for the Hebrew *keleb* has a range of meaning from actual "dogs" and the "dogfish" or "shark" and "dogstar" to metaphorical meanings.<sup>85</sup> The last category includes its use as a word of reproach to denote shamelessness, audacity, coarseness, and the like. In mythology it frequently is used of the servants, agents or watchers of the gods (as in Hebrew; see above). For example, Pan is the "dog" of Cybele. It is used of mythical beings as well.

It appears that dogs were considered utterly unclean in Israel, while elsewhere (Egypt) they were highly esteemed. It seems, then, that the Jews "were exceptional in their attitude to the dog."<sup>86</sup> Contact with such an unclean dead animal rendered one unclean (Lev 22:4-6; cf. Rev 22:15 where the unclean are called "dogs").

According to Keil and Delitzsch the *qādēš* was called a *kinaidos* by the Greeks and "received his name from the dog-like manner in which the male *kadesh* debased himself."<sup>87</sup>

A final consideration that supports sodomy and a derogatory sense for "dog" is Aquila's translation of *qādēš* in Deut 23:17. Here and elsewhere he rendered it as *endiēllagmenos*, "changed (of sex)."<sup>88</sup>

In 1 Kgs 14:24 there seems to be a consensus that *qādēš* is to be understood as a collective for both sexes with the meaning "cult prostitute"

no doubt, homosexuality. Men were usually initiated while veiled, whereas women acted as the leaders and initiators. See J. Godwin, *Mystery Religions in the Ancient World* (San Francisco: Harper, 1981) 27-28, 132-142.

<sup>84</sup> LSJ 1770-1771. Scroggs, *New Testament* 86-87, says that the meaning of the two extra terms in 23:19 is "uncertain" and that the translators were unclear as to the meaning of the Hebrew; they used these terms to prohibit participation in foreign cults, whereas the first two clauses refer to homosexuality. Yet it is more plausible that they wanted to elaborate the first clause by the second—i.e., to clarify the meaning.

<sup>85</sup> LSJ 1015.

<sup>86</sup> G. S. Candale, "Dog," in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (ed. M. C. Tenney; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 2. 153-154.

<sup>87</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary of the Old Testament: The Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), 3. 416. LSJ 951 defines *kinaidos* as (1) "catamite" (Plato), generally a "lewd fellow" (so Herodotus and Plutarch); (2) "public dancer"; (3) used of "obscene poems." Cognates are *kinados*, "fox," hence a "cunning rogue," generally "beast, monster"; *kinaideia*, "unnatural lust"; *kinaideuomai*, "to be a *kinaidos*"; *kinaidizō*, "practice unnatural vice"; *kinaidisma*, "unnatural lewdness." The term *kyōn* is used in a coarse sense of men in *Iliad* 13.623. Scroggs, *New Testament* 40, suggests that *kinaidos* is perhaps the most technical term (though rare) used by the Greeks for the "effeminate call-boy" who sold himself for sexual gratification. He was most frequently called by the Greeks a prostitute or  *pornos*. The Latin equivalent is *catamitus*.

<sup>88</sup> See below on 1 Kgs 22:46 (47) where the sole use of the term in the LXX occurs. Aquila uses it also in Gen 38:21; 1 Kgs 22:47; 2 Kgs 23:7; Hos 4:14.



rather than just a reference to the male sex.<sup>89</sup> It is unlikely that the term simply means "prostitute" in a general sense (based on Gen 38:21 ff.). Hos 4:14 "seems to preserve the original sacral connotations of the term,"<sup>90</sup> and Hosea writes during the later times of the kings of Israel (2 Kings 14-20). It is clear that males are involved (so Deut 23:17), and the use of the singular *qādēš* is "derogatory, aligning the subject with brute species."<sup>91</sup> The *qādēš* here refers to the "caste of dogs" of Deut 23:18. This caste of dogs appears among the Phoenician hierodules ("temple slaves").<sup>92</sup>

Here the LXX uses *syndesmos*, "that which binds together, bond of union, fastening." Other definitions given include "that which is bound together," "conspiracy," and its use in astronomy as "node" and "connexion."<sup>93</sup> The only place, according to LSJ, where "sodomy" is the meaning is here (1 Kgs 14:24).

Just why the LXX uses this term to render *qādēš* is unclear. But "bond of union" is another definition given for the noun, and the verb *syndeō* can metaphorically mean to "form a union, unite themselves." This idea is used by Plato *Politics* 310b with the sense "form a union for the begetting of children."

While Brenton's translation of the LXX renders *syndesmos* as "conspiracy" here, it is clear that the word is equivalent to *symplokē* (cf. 1 Kgs 16:28) and that the two "are synonymous and used of sexual copulation."<sup>94</sup>

Other Greek versions saw religious prostitution here. For example, Symmachus uses *teletas*, as in 1 Kgs 15:12; 2 Kgs 23:7.<sup>95</sup>

Other considerations support homosexuality in 1 Kgs 14:24. Aquila's rendering (*enēllagmenoi*) assumes these to be castrated sodomites, according to Gray, and their existence was known in Israel (Deut 23:1).<sup>96</sup> Montgomery renders Aquila's term as "denatured" and makes reference to Rom 1:26 ("female perverts").<sup>97</sup>

Context also supports sodomy here. The second half of 1 Kgs 14:24 says, "They (the *qādēš*) did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel." This seems to be a

<sup>89</sup> So R. D. Patterson and H. J. Austel, *1, 2 Kings* (Expositor's Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 4. 125; J. Robinson, *The First Book of Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1972) 171-172; G. H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 277; S. J. De Vries, *1 Kings* (Waco: Word, 1985) 185; Gray, *Kings* 311; J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings* (New York: Scribners, 1951) 273, 347, 531, 539.

<sup>90</sup> Gray, *Kings* 311.

<sup>91</sup> Montgomery, *Kings* 273.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* 268. Montgomery observes that Jerome *Comm. ad Hoseam* 3.1261 remarks that "the term means the Galli religious self-castrated eunuchs of the Attis religion of his day . . . but in other places . . . 'Cadesim' is used of . . . male prostitutes." Jerome is cited also by Movers and Keil, Montgomery adds.

<sup>93</sup> LSJ 1701.

<sup>94</sup> Montgomery, *Kings* 273.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* Yet on p. 268 Montgomery apparently says that Symmachus uses *tetelesmenoi* ("initiates"), derived from *teleō* and used in the LXX at Hos 4:14. In either case the two terms mean "initiates" (see discussion above).

<sup>96</sup> Gray, *Kings* 311.

<sup>97</sup> Montgomery, *Kings* 268.

conscious allusion to the warning of Lev 18:24 (referring to “nations”), 27: “For the *men* of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations and the land has become defiled.” The term *tô<sup>c</sup>ebâ* (LXX *bdelygma*) connects 1 Kings with Leviticus—and in the latter, among all the vices listed homosexuality alone is singled out as *tô<sup>c</sup>ebâ* (18:22, 26, 27, 29, 30; 20:13). The same term occurs in Deut 23:18.

In 1 Kgs 15:12 the Hebrew reads the plural *qādēšîm*. The verse records King Asa’s attempt to reform Israel of the evil that flourished under Rehoboam (14:24).

The LXX and the Hexaplaric Greek (Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion) use *teletas* here. The Syro-Hexapla has a gloss, “shameful rites.”<sup>98</sup>

The Greek term (from *teletēs*) is apparently obscure, but the few secular references that occur show it to be equal to *telestēs*, a *hierophantēs* (one who teaches rites of sacrifice and worship; an initiating priest). The word seems to be parallel to *teleō* and *telesphoros*, with “initiates” or “devotees” the common idea: “all they that belong to Dionysus.”<sup>99</sup> Its equivalent, *telestēs*, means “official, initiator, priest, initiated person.”

Several secular sources link the *teleō* word-group together. For example, Plato *Phaedrus* 249c: “Now a man who employs such memories rightly is always being initiated (*teloumenos*) into perfect mysteries (*teleous* . . . *teletas*) and he alone becomes truly perfect (*teleos*).”<sup>100</sup> This connection with the mysteries again supports a religious and homosexual significance in 15:12.

Hebrew *qādēš* occurs in 1 Kgs 22:46 (Heb and LXX 47). King Jehoshaphat sought to continue the reforms of his father Asa by removing the “sodomites” still remaining after his father’s efforts. There is a deliberate link to 1 Kgs 15:12.

The LXX has no corresponding text for the Hebrew of vv. 47–50. Yet the Greek text is found in Origen and the Hexapla, which reads *tou endiēllagmenou*. Montgomery renders this as “the perverted” and says, as he did at 14:24, that it is a parallel to Paul’s condemnation of women who “changed (*metēllaxan*) the natural use” into that which is contrary to nature (Rom 1:26).<sup>101</sup> Aquila customarily uses *enallaktēs* (cf. Isa 3:4).<sup>102</sup>

Like *enallagē*, the term in 1 Kgs 22:47 is derived from *allassō*, “to change.” LSJ cites only three occurrences of *endiēllagmenos*: “to alter” in

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. 280. This is the sole use of *teletē* in canonical LXX (it does occur in Wis 12:4; 14:15, 23; 3 Macc 2:30; cf. Amos 7:9, “sanctuaries”).

<sup>99</sup> LSJ 1771. Although Boswell, *Christianity* 99, faults the LXX for using a feminine term here to render a Hebrew masculine, LSJ shows that it is a masculine first-declension noun (in spite of the article *tas*). In any case this is a matter of grammatical gender, not sex. Also, if the LXX viewed the Hebrew word as a collective, then either a masculine or a feminine form would do. Bailey, *Homosexuality* 51, links it with *hierodoulos*.

<sup>100</sup> LCL (Cambridge: Harvard, 1971), 1. 483. Plato *Phaedo* 69c reads: “And I fancy that those men who established the mysteries (*tas teletas*) . . . whoever goes uninitiated (*atelestos*) . . . to the other world will lie in mire, but he who arrives there initiated (*tetelestemos*) . . . will dwell with the gods. For as they say in the mysteries (*peri tas teletas*).” LCL, 1. 241.

<sup>101</sup> Montgomery, *Kings* 347.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

Aristotle (*Physiognomonica* 806a 13 [14]) with an active sense, and the passive ("sodomite") here and in Aquila at Gen 38:21 (referring to Tamar).<sup>103</sup> Codex Alexandrinus uses it elsewhere of "prostitute" (Lev 21:7).

In 2 Kgs 23:7 *qēdešim* occurs. In the declining years of Judah it was only Josiah who put a stop to them. They were in the house of the Lord, and reference is made in the context to idolatry (Asherah).

The LXX simply transliterates the Hebrew as *kadēsīm*. Apparently there is no other use of this term in Greek literature.<sup>104</sup> Clearly the translators believed it to mean whatever the Hebrew and the preceding translations (above) mean.<sup>105</sup>

In Job 36:14 *qēdešim* parallels the above uses, although there does not appear to be any religious setting for this verse. It is not directly related to Israel. Among the passages studied it is the only occurrence in the form of a proverbial saying.

The Greek *titrōskomenē* does not seem to be cited by LSJ. According to Hatch and Redpath (2. 1362) it occurs several times in the LXX in such senses as "wound, pierce, crush." The LXX renders v. 14b as follows: "Let their life be wounded by messengers/angels [of death]." The phrase "be wounded by messengers" is the translation of the single term *qēdešim*. The verse suggests that a shortened life is the common lot of the *qēdešim* (perhaps by disease or divine intervention).<sup>106</sup>

### III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

While not exhaustive, the preceding study is sufficient to allow several observations and conclusions. On the basis of linguistic study and context, it seems certain that the terms *yāda*<sup>c</sup> and *synginomai* mean homosexual conduct in Gen 19:5.

Both historical-comparative and linguistic-contextual studies show that the Hebrew *qādēš* (Deut 23:17-18) bears both religious and sexual overtones. Since homosexuality was associated with pagan deities and their worshipers it is not implausible that the term should include a reference to males worshiping at shrines by means of same-sex behavior. The use of "abomination" (*tō'ēbā*) and other phrases in 1 Kgs 14:24 links the verse with the unmistakable prohibitions of sodomy in the code of holiness (Lev 18:22; 20:13). The double reference to male and female shrine prostitutes (Deut 23:17-18) tends to reinforce a reference to sodomy, especially the mention of "dog" (v. 18), which in Biblical contexts has a derogatory sense. Indeed *qādēš* links together all the passages studied, and in turn they are linked by 1 Kgs 14:24 to Leviticus.

<sup>103</sup> LSJ 559. Aquila also uses it in Deut 23:17; 2 Kgs 23:7; Hos 4:14. Bailey, *Homosexuality* 51, believes that the correct sense (either a reference to a homosexual pervert or to an apostate who turns to idolatry) must remain a "matter of conjecture."

<sup>104</sup> LSJ cites only *kadēs* and makes it equivalent to *hagiasmos* ("holy") and cites Hesychius without reference. It occurs in Deut 33:2 as "holy ones" ("angels"?).

<sup>105</sup> Montgomery, *Kings* 531, considers "sodomite" to be "inexact" in 2 Kgs 23:7 since both sexes are included.

<sup>106</sup> See E. C. S. Gibson, *The Book of Job* (Minneapolis: Klock and Klock, reprint 1978) 196.

Several pertinent observations regarding the various Greek terms used to render *qādēš* in the LXX are in order. Every term is a unique occurrence or a unique use.

Some (*telesphoros, teliskomenos, teletas, tetelesmenos*) are part of the *teleō* word group and have common meanings such as “initiate” and “dedicate.” Such meanings refer to deities and sacred rites, including those of the mysteries among some of which sodomy was practiced. Another term (*porneuōn*) belongs to the *pornē* word-group, and “male cult prostitutes” and “sodomites” are definitions possible here. The context certainly allows “changed of sex” (*endiēllagmenos*) to refer to sodomy, and this would be true of the transliterated *kadēsīm* as well. Finally even the critics acknowledge that *syndesmos* has sexual connotations (1 Kgs 14:24), if for no other reason than its association with the other Greek terms used to render *qādēš*. Indeed all of the terms of the LXX have a sexual connotation, and most of them have a religious meaning tied to the sexual. Sacred or religious prostitution and homosexuality are certainly within the scope of the meanings of most of these Greek words in light of the comparative-historical context.

Has the LXX misrepresented the Hebrew? This study reveals that it has not. The homosexual connotations belong to the Hebrew. Contrary to what has been charged, the LXX does not reflect “confusion,” “uncertainty,” “imprecision” or “mistranslations.” Rather, the terms of both the Hebrew text and the LXX suggest cultic prostitution and homosexual practice. At least homosexual practice cannot be eliminated from the range of meaning in light of the linguistic and cultural contexts.

The Hebrew texts and their Greek renderings have much to contribute to modern discussions of the Biblical teaching regarding sodomy. The Scriptures address sodomy in Gentile (universal) contexts (Gen 18:25; 19:1-8; Judges 19), in everyday Jewish legal settings (Leviticus 18; 20), and in religious worship (uses of *qādēš* in Deuteronomy and Kings). The sense is always condemning. Indeed the divine judgment exercised on Sodom is intended to be a perpetual warning to Gentile nations as well as to Israel (Luke 17:26-37). Homosexual conduct validated Sodom’s evil (Gen 13:13; 18:17-21). It was culpable before the “judge of all the earth” (18:25).

The passages make a significant contribution to ethics and civil law (cf. Rom 1:26-27; 1 Tim 1:8-11). Western society should heed this revelation in the formulation of its ethics and laws. There is Biblical and historical precedent for the criminalization of homosexual practice.

With reference to translation, English versions need to render Gen 39:10 on the basis of both the Hebrew and Greek terms employed. The last clause is meant to be exegetical and explanatory of the preceding. Hence the last part of the verse should be rendered: “He did not listen to her to lie beside her, to have sexual relations with her.” In addition the translations should render Gen 19:5, 8 as “have sexual relations with,” or at least they should give a marginal explanation that “to know” in these two verses means “to have sexual relations with.”

It is important to point out that the KJV and NASB are not in error when they use "sodomite" in the places discussed above. While this may be too narrow for all the references, such a translation seems justifiable in Deut 23:17-18; 1 Kgs 14:24 and perhaps in Job 36:14 (if not in all the references, since they seem to allude directly to Deut 23:17-18). If terms such as "male cult prostitute" or the collective "cult prostitute" are used, marginal references should make it clear that sodomy is at least included in these terms.

Critics of the usage of the LXX and of the KJV have simply not considered the total linguistic and cultural settings. The LXX translators seem to have exercised deliberation and concern to reproduce appropriately the impact of the Hebrew to their contemporaries centuries after the Hebrew was written. While they use terms more explicit and contemporary than the Hebrew, they have not distorted or contradicted the meaning of the Hebrew, for a homosexual idea was there already. The reinterpretation of modern critics has strayed too far and is fairly termed revolutionary and revisionist.