The Anatomy of Separation.
Priestly Dichotomies and their Development in the Hebrew Bible

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Abbreviations

AB	*Anchor Bible Series*
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*
BDB	Brown – Driver – Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
CJB	*Complete Jewish Bible*
CSB	*Christian Standard Bible*
ESV	*English Standard Version*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
KJV	*King James Version*
NAC	*The New American Commentary*
NICOT	*New International Commentary on the Old Testament*
WBC	*Word Biblical Commentary*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Zusammenfassung/These

Diese Dissertation untersucht die Geschichte und den sozio-historischen Hintergrund der *heilig/profan* und *rein/unrein* Dichotomien in der Hebräischen Bibel. Obwohl die beiden Konzepte von Emile Durkheim, Rudolf Otto, Mircea Eliade, Mary Douglas und ihren Anhängern ausführlich diskutiert wurden, konzentriert sich die wissenschaftliche Diskussion vor allem auf ihre synchronen Aspekte und zeigt nur bestimmte Aspekte der inneren Entwicklung der Dichotomien (insbesondere die konzeptionelle Entwicklung zwischen P und H in der Hebräischen Bibel). Diese Dissertation trägt weitere Aspekte zum wissenschaftlichen Dialog bei.

Die zentrale Erkenntnis der Forschung ist, dass sowohl die *rein / unrein* als auch die *heilig/profan* Dichotomien eindeutig nachexilische Konzepte sind. Genauer gesagt, wurden sie durch das Jerusalemer Priestertum nach dem babylonischen Exil geschaffen, um ihre einzigartige Position innerhalb der Gesellschaft der Provinz Jehud des 6.-5. Jahrhunderts vor Chr. anzuzeigen und zu sichern.

Die Forschungsmethodik basiert auf *semantischen Karten*, die das biblische Vorkommen der Begriffe nach Kontext und Bedeutung aufzeigen und *semantische Domänen* identifizieren, also die großen Kontexte, in denen die Begriffe verwendet werden. Dabei werden vier semantische Domänen identifiziert:

1. **Ästhetische Domäne**: Die Begriffe werden als bloße physische oder ästhetische Attribute wie „reines Gold" oder „heilig" als höchstes göttliches Attribut verwendet - in allen Fällen ohne gegensätzliche Begriffe. Die Begriffe in diesem Bereich bilden keine Dichotomien.

2. **Kultische Domäne**: Die Begriffe werden im kultischen Kontext (des Jerusalemer Tempels) mit der Absicht verwendet, eine einzigartige Position für das monopolisierte Heilige gegen den Rest der Gesellschaft zu sichern und die rituelle Eignung von Personen, Tieren oder Kultobjekten zu bewerten.

3. **Nationale Domäne**: Die Dichotomien werden im Kontext der nationalen Identität gegen die Außenwelt einschließlich der ausländischen Bevölkerung verwendet.

4. **Moralische Domäne**: Die Begriffe werden als moralische Voraussetzungen verwendet, meist in individuellen moralischen Kontexten.

Die vier semantischen Domänen werden durch die verschiedenen textuellen Traditionen der hebräischen Bibel abgebildet. In der Jerusalemer Erzählung (JE) und in der Deuteronomistischen Tradition (D) werden die Begriffe nur im ästhetischen Bereich verwendet, das heißt, es gibt einen klaren Hinweis darauf, dass vor dem Exil die Dichotomien nicht in Gebrauch waren. Der kultische Bereich ist eindeutig mit der Priesterlichen Tradition (einschließlich P und H) verwandt. In der Geschichtsschreibung des Chronisten werden die Dichotomien auf die nationale Domäne verlagert und die Trennung zwischen „dem Volk Israel" und den fremden Nationen zum Ausdruck gebracht. Schließlich verschiebt sich der Sinn und Gebrauch in späten literarischen Werken auf den moralischen Bereich, der die individuelle Moral ausdrückt.

Figure 2: The Semantic Development of בדל
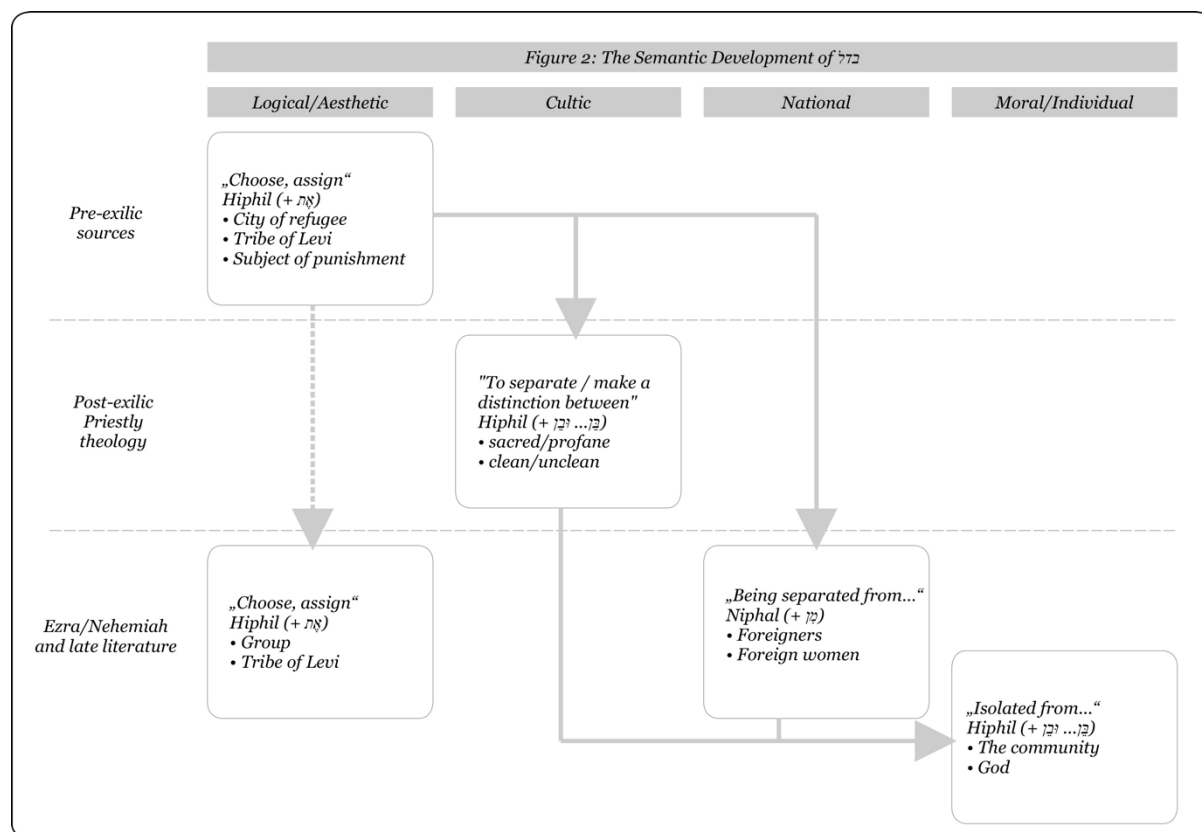
Die semantische Analyse der dichotomistischen Begriffe ergibt die folgenden Entdeckungen:

- בדל/הַבְדִּיל (**„zu trennen"**). Der Begriff bekam die Bedeutung „Trennung" erst nach dem babylonischen Exil und wird in einem dichotomischen Kontext nur in nachexilischen (das heißt kultischen, nationalen und moralischen) Domänen verwendet.

- קדש (**„Heilig"**). Heilig, wie die höchste göttliche Eigenschaft im AO einschließlich Kanaans, ist auch in den meisten Schichten der Hebräischen Bibel vorhanden. Allerdings wurde es ohne expliziten Gegenpol verwendet. Die *heilig / profan* Dichotomie war eindeutig eine Neuerung des nachexilischen Jerusalemer Priestertums, die verwendet wurde, um den Bereich Jahwes zu bezeichnen und eine Linie zwischen dem Tempel und der Außenwelt zu ziehen.

- חֹל**, חלל** (**„Profan, allgemein"**). Die חלל-Wurzel war vor dem Exil in Gebrauch, aber nur im Sinne von "töten, durchbohren". Die Bedeutung der Wurzel wurde nur im kultischen Bereich in die Richtung „Verunreinigung" verschoben. Das חֹל („Profan") Substantiv erscheint nicht in vorexilischen Texten. Es ist eine Erfindung der nachexilischen Priesterkreise, um den nicht-kultischen Bereich zu bezeichnen.

- טהר (**„rein"**). Die *rein / unrein* Dichotomie gab es auch nicht vor dem Exil. Die ursprüngliche Bedeutung der Wurzel טהר ist nicht ganz klar. Basierend auf Ex. 24:10 und Hiob 37:21 ist eine mögliche vorexilische Bedeutung "glänzend", was auch durch die nominale Bedeutung ("reines [glänzendes] Gold") unterstützt wird. Die nachexilische Priester-Theologie führte eine *semantische Verschiebung* des Wortes durch und kompilierte sie - zusammen mit der טמא-Wurzel - in die *rein / unrein* Dichotomie, um die Einzigartigkeit und Makellosigkeit des Kultes zu sichern sowie die einzigartige Position des Heiligen gegen die (auch neu geschaffen) profane Welt.

- טמא (**„Unrein"**). Die Wurzel hatte in der vorexilischen Literatur zwei ursprüngliche Bedeutungen: "sündiger (vielleicht gewalttätiger) Geschlechtsverkehr" und "Zerstörung" (eines Ortes, vor allem von Heiligtümern). Die Bedeutung von "Verschmutzung, Unreinheit" erschien nur in der priesterlichen Literatur als Gegenpol des (semantisch modifizierten) Begriffs „rein".

Die priesterliche Theologie systematisierte 6 Arten von Verunreinigungen: 3 körperliche Ausflüsse (durch *Krankheiten und Tod* sowie *genitale Ausflüsse*); das System der *reinen und unreinen Tiere*, eine Tradition, die vermutlich auf das Schweineverbot zurückgeht , und vielleicht Essbarkeitslisten der vorexilischen Stämme Israels; *Idolatrie*, die die höchste Verunreinigung im Priester-Dichotomiesystem ausdrückte, im Einklang mit der Absicht, den Bereich des Heiligen zu schützen. Und schließlich *Ehebruch*, ein Gesetz, das vermutlich aus der ursprünglichen Bedeutung der טמא-Wurzel stammte („*gewalttätiger Geschlechtsverkehr*").

Interessanterweise scheinen Ezra / Nehemiah das priesterliche Konzept der Unreinheit zu ignorieren und kehren in die deuteronomische Agenda zurück, das Wort טמא in seiner ursprünglichen Bedeutung „Zerstörung" benutzend, vielleicht weil die Dynamik der deuteronomischen Tradition besser zum Pragmatismus von Ezra passt.

In der späten poetischen Literatur wurden die priesterlichen Begriffe in einem moralischen Kontext verwendet, aber nicht ganz dem priesterlichen Gebrauch der Begriffe folgend: die טהר Wurzel begann, „moralische Reinheit" zu bedeuten, im Gegensatz zu „Übertretung" (פֶּשַׁע), „Sünde" (עָוֹן) oder „Vergehen" (חֵטְא). Das Wort טהר verlangte nicht mehr sein „richtiges" dichotomisches Gegenstück טמא: Die Dichotomien begannen sich im nicht-priesterlichen Kontext aufzulösen.

Figure 5: The Semantic Development of טהר and טמא

	Aesthetic/original	Cultic	National	Moral
Pre-exilic texts	טהר • To shine? (divine attribute?) — טמא • Sexual intercourse • To destroy (a sanctuary)	Pig taboo	Deuteronomist • Cult monopoly • Emerging monotheism • Prohibition of idolatry	
Post-exilic Priestly theology	Shining („clean") gold	„clean/unclean" (טהר, טמא) • Diseases • Death • Sexual discharges • Unclean animals • Idolatry • Adultery		
Ezra/Nehemiah, late literature			• Reverts to the Deut. agenda • Uncleanness of foreign nations	Moral shift: • Clean heart • Clean eyes • Opposites: sins, transgressions

Die sozio-historischen Wurzeln des priesterlichen Dichotomiesystems gehen auf das Jahrhundert zwischen dem Fall Samarias (721 v.Chr.) und der Herrschaft Josias (649–609 v.Chr.) zurück. In diesem Jahrhundert ging durch Juda ein beispielloses Bevölkerungs- und Wirtschaftswachstum, erreicht durch Zentralisierung der Produktion und des Logistik-Systems, eine zentralisierte königliche Verwaltung und parallel dazu ein zentraler königlicher Kult. Die Gesellschaft ging langsam von einer Stammesgesellschaft zu einer klassenbasierten landwirtschaftlichen Gesellschaft über, in der das Jerusalemer Priestertum als Hüter des zentralisierten Kultes deutlich verstärkt wurde. Paradoxerweise hatte die priesterliche Gruppe während des babylonischen Exils einen relativen Vorteil erhalten, indem sie ihre Relevanz in der Exilsgemeinschaft vergrößerte, da andere Gruppen, wie der *'am hâ'âreṣ*, ihre Identität und Kohärenz während der Gefangenschaft auch wegen des Verlustes des Landes nicht behalten konnten. Nach der Rückkehr in die Heimat mussten die Priesterfamilien ihre Position innerhalb der nachexilischen Gesellschaft von Jehud sichern, die sie durch die Wiederherstellung und Weiterentwicklung des monopolisierten Kultes Josias erreichen konnten. Das priesterliche Dichotomiesystem entstand in dieser besonderen geschichtlichen Situation, mit der Absicht, das Monopol der Heiligen und die einzigartige Position des Jerusalemer Priestertums in der Gesellschaft des nachexilischen Jehud zu sichern.

Als eine theologische Interpretation ist das Heilige als ein endgültiges göttliches Attribut eigenständig und erfordert keinen ergänzenden Begriff („allgemein" oder „profan"). In dieser Hinsicht ist die gründliche Interpretation von Rudolf Otto bislang die umfassendste Beschreibung. Die „*heilig / profan*" Dichotomie wurde geschaffen, um das Milieu des „ganz Anderen" zu etablieren und die Einzigartigkeit durch die Trennung vom Rest der Gesellschaft (das חֹל) zu symbolisieren. So konnten sie nicht nur mit einer physischen Mauer, sondern auch mit der Kraft der Worte sowohl ihre einzigartige Position innerhalb der Gesellschaft als auch die Einzigartigkeit ihres monopolisierten Gottes symbolisieren. Schließlich ist es die unverkennbare Kraft der priesterlichen Theologie, dass sie den Dualismus erfolgreich vermeidet. Auch wenn der Begriff „profan" (חֹל) geschaffen wurde, um das äußere Territorium zu begrenzen, ist das *Profan* immer strikt in seinem Kontext geblieben. Der Heilige blieb noch unvergleichlich und „der ganz Andere".

Figure 8: The Structural Model of "Separation"

Social goals

Group integrity

Cultic domain
„Clean/unclean" to track ritual suitability
„Sacred/profane" to establish protected group & area

National domain
„Sacred" extended to the nation/congregation to define against „the foreigners"
„Clean/unclean" to justify isolation by valuation

Individual integrity

Aesthetic domain
„Clean" („not clean") as physical attribute
„Holly" as divine attribute („wholly other")

Moral domain
„Sacred" and „clean" as individual valuative indicators

Aesthetic („nice/not nice")

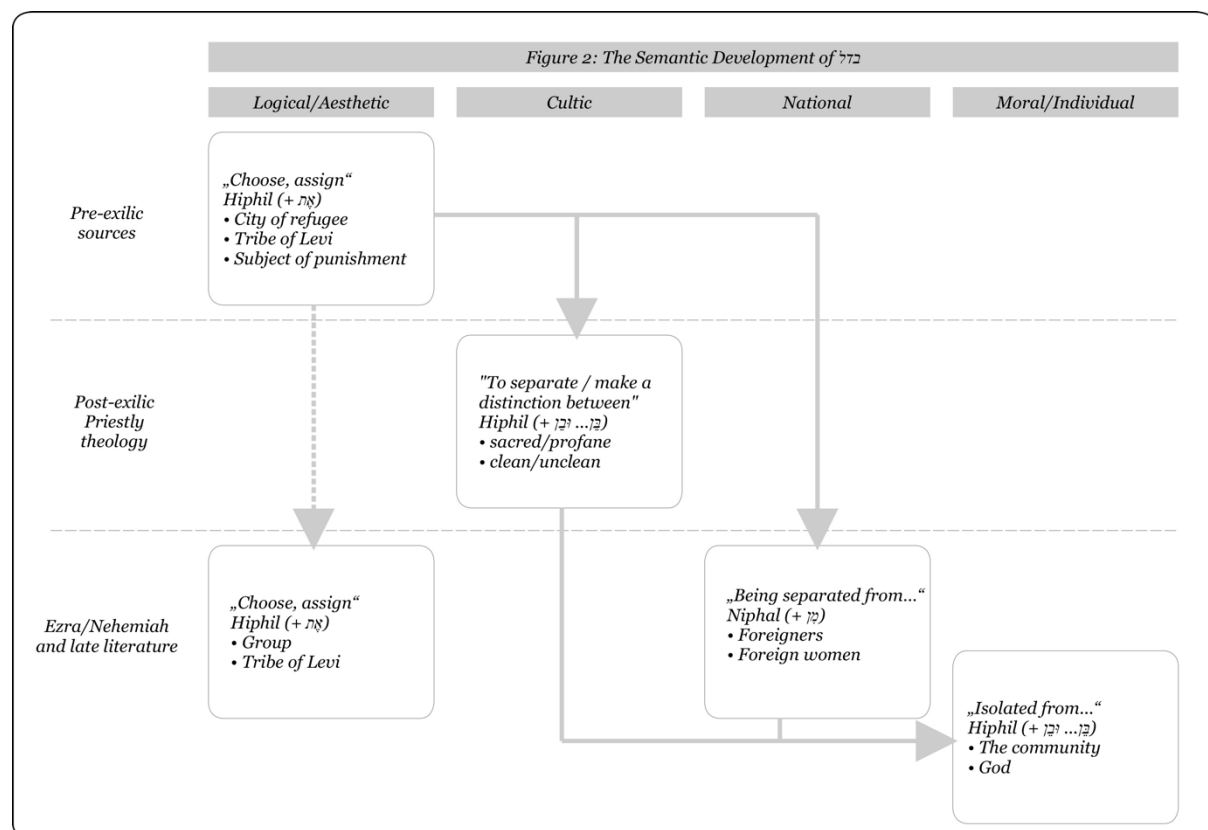Ethical („good/bad")

Normative scale

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the history and socio-historical background of the *sacred/profane* and *clean/unclean* dichotomies found in the Hebrew Bible. Although both concepts have been extensively discussed by Emile Durkheim, Rudolf Otto, Mircea Eliade, Mary Douglas and their followers, the scholarly discussion focuses mostly on the synchronic aspects of the them, revealing only certain aspects of the internal development of the dichotomies (in particular the conceptual development between the P and H in the Hebrew Bible). This dissertation contributes further aspects to the scholarly dialogue.

The key finding of the research is that both the *clean/unclean* and the *sacred/profane* dichotomies are clearly post-exilic concepts. More specifically, they were created by the Jerusalem priesthood after the Babylonian exile in order to indicate and secure their unique position within the society of the 6-5th century BCE Yehud province.

The research methodology is based on *semantic maps* that sort biblical occurrences of the terms by context and meaning, and identifies *semantic domains*. That is, the major contexts in which the terms are used. In this research, four semantic domains are identified:

5. **Aesthetic domain:** the terms are used as merely physical or aesthetic attributes, such as "pure gold" or as "holy" as an ultimate divine attribute – in all cases without opposing terms. The terms in this domain do not form dichotomies.

6. **Cultic domain:** the terms are used within the cultic context (of the Jerusalem temple) with the intention of ensuring a unique position for the monopolized Holy against the rest of the society, and evaluate ritual suitability of persons, animals or cultic objects.

7. **National domain:** the dichotomies are used in the context of national identity against the outside world including foreign population.

8. **Moral domain:** the terms are used as moral premises, mostly in individual moral contexts.

The four semantic domains are mapped through the different textual traditions of the Hebrew Bible. In the Jerusalem Narrative (JE) and in the Deuteronomistic tradition (D) the terms are used only within the aesthetic domain, that is, there is a clear indication that before the exile the dichotomies were not in use. The cultic domain is clearly related to the Priestly tradition (including P and H). In Chr and Ezra-Nehemiah, the dichotomies are shifted towards the national domain, expressing the separation between "the people of Israel" and foreign nations. Finally, in late literary works, the meaning and usage shifts towards the moral domain, expressing individual morality.

Figure 2: The Semantic Development of בדל

Logical/Aesthetic	Cultic	National	Moral/Individual

Pre-exilic sources

"Choose, assign"
Hiphil (+ אֶת)
• *City of refugee*
• *Tribe of Levi*
• *Subject of punishment*

Post-exilic Priestly theology

"To separate / make a distinction between"
Hiphil (+ בֵּין... וּבֵין)
• *sacred/profane*
• *clean/unclean*

Ezra/Nehemiah and late literature

"Choose, assign"
Hiphil (+ אֶת)
• *Group*
• *Tribe of Levi*

"Being separated from..."
Niphal (+ מִן)
• *Foreigners*
• *Foreign women*

"Isolated from..."
Hiphil (+ בֵּין... וּבֵין)
• *The community*
• *God*

The semantic analysis of the dichotomist terms yields the following findings:

- בדל/הִבְדִּיל ("to separate"). The term started to mean "separation" only after the Babylonian exile, and it is used in a dichotomist context only in post-exilic (that is: cultic, national and moral) domains.
- קדשׁ ("holy, sacred"). Holy, as the ultimate divine attribute in the ANE including Canaan, is present as well in most layers of the Hebrew Bible; however, it was
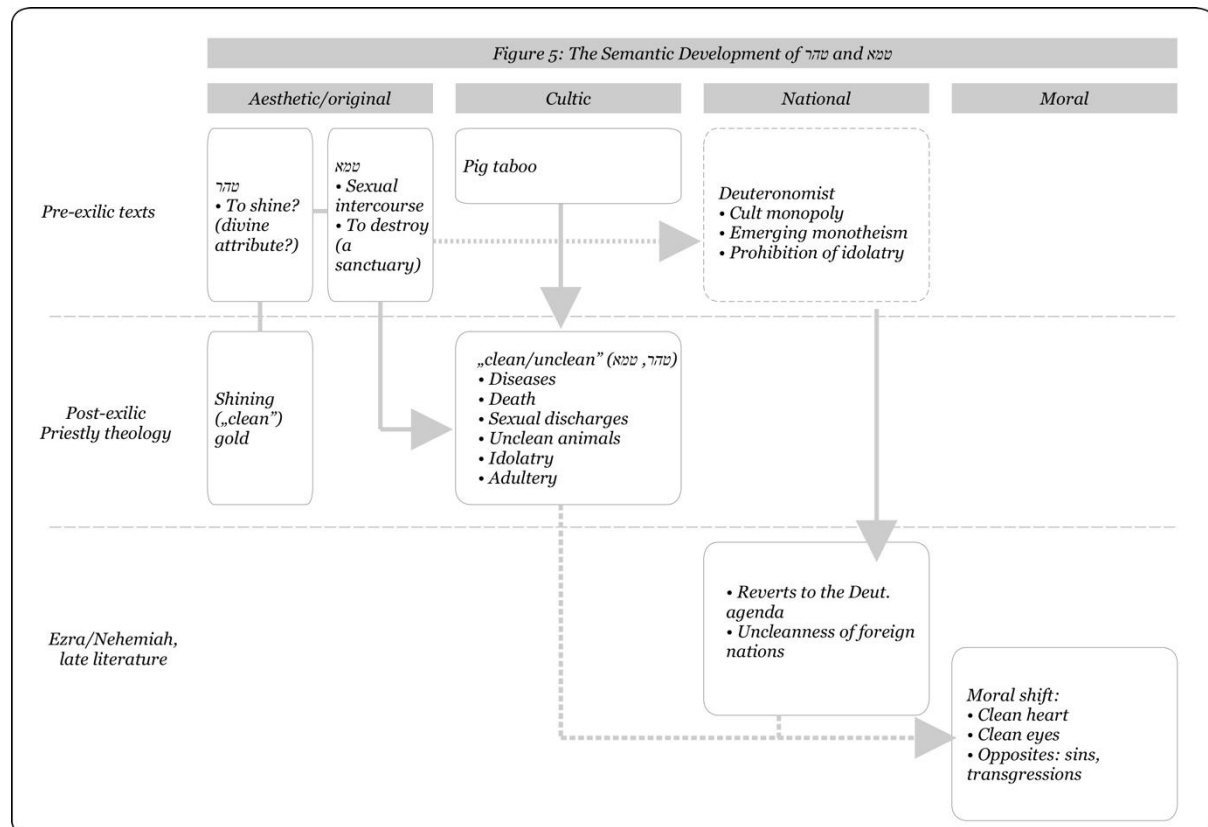
used without any explicit counter-pole. The sacred/profane dichotomy was clearly an innovation of the post-exilic Jerusalem priesthood, used in order to designate Yahweh's realm and to draw a line between the temple and the outside word.

- **חֹל, חלל** ("profane, common"). The חלל root was in use before the exile, but only in the sense of "to kill, pierce". The meaning of the root was shifted towards defilement only in the cultic domain. The חֹל ("profane") noun does not appear in pre-exilic texts; it is an invention of the post-exilic priestly circles to designate the non cultic area.

- **טהר** ("clean/pure"). The clean/unclean dichotomy did not exist before the exile, either. The original meaning of the root **טהר** is not completely clear. Based on Ex. 24:10 and Job 37:21, a possible pre-exilic meaning is "shining", also supported by the nominal meaning ("clean [shining?] gold"). The post-exilic priestly theology performed a *semantic shift* of the word and compiled it – together with the **טמא** root – into the *clean/unclean* dichotomy, in order to ensure the uniqueness and spotlessness of the cult, and secure the Holy's unique position against the (also newly created) profane world.

- **טמא** ("unclean/impure"). The root had two original meanings in the pre-exilic literature: "sinful (perhaps violent) sexual intercourse" and "destruction" (of a place, first of all sanctuaries). The meaning of "pollution, impurity" appeared only in the Priestly literature, as a counter-pole of the (semantically also modified) "clean" term.

The priestly theology systematized 6 types of impurities: 3 bodily discharges (*diseases*, *death* and *genital discharges*); the system of *clean and unclean animals*, a tradition which presumably originated in the pig ban and perhaps edilibity lists of the pre-exilic Isralite tribes; *idolatry*, which expressed the ultimate impurity in the Priestly dichotomy system, in line with the intention to safeguard the realm of the Holy; and finally, *adultery*, a law which presumably originated from the original meaning of the טמא root ("violent sexual intercourse").

Ezra-Nehemiah seems to ignore the Priestly concept of impurity and reverts to the Deuteronomic agenda instead, using the טמא word in its original "to destroy" meaning, perhaps because the dynamics of the Deuteronomic tradition better fit Ezra's pragmatism.
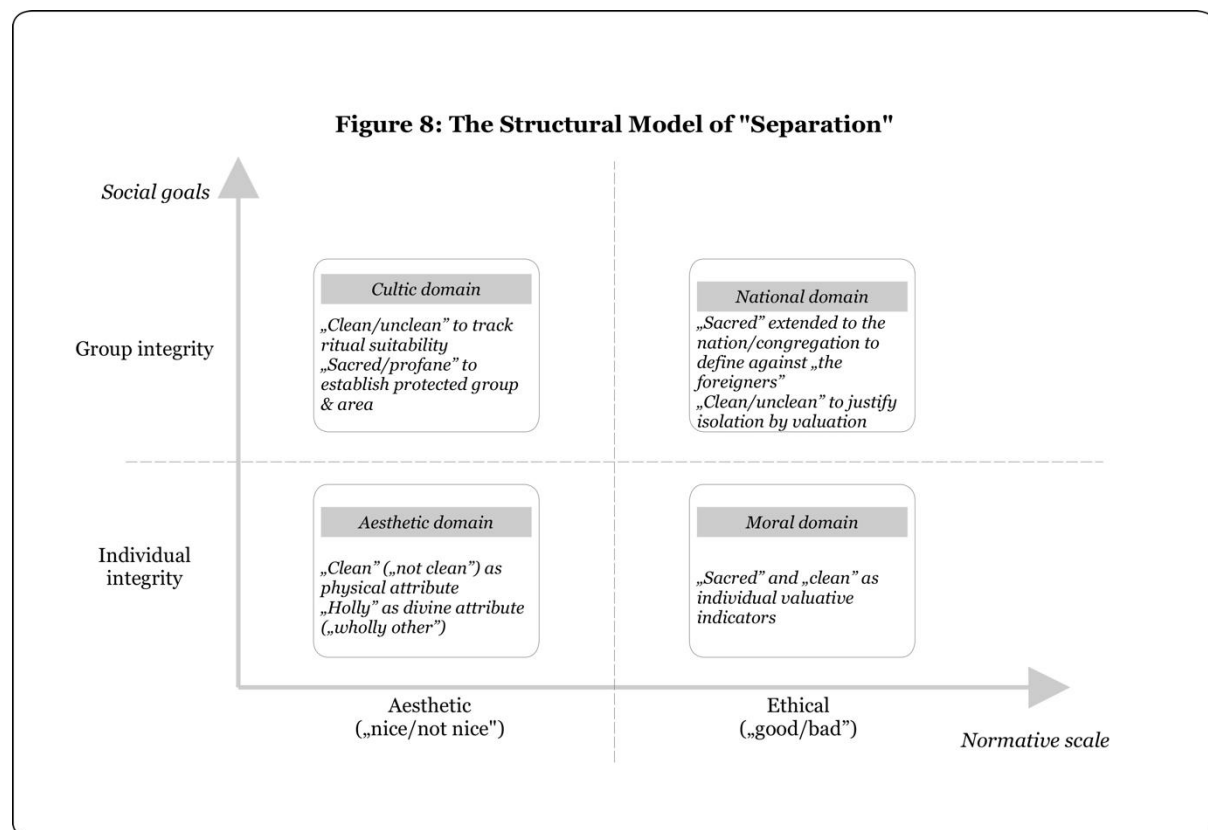
In late poetic literature, the priestly terms were used in a moral context, but not fully following the Priestly usage of the terms: the טהר root began to mean "moral purity", in opposition to "transgression" (פֶּשַׁע), "sin" (עָוֹן) or "offence" (חֵטְא). The טהר word did not require its "proper" dichotomist counterpart, the טמא any more: the dichotomies started to dissolve in the non-priestly context.

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	Aesthetic/original		Cultic	National	Moral
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Ezra/Nehemiah, late literature				• Reverts to the Deut. agenda • Uncleanness of foreign nations	Moral shift: • Clean heart • Clean eyes • Opposites: sins, transgressions

The socio-historical roots of the priestly dichotomy system go back to the century between the fall of Samariah (721 BCE) and the reign of Josiah (649–609 BCE). In this century, Judah went through an unprecedented population and economic growth, achieved by centralized production and logistics system, centralized royal administration and in parallel, a centralized royal cult. Society slowly transitioned from a tribal society to a class-based agricultural society, in which process the Jerusalem priesthood was significantly strengthened as the guardian of the centralized local cult. Paradoxically, during the Babylonian exile the priestly group had obtained a relative advantage by increasing its relevance inside the exilee community, as other groups – such as the *'am hâ'âreṣ* – could not retain their identity and coherence also due to the loss of land properties during the captivity. After returning to the

homeland, the priestly families had to secure their position within the post-exilic society of Yehud, which they could achieve by restoring and further developing Josiah's monopolized cult. The priestly dichotomy system was created in this specific historical situation, with the intention of safeguarding the monopoly of the Holy and the unique position of the Jerusalem priesthood within the society of the post-exilic Yehud.

As a theological interpretation, the Holy as an ultimate divine attribute is standalone and does not require a complementing term ("common" or "profane"). In this respect, Rudolf Otto's thorough interpretation is so far the most comprehensive description. The "sacred/profane" dichotomy was created to establish the millieu of "wholly other", and to symbolize the uniqueness by separation from the rest of the society (the חֹל). Thus, not only with a physical wall but also with the power of words, they could symbolize both their unique position within the society and the singularity of their monopolized God. Lastly, the unmistakable strength of the Priestly theology is that it successfully avoids dualism. Even though the term "profane" (חֹל) was created to delimit the outside territory, the *profane* has always strictly remained in its context. The Holy still remained unparalleled and "wholly other".

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Aesthetic („nice/not nice")

Ethical („good/bad")

Normative scale

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1. Introduction

Over the last century, hardly any other concepts in the anthropology of religion have gained more popularity than the dichotomy of the *sacred* and *profane*. Thanks to Émile Durkheim (1912),[1] who placed this idea in the center of his theory despite the criticism of E.E. Evans-Pritchard,[2] the *sacred/profane* dichotomy became a frequently-used concept in both anthropological and theological theories.

In fact, the dichotomy itself is not new; it originates *expressis verbis* from the Book of Leviticus 10:10, cited by Ezekiel 22:26 and 42:20. The *priestly dichotomy system* is a central thought in the post-exilic priestly source (P): [3]

> "You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean." (Lev. 10:10) [4]

Thus, the concept of the *sacred and the profane* has always been central to the Hebrew Bible. However, it only came into the scholarly spotlight at the beginning of the 20th century with the work of William Robertson Smith.[5] Using his work, a line of notable antropologists (Émile Durkheim, Rudolf Otto[6], Mircea Eliade[7] and Mary Douglas[8]), as well as theologians (Gerhard von Rad[9]) started to work with the concept of the *sacred and the profane*. The

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[1] Durkheim, Émile, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse. La système totémique en Australie.* (Paris: Alcan, 1912). English translation: Alien & Unwind, 1976. Hungarian translation: *A vallási élet elemi formái.* (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2004).

[2] Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 78. Evans-Pritchard criticizes Durkheim because of the over-emphasized and arbitrary usage of the sacred/profane dichotomy.

[3] In this dissertation, I am working with P. Weimar – E. Zenger's so called Münster model, that identifies the following redactional layers in the Pentateuch: JE = "Jerusalemer Geschichtswerk" (after 650 BCE); D = "Grosses (deuteronomistisches) Exilisches Geschichtswerk" (post-exilic but compiled from JE and earlier layers of Dtn and the "Bundesbuch"); P = "Priester(schrift)liches werk" (after 520 BCE); and finally, "Grosses Nachexilisches Geschichtswerk" (after 450 BCE). Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 5. Edition, 105.

[4] Biblical citations are from the English Standard Version (Crossway, 2016).

[5] William Robertson Smith, *Lectures On The Religion Of The Semites* (Macmillan, 1927).

[6] Otto, Rudolf, *The idea of the holy*, (Oxford University Press: 1958).

[7] Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion.* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961).

[8] Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo. (*London: Routledge, 1966).

[9] Rad, Gerhard von. *Old Testament Theology I.* New York: Oliver & Boyd, 1962.

second chapter of this dissertation provides a brief overview of this revival of the *sacred/profane* dichotomy, highlighting major cornerstones that raise questions for semantic analysis.[10]

The term "holy, sacred" (קדֹשׁ) is one of the main divine attributes in the Hebrew Bible, and has remained so in all later monotheistic religions. In the Roman era, the terms "holy" (*sanctus*) and "sacred" (*sacer*) continued to be used extensively as supreme divine attributes both in religious and scholarly works, but they were always in use as a naïve and axiomatic truth without elaboration or contextual reflection. Christian authors, even sophisticated scholars such as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, or Martin Luther simply used the "holy" term as an *eo ipso* divine attribute that required no further explanation.

In the Book of Leviticus, the term "sacred" (קָדוֹשׁ) refers to people or objects that belong to God (i.e. the property of the temple), whereas its counterpart, the "profane" (חֹל) refers to the outside word. It was attributed to any type of agricultural products or places that had not been donated or did not belong to the temple.[11]

However, in contrast to the terms "holy" and "sacred", this term has never been in use in Christian literature – in Christian tradition only the "holy" part of the dichotomy was used extensively. The "profane" part and the dichotomy itself were shrouded in a mist of oblivion – besides the dichotomy's explicit mention in the Book of Leviticus, so exegetical and homiletic works were dealing with it to some extent. But the dichotomy in its totality has never been the subject of sustained attention.

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[10] Due to lack of space I don't go into detail on the notable book of William Robertson Smith, who was the first who scholarly investigated the clean/unclean and sacred/profane dichotomies in depth. In his book, *Lectures On The Religion Of The Semites*, Smith analyses the conceptions of holiness and impurity; and explains that "the distinction between what is holy and what is unclean is real; in rules of holiness the motive is respect for the gods, in rules of uncleanness it is primarily fear of an unknown or hostile power" (p. 153). Ultimately, Smith thinks that "positive religions" (namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam, p. 1.) are superior to other ancient religions, because they are *ethical,* while the primitive religions are *magical* (superstitial); and tries to set a link between his ethical/magical distinction and the holiness/impurity notions.

[11] See, for example Ezekiel 48:15, "The remainder, 5,000 cubits in breadth and 25,000 in length, shall be for common use (חֹל) for the city, for dwellings and for open country. In the midst of it shall be the city.". Here the term explicitly refers to a territory which does not belong to the temple court.

In contrast, the Jewish tradition has handled this differently, since rabbinic thought preserved the original priestly concept of קֹדֶשׁ and חֹל in its original form (or in a form that was thought to have been original, as will be discussed later in this dissertation). However, the interest of Jewish legislation was confined to the *technical aspect* of differentiation between the two ritual statuses, and never exceeded its technical approach. This also did not happen in medieval philosophical works. Thus, being a core concept of the Book of Leviticus, the *sacred/profane* dichotomy has given rise to a substantial amount of literature in the post-biblical Jewish tradition, but this has remained a particular issue of sophisticated legal discussions. Because of the medieval isolation of Jewish wisdom, the dichotomy could not seriously influence Christian theology, nor did it deserve special attention in the eyes of Jewish philosophers.

Combined as they are by the Book of Leviticus itself, the other two notions to be analyzed comprise the *clean/unclean* dichotomy, which has always been a widely accepted and well-known feature of the Jewish religion. Due to its practical applicability, this issue has always been among the core concepts of *Yiddishkeit*, the Jewish way of life, and is therefore extensively discussed in the rabbinical literature.

Interestingly, Christian religious thought also incorporates the concept of clean and unclean, but only indirectly: the *rejection* of a distinction between clean and unclean animals (Acts 10:11) became a symbol of unity for Jews and gentiles. Consequently, instead of applying the original concept, Christian thought has adjusted the dichotomy to an abstract, or rather ethical level, speaking about clean and unclean *desire*, *thoughts* or *life*. Therefore, although the original (ritual) concept was rejected and intended to be substituted by the *conscious re-conceptualization* of it, the tradition could not completely eliminate the dichotomy from people's thoughts, but merely force it to be used on another level.

In this dissertation, this change of meaning is called a *semantic shift*, a term that refers to a semantic modification of any word. The semantic shift of the word "clean" or "pure"

from the ritual to the ethical (or moral) *semantic class* is one of the most important observations upon which this analysis is built.

This *semantic shift* is reflected in modern Christian theological compendiums and scholarly works: while the interest in the original (that is, ritual) concept is moderate and usually discussed only as a historical curiosity, investigating mostly the rationale behind the biblical rules,[12] the elements of the semantically-shifted dichotomy are intensively used in religious literature on an ethical level, for instance, in terms of "unclean desire", "sexual purity" etc.

Nevertheless, the *clean/unclean* dichotomy did not have such a brilliant career as that of the *sacred/profane* in theological and anthropological sciences. Indeed, it has never enjoyed the status of a core concept in any scientific works. In contrast to its counterpart, the *sacred/profane* dichotomy became the backbone of recent anthropological theories since Durkheim, and is frequently used in theological works as a self-evident axiom.

Another characteristic feature of Christian interpretation – as opposed to Jewish legislation – is the interchangeability of the "clean/unclean" and "sacred/profane" dichotomies, handling "clean" and "sacred" notions as equivalents and designating them as *morally good*, while the word "unclean" is mostly paired with other moral indicators such as *unrighteous*, or simply *sinner*. This principle is expressed by both Catholic and Protestant theologians, for example by Luther, who writes in his famous *Lectures on Romans*:

> "To serve uncleanness. (Rom. 6:19) The apostle now turns around and does not hold to the antithesis, for he says first: (to serve) 'uncleanness and unrighteousness unto unrighteousness', and then 'to serve righteousness unto sanctification', i.e., cleanness. (Hence, in the Old Testament, it often says 'be holy", 'sanctify yourselves' for 'purify yourselves', 'be clean from carnal pollution. ') For this understanding, sanctification and cleanness are the same: they mean the chastity of the body, not any kind of chastity, but that which comes inwardly out of the spirit of faith that sacrifies."[13]

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[12] See e.g. Sprinkle, The Rationale Of The Laws Of Clean And Unclean In The Old Testament, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43.4 (2000): 637–657.

[13] Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, 192.

This quotation illustrates the second important feature of Christian interpretation apart from the rejection of the *clean/unclean* dichotomy as a ritual indicator. The *borders between cleanness and holiness are blurred*. The author himself identifies and uses these attributes interchangeably, a usage neither typical of the Book of Leviticus nor of the later Jewish legislation. In addition to a shift of the word "clean" from a ritual to a moral meaning – referring to the "chastity of the body", which comes "out of the spirit of faith that sacrifices" – the interchangeability of terms shows a *semantic merge of the original dichotomies*, resulting in a semantic context that is alien to the original terms.

The scholarly investigation of the concepts of the *sacred/profane* and *clean/unclean* only began at the beginning of the 20th century, with the aforementioned books of William Robertson Smith (1927), Emile Durkheim (1912) and Rudolf Otto (1917), followed by Mircea Eliade (1957) and Mary Douglas (1966). These classical works discussed the phenomenological aspects of the dichotomies, discussing mostly their *synchronic* aspect.

The synchronic view of the *clean/unclean* and *sacred/profane* dichotomies in the phenomenology of religion treats these concepts as universal phenomena that exist in all religions, cultures and ethnicities (with slight differences). That is, they are treated like basic human attitudes. Little attention was given, however, to the *diachronic* view of these notions: that is, the origins and historical development of these terms, possibly validating them in Biblical or other text corpus. As a matter of fact, after the fascinating book of Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, even such profound professors as Gerhard von Rad, began referring to both Otto's and Eliade's theses as a priori or given axioms, without exegetical validation.[14] Later, theological works also tend to cite Eliade's system as a timeless axiom, leaving both its historical dimension and textual evidence untapped.

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[14] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology I.*, 167–169, 217–223.

The deepest exegetical analysis regarding the priestly concept of *separation* and related dichotomies has been carried out by Jacob Milgrom in his brilliant Leviticus commentary[15] that summarizes the results of his research in the following model:[16]
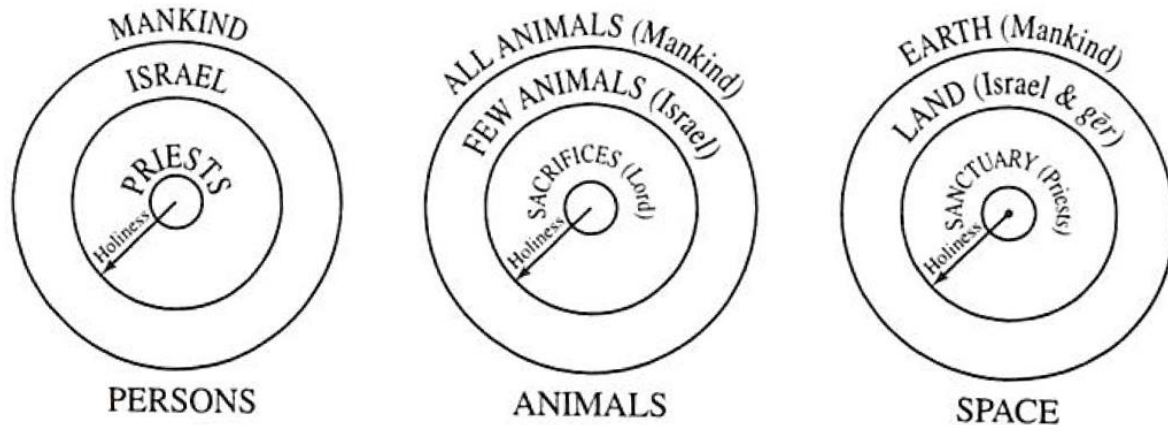
Milgrom's model illustrates the levels of *holiness* with three examples: persons, animals and space. In his model, the Holy is in the center of the inner circle, and the level of holiness corresponds with proximity to the core. Milgrom also notices an internal development of these concepts in the biblical tradition: the Priestly source (P) considers the borders between the circles as a fixed separation; the Law of Holiness (H) assumes a blurred border between the two internal circles. Both the people and the land of Israel can have a share of holiness, which is otherwise the inherent attribute of the priesthood as soon as they comply with God's laws.[17]

The model of Milgrom has two major advantages. First, it shows that the border between *holy* and *profane* can be variable in different biblical sources and ages; second, by showing the difference between the P and H layers, he posits a possible *diachronic evolution* of the priestly dichotomy system. He also recognizes that the *sacred/profane* dichotomy can

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[15] Milgrom, Jacob. *Leviticus 1–16.* The Anchor Bible. (New York: Doubleday, 1991). *Leviticus 17–22.* The Anchor Bible. (New York: Doubleday, 2000). *Leviticus 23–27.* The Anchor Bible. (New York: Doubleday, 2000).
[16] Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1718.
[17] Ibid. 1718–19.

refer to the opposition of Israel and the foreign nations, which is a new aspect compared to Eliade's original theory.

Thus, the innovation in Milgrom's model is the recognition of the *diachronic* aspect of the dichotomies at a certain level, based on Biblical exegesis. Milgrom's "moving holiness" is in fact a *semantic shift* of terms between the different traditions of the Hebrew Bible. Milgrom's approach also draws our attention to textual substantiation of the phenomenological hypothesis on the sacred/profane and clean/unclean dichotomies.

The goal of this dissertation is to continue the research that Milgrom has begun, with the following ambitions:

1. Extending the investigation beyond the Book of Leviticus, and validating the existence of the *sacred/profane* and *clean/unclean* dichotomies in the full biblical text corpus;

2. Justifying or refuting that the dichotomies are truly timeless human phenomena, or came into existence at a certain time (at least based on Biblical evidences);

3. Describing the semantic development of the terms, including their genesis if possible;

4. Identifying *semantic domains*, that is, context and meaning pairs, in which the dichotomies are used; and also the *semantic shifts* from one domain to another;

5. Providing a theological framework that supports the interpretation of the semantic domains in a theological context;

6. Finally, revealing the socio-historical background of the creation of the dichotomies and shifts in their meaning over the centuries.

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2. The Sacred/Profane and Clean/Unclean Dichotomies in the Phenomenology of Religion

2.1. The Re-invention of the Sacred/Profane Dichotomy: Émile Durkheim

In his pioneering work, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (1912), Durkheim describes ancient, primordial religious forms. His description is based on the fieldwork of B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, which was conducted in the remote Australian continent among the *Warramunga* aboriginal tribes. [18] It also relies on the results of contemporary anthropologist J. G. Frazer's *Totemism and Exogamy*, published in 1910. Durkheim puts *totemism* at the centre of his theory, assuming that totemism, a collective belief of clans, was the most primitive ancient form of religion. For him, the function of totemism was "apt to awaken the sensation of the sacred and the divine".[19] According to Durkheim,

> "Totemism is the religion, not of such and such animals or men or images, but of an anonymous and impersonal force, found in each of these beings but not to be confounded with any of them. No one possesses it entirely and all participate in it. […] Yet it is an impersonal god, without name or history, immanent in the world and diffused in an innumerable multitude of things."[20]

Durkheim calls this impersonal force *mana*, and he perceives this power to be a collective heritage of all historical religions throughout history. Supernatural beings such as gods, geniuses, and demons are seen as the concrete manifestation of *mana*.[21]

Durkheim believes that *mana* is a collective product of communities; in fact, it is a divinatory practice of human society. The totemic *mana* is an imperative moral force of society, and elevates the individual above himself. Thus, the *sacred*, or *mana*, represents the collective power of the society. In other words, *the sacred is the product of society: it is a*

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[18] Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of the religious life.* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1912.

[19] Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the religious life,* 205ff.

[20] Ibid. 187–188.

[21] Durkheim follows a typically positivistic approach, excluding the supernatural, the miraculous, and gods from his scope. Instead, he deduces his system from immanent phenomena such as the existence of myths and beliefs. For a general overview see Ries, J. (1989). *Le Origini e il Problema Dell'Homo Religiosus.* Milan: Jaca Book SpA. Hungarian translation (2003): *A szent antropológiája.* Budapest: Typotex. P. 28ff.

real social phenomenon, the totality of collective emotions, and a key principle of social cohesion.[22]

In Durkheim's view, social phenomena are autonomous entities that transcend the individual level; moreover, they have coercive power over the individual. The concept of *mana* as collective power, which has significant influence on the individual's behavior, has the same role in Durkheim's theory as that of the Collective Unconscious in the system of his contemporary, psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung: it equips society with power that cannot be reduced to individuals' behavior in itself. Durkheim conceive of religion as one such social phenomenon occurring in a given social context. Humans learn this together with their first language and individuals are practically born into a religious context. In closed societies that do not offer any alternative to their own single cultural context, it therefore has a compelling importance for the individual.

Durkheim claims that religious ideas are neither *a priori* (prior to experience) nor *a posteriori* (post experience) by origin. Or, they are neither innate Platonic ideas nor representations of our experiences. Instead, they are parts of the collective mind passed down together with our native language and culture. Moreover, according to Durkheim, religion is culture itself: he claims that basic categories of human thinking are of religious origin.[23]

Finally, he defines religion through two dichotomies: the *individual/community* and the *sacred/profane*. The first is required to make a distinction between magic and religion. While magic is an individual phenomenon, religion and the church can exist only as communal

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[22] The intention of anthropologists by the beginning of the last century, including Frazer and Spencer, was to identify the "ancient religion", a common subset of attributes that would have been the common predecessor of all religions. As Vargyas (2004) points out, Durkheim deliberately defied the evolutionary approach, because he took for granted the socio-psychological drivers behind phenomena such as animism, fetishism, totemism and the *mana*. But he also rejected contemporary psychologists' individualistic approach, which assumed that religions were the results of individual dreams, misconceptions or mental deviations. Vargyas, Gábor (2004). *E. Durkheim és a vallási élet elemi formái.* In Durkheim, Émile (2004): *A vallási élet elemi formái.* Budapest: L'Harmattan. (Prolegomena to the Hungarian edition of Durkheim's Les formes élémentaires…). P. IIff. See also: Pals, E. Daniel (2006). *Eight Theories of Religion.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2nd Edition. P. 85–117.

[23] Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the religious life,* 24ff.

experiences. The second dichotomy is a common characteristic of all religions, or the categorization of things as either *sacred* or *profane*. In these two opposing classes, sacred things are defended by prohibitions from the profane. [24] Thus, in Durkheim's definition,

> "religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, in other words, things set apart and forbidden".[25]

Durkheim takes his definition of the sacred from the act of the separation itself. This is in contrast to Rudolf Otto, whose definition does not require an opposite term, and is usable without a dichotomy. Durkheim claims that dividing both the ideal and real things into two opposite classes is a common feature of every known – simple or complex – religious belief, and the terms *sacred* and *profane* are "good enough" to denote these terms. Thus, the world is divided into two parts, one *sacred* and one *profane*, and the former can include anything from people, rocks, trees, springs, houses to just a piece of wood. Moreover, rites, maxims, formulas, gestures, motions can have sacred character, too.

Although the sacred character is absolute ("there is nothing common in the two [sacred and profane] worlds"), sacredness has degrees: there are sacred objects that merit less respect than others. Despite the hierarchy of the sacred world, the sacred is *always* and *everywhere* separated from the profane. The sacred is *par excellence*, that which is prohibited from the profane. Therefore, crossing from the profane to the sacred always requires a (ritual) metamorphosis or renascence. Sacred and profane things are different in nature.[26]

M.E. Spiro (1966)[27] accuses Durkheim of he explaining a vague concept (i.e. "the religious") with another vague term (i.e. the *sacred/profane* dichotomy). Interestingly, Durkheim is satisfied with a merely tautological definition (*sacred* and *profane* are separate, and *sacred* is what is not the *profane*) without adding further explanation. However, it is also

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[24] Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the religious life,* 46ff.
[25] Ibid. 47.
[26] Ibid. 38.
[27] Durkheim was already accused of explaining a vague concept ("the religious") with another vague term ("sacred/profane") by Melford Elliot Spiro in 1966. Vargyas, *E. Durkheim és a vallási élet elemi formái,* XII.

note-worthy that Durkheim avoids any reference to the Bible where the sacred/profane dichotomy and the separation itself are central.

Although sometimes he refers to certain Christian rituals, Durkheim takes care to painfully distinguish Christianity from other cults and religions, suggesting that they would be peers or equivalent, or, giving the impression that his scholarship is unbiased towards Christianity. Despite his efforts, it is hardly conceivable that, being a European scholar who had been socialized in an essentially Christian culture, he would have been able to completely untie himself from his cultural context. It seems inconceivable that Durkheim would not have taken the sacred/profane dichotomy from the most widespread religious document in the world, where it occurs explicitly – even if similar behavior occurs in other religions as well. Rather, Durkheim borrowed the dichotomy from the Bible – or at least from the Jewish/Christian cultural context – and intentionally refrained from referring to the source of the dichotomy, perhaps to give the impression of an impartial and neutral position from an anthropological point of view.[28]

Ultimately, Durkheim applies the *sacred/profane* dichotomy to his contemporary observations, and finds patterns in human behavior which otherwise match the (biblical) priestly concept of *separation* between the sacred and the profane (Lev. 10:10). However, he does not bother with the analysis of the biblical term, nor does he raise the question of whether the dichotomies are *a priori* given in human culture or were created in a specific era and historical situation. Practically, his work does not focus on the existence and origin of the *sacred/profane* dichotomy. Rather, he *employs* the dichotomy as a given concept, and applies it to his contemporary survey. As a matter of fact, Durkheim's work was the first one to use the *sacred/profane* dichotomy as an interpretative term in cultural anthropology, followed by Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane*. Durkheim's considerable contribution to the awareness

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[28] Furthermore, Durkheim's principle of *separation* between the sacred and profane corresponds exactly to the priestly concept of Leviticus 10:10.

and scholarly usage of the *sacred/profane* dichotomies is inevitable; however, testing the theory on a major text corpus to identify the possible genesis or scrutinizing the validity of the terms, was excluded from his focus and working method.

2.2. Rudolf Otto and the Numinous

Up to this point, the most comprehensive definition the term "holy" was that developed by Rudolf Otto. His book, *The Idea of the Holy* was published in 1917,[29] five years after that of Émile Durkheim. Having been influenced by works of Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889) and especially Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), Otto confronts in his book the positivist school, who exclude the irrational, and thus also the supernatural from the science of religion. Otto argues that in so doing, they ignore the special nature of religious experience.

In contrast to the materialist Durkheim, who was forced to explain the *inexplicable* with mundane (in his case, social) reasons, Otto's neo-Kantianism, stemming from Schleiermacher's modified Kantian epistemological approach,[30] allowed him to regard the *holy* as an *a priori* idea. The assumption of two parallel, indeed, opposing worlds of respectively the phenomena and of the idea made it possible for him to give to the *holy* an essentially different character – the "holy", which is "wholly other" ("*ganz anders*") according to his words.

It is no doubt Schleiermacher's merit that he – based on the concept of "the feeling of absolute dependence" – enabled the inclusion of the element of the supernatural in the science of religion without violating the mundane laws of science. Whereas Schleiermacher

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[29] Otto, Rudolf. *Das Heilige – Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen*, 1917. English translation (1958): *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non Rational Factor of the Divine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[30] As Pethő, *Rudolf Otto – avagy az elrettentő titok filozófiája,* 233 notes, Schleiermacher modified Kant's epistemological thesis with the assumption that space, time and causality are not only *a priori* perceptions of the subject, but also realities that determine cognition. As one consequence, God has two opposing attributes: he is both ideal and real; on the one hand He is not identical with the world; on the other hand, the world cannot be conceived without Him.

strictly remained within the outline of human experience, he did not explicitly integrate the supernatural into the world of realities. This is one of the key contributions of Otto, who – probably using Nathan Söderblom's book, *Das Werden des Gottenglaubens*, published in 1915, two years before Otto's *Das Heilige* – slightly modified Schleiermacher's system so that he could finally integrate the irrational element as an actually existing entity into his theory. [31] Otto called this element the *numinous*, and defined it as the "non-rational, non-sensory experience or feeling whose primary and immediate object is outside the self".[32] Although this definition also refers to the human experience, one of Otto's conclusions was that he did not regard the holy as a possible theoretical assumption, but by not identifying it with the religious experience itself he calculates the *holy* as an actually existing entity to be considered scientifically.

Otto also follows Schleiermacher in assuming a reality beyond experience: the *holy* is an *a priori* entity, a source from which the experience of the numinous stems. Thus, Otto consciously joins the group of *a priori* opinions, in contrast to Durkheim who, driven as he was by his materialism, rejected supernatural and *a priori* theories. Otto substitutes the postulate of the collective power (the *mana*) in Durkheim's system with the reality of something "wholly other" and its interpretation.[33]

Otto consciously uses the word *numinous* (*das Numinöse*) instead of 'holy', in order to avoid the "derivative sense" (that is, moral sense).[34] As he argues,

> "We generally take 'holy' as meaning 'completely good'; it is the absolute moral attribute, denoting the consummation of moral goodness. […] But this common usage of the term is

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[31] On Söderblom's and Otto's relation see Pethő (1997), *Rudolf Otto – avagy az elrettentő titok filozófiája* p. 237–238.

[32] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy,* 4.

[33] Interestingly, both of them use the term "divination": Durkheim calls divination the *mana* itself, that is, the collective product of the community; Otto calls divination the contact with the *holy*. The usage of the term *divination* comes from Schleiermacher and the Kantian school, see Ries, J. (1989). *Le Origini e il Problema Dell'Homo Religiosus.* Milan: Jaca Book SpA. Hungarian translation (2003): *A szent antropológiája.* Budapest: Typotex. P. 31.

[34] In Otto's approach, the "moral" aspect of the numionous experience is a sign of corruption, as the moral meanings are "inaccurate" (Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 6.). He therefore argues that in the mosaic religion the *numinous* experience bacame "increasingly moral", and in general terms more rational. Ibid. 74.

inaccurate. It is true that all this moral significance is contained in the word 'holy', but it includes in addition – as even we cannot but feel – a clear surplus of meaning, and it is now our task to isolate this."[35]

In the first half of his book Otto elaborates the steps of the *numinous* feeling in great detail. After having observed his or her creature-feeling, which is triggered by any objectified appearance of the *numinous*, the human is seized by a mystical fear (*tremendum*). This is then followed by the experience of the *mysterium*, the "wholly other", whose kind and character are incommensurable with that of the human, and which is beyond his or her apprehension and comprehension.[36] The final step is the *fascinans*, the experience of something fascinating, adoration, salvation and grace.[37]

The *numinous* is "wholly other",[38] meaning that it overwhelmingly surpasses everything; it has no peer, not even in the sense of negation. Therefore, Otto does not use the *sacred/profane* dichotomy in his work, in contrast to Durkheim who defines the *sacred* as "things which are set apart and forbidden."[39] Thus, the essence of the sacred is the separation from what is profane. Otto does not require the profane to define the *numinous* at all. The profane appears in his work not as the negation of the sacred, but as the *absence* of it. The 'holy' appears as an *absolute value* in the book.

In summary, Otto's concept is a well thought-out system, built on a special interpretation of the term "holy". He creates a context, in which the *numinous* is elevated to unprecedented heights. Otto's results are unique for their kind: he successfully builds up a coherent *a priori* phenomenology which can be accepted even from a positivist point of view (focusing on human experience); and in the meantime, he can describe the *numinous* with thus far unprecedented, tremendous power.

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[35] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy,* 5–6.
[36] Ibid. 28.
[37] Ibid. 31ff.
[38] Ibid. 26.
[39] Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the religious life,* 47.

Beyond his essentially synchronic approach, Otto also introduces a diachronic view, arguing for the *evolution* of the numinous experience. Discussing the different stages of the *numinous* experience, he mentions episodes about Zipporah at the inn (Exodus 4:24); Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3:6); the vocation of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1ff); the visions of Ezekiel and two examples from Job (42:6; 39:13-17); arguing, that – compared to other religions – one can meet "the irrational and numinous feelings" mostly in the Old Testament.

In his view, there is an internal evolution also in the Hebrew Bible – the authors of the prophets and the Psalms had already surpassed lower degrees of numinous feelings. The peak of this evolution was biblical prophetism and the gospels, which, at the level of Deutero-Isaiah, was worthy of becoming a world religion.[40]

It is no wonder that Otto applied an evolutionist approach. On the one hand, it was fostered by the appreciation of so-called primitive religions by contemporary religious anthropologists. On the other, it also met the apologetic concept of Christian theologians who saw a continuous evolution of religion in biblical history, and the final culmination in the coming of Christ. Thus, the assumption of the evolution of religions matched both anthropological and theological expectations, albeit in opposite directions: the former group was more interested in the primordial forms of religion, and handled institutionalized religions as if they somehow were corrupted, whereas the latter group considered rudimentary religious forms to be primitive in a negative sense, and praised the magnificence of biblical literature, especially the prophets and the New Testament.

2.3. Mircea Eliade

The most coherent system to date on the topic of the *sacred/profane* dichotomy was created by Mircea Eliade, whose major work, *Das Heilige und das Profane* was published in 1957,

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[40] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy,* 74–84.

forty years after that of Rudolf Otto.[41] His book synthesizes the anthropological theories of religion from the beginning of the century, especially the systems of Durkheim and Otto. By creating the concept of *hierophany* (that is, the manifestation of the *sacred* in the immanent world) he could build up a coherent system that still serves as a paradigm in religious anthropology.[42]

Eliade starts his book with a vague introduction to Otto's message, highlighting that the *numinous* presents itself as something "wholly other", something basically and totally different. Eliade states that Otto's analyses "have not lost their value",[43] though he applies a slightly different approach to it in two respects: first of all, he proposes "to present the phenomenon of the sacred in all its complexity, and not only in so far as it is irrational"; and he gives a definition for the sacred that reflects the definition of Durkheim, rather than Otto:

> "The first possible definition of the sacred is that it is the opposite of the profane. The aim of the following pages is to illustrate and define this opposition between sacred and profane."[44]

Some critics of Eliade's book say that there is a confusion about the concept of the sacred itself, since it seems to be subjected to considerable change throughout his book; for example, in one instance he says that the sacred can be symbolized by the image of a center that is hard to reach, but elsewhere he claims that the center is easy to reach. He is also criticized for basically failing to provide a definition of the concept of the sacred, except that it is the opposite of the profane.[45]

In fact, Eliade does not need to precisely define the idea of the sacred, because in his introduction he clearly indicates that his concept is based on Otto's *numinous*; indeed, the

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[41] Eliade, M. (1957). *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion.* New York: Harcourt.

[42] Although Eliade refers explicitly only to Otto in the foreword of his book, he summarizes the works of a large number of religious anthropologists when constructing his system. Beyond the great personalities of classical religious anthropology, such as Durkheim or J.G. Frazer, Eliade also relies on the works of Raffaele Perrazzoni, and Georges Dumézil, the close colleague and friend of him. See Dosse, *History of Structuralism: The Rising Shine,* 35. and Ries, *A szent antropológiája*, 37ff.

[43] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane,* 9.

[44] Ibid. 10.

[45] Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*, 225.

main concept of the book, the *hierophany* assumes a majestic entity beyond the mundane, exactly as it was described by Otto. Eliade's initial remarks, however, draw attention to three obvious differences between the two concepts:

1. First of all, Eliade's effort to present the *rational side* of the sacred goes against Otto's concept. As the previous section demonstrated, for Otto the term "rational" was a negative signal; and declaring the *moral* senses of the holy as rational was enough for him to ignore it. Indeed, Eliade uses the term "rational" as simply mundane, since in a positivist sense the world of myths and symbols is not "rational" at all. Apart from this, Eliade differs from Otto in that he again concentrates on human experience and behavior instead of the phenomenon of the *holy* itself.

2. Second, Eliade gives a definition that is alien to Otto's concept: the sacred, which is the negation of the profane. This definition is a return to Durkheim's, who defined the term in exactly the same manner. At the same time, Eliade explicitly mentions the *sacred/profane* dichotomy in the preface, which also matches Durkheim's concept, and does not fit Otto's approach. As discussed above, the *numinous* in Otto's concept is unique in its kind, indeed 'wholly other' and the profane is dwarfed next to it; the profane is not the negation but at most the *lack* of the *numinous*.

3. Finally, though Eliade refers to the term *numinous* in his preface, he does not use Otto's term, instead returning to the original term sacred and ignoring Otto's warning that this term is burdened by its afterlife and its secondary meanings. However, Otto's fear from these so-called 'rational' (that is, 'moral') meanings came from the defense of the uniqueness and irrationality of the *numinous*, while Eliade consciously embraces rationality. Furthermore, he not only allows, but also actively uses the whole semantic range of the term sacred, and therefore there is no reason for him to replace it with Otto's *numinous*.

Eliade thus returns to the examination of religious behavior rather than the *holy* itself, and therefore he also returns to the concept of the *sacred/profane* dichotomy and the definition of sacred which we are familiar with thanks to Durkheim. The difference, however, is that Eliade maintains Otto's *a priori* approach, and in contrast to Durkheim, who thought an impersonal social power (the *mana*) to be the source of the sacred, Eliade insists that the source of the *sacred* is a supernatural reality, namely the *numinous* of Otto. Applying this approach, Eliade can examine religious behavior related to the sacred and the profane by eliminating Durkheim's *mana*, and he can harmonize *a priori* epistemology with the toolkit of the positivist school so that he practically inoculates Otto's *numinous* into Durkheim's *sacred/profane* dichotomy.

The key term of Eliade is *hierophany* (the term he chooses instead of *theophany* so that he can use it in a wider sense). People become aware of the *sacred* because it manifests itself and it shows itself as "something wholly different from the profane."[46] He also claims that the history of religions is constituted by a great number of hierophanies, that is, the manifestations of sacred realities. Moreover, he claims that "from the most elementary hierophany [...] to the supreme hierophany (which, for a Christian, is the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ)".[47]

Although Eliade also claims that myths had a fundamental importance in the pre-Mosaic religion, he sees the later development of the Jewish religion not as a process of rationalization, but rather an innovation of the perception of time: God no longer manifests himself in (circular) cosmic time, but in an irreversible historical time. For Christians, with the incarnation of God, since he took a historically conditioned human existence, history

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[46] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane,* 11.

[47] Ibid. It is obvious that Eliade shares the view of Otto and the Christian theological tradition of the evolution of religions, which reaches its peak in Jesus Christ, though Eliade dampens his statement by noting '*for a Christian*'. This is why Donald Wiebe and others call him a Christian theologian or even a missionary, albeit Eliade himself never explicitly confirmed his personal religious views, neither in his publications, nor in his interviews. See Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion, 223ff.*

itself involved the possibility of being sanctified. The historical time is sanctified by the presence of Christ, thus, history became sacred history.[48]

The major strength of Eliade's concept is the flexibility of his symbolism and structuralism. As Douglas Allen notes,[49] Eliade is able to find intentional configurations and relations, or permanent patterns even in the most confusing variety of myths and other religious phenomena. Due to his high-level approach he never goes deeply into the analysis of a particular culture and therefore is never lost in the details. Even if he finds only a single custom, event, or ritual in which he can recognize a spatial or temporal structure, he inserts it into his system. Structures are interpreted as symbolic representations of an unearthly reality. As highlighted by Allen, symbolism is central to Eliade because of his emphasis on the "pre-reflective, unconscious and transconscious dimensions of religious experience", due to the impact of German depth psychology.[50]

The starting point of Eliade's concept is the *hierophany*, the manifestation of the *sacred* in any creatures, objects or events. He emphasizes that each hierophany is a paradox: the object which manifests the sacred becomes *something else*, yet it continues to remain itself; its immediate reality is transmuted into a supernatural reality.[51] For a religious person, neither space, nor time is homogenous, since the manifestation of the sacred gives them a structure. The experience of *hierophany* is a primordial experience, which precedes all reflection on the world; it reveals the central axis for all future orientation, therefore it serves as an ontological foundation of the world. Since no world can be born in the chaos of the homogeneity and relativity of the profane space, if the world is to be lived in, in must be

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[48] Eliade, Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 110-112. There is a fundamental difference between Otto's and Eliade's evaluation of historical changes. While Otto sees a corruption of the numinous experience when the meaning of the holy shifts towards a "rational" (namely, in his logic, "moral") meaning, Eliade sees the decline of the religious experience in the desacralization of the cosmos, which has been brought by the industrialization of the societies. The de-sacralized man has "profane" behavior, his house is a "machine to live in" which is first of all functional, in contrast to the archaic religious man, whose house is the imago mundi, which reflects cosmic symbolism in its very structure. See Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 51–53.

[49] Allen, *Myth and religion in Mircea Eliade,* 139–140.

[50] Ibid. 134ff.

[51] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane,* 12.

founded by the manifestation of the *absolute reality*, which is opposed to the non-reality of the vast surrounding expanse.[52] The true world is always in the middle, at the center, the place where a break in plane occurs, where space becomes sacred, hence pre-eminently *real*. Therefore, every construction or fabrication has the cosmogony as a paradigmatic model.[53]

He describes the 'sacred time' similarly, which he believes to be *reversible* by its very nature, meaning that it is a primordial mythical time that is made present. Every religious festival, any liturgical time, represents the re-actualization of a sacred event that took place in a mythical past, "in the beginning". Gods created "sacred time" together with the realities of the world, for the time current to a creation was necessary, sanctified by the presence and activity of the gods.[54] The New Year is a re-actualization of the cosmogony, restoration of the primordial time; the religious man periodically becomes the contemporary of the gods. The desire to live in the divine presence and in a perfect world corresponds to the nostalgia for a situation of paradise.[55] Myths serve as paradigmatic models that reveal absolute sacredness; one becomes truly a man only by conforming to the teaching of the myths, that is, by imitating the gods.[56]

Beyond "sacred space" and "sacred time" Eliade describes also the nature of the symbols, and emphasizes that their true essence is the manifested sacredness through the mode of being. That is, a "sacred stone" is venerated because it is sacred and not because it is a stone.[57] Symbols can be animate and inanimate entities such as a tree, a stone or the water; and also certain activities (rites). Finally, the whole life of the religious human becomes sanctified due to the rites that could be termed cosmic experiences. The sanctified life is a trans-human life, that of the cosmos or the gods.[58]

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[52] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane,* 21-22.
[53] Ibid. 45.
[54] Ibid. 68-69.
[55] Ibid. 92.
[56] Ibid. 100.
[57] Ibid. 118ff.
[58] Ibid. 167ff.

Although Eliade explicitly supports the position of *a priori* epistemology, and he posits the sacred as existent in reality, he actually does not examine the sacred itself, but the religious behavior and the myths and beliefs that support it. Therefore, his system is acceptable also from a positivist perspective. Human behavior, myths and beliefs, as well as the system of symbols can be subjected to scholarly testing and description. The assumption of ontological structures is somewhat more difficult to prove with the same tools. This would need exegetical analysis of related texts or psychological experiments to demonstrate that Eliade's imaginary structures actually exist in human thought. Despite these problems, Eliade has created a cohesive system that is viable without external factors such as Durkheim's *mana*, a problematic assumption in the absence of evidence.

To summarize, the following table compares the systems of Émile Durkheim, Rudolf Otto and Mircea Eliade, in order to show the common and different elements among them:

Author	Durkheim	Otto	Eliade
Source of religious experience	society	a priori	a priori
Definition of the "sacred"	What is forbidden for the profane	"Wholly other"	What is not profane, "wholly other"
Sacred/profane dichotomy	Yes	No	Yes
Focus	Human behavior	The *numinous* itself	Human behavior

A definite advantage of Eliade's approach is that, in contrast to Otto, who focuses on a narrow spectrum of the experience of the numinous, it can handle a wide range of meanings of the *holy*. Thus, his theory is able to incorporate holiness as a ritual or moral attribute, such as "sacred stone", "sacred life" and so on. Eliade shows a high degree of creativity in placing any semantic constructs in various locations of his system. Although he does not really deal

with the moral aspect of the word (e.g. "a holy man"), his system is applicable in moral contexts as well. The overarching, flexible framework that Eliade provides fits into the system of post-exilic priestly theology, as is discussed during the analysis below. Further, it opens the door – which Eliade leaves open – to a semantic analysis that identifies actual usage patterns of the *sacred/profane* dichotomy in different textual traditions and historical contexts.

2.4. The Universality of the Sacred: Gerhard von Rad

In the same year that Eliade's book was published, Old Testament researcher Gerhard von Rad published his well-known two-volume *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (1957). In this book, he is concerned with the question of the sacred and the profane in two sections: first during the explanation of the First Commandment,[59] and later in relation to the question of ritual cleanness and uncleanness.[60]

In the first case, von Rad addresses the issue of God's "holy jealousy". He defines his notion of holiness referring to three passages on shunning alien cults (Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 6:14f), and claims that the prohibition of other gods is usually explained by God's jealousy in the Old Testament; therefore, he thinks that God's holiness, his jealousy and the First Commandment are an inseparable concept.[61]

The following thread of von Rad apparently relies on Rudolf Otto's semantic and concept scheme:

> "Both in the history of religion in general and in Israel in particular, the experience of the holy is a primeval religious datum; that is, the concept of holy cannot in any way be deduced from other human standards of value. […] A datum of experience which can never really be coordinated into the world in which man is at home, and over against which he initially feels fear rather than trust – it is, in fact, the 'wholly other'."[62]

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[59] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology I.*, 205-206.
[60] Ibid. 248-249.
[61] Ibid. 204.
[62] Ibid. 205ff.

Both his terminology and his logic fit Otto's concept of the *numinous*. Indeed, in the subsequent paragraph, von Rad explicitly refers to Otto's *Das Heilige*, though slightly dissociating himself from Otto's viewpoint:

> "This very considerable body of Old Testament evidence concerning holiness reveals the limitations of the great work of Rudolf Otto, in which the holy is related much too one-sidedly to man and his soul. [The religion psychological viewpoint is not consistent with what we can find in the Old Testament]."[63]

Thus, von Rad seems to be the first among Old Testament theologians to take up the concept of the sacred and the profane and to incorporate it into a grandiose theological system.

Von Rad skillfully combines Durkheim's tautological definition (sacred is what is separated from the profane), with Otto's definition ("the *wholly other*"), and incorporates this combination into his own theological concept. Referring to several articles from the previous forty years (i.e. to works of O. Procksch, R. Asting, J. Hänel, J. Pedersen and S. Mowinckel), his concept fits with the milieu of the revelation on Mount Sinai, as well as the meticulous laws of the Book of Numbers on the sacred and the profane.[64] Being a Christian theologist, he is not forced to eliminate God from his system (as opposed to Durkheim), or to present himself as unbiased, as Eliade attempts. God reveals himself, his presence scares people, and any places, objects or persons who belong to God are separated from what is *secular*. His concept broadly corresponds to that of Eliade, with the difference that in von Rad's book the *sacred/profane* dichotomy is not a focus.

As a Christian theologist, von Rad also shares an evolutionist view: though he admits that the *sacred/secular* distinction is also typical in a wide range of human religions, he believes that the Israelite cult is superior to pre-Isrealite religions; by making a distinction

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[63] Von Rad, , *Old Testament Theology I.*, p. 206. The bracketed sentence is unfortunately missing from the English translation, although it is required to understand why von Rad distances himself from Rudolf Otto on the surface, while still citing Otto's concept, combined with a theological viewpoint.

[64] Interestingly, von Rad discusses the sacred/profane dichotomy in relation to the epiphany on Mount Sinai and in context of the Covenant and the Ten Commandments – and not in the context of priestly tradition in which the sacred/profane dichotomy is inherently present. Otherwise, he discusses the *clean/unclean* dichotomy in the context of the priestly theology. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology I., 272.*

between "material holiness" and "spiritual holiness". In his view, the former is a common set of biblical and non-biblical religions, while the latter appears only in the Sinai Covenant. As a matter of fact, his evaluation about the evolution of religions directly opposes Rudolf Otto's viewpoint. Otto sees the pre-mosaic religion as the natural expression of *mysterium tremendum* and the "the respectable religion" of Moses he evaluated as becoming increasingly moral, that is "rational". In contrast, von Rad believes that primitive religions knew only a lower level (that is, "material") of holiness, and saw a positive evolution of religion in the Bible, especially praising biblical prophets for the superior manifestation of the holy.

Von Rad also discusses the topic of purity and impurity in the context of the priestly theology. Here, he believes that in the priestly system

> "God's sight was divided into clean and unclean, holy and secular, blessing and curse. For Israel this tension and polarity was a basic datum of all life. […] There is not the slightest reason for assuming that it was a specific characteristic of the post-exilic period alone: P only fixed and conserved the sacral ordinances which were valid in earlier times as well." [65]

Von Rad extends the dichotomist view of the Priestly theology to the whole life of Israel. In his view, the life of Israel, and moreover the whole history, is a

> "continuing struggle between the sacred and the secular, which runs right through the whole of Jahweh's creation (vide the list of unclean animals), is, however, regarded even by P as something temporary. P too knows a final condition of things where the holiness of Jahweh will attain its goal, since 'all the earth will be full of the glory of God' (Num. XIV. 21)." [66]

Apparently, von Rad shares Eliade's views in many aspects. He applies the same, overarching dichotomist framework of the sacred and profane as Eliade. However, in von Rad's theory, the 'secular' is a more negative term, as it is linked to uncleanness, and opposes God's creation. In von Rad's interpretation, Israel is engaged in a continuous struggle again uncleanness, until history reaches its peak with the full revelation of God.

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[65] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 272.
[66] Ibid. 279.

It is indeed the irrefutable merit of von Rad that he has set a link between the theories of contemporary anthropologists and his theological work, significantly contributing to the scholarly discussion about the *sacred/profane* and *clean/unclean* dichotomies. His book was the first that made the topic of priestly dichotomies a subject of exegetical analysis, providing valuable textual evidences to the research.

However, his theory also has its weakness. Although he certainly discusses the different stages of theological concepts in the Old Testaments, he doesn't focus on the development of the dichotomies themselves. He applies his overarching holy/secular model to the whole life of Israel, even though he clearly acknowledges that the clean/unclean dichotomy is mostly dominant in P. Strictly speaking, von Rad applies the synchronic model of Eliade to his exegesis, and even though he discusses the internal development of biblical traditions to some extent, he does not extend his historical investigations to the history of the *holy/secular* or the *clean/unclean* dichotomies. He left this work to posterity.

2.5. Mary Douglas

The next notable work, which presents a brilliant and ambitious concept based on the clean/unclean and sacred/profane dichotomies, is Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger*, first published in 1966.[67] In her book, Douglas examines the symbolic interpretation of religious purity and pollution rules in different cultures, while introducing the polemical theories of earlier authors.

Douglas's starting point is that anthropologists of the nineteenth century found two peculiarities in primitive religions that distinguished them from modern world religions: fear and hygiene rules. On the former, she states that during subsequent researches only a little trace of fear was found, therefore the significance of this motif became less important.[68]

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[67] Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.* London: Routledge, 1966.

[68] Douglas, *Purity and Danger,* 1ff.

Subsequently, she builds her theory upon hygiene rules, which she discusses on both physical and symbolic levels.

Dirt (thus uncleanness) is interpreted by Douglas to be "essentially disorder", and she claims that eliminating it is "a positive effort to organize the environment".[69] Pollution ideas work in the life of a society both at instrumental and at expressive levels. On the instrumental level, people try to influence each other's behavior. Social pressures are also reinforced by beliefs about dangers that threaten transgression. However, there is also a higher level on which pollution ideas relate to social life: according to Douglas *some pollutions are used as analogies for expressing the order of the society*; she cites sexual rules as an example. She argues that patterns of sexual danger can be seen to express symmetry or hierarchy, and sexual dangers are better interpreted as symbols of the relation between parts of the society.[70]

Although sexual examples are always a matter of debate, given that sexual intercourse explicitly includes physical pollution and also a considerable risk of sexual infections, Douglas's hypothesis, that some pollution rules express the order or structure of a society, is one of her most important observations. Another important aspect of her theory refers to the historicity of purity rules:

> "No one knows how old are the ideas of purity and impurity in any non-literate culture: to members they must seem timeless and unchanging. But there is every reason to believe that they are sensitive to change. The same impulse to impose order which brings them into existence can be supposed to be continually modifying or enriching them."[71]

Thus, Douglas' two most important lessons are that purity rules often reflect and support structures of a society, and that they can be subject to change depending on the continuously changing social context.[72]

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[69] Douglas, *Purity and Danger,* 2.
[70] Ibid. 3.
[71] Ibid. 5.
[72] Another important observation of Douglas refers to the anthropological 'sacred uncleanness' association of Frazer and his followers, which she finds to be 'ludicrous' and a theory that should be corrected. Douglas, *Purity and Danger,* 26–30.

Douglas builds her theory upon the definition and interpretation of secular (that is, physical) defilement, which is an unusual but bold approach, because it draws attention to the wide semantic variability of the word 'unclean' and expands the horizon beyond ritual impurity. Her motivation to raise the question of physical defilement is that comparative science of religion "has always been bedeviled by medical materialism."[73] That is to say, researchers have always tried to find medical rationales behind purity rules, without clarifying the notion of defilement itself.

Her key message is that 'secular' defilement is no less symbolic than 'ritual' pollution. Douglas argues that if we abstract pathogenicity and (medical) hygiene from our notion of dirt, what remains is a merely relative idea of pollution, an element of our systematic ordering behavior.[74] In her view, the notion of 'dirt' is the sign of human's systematic ordering and classification of matter, which involves rejecting inappropriate elements. Dirt is disorder in a sense that it is a perception of deviances from a stable world of recognizable shapes, which are created so that we can find stability in the "chaos of shifting impressions".[75] Experiences are summed-up by society, in order to help individuals in orientation:

> "Culture, in the sense of the public, standardized values of a community, mediates the experience of individuals. It provides in advance some basic categories, a positive pattern in which ideas and values are tidily ordered. [...] But its public character makes its categories more rigid. [...] It cannot ignore the anomalies which its scheme produces, except at risk of forfeiting confidence."[76]

Douglas's concept largely recalls that of Eliade in the sense that both of them outline human behavior along symbolic structures. In fact, Douglas applies Eliade's theory of symbolic structures to the notion of 'cleanness' and 'uncleanness.' What the chaos of profanity is to Eliade, the disorder of dirt is to Douglas. Her main achievement is establishing a standalone framework for the *clean/unclean* dichotomy that is not dependent on the *sacred/profane*.

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[73] Douglas, *Purity and Danger,* 30.
[74] Ibid. 36.
[75] Ibid. 37.
[76] Ibid. 40.

The main advantage of Douglas' theory is that the *purity/impurity* terms are much closer to normal, everyday experience even in a highly materialistic secular culture than the *sacred/profane*. They are completely derivable from immanent phenomena, without the assumption of any supernatural entities. Her approach is *a posteriori* and positivist, claiming that symbolic purity structures are community abstractions of actual individual experiences.

Still, discussing the *clean/unclean* dichotomy, she reverts to a theological standpoint: holiness is a divine attribute, and its meaning is twofold: on the one hand, it stems from "setting apart". On the other, it refers to God's blessing, because "blessing makes the land possible for men to live in". The function of blessing is essentially that it creates order, through which man's affairs prosper. The withdrawal of blessing results in barrenness, pestilence and confusion.[77] According to Douglas, these considerations lead us to the idea that holiness means "wholeness and completeness". Everything that is involved in the worship of the sacred must be perfect: sacrificial animals must be without blemish, women must be purified after childbirth, lepers must be separated and ritually cleansed, etc. Wholeness applies to the perfection of physical conditions and also to the social context as well; Douglas refers to Deut. 20:5–7, where the Torah requires the settlement of ownership rights before going to a war.[78]

Douglas' concept has several advantages. First, by involving the perception of physical dirt into her investigations, she further widens the semantic range of the clean/unclean dichotomy, which helps in understanding the semantic variability of these terms. Second, her approach makes it unnecessary to involve further concepts (such as the *mana*) into the discussion. Based on psychological perception of physical phenomena, but enjoying the flexibility of symbolic structures, Douglas creates a practically positivist theory, where human perception originates from *a posteriori* generalization. Finally, her greatest

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[77] Douglas, *Purity and Danger,* 51.
[78] Ibid. 53.

contribution to the research is setting *purity* in focus, showing that purity/impurity is not self-evidently only a subtopic of the sacred/profane dimension.

2.6. A New Synthesis: Jacob Milgrom's "Moving Holiness" Model

Although the topic of the sacred and profane has been discussed by several authors in the last 45 years, no new comprehensive theories have been introduced. The scholarship has amounted to merely the reiteration of Rudolf Otto and Mircea Eliade's concepts, more or less integrating them into theological theories. During this time a number of works were published on both biblical exegesis and religious history, describing the background and meaning of relevant biblical verses in incredible details. However no successful attempts were made to bridge the gap between exegetical microanalysis and overarching anthropological concepts about the sacred/profane and clean/unclean dichotomies.

On the one hand, the original concepts of Durkheim, Otto, Eliade and Douglas were not focusing on the historical development of these dichotomies: biblical exegetes and theologians used these concepts in their works "as is", without testing the validity of the concepts themselves against biblical texts. In fact, in the last hundred years, no one has questioned the textual validity of Durkheim's or Eliade's *sacred/profane* theories – exegetes, as seen in von Rad's Theology, incorporated them into their theological works as untested axioms, applying them to some selected texts.

One noteworthy work should be mentioned here, which makes a considerable attempt to harmonize anthropological theories with the intricate and meticulous results of philological research. In his enormous Leviticus commentary, Jacob Milgrom examines overarching theories in detail, especially those of Émile Durkheim and Mary Douglas, in the light of the

Book of Leviticus and other biblical sources, attempting to construct a comprehensive model that determines the relation between the clean/unclean and sacred/profane dichotomies.[79]

Regarding the clean/unclean dichotomy, Milgrom claims that, although a number of different theories exist, basically two types of argumentation can be identified, which merit serious consideration: the *hygienic* one, which assumes a medical rationale behind the rules (thus Maimonides, Ramban, Rashbam and Albright); and the *symbolic* theory, which assumes that the behavior of prohibited animals corresponds to the behavior of humankind.[80]

Here he refers to Mary Douglas, whose theory is basically symbolic in nature, by explaining the taxonomy of animals as a mirror of society's value system, applying the classification of 'order' and 'disorder' to the nature. Milgrom confirms the thesis that animal taxonomy is a mirror of human society, quoting a number of parallel attributes of animal and human existence in the Bible, including soul (נֶפֶשׁ); the law that their blood must be buried (Lev. 17:13); both must die if they kill a human being (Gen. 9:5); and several similarities.

However, Milgrom points out several errors of Douglas, such as confusing words and concepts, incorrect references etc. His most serious complaint is that Douglas confuses the חֹל/קֹדֶשׁ dichotomy, claiming that the dietary laws are "inspired meditations of the oneness, purity, and the completeness of God". By contrast, Milgrom emphasizes, "in the Priestly system the realm of the holy is restricted to the sanctuary, the sacrifice and the priest".[81] Thus, the sacred/profane and clean/unclean dichotomies should not be confused.

Instead, Milgrom sets up another model, drawing a parallel between the "tripartite division of the human race": priesthood/Israel/mankind; and the three animal divisions: sacrifices/few [i.e. clean] animals/all animals. He enumerates some similarities between the two structures, such as the list of blemishes of priests and the list of disqualified animals from

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[79] Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 691ff. and also
Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 711ff.
[80] Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 718–719.
[81] Ibid. 721.

the cult, both lists containing twelve items.[82] Milgrom depicts the two structures as two sets

of concentric circles, claiming that both innermost circles are

> "deliberately set apart from the middle ones, implying that the realms of the priest and laity, on the one hand, and the sanctuary and land, on the other, must remain distinct entities".[83]

Milgrom's model has a number of strengths. First, it forms a coherent system of animal-

related cleanness: *edibility* (that is, the issue of clean/unclean animals) and *ritual suitability*

(namely the issue of sacrificial and non-sacrificial animals), setting up a tripartite hierarchy

of *cleanness*.[84]

Second, Milgrom integrates the post-exilic tripartite social structure

(priesthood/Israel/mankind) into the (logical) tripartite hierarchy of sacrificial/clean/unclean

animals and also with the dichotomy of holiness, combining these elements into one coherent

model. Perhaps due to his personal and scientific background – being a Jewish scholar and a

conservative rabbi, driven by his deep knowledge of Jewish terms and traditions – Milgrom

uses the terms accurately, making a clear distinction between the clean/unclean and

sacred/profane dichotomies, thus avoiding the trap of *semantic uncertainty* (using terms

inadequately), into which so many have fallen before.[85]

Milgrom adds yet another dimension to his model, namely *space*, referring to Num.

5:1–4. According to this section, the "entire camp of Israel in the wilderness" had to avoid

impurity, and the whole community remained holy according to both P and D. In addition,

both the sanctuary (Num. 25:34 etc.) and the entire land of Israel had to avoid pollution

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[82] Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 723.

[83] Ibid. 723.

[84] As a matter of fact, the structure represented by Milgrom's model is also not explicitly expressed by the Priestly source, it is logically constructed and thus somewhat artificial. Even so, it is Milgrom's merit that he further refines the originally bipolar *sacred/profane* theory of Eliade.

[85] One example for a semantic uncertainty is using the 'sacred' and 'clean' terms interchangeably, such as "the holiness of a person or a thing can be restored by lustrations or by anointing with oil or blood" (in von Rad, *Old Testament Theology I.*, 273.). Milgrom resolves the discrepancies in the use of dichotomies at the systemic level by expanding dichotomies to trichotomies. Thus, the dichotomy of clean/unclean animals and the dichotomy of clean/unclean ritual status (of sacrificial animals) are reconciled by arranging them into the sacrificial/clean/unclean tripartite system. This method results in a usable synchronic synthesis, which, however, hides both the time factor and the inner conflict of terms, and thus doesn't provide a diachronic view of textual traditions.

(Num. 18:25-35). Using these mosaics, Milgrom constructs a third circle, which organizes

space (i.e. geographical location) into the same tripartite structure as in the case of the people

and animals: Earth (mankind), Land of Israel (including gentile residents), and the Sanctuary.

The three circles are linked by the notion of a chosen people:

> "As God has restricted his choice of the nations to Israel, so must Israel restrict its choice of
> edible animals to the few sanctioned by God. The bond between the choice of Israel and the
> dietary restrictions is intimated in the deuteronomic code when it heads its list of prohibited
> animals with a notice concerning Israel's election. […] Israel's attainment of holiness is
> dependent on setting itself apart from the nations and the prohibited animal foods. The dietary
> system is thus a reflection and reinforcement of Israel's election."[86]

Taken together, Milgrom finally arrives at a model similar to that of Eliade, but this matches

biblical theology (more precisely the theology of the post-exilic Priestly writing) much better.

This model is also built upon the *sacred/profane* and *clean/unclean* oppositions, but instead

of a dichotomic model it contains an intermediate element, the land and nation of Israel,

halfway between the two poles. Milgrom himself draws the arrow indicating holiness

between the center of the concentric circles and the boundary between the two outer spheres,

the Land of Israel and the outside world (Earth/Mankind), with the remark that

> "The innermost circles, however, are not fixed and static. […] According to H, although priests
> are inherently holy, all of Israel is enjoined to achieve holiness (e.g., 19:2). Not that Israel is to
> observe the regimen of the priests or to attain their status in the sanctuary. Rather, by scrupulously
> observing God's commandments, moral and ritual alike, Israel can achieve holiness. Signs of this
> mobility are reflected in the animal sphere. […] When the layman is permitted to slaughter his
> animals at home (Deut. 12:15, 21), he is enjoined to employ the same slaughtering technique
> practiced in the sanctuary."[87]

With the motif of "moving holiness" Milgrom tries to solve the ambivalence of the

Pentateuch regarding the subject of holiness.

7. On the one hand, the word 'holy' (קָדוֹשׁ) is an attribute of God and also of

property devoted to God, namely the temple. This meaning matches the pure

dichotomic model of Durkheim and Eliade, where the *sacred* comes into being

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[86] Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 724–725.
[87] Ibid. 724.

(Durkheim) or is manifest (Eliade) in a *sacred space* by separation from the outside world, the common or profane.

    8.   On the other hand, the Code of Holiness (H, Leviticus 17–21) explicitly claims that the whole nation (i.e. "all the congregation of the sons of Israel", Lev. 19:2) must be holy. In a pure technical sense it would mean that the realm of the *Holy* should be extended over the whole nation and land of Israel.[88]

Milgrom attempts to reconcile the two natures of holiness by partially accepting the classic anthropological model, acknowledging the border between the sanctuary and the rest of Israel. At the same time, he sees holiness as a ritual and moral attribute that can spread to all the people, who can thus "enjoin" or "achieve" holiness.[89] Here, Milgrom obviously exits the original anthropological framework, speaking about holiness as an attribute that can be taken over by humans or animals. According to him, this can be done by "scrupulously observing God's commandments, moral and ritual alike".[90]

It cannot be claimed with certainty that Milgrom would shift the notion of *holiness* to a moral sense, since his concept of the "moving" (that is, *spreading*) holiness can be understood in a merely ritual sense. However, it is safe to say that this concept no longer relies on classical dichotomic models that are based on the separation of the *wholly other* from everyday common reality. Instead, Milgrom's concept of *holiness* can be characterized as an inherent attribute of a community, and thus a normative system[91] where the innermost circle is not the exclusive area of the Holy, but the source of holiness, an attribute that is overflowing to the whole community and can be reached by ritual and moral efforts. As a

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[88] Classic anthropological models represented by Durkheim, Eliade and Douglas assume the separation between the sacred and the profane within the perceived cultural context of an individual, that is, within the community. The "community-wide holiness" requirement of H – that the whole nation should be holy – is hardly intelligible in classical anthropological models.

[89] Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 724.

[90] Ibid. p. 724.

[91] About the difference between a *normative* and a *moral* system see the fourth chapter below.

consequence, the counterpart of the dichotomy ("we" and "they"), and thus the border of real opposition moves outside the community.

Note that the opposition between the community and the outside world is not primarily characterized by the holy/common, but rather by the clean/unclean dichotomy in Milgrom's model. Writing about the motif of separation he mentions cleanness only related to dietary and sexual cases:

> "What is merely implicit in D, however, is forcefully explicit in Lev. 20 (H): 'I am the Lord your God who set you apart (hibdalti) from other peoples. […] You shall be holy (qedošîm) to me, for I the Lord am holy (qadôš) and I have set you apart (wa'abdîl) from other peoples to be mine' (20:24b–26). What could be clearer! Israel's attainment of holiness is dependent on setting itself apart from the nations and the prohibited animal foods. The dietary system is thus a reflection and reinforcement of Israel's election. This motif of separation in Lev. 20 […] is further extended and underscored by its context. It is the peroration to the periscope on forbidden sexual unions (20:7–21), that are attributed to the Canaanites, Israel's predecessors in the land, and to her Egyptian neighbor (18:3; 20:23)."[92]

As the citation above suggests, Milgrom pushes the border of separation outside the community, between Israel and the gentiles, and characterizes this separation as the clean/unclean dichotomy. At the same time he uses the holy/common – and notably not the sacred/profane – dichotomy as a normative attribute inside the community, which can be reached by accomplishing community norms (that is, keeping to the commandments, etc.). Although according to classical anthropological models the holy/common dichotomy would have been liable for ensuring the border between the sanctuary and the rest of the community, Milgrom blurs this border by pointing out that the entire community should join to holiness. He expresses this hesitation by speaking about the "not fixed and static" border between the sanctuary and the rest of the community; which means a break with the anthropological tradition, expressed also by abandoning the language of sacred/profane.

Thus, Milgrom creates a two-tier model: a binary opposition (the *clean/unclean* dichotomy) protects the community's outer border against the outside world, whilst *holiness* as a normative multi-stage attribute characterizes the actual ritual and moral status of the

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[92]Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 725.

community, fueled by the innermost circle, the sanctuary, the cult and priesthood, whose

main concern is to make holy the whole community. This implies that the binary nature of the

holy/common dichotomy dissolves: *holiness* stands out as a standalone and unique attribute,

while *common* indicates only the lack of it, similarly to Rudolf Otto's model; as it is

expressed explicitly by Milgrom a few pages later, when he claims that both *common* and

unclean are secondary categories, that "take their identity from their antonyms".[93]

As expected in light of the above, Milgrom later explicitly rejects Durkheim's and

Eliade's definition of the *sacred* ("what is separated"):

> "An examination of Semitic polytheism (and indeed of any primitive religion) shows that the realm of the gods is never wholly separate from and transcendent to the world of man. […] 'Holy' is thus aptly defined, in any context, as 'that which is unapproachable except through divinely imposed restrictions,' or 'that which is withdrawn from common use.'
> In opposition to this widespread animism we notice its marked absence from the Bible. Holiness there is not innate. The source of holiness is assigned to God alone. Holiness is the extension of his nature; it is the agency of his will. […] As shown above, the priesthood, Israel and man, respectively, form three concentric circles of decreasing holiness. The biblical ideal, however, is that all Israel shall be 'a royalty of priests and a holy (qadôš) nation' (Exod 19:6). […] And just as priest lives by severer standards than his fellow Israelite, so the Israelite is expected to follow stricter standards than his fellowman. Here, again, holiness implies separation. […]
> But as for Israel the holy is the extension of God's will, it means more than that which is 'unapproachable' and 'withdrawn'. Holiness means not only 'separation from' but 'separation to'. It is a positive concept, an inspiration and a goal associated with God's nature and his desire for man. […] Holiness means imitatio Dei – the life of godliness. […] Israel is consecrated to attain the ideal of 'holy people' when it is given the Decalogue (Exod 19:6)."[94]

As shown, Milgrom rejects classical anthropologists' definition of holiness, and handles it as

a normative attribute, that must be followed by the human; while he also states that "the

ethical is bound up with and inseparable from the ritual", showing that he consciously avoids

semantic confusion between moral and ritual usages, in contrast to previously discussed

theories. He interprets the notion of separation as separation of the community (nation) from

the outside world, and links it to the concept of the chosen people. Again, this border is

safeguarded by the *clean/unclean* dichotomy in Milgrom's model, while *holiness*

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[93] Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 732.
[94] Ibid. 730–731.

characterizes the internal moral and ritual level of the community. Finally, Milgrom comes to the conclusion that

> "If we find its exact antonym and are able to determine its contextual range, we will be able to declare what qadôš is unlike, what it negates and, hence, being the semantic opposite, what it affirms. There can be no doubt that the antonym of qadôš 'holy' is tame' 'impure'."[95]

Milgrom's conclusion is even more interesting because it partially overwrites the original biblical dichotomies. In the next paragraph he acknowledges that the Bible itself uses *common* or *profane* (הֹל) as the antonym of sacred. Thus, Milgrom handles biblical dichotomies appropriately at the exegetical level, while creating an abstract theological model, an artificial construct intended to establish a relation between both the two dichotomies and also between textual incoherencies such as the clean/unclean ritual status and the concept of clean/unclean animals.

In order to smooth out the contradiction between his comprehensive concept and exegetical realities, Milgrom creates another model, referring to the "pedagogic rule" of Lev. 10:10 ("distinguish between the sacred and the common, and between the impure and the pure"), which is intended to set up the relation between the two dichotomies, according to Milgrom.[96]

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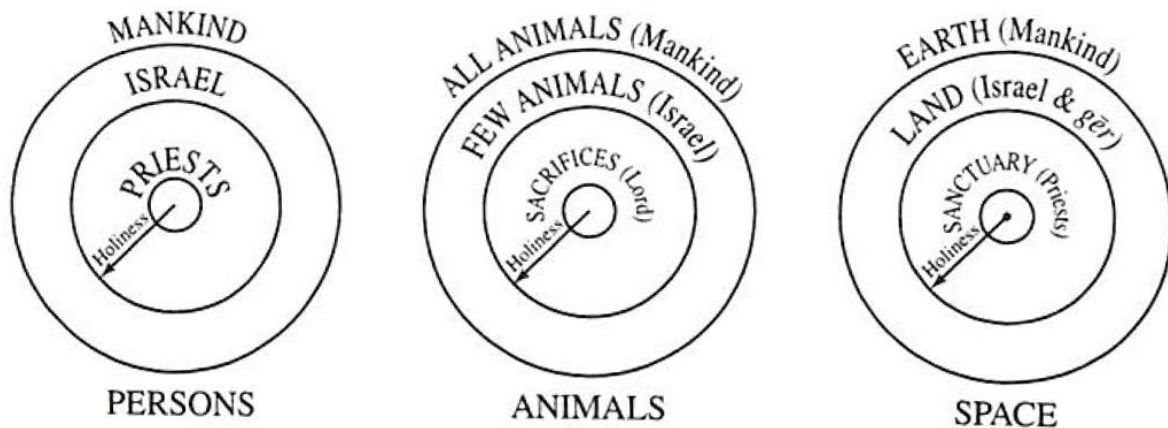
[95] Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 731.
[96] Ibid. 1718.

Milgrom suggests that both persons and objects can be the subject of the four possible states: holy, common, pure and impure. A subject can have two attributes simultaneously, either holy or common, and either pure or impure. There is, however, one combination, that is excluded by priestly legislation: the sacred can never be impure. Therefore, the real antonym of the *sacred* is *impure*, since they are antagonistic and totally opposite.[97]

Milgrom thinks that these two categories are "dynamic", since "they seek to extend their influence and control over the other two categories, the common and the pure".[98] In contrast, the other two categories (i.e. *pure* and *common*) are static, because they cannot transfer their state, "there are no contagious purity or contagious commonness".[99] Milgrom thinks that these two latter categories are secondary, and both take their identity from their antonyms: purity is the absence of impurity, and commonness is the absence of holiness. Ultimately, Milgrom argues that in fact there is only one dichotomy, the *holy/impure*, and the two other categories are just secondary and indicate a lack in the former ones. Moreover, as seen above, Milgrom uses *holiness* as a moral category, applying the later Christian idiom "imitatio Dei" to it. Therefore, his *holy/impure* dichotomy takes a moral hue.

In summary, Milgrom constructs a complex and sophisticated model based on the opposition of two poles: *holiness*, the realm of God; and *impurity*, the total opposite. His model refuses the autonomy of either the sacred/profane or the clean/unclean dichotomy, claiming that both *profane* and *pure* are just secondary attributes, indicating the lack of the primary ones.[100]

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[97] Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 732.

[98] Ibid. 732.

[99] Ibid. 732.

[100] In fact, Milgrom adopts the same two-pole position as Eliade and Douglas, namely that the world can be divided into two parts: the realm of the holy, a positive and absolute notion; and the realm of the impurity, which appears as "chaos" or even as "dirt" in preceding anthropological theories. But Milgrom combines this dichotomy with the isolation and opposition of Israel and surrounding nations, identifying the boundary of holiness with the boundary of the nation. As Milgrom points out, this border is defended by the pure/impure dichotomy (namely dietary, sexual and ritual laws), while holiness is a divine attribute that seeks to benefit not only the priesthood but the entire nation.

The undoubted advantage of Milgrom's model is that it is nuanced, able to encompass key motifs of the Pentateuch tradition, while preserving its coherence. Beyond its benefits, however, it also has some drawbacks:

1. First, Milgrom's model is a coherent theological framework, intended to integrate several biblical concepts and thoughts, ranging from the opposition of Israel and surrounding nations, the issue of clean and unclean animals and the tripartite structure of the Israelite society; up to Sinaitic revelation, the motif of the chosen people and God's holiness. However, the model realizes its ability to integrate multiple traditions by applying a synchronic snapshot of biblical theology, mostly starting out from post-exilic Priestly theology – and it does not differentiate historical stages and changes.[101]

2. Second, in order to preserve the integrity of his concept, ultimately he also leans towards a *holy/unclean* dichotomy, to show that the final opposite of *holiness* is *uncleanness*, since these two attributes cannot tolerate each other; thus ultimately he degrades both the *profane* and the *clean* pole to secondary categories. As for an overarching framework it is a legitimate approach, however it raises a further question: why *clean/unclean* and *sacred/profane* dichotomies exist if *sacred/unclean* would have been enough?[102]

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[101]Milgrom cites D and P sources indiscriminately to support his views. A striking example of this is when he argues with Deut. 12:15 (the layman is permitted to slaughter his animals at home) to support his view that the boundaries between the Priesthood and Israel are not fixed and static, but the whole nation can join holiness. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 724.

[102]Klawans (2006) assesses Milgrom's model as a structural, "systemic" view on ritual purity rules, based on the assumption that ritual purity rules form a coherent system governed by its own internal logic, and also that the system as a whole can be understood symbolically. According to Klawans, the result of this approach is that Milgrom tends to infer the existence of all sorts of purity rules, even though they are not explicitly stated in the Hebrew Bible. He is forced to find a "single common denominator" for impurity rules, even if his examples are not convincing. (Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple*, 28.)

3. Finally, by interpreting *holiness* as a universal ritual and moral attribute that can be reached by the whole community, and also explicitly claiming that the borders (of the two innermost circles) are "not fixed and static", ultimately he faces and rejects classical *sacred/profane* theories which position the sacred/profane space *within* the society. Thus, Milgrom leaves the question open: can Eliade's classical *sacred/profane* theory be validated against the Hebrew Bible?

2.7. Philip Jenson's "Graded Holiness" Model

Beyond Milgrom's holiness model, a number of further attempts have been made in the last decades to reconcile the priestly dichotomies into a single, comprehensive framework that properly explain the relation between *clean/unclean* and *sacred/profane*.

Most models use Lev. 10:10 as a starting point, identifying forms of parallelism in the verse:

> "To distinguish between holy and profane and between the unclean and the clean." (Lev. 10:10)

The idea of assuming a chiastic pattern in the verse is logical, as chiastic structures are widespread in the Hebrew literature, especially in Psalms and the Book of Numbers.[103] A strict synonymous parallelism is hardly applicable to this verse, as טָהוֹר ("clean") is not fully parallel with קָדוֹשׁ ("holy") and similarly, חֹל ("profane") does not fully match טָמֵא ("unclean") in meaning. However, due to the grammatical structure itself and the fact that they are conceptually linked to the requirement of *separation*, some kind of relation between the dichotomies is usually assumed by scholars.

A less speculative model is that of Barr, who does not reconcile the dichotomies on one scale, but rather shows the relative position of the two dichotomies to each other.[104]

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[103]On chiastic structures in the Hebrew Bible see Collins, John J. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible.* 2nd edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. p. 492–495. Longman, Temper – Dillard, Raymond B. *An Introduction to the Old Testament.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006. p. 98.

[104]Barr, *Semantics and Biblical Theology*, 11ff – graphic from Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 44.

holy
קדש

clean
טהור

חל
profane

טמא
unclean
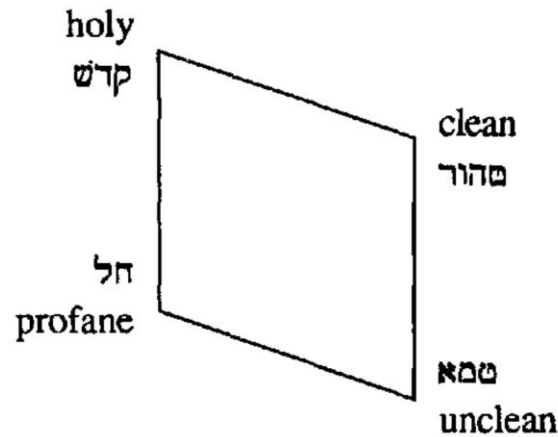
In his "Graded Holiness" book, Philip Jenson makes a further attempt to establish a model, classifying the grades of holiness in a single dimension model and merging the dichotomies into one structure (and apparently omitting the *profane* element):[105]

←——— SACRIFICE ———

קֹדֶשׁ   טִהַר

←——— sanctify ———   ←——— cleanse ———

קָדוֹשׁ   טָהוֹר   טָמֵא
holy   clean   unclean

——— profane ———→   ——— defile ———→

חִלֵּל   טָמֵא

——— SIN and IMPURITY ———→
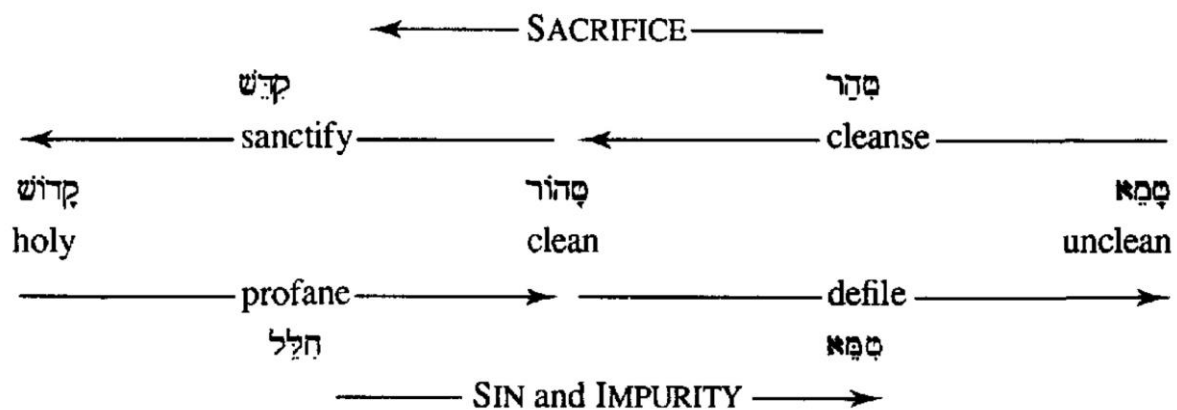
Jenson constructed the model of "Graded Holiness" to provide a system "*upon which the unity of large sections of the Bible can be appropriately expressed*", that is, to help the creation of a systematic theology with comprehensive categories.[106] His system is basically very similar to Milgrom's. He discusses Levitical laws and theology in four dimensions, where he embraces M. Haran's categories:[107]

1.   Space (Ex. 25–27; 30–31; 35–37; 40; Num. 1–4)

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[105]Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 47. His model is an adopted version of Wenham's similar model.
[106]Ibid. 33.
[107]Ibid. 35.

2. Personnel (Ex. 28–29; 38–39; Lev. 8–10; Num. 5–6)

3. Ritual (Lev. 1–7; 11–15; Num. 7–10; 19)

4. Time (Lev. 16; 23; Num. 28–29)

In each dimension, Jenson applies a so-called "Holiness Spectrum", which indicates "the levels of holiness ranging from extreme sanctity to extreme uncleanness".[108] In his view, the "Holiness Spectrum" is P's "graded conception of the world",[109] that "helps classifying certain aspects of the world in a graded manner".[110]

Despite the fact that Jenson's Holiness Spectrum seems to be a discreet scale (from "very holy" down to "very unclean"), Jenson himself attempts to make a distinction between the holiness and the cleanness section of the spectrum, as – in his view – holiness "represents the divine relation to the ordered word", while "clean embraces the normal state of human existence in the earthly realm".[111] Jenson argues that the "normal state of earthly things is purity[112]", and a special act of God is required to make things or persons holy. This act is consecration or sanctification (Piel or Hiphil of קדשׁ), and also implies "a new relationship with the divine realm, which entails a corresponding separation from the earthly sphere".[113]

Thus, despite the consolidated scale (the "Holiness Spectrum"), Jenson suggests linking the notion of *holiness* to the divine world, and *purity* to the earthly world. Likewise, he suggests that transition is possible from the state of cleanness with God's intervention. He also thinks that while the holiness of *objects* is permanent – that is: whatever has been consecrated can never enter the profane sphere again. However, holy *persons* (priests) live both in the profane and holy spheres "though at different times", that is, "their holiness was

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[108]Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 36.
[109]Ibid. 38.
[110]Ibid. 40.
[111]Ibid. 47.
[112] Jenson prefers to use the 'purity' term to 'clean'; in his explanation because "the word 'purity' in English has a positive content lacking in the Priestly טָהוֹר". (Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 44.) However, in his model he keeps the *clean/unclean* terms as a strict translation of טָהוֹר and טָמֵא.
[113]Ibid. 48.

only active in the holy area".[114] His other example for the temporary manner of the holiness of humans is the case of Nazirites in Num. 6:7–8, whose holiness was "only temporary and non-communicable".[115]

Finally, Jenson extends his "Divine Sphere" scale negatively in two ways: from holy to profane through "desanctification", which were minor rituals, such as the change of the high priest's clothes on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:23–24) or the scoured holy vessels (Lev. 6:28). And from holy to unclean: a deliberate defilement, treating holy things as profane, expressed with the חלל root Piel (e.g. Ex. 31:14).

In regards to the "Human Sphere", or the realm of clean and unclean, Jenson states that it describes "the life of Israel outside the cult", thereby enumerating certain cases of impurity such as food laws in Lev. 11; rules about skin disease in Lev. 13–14 and further cases. Although "minor impurity is a common state of affairs", "an ethical factor is introduced when someone deliberately defiles oneself (in Lev. 11:24, 43)".[116] Thus, according to Jenson, in the human sphere – such as in the divine sphere – the moral consequences apply only in case of a deliberate defilement, and "the danger of impurity, the extent of the required purification, and the penalties for disobedience are correlated with the grade of impurity".[117]

In sum, Jenson makes an attempt to consolidate the two dichotomies on one scale, which he calls "the Holiness Spectrum". He achieves this by apparently eliminating the *profane* element from the scale, defining the poles as holy–clean–unclean. In the meantime, he splits his scale into two sections: the 'holiness' section belongs to the 'divine sphere'; the 'cleanness' sections belong to the 'earthly sphere'. He analyzes the four areas of cultic life (space, persons, rites, time) at certain levels of holiness/cleanness.

One of Jenson's main strength is the clear distinction between ritual and moral acts, introducing *deliberateness* as a decisive factor for morality. This is a very important aspect,

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[114]Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 49.
[115]Ibid. 50.
[116]Ibid. 53.
[117]Ibid. 54.

since the distinction between ritual and moral acts is frequently confused. On the other hand, Jenson's attempt to set up a reconciled model out of the two dichotomies ultimately raises the same concerns which have been raised in the previous section addressing Milgrom's "Moving Holiness" model:

1. Firstly – as Jenson himself admits – "relatively little attention (that) has been paid to the historical and social realities".[118]

2. Secondly, why two pairs of – conceptually different – dichotomies exist in the Hebrew Bible, instead of one *sacred/clean/unclean* trichotomy as it is suggested by Jenson's model?

3. Thirdly, the question still remains open: can Eliade's *sacred/profane* dichotomy be substantiated as a universal, *a priori* phenomenon on a textual basis?

The following chapters seek to answer these questions.

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[118]Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 210.

3. The Anatomy of Separation

The frequent use of the verb "to separate, distinguish" (בדל הִבְדִּיל, Hiphil) is one of the well-known characteristics of the Priestly source (P). The key verse of this concept is Lev. 10:10 that commands that

> "You [the sons of Aaron, i.e. the priests] shall distinguish (הִבְדִּיל) between the holy and the common, between the clean and the unclean." (Lev. 10:10)

Similarly, the concept of separation of objects of a different nature is used extensively throughout the Priestly source, such as in the priestly Creation Narrative (Gn 1: l-2:4a), in which God *separates* (וַיַּבְדֵּל) entities of existence, such as light from the darkness (Gen. 1:4), water under the vault from water above it (Gen. 1:7) etc.

The separation of entities – arguably a core concept of the Priestly source – covers almost all aspects of cultic life, including sacred and common places, social groups, properties, objects, and also the clean or unclean status of people, which determines their eligibility or ineligibility for the participation in the cult.

3.1. The Semantic Map of the בדל Root

The semantic map below shows the occurrences of the root בדל in the Hebrew Bible. The columns of the map represent *semantic fields*, that is: a range of meanings, sorting occurrences by context and meaning (what the word means in a given context). In this case, there are three major verbal semantic fields: "to distinguish", "to choose" and "to separate"; and two minor nominal fields: "piece" [of something] and "tin".

The rows of the map enumerate biblical books where the root occurs, in canonical order. It is apparent at first glance that occurrences are concentrated in certain groups on the map. These groups represent *semantic domains*, that is, groups of occurrences that have similar meanings in a similar context. Identified domains are framed with bold on the semantic map, and a label describing the characteristics of the domain is given to them.

	Physical domain ("piece, tin")		Logical domain ("to select")				Cultic domain ("to separate")
	Piece (noun) (בְּדַל־אֹזֶן)	Tin (noun) (בְּדִיל)	To set apart a city (Cities of Refugee, and of Manasseh) (no prefix)	To set apart the sinner for punishment	To set apart the tribe of Levi (אֶת)	To set apart a group for a service	Entities during the creation (P) (בֵּין ... וּבֵין)
Gen.							1:4.6.7.14.18 (P)
Exod.							
Lev.							
Num.		31:22 (P)					
Deut.			4:41 (Dtr1); 19:2.7 (OTHER)	29:20 (Dtr1)	10:8 (Dtr1);		
Joshua			16:9 (cities of Manasseh, Ni)				
1Kings							
1Chron.					23:13 (Niph)	12:9 (Niph); 25:1	
2Chron.						25:10	
Ezra						8:24; 10:16 (Niph)	
Neh.							
Isa.		1:25					
Ezek.		22:18.20; 27:12				39:14	
Amos	*3:12 (peace of ear)*						
Zech.		4:10					

Figure 1: The Semantic Map of בדל

Figure 1: The Semantic Map of בדל (continued)						
Cultic domain ("to separate")					**National domain** ("to isolate")	**Moral domain** ("being isolated")
The holy of holies within the sanctuary (P) (בֵּין ... וּבֵין)	Parts of the sacrifice (P) (no prefix)	The clean and unclean, the sacred and the profane (בֵּין ... וּבֵין)	Clean and unclean animals (בֵּין ... וּבֵין)	To select the levites from Israel and Israel from the nations אֶת ... מִן	The nation/community separates itself from the outside world (Niph with 1 exception) (מִן)	To be separated from God or from the community because of sins
26:33 (P)						
	1:17; 5:8; (P)	10:10 (P)	11:47; 20:25.25 (H)	20:24.26 (H)		
				8:14; 16:9; 16:21(Niph) (P)		
					6:21 (Niph, from impurity of nations); 9:1 (Niph, from nations); 10:8 (to be excommunicated, Niph); 10:11 (from foreign wives,Nniph) 9:2 (Niph); 10:29 (Niph); 13:3 (Hiph!) foreign nations	
						56:3.3 (מֵעַל, from the community); 59,2 (בֵּין ... וּבֵין), from God
		22:26, 42:20 (בֵּין ... לְ)				

Within the verbal occurrences of the בדל root, four specific semantic domains are identified: (1) *logical/physical*, (2) *cultic*, (3) *national* and (4) *moral*. In this chapter, I attempt to identify the date of origin of each occurrence within the domains and also the possible authorship or tradition of the given section in which the root occurs.

3.2. Logical/Physical Domain

3.2.1. Nominal Occurrences

בְּדָל ("piece" [of something]). This noun occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible, in the sense of "piece [of an ear]", in Amos 3:12. Although the chapter itself belongs to the oldest layer of the book, dated to the 8th century BCE,[119] 3:12 differs from the basic layer of the text: instead of judgment and destruction, it announces rescue of the people of Israel. Because of its differing message, this verse is thought not to belong to the basic tradition of Amos, but either an insertion coming from the Deuteronomic tradition (D) or even a later from post-exilic times. However, since the universalist view of the section 9:11ff (which is identified as a post-exilic text), referring to "all nations", is missing from 3:12, the proper dating must be the *milieu* of the rising Judah, especially the court of King Josiah at the end of the 6th century BCE. Thus, the root בדל was presumably in use before the Babylonian exile, meaning, "part [of something]".

בְּדִיל ("tin"). The other nominal form of the root occurs mostly in post-exilic texts, as can be seen in the map (Num. 31:22 from P, three verses in Ezekiel and one verse in Zechariah). The single occurrence that could be dated before the exile is Isa. 1:25. However, the dating of this verse is debated identified also as post-exilic.[120] What we can claim with certainty is that in the VI-V centuries, the word was in use with the meaning 'tin' – that is, 'what has been

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[119]Rózsa, *Az Ószövetség keletkezése II.*, 52–53; Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 539.
[120]Rózsa, *Az Ószövetség keletkezése II.*, 94.

separated' [from a more valuable metal, according to the BDB]. Note that in earlier sources, though only once (Amos 7:8), the Akkadian word *annaku* is used to denote tin, in the form of אֲנָךְ. This verse belongs to the oldest layer of Amos.[121] Therefore, it can be dated to the mid-VIII century BCE.[122] Within the nominal occurrences, there are four verses that enumerate different types of metals (Num. 31:22; Ez 22:18.20; Ez 27:12). The longest list is Num. 31:22, which enumerates "gold" (זָהָב), "silver" (כֶּסֶף), "copper" (נְחֹשֶׁת), "iron" (בַּרְזֶל), "tin" (בְּדִיל) and "lead" (עֹפֶרֶת). Note however, that the old world for tin (אֲנָךְ as in Amos 7:8) is not in the list; it is rather substituted with בְּדִיל. Considering this evidence, there is reason to assume that the old word אֲנָךְ had disappeared after the Exile and בְּדִיל was used instead.

3.2.2. Verbal Occurrences

The occurrences in the logical domain refer to one single subject (either with אֵת preposition or without it), and have the meaning, "to select, to assign something". As these occurrences happen in pre-exilic texts, this could be the original meaning of the root. In this context, the root means merely logical choice or selection (e.g. selecting an individual from a group), and, in contrast to the other semantic domains, does not have the separation meaning.

Cities of refuge. The oldest texts in the logical domain are most likely those referring to cities of refuge in Deuteronomy (4:41 and 19:2.7).

Deut. 4:41 "Then Moses *designated* three cities" (אָז יַבְדִּיל מֹשֶׁה שָׁלֹשׁ עָרִים).

Deut. 19,2.7 " *You shall designate three cities for yourselves in the land*" (שָׁלוֹשׁ עָרִים תַּבְדִּיל לָךְ בְּתוֹךְ אַרְצְךָ).

Regarding the dating of the sections of the cities of refuge there is a more or less stable consensus among researchers following the five-step breakdown of J. de Vaux. In a historical analysis, de Vaux dates both the sections Deut. 4:41 and 19:2.7 to the third step of traditional development, i.e. the time of cult centralization in the second half of the 6th century BCE.[123]

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[121]Rózsa, *Az Ószövetség keletkezése II.*, 52–53; Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 539.
[122]Rózsa, *Az Ószövetség keletkezése II.*, 53.
[123]Budd, *Numbers*, ad loc. Num. 35,9–34.

This assumption matches the dating of Amos 3:12 exactly, where the בדל root first appears in nominal form. This implies that the root בדל was in use by the end of the 7th century both in nominal (בָּדָל, "piece") and in verbal (הִבְדִּיל, "to select, to assign something") forms, according to written sources. All three verbal occurrences are in *Hiphil* and used without a preposition.

Joshua 16:9. On the semantic map – due to a similar meaning – Joshua 16:9 is in the same column (i.e. semantic field). This verse is about "cities that were *selected* for the sons of Ephraim" (הֶעָרִים הַמִּבְדָּלוֹת לִבְנֵי אֶפְרַיִם). The context differs somewhat from the verses discussed above, but the logic of the word's application is the same: a subset is selected from the whole set of cities for a specific purpose. The verb is used here in a Niphal form, but still without prepositions (e.g. without מִן). According to Finkelstein and Silberman,[124] whose opinion is shared by the current consensus of biblical researchers,[125] the territorial divisions in the Book of Joshua reflect the political program in the age of King Josiah, thus the verse 16:9 can also be dated to the end of the 7th century BCE. A later redaction that would assume a later dating for the verse is hard to identify with philological methods.

Deut. 10:8. The verse about the designation of the Levites is in a compound section. In the wider context, God's wrath on Mount Horeb (Deut. 9:7–10:11) is an early version (originally 9:7–18; 9:26–29; 10:10b–11) of the story of the golden calf (Ex. 32–34). It was later complemented with different additional inserts.[126] Deut. 10:8–9 is such an insert, and reports that God designates (הִבְדִּיל) the tribe of Levi so that they carry the ark of covenant to stand before God to minister and to bless in his name "until this day". Though this latter remark raises the suspicion of a late insertion, these two verses are classified to the Deuteronomic tradition.[127] In terms of content, this is clear because it is acknowledged that Levites do these duties only in D; and from a linguistic point of view because the verb הִבְדִּיל

[124]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 110.
[125]Rózsa, *Az Ószövetség keletkezése I.*, 311; Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 140ff.
[126]Barton – Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, 2001: 144.
[127] Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 138–139.

("to designate", appearing only four times in D) establishes a link between the three verses (on the designation of the cities of refuge) and this verse (on the designation of the Levites). Both the common vocabulary and the fact that the ministry of the Levites better fits the conception of the Deuteronomist points to the time of the Deuteronomist.

Deut. 29:21. Only a single occurrence remains for the consideration of this group. According to the curse text in Deut. 29:21, God "*designates* them [that is, those who worship foreign gods] from all the tribes of Israel unto evil" (וְהִבְדִּילוֹ יְהוָה לְרָעָה מִכֹּל שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). The sentence, similarly to the previous ones, refers to a simple logical choice (and not "separation" or "excommunication") which is implied by the inserted "unto evil" (לְרָעָה) lexeme, that is, the sinners *are designated* adversity.

3.2.3. Post-exilic Texts of the Logical Domain

Beyond the four Deuteronomic/Deuteronomistic occurrences above, there are eight further occurrences in the logical domain, all from post-exilic verses, meaning, "to designate, to select". Even if English translations translate these occurrences as "set apart", obviously influenced by the secondary meaning of the הִבְדִּיל word, in these contexts the proper translation of the word is "to select, appoint". All the verses below report that somebody (a small group/troop or a single person) is assigned to a specific task:

Ezek. 39:14 A permanent team is *appointed* to bury skeletons (וְאַנְשֵׁי תָמִיד יַבְדִּילוּ עֹבְרִים בָּאָרֶץ).

1Chron. 12:9 A small group of warriors *deserted* to David (וּמִן־הַגָּדִי נִבְדְּלוּ אֶל־דָּוִיד).

1Chron. 23:13 Aaron was *appointed* (וַיִּבָּדֵל אַהֲרֹן לְהַקְדִּישׁוֹ), to serve as a priest.

1Chron. 25:1 David, together with the commanders of the army, *appointing* the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun for musicians (וַיַּבְדֵּל דָּוִיד וְשָׂרֵי הַצָּבָא לַעֲבֹדָה לִבְנֵי אָסָף וְהֵימָן וִידוּתוּן).

2Chron. 25:10 Amaziah *appoints* (that is, commands) the troop (וַיַּבְדִּילֵם אֲמַצְיָהוּ לְהַגְּדוּד), to go home.

Ezra 8:24 Ezra *selects* twelve of the leading priests (וָאַבְדִּילָה מִשָּׂרֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים שְׁנֵים עָשָׂר).

Ezra 10:16 Ezra the priest *appoints* men (וַיִּבָּדְלוּ עֶזְרָא הַכֹּהֵן אֲנָשִׁים).

There are two apparent features in this series. First, except for the first occurrence of Ezekiel, all are from Chronicles or Ezra-Nehemiah. Second, the presence of the Niphal stem is extensive. Braun has already noticed[128] that the נִבְדָּל form occurs only ten times in the Bible, out of which nine are in the Chronicles or Ezra, and only one in Num. 16:21, which belongs to P. The use of the בדל root in Niphal stem is therefore typical for late sources, especially for the Chronicler.[129]

On the semantic map, it is apparent that six out of 13 occurrences from Ezra/Nehemiah and Chronicler are still in the logical domain, indicating that besides the new meaning ("to separate oneself from…"), the old meaning ("to select, appoint") was still in use.

Ezek. 39:14. Chapter 39 of Ezekiel, especially its second part starting with the 11th verse (esp. because of the expression "on that day"),[130] is attributed to a late redactor by the majority of researchers,[131] although Zimmerli believes the text was created from smaller units and considers verses 39:1–5.17–20 as primary oracles.[132] In any case, the verse in question (Ezek. 39:14) is of post-exilic origin. The root בדל is used here as a simple logical selection: "a permanent team is *designated/selected*" (וְאַנְשֵׁי תָמִיד יַבְדִּילוּ) in this context.

The root is used in a similar way (as logical "selection") in the remaining six verses from the Chronicles. In 1Chron. 12:9 the Gadites, in 25:1 the musicians are "selected". The reference to the Gadites in association with David, according to the mainstream historian view, must be a late tradition based on political notions at from the age of King Josiah at least, since it is unlikely that members of the Gad tribe from the far north would have fought

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[128]Braun, *1 Chronicles*, WBC, ad loc. 1Chron. 12,9.
[129]Num. 16:21 will be discussed later.
[130]Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, WBC, ad loc. Ez 38,1–39,29.
[131]Rózsa, *Az Ószövetség keletkezése II.*, 212–218.
[132]Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, WBC, ad loc. Ez 38,1–39,29.

together with David far in the south. The personal names of 25:1 (Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun) also reveal post-exilic origin. Moreover, the section itself consists of multiple layers out of which even the oldest is no earlier than the age of the Second Temple.[133]

1Chron. 23:13. This verse requires special attention, especially in comparison with Deut. 10:8 (discussed above):

> "At that time the LORD *selected* the tribe of Levi (הִבְדִּיל יְהוָה אֶת־שֵׁבֶט הַלֵּוִי), to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD to stand before the LORD to minister to him and to bless in his name, to this day." (Deut. 10:8)
>
> "The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses. Aaron was *selected* (וַיִּבָּדֵל אַהֲרֹן), to dedicate the most holy things, that he and his sons forever should make offerings before the LORD and minister to him and pronounce blessings in his name forever." (1Chron. 23,13)

Both the similarities and the differences between these two verses (finding themselves in the same semantic field, i.e. column in the semantic map) are conspicuous. The priesthood is *selected* (בדל) in both verses; however, in the earlier text (D) it is only the tribe of Levi, while in the later text (Chronicles) it is only Aaron and his sons. Also, in Deuteronomy the בדל is used in Hiphil (הִבְדִּיל, 'to select'). In Chr. it is used in Niphal (וַיִּבָּדֵל, 'be selected'). With minor differences, the task is similar in both verses: to minister to God and to bless in his name.

Although English translations usually gloss בדל in these verses as "to set apart", which may suggest a kind of opposition or isolation, the original context instead suggests a simple logical "selection" or "designation", particularly because no opposition between sets is expressed explicitly. Neither מִן ([separate] "from") preposition, nor וּבֵין...בֵּין construct is used in any of these verses. Based on these formal criteria, considering their context, these occurrences are classified in the simple logical domain, even if the subject (priesthood and ministry) might refer to cultic setting.

2Chron. 25:10. This verse with a rather interesting structure belongs to section 25:5–16, which is the Chronicler's own material,[134] viz. the explanation of 2Kings 14:7. Although

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[133]More details in Braun, *1 Chronicles*, WBC, ad loc. Ezek. 39.

[134] Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 256–260.

Dillard[135] and others think that, considering the internal discrepancies of the text and the anonymity of the prophet, the Chronicler used earlier traditions, it is impossible to assign an exact date to 25:10. Nevertheless, the Hiphil וַיַּבְדִּילֵם form fits the style of the Chronicler, and also the use of the verb is similar to the other occurrences in this semantic field.

Ezra 8:24 and 10:16. These two verses are similar from a contextual and logical point of view: in 8:24 twelve leading priests and in 10:16 heads of families are *appointed*. However, the two verses are different in their verbal form. 8:24 is written in first person singular as a "first person report", while 10:16 is located in a narrative block that uses third person singular. Since the action is *designation/selection* in both cases and not *separation*, the translations "separated" and "set apart" of certain English versions are inadequate. 10:16 shall be amended due to its syntactical difficulties: the easiest is to correct יִבָּדְלוּ as יבל לו, thus the meaning of the sentence would be "and [Ezra] selected for himself…"

1Kings 8:53. This occurrence is surprising among post-exilic texts, but the verse and the preceding section (1Kings 8:46–53) are dated as post-exilic with consensus, due to its late vocabulary.[136] According to the closing verse, 8:53, God *selected* Israelites for himself as his heritage (אַתָּה הִבְדַּלְתָּם לְךָ לְנַחֲלָה מִכֹּל עַמֵּי). הִבְדִּיל here also means "selection", as it becomes clear again by the לְךָ particle ('you have selected them for yourself'). The phrase "among the nations" refers only to a basic set from which Israel has been selected. No opposition, separation or isolation is meant here.

3.2.4. Logical Domain – Summary

In this domain, there are occurrences of the בדל root that mean "to select, to assign [somebody or something from a mass]" in verbal form, and "tin" or "part" in nominal form. The verb is never used together with מִן preposition in this domain, and separation as a motif does not play a role. Translators' efforts to use either the expressions "separate" or "set apart"

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[135]Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, WBC, ad loc. 2Chron. 25:10.
[136]DeVries, *1 Kings*, ad loc. 1Kings 8:53.

are therefore misleading. The "assign" use of the verb was still widespread also in the age of the Chronicler.

3.3. Cultic Domain

Occurrences in the cultic domain are concentrated on the Priestly source (P), supplemented by two verses from Ezekiel (22:26 and 42:20). It is common in these occurrences for their context to be the cult, and also the use of the וּבֵין...בֵּין double preposition. The appearance of this latter extension is one of the most significant inventions in the use of the root בדל. Thus, the verb is not used with one object ("to assign *something*"), but sets a relation between two objects ("makes a distinction between…" or "divides something from something").

The Creation Narrative. The priestly cosmogony (Gen. 1:1–2:3.4a) tells the story of the creation of the world in seven steps, among which one key moment is the *separation* of entities. The *separation* refers only to two entity-pairs: light and darkness (1:4.14.18), and waters of heavens and of the Earth (1:6.7).

The biblical concept of separation is not unique in cosmogony: in the Mesopotamian creation epic, Enuma Elish, Marduk "splits" Tiamat into two parts. From one part he creates the firmament, which corresponds to the waters of the sky (IV/138).[137] In another fragment the words "Upper Tiamat/Ocean" (*Ti-amat e-Zi-ti*) and "Lower Tiamat/Ocean" (*Ti-amat shap-li-ti*) also appear, matching biblical waters of the firmament and the Earth.[138] Similarly, at the beginning of the fifth tablet, Marduk creates the heavenly bodies and splits the year in sections (V/3). Here the Akkadian text uses the verb *maṣāru* ('separate') and the nominal form *miṣru* ("part, section") created from the same root.

The relation between *Enuma Elish* and the biblical creation story is beyond the scope of this dissertation. It is obvious, however, that the priestly epic uses motifs similar to those

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[137]King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation*, 77.
[138]King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation*, LXXXIII.

in the Mesopotamian cosmogony, such as the separation between the heavenly and ground waters, and between light and darkness (i.e. day and night). From this relation, the conclusion can be drawn that the *separation between entities* is not a result of internal evolution of the priestly theology in Jerusalem, but the internalization of elements from the Mesopotamian cosmogony. This implies a semantic evolution of the root בדל, used together with the בֵּין ...וּבֵין double preposition structure in the sense of "separate" [two entities from each other].

Exod 26:33. The root בדל occurs only once in the entire Book of Exodus, viz. in the context of the interior design of the sanctuary. The function of the curtain (פָּרֹכֶת) is to "separate" the Holy Place from the Most Holy. The phenomenological symbolism allows this setup to be understood as a concept of symbolic separation but, since the redactor of Exodus does not add any comments to the curtain, in this verse the "separation" should rather be taken as merely a technical separation.

Lev. 1:17; 5:8. These two verses of Leviticus bring similar technical descriptions of the process of burnt offering (1:17) and sin offering (5:8): the priest may not *divide* (i.e. "separate") completely the parts of the sacrificial animal. This use is rather remote from the primary and original "to select, to assign" meaning; in this case, it refers to the split between parts of the animal.

Lev. 10:10. This is a programmatic verse that summarizes the core concept of *separation* in the Priestly theology. Priests (the sons of Aaron) are to "make a distinction" between clean and unclean and between holy and common. The text mentions the poles of the dichotomy in absolute terms (*the* holy, *the* common, *the* clean, *the* unclean).

Ezek. 22:26. This verse from Ezekiel is special in the sense that, apart from Lev. 10:10, this is the only *locus* in the Bible where the separation of the holy and the common is formulated *expressis verbis*. Ezekiel's 22nd chapter consists of three oracles (1–16, 17–22, 23–31), thus making 22:26 part of the third.[139] This oracle is a historical retrospection

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[139] Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 490ff.; Rózsa, *Az Ószövetség keletkezése II.*, 208ff.

recalling the loss of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. Another feature of this oracle is its relation with Zephaniah 3:3–4:8. This is why some researchers think that the text could be written between the end of the 7th century BCE and the years of Ezekiel; some even think that Ezekiel himself could have been its author.[140] However, the author obviously knows the concept of separation, as it recites the priestly concept of Lev. 10:10. As beyond the P and H sources of the cultic domain, this verse appears only in 2 verses in Ezekiel (22:26 and 42:20), there is reason to suppose that the verse is a later insertion (or the full text is from post-exilic times).

Ezek. 42:20. The vision about the New Temple (Ez 40–48) is considered a post-exilic work of art by the scholarly consensus.[141] The precise and detailed description of the temple can be bound to the priestly groups. 42:20 describes the sides of the "inner house" (הַבַּיִת הַפְּנִימִי) as:

> "He measured it on the four sides. It had a wall around it, 500 cubits long and 500 cubits broad, to make a separation between the holy and the common. (לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְחֹל)." (Ez 42:20)

Although the Hebrew text uses לְ בֵּין prepositions, it is safe to say that the author of this verse must have known both the existence of the sacred/common dichotomy and the related priestly theology. This implies that both verses from Ezekiel are from late exilic origin.[142]

Lev. 11:47; 20:25. These two verses are peculiar statements of Leviticus, and the latter is from the Holiness Code (H, Lev. 17–26). The *distinction* between clean and unclean animals fits well into the priestly system, because it *at least seemingly* matches the clean/unclean dichotomy.

The distinction between *clean and unclean animals* is substantially different from the priestly concept of *clean and unclean*. While the latter refers to a *ritual status* that can change (depending on the suitability for participating in the cult), the former is based on an *inherent feature* that is not only about ritual status (although being unclean automatically implies ritual

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[140]Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, WBC, ad loc. Ez 22,26.
[141]Rózsa, *Az Ószövetség keletkezése II.*, 212–218.
[142]About the pre- or post-exilic dating of P see the summaries of Hildebrand 1986 and Meyer 2010; this dissertation considers P's post-exilic origin.

unsuitability) but rather *palatability*, that is, whether a type of animal is suitable for breeding and consuming. Although it also determines cultic usability of an animal, the classification of animals by palatability derive from earlier traditions as discussed in Section 4.4.2 below.[143]

The conclusion is that post-exilic priestly redaction incorporated a former tradition of *edible* animals into its system, perhaps incorporating earlier edibility lists of other sanctuaries,[144] with the newly created *clean/unclean* dichotomy for ritual status. Lev. 11:47 reflects the status of when this incorporation has already been done:

> "You must *distinguish* between the unclean and the clean (לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטָּהֹר), between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten." (Lev. 11:47)

It is apparent that the first part of the verse cites the priestly formula of Lev. 10:10 word for word. However, the second part uses another definition. Instead of "clean animals", it speaks about "edible animals" (הַחַיָּה הַנֶּאֱכֶלֶת). Therefore, the verse incorporates the old (pre-exilic) tradition of *edible/breedable* and *unedible* animals into the priestly system and merges it under the *clean and unclean* dichotomy.

Lev. 20:24.26. These two verses of H frame Lev. 20:25 on the distinction between clean and unclean animals, discussed above. These two framing verses apply the מִן ... אֶת preposition pair together with the root בדל. The section is apparently interwoven into the Hiphil form of בדל (הִבְדִּיל); the verb holds the section together. The core message of the text is God's covenant with Israel, which assumes and implies that Israel shall be holy. The standard translation of both verses uses the motif of "separation":

> "I am the Lord your God, who has separated you from the peoples." (ESV Lev. 20:24)

However, the context does not support the motif of "separation", as the message of the verse is that Yahweh has *selected* Israel from the peoples (as a chosen nation). On the other hand,

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[143] See below p. 95–100.
[144] Thus Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law*, 123.

H associates with *holiness* when it calls Israel a "selected" (that is, *chosen*) nation therefore this occurrence belongs to the cultic domain – but definitely not to the national (isolation) domain, because isolation (as a concept of Ezra-Nehemiah) is still missing.

Num. 8:14; 16:9. A similar logic applies to these two occurrences, which belong to P by scholarly consensus.[145] The context clearly suggests, that the Levites shall be *selected* (or *to set apart*) from among the people of Israel. However, here the author (being P, and given the cultic context of the whole narrative) might also associate with the *separation* between קֹדֶשׁ and חֹל – as Levites are serving the קֹדֶשׁ.

Num. 16:21 is slightly different from the previous two in that the verb is in Niphal stem (הִבָּדְלוּ), similarly to the occurrences in Chr., and that here it instead expresses *separation*. Moses and Aaron (that is, priests and Levites) shall be *separated* from among the congregation so that Yahweh can destroy the people. It seems that the Niphal stem here not only expresses a reflexive meaning, but also implies a beginning semantic transformation of the lexeme: the context explicitly suggests the meaning "isolation" for this occurrence. The line of demarcation, however, is not between Israel and all other nations, but between the priesthood/Levites and the people of Israel.

3.3.1. Cultic Domain – Summary

The *authority* of the post-exilic priesthood (as explained in the last chapter) was expressed by the clean/unclean and sacred/common dichotomy system, which is demonstrably post-exilic, depicting the social status and aims of the priesthood in the Persian era. The *terminus technicus* for this dichotomy system is the "makes a distinction" (הִבְדִּיל בֵּין ... וּבֵין) term, which is a conceptual extension of the original, pre-exilic בדל root, by using the 'between … and between' (בֵּין...וּבֵין) preposition. This linguistic innovation was used not only to

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[145] Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 156ff.; Friedman, *Who wrote the Bible?*, 252.

articulate of the priestly dichotomy system, but also as a technical term for "splitting" (e.g. the parts of the sacrificial animal). This usage also characterizes the priestly document.

3.4. National Domain

The next object of analysis is the *national domain*, which contains occurrences from Ezra and Nehemiah.

> Ezra 6:21 "It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by every one who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land (הַנִּבְדָּל מִטֻּמְאַת גּוֹיֵ־הָאָרֶץ אֲלֵהֶם כֹּל) to worship the LORD, the God of Israel."
>
> Ezra 9:1 "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands (לֹא־נִבְדְּלוּ הָעָם יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם מֵעַמֵּי הָאֲרָצוֹת) with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites."
>
> Ezra 10:8 " and that if anyone did not come within three days, by order of the officials and the elders all his property should be forfeited, and he himself banned from the congregation of the exiles (וְהוּא יִבָּדֵל מִקְּהַל הַגּוֹלָה)."
>
> Ezra 10:11 "Now then make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives (וְהִבָּדְלוּ מִן־הַנָּשִׁים הַנָּכְרִיּוֹת מֵעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ)."
>
> Neh 9:2 " And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners (וַיִּבָּדְלוּ זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכֹּל בְּנֵי נֵכָר) and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers."
>
> Neh 10:28 "…all who have separated themselves from the peoples of the lands (וְכָל־הַנִּבְדָּל מֵעַמֵּי הָאֲרָצוֹת) to the Law of God."
>
> Neh 13:3 " As soon as the people heard the law, they *separated* from Israel all those of foreign descent. (וַיַּבְדִּילוּ כָל־עֵרֶב מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל)."

As is discussed in the seventh chapter of this dissertation,[146] the conflict between "the sons of Israel" and the "peoples of the lands" has a complex socio-historical background. The subject of this conflict was – at first sight – that mixing with a foreign population endangered national identity. While in the cultic domain the root בדל expressed that the realm of the *holy* should be separated from the outside world (חֹל); in Ezra-Nehemiah the border of the separation is repositoned to the border of the nation. Considering Milgrom's "Moving Holiness" model, this means that the word went through a *semantic shift*, applied in a new context. In Ezra-Nehemiah this lexeme means "to separate", or rather "to isolate" from the

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[146] See below p. 184–186.

surrounding nations. As seen, the usage of the Niphal stem is also a linguistic innovation in this era, adding a reflexive meaning for the verb ('separates/isolates himself or herself') with a מִן preposition. The semantic shift of the root בדל indicates, that in the age of Ezra-Nehemiah (mid–5th century BCE) the original *clean/unclean* dichotomy was shifted from cultic usage towards national self-identity, expressing national isolation from the surrounding nations.

3.5. Moral Domain

Only one group remains to be examined. In Trito-Isaiah there are two occurrences that lament for "being separated" from the community or from God.

> Jes 56:3 "Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, 'The LORD will surely separate me from his people' (הַבְדֵּל יַבְדִּילַנִי יְהוָה מֵעַל עַמּוֹ)."
> Jes 59:2 "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, (עֲוֺנֹתֵיכֶם הָיוּ מַבְדִּלִים בֵּינֵכֶם לְבֵין אֱלֹהֵיכֶם), and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he does not hear."

Both verses are in a later work, Trito-Jesaja, which is mostly thought to be a late compilation of different sources, rather than a work of a single author.[147] What is common in these two verses is that both shift the motif of separation to a *moral level*, that is, separation (expressed by בדל Hiphil in both cases) is evaluated as a punishment of a moral act. This is new, as compared to the *physical* or *ritual* separation discussed earlier.
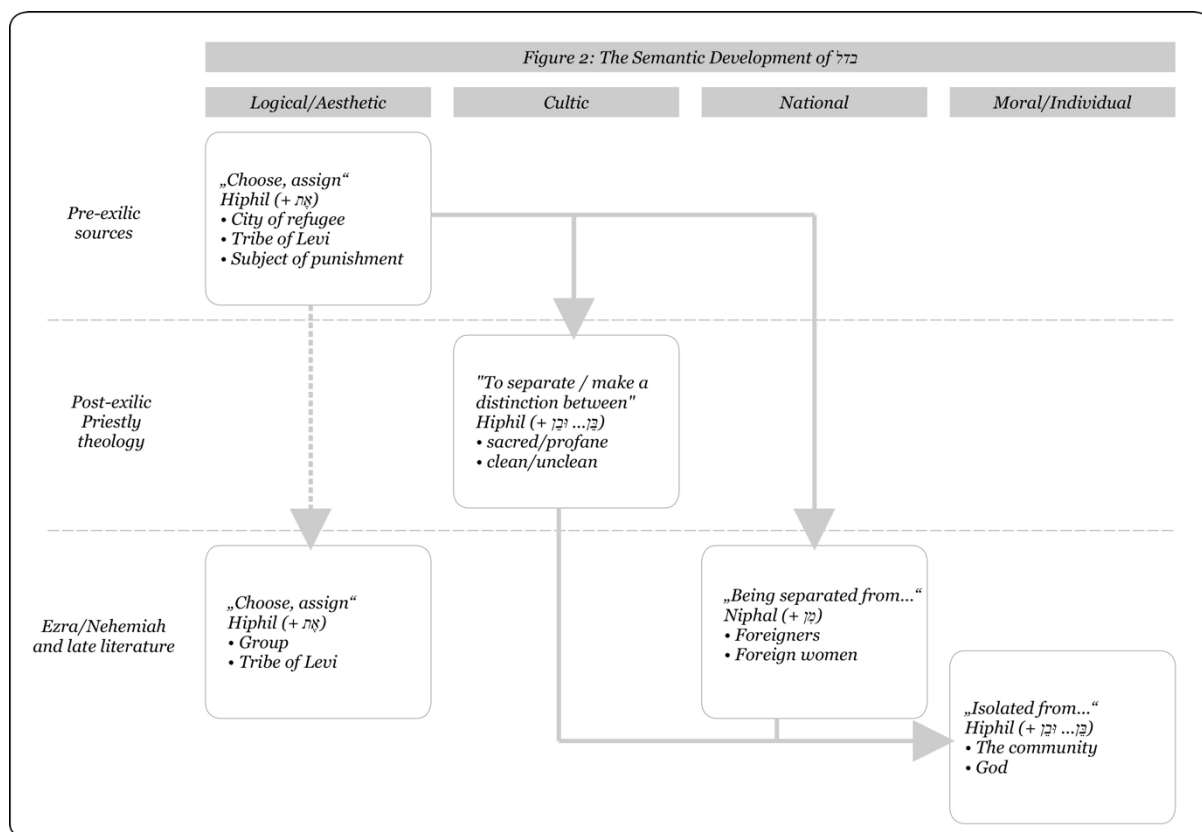
The first verse entirely opposes the logic of Ezra-Nehemiah: the foreigner shall NOT be 'separated' from the nation of God. Although the root בדל is used here in Hiphil (and not in Niphal as in Ezra-Nehemiah), the context and the usage of the compound preposition מֵעַל evokes the age of Ezra-Nehemiah, but with an opposite edge. Because of this permissive tone towards the foreigners, this text must be of a rather late origin.

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[147]Rózsa, *Az Ószövetség keletkezése II.*, 285–287.; Zenger, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 429.

The peculiarity of the second verse is the *participle* Hiphil form of the root בדל, together with the priestly usage of the prepositional pair בֵּין … וּבֵין, this time not in a ritual but a moral context. The ritual-to-moral evolution of the root בדל corresponds the similar transition of both the *clean/unclean* and the *sacred/profane* dichotomies in the Hellenistic era.

3.6. Summary: the Anatomy of Separation in a Diachronic View

The semantic analysis of the occurrences of the root בדל leads to the recognition that semantic shifts follow the development of the Priestly theology in the Hebrew Bible. The pre-exilic occurrences of the בדל root suggest a "selection" meaning, without the motif of "separation". The word takes up the "separation" meaning only in the post-exilic Priestly theology, where it was a *terminus technicus* for cultic separation. Later, in Ezra-Nehemiah, the border of the "separation" is shifted from the temple to the nation, indicating separation between Israel and the foreign nations. Finally, the word was also used in a moral, individual sense in late literature, passing through another semantic shift. The final conclusion is that the meaning of the root בדל was not constant, but rather dynamically adjusted to the changing social context, as illustrated below:

Figure 2: The Semantic Development of בדל

	Logical/Aesthetic	Cultic	National	Moral/Individual
Pre-exilic sources	„Choose, assign" Hiphil (+ אֶת) • City of refugee • Tribe of Levi • Subject of punishment			
Post-exilic Priestly theology		"To separate / make a distinction between" Hiphil (+ בֵּין… וּבֵין) • sacred/profane • clean/unclean		
Ezra/Nehemiah and late literature	„Choose, assign" Hiphil (+ אֶת) • Group • Tribe of Levi		„Being separated from…" Niphal (+ מִן) • Foreigners • Foreign women	„Isolated from…" Hiphil (+ בֵּין… וּבֵין) • The community • God

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4. The Clean and the Unclean

The other axis of the priestly separation matrix is *clean and unclean* (or *purity* and *impurity*[148]). The hermeneutic challenge of contemporary exegetes, notably the influence or even bias of the theological and ethical interpretations of the last two thousand years towards the *moral* interpretations of these terms, occurs even more in this case than in the case of the *sacred and the profane*. Moreover, the terms are still frequently used in contemporary culture in moral context, e.g. "unclean thoughts", "unclean desire", "pure intent" – tempting with moral interpretation in non-moral context. The hermeneutic bias is so strong that sometimes it becomes difficult to evaluate the semantics of some biblical verses, such as "uncleanness by adultery" in Numbers 5:13–29 (analysis below).

4.1. Clean and Unclean in Biblical Hebrew and their Semitic Origins

4.1.1. "Clean" (טהר)

In the Hebrew Bible, purity can be expressed with various roots, depending on the context: ברר, זכה, זכה, כפר, נקה, צרף, טהר. Since this dissertation discusses the priestly dichotomy concept, where the טהר root is a *terminus technicus*, I concentrate on this root along the analysis.

The טהר root occurs in verbal, nominal, and adjectival forms in the Hebrew Bible:[149]

1. **As a verb:** "to be clean, pure" in Qal (טָהֵר, Lev. 11:32); "to cleanse, purify" in Piel (טִהַר, Mal. 3:3); "to purify oneself" in Hitpael (הִטַּהֵר, Gen. 35:2). BDB makes a

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[148]In this dissertation I follow Jenson's habit in using the 'purity/impurity' terms to describe purity as a cultic concept, and the 'clean/unclean' terms as a strict translation of the טָהוֹר/טָמֵא adjectives. As Jenson argues, "the word 'purity' in English has a positive content lacking in the Priestly טָהוֹר". (Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 44.)

[149]Brown-Driver-Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 372.

distinction between *physical*, *ceremonial* and *moral* meanings – which completely match the semantic model above.[150]

2. **In nominal forms:** טֹהַר ("purity"), only in Ex. 24:10 and Lev. 12:4.6; טְהָר ("clearness, lustre"), in Psalm 89:45 but this is a dubious form (see BDB 372); **טָהֳרָה** ("purifying, cleansing"), used in ritual context: menstruation (Lev. 12:4.5), leper (Lev. 13:7.35), from a bodily issue (Lev. 15:13), from contact with the dead (Ez 44:26); of sacred things in general (1Chr. 23:28) and of persons for the Passover (2Chr 30:19).

3. **As an adjective:** טָהוֹר ("clean, pure", Ex. 25:11).

The root טהר does not occur in early eastern Semitic sources, and, according to most scholars, is of late origin.[151] However, it occurs twice in pre-biblical western Semitic sources, namely in Ugaritic polyglot vocabularies as an adjective meaning "pure":[152]

(Sum.) [SIKIL] = (Akk.) [ellu] = (Hur.) ši-——a-la-e = (Ugar.) tu-ú-ru[153]

(Sum.) [KÙ] = (Akk.) [ellu?] = (Hur.) [ši-——]a-al-e = (Ugar.) tu-ú-ru[154]

The polyglot vocabulary indicates that the word is equivalent to Akkadian "ellu" meaning "holy, sacred", "pure, clean, unpolluted", "ritually clean", "free" (man).[155] This indicates a usage very similar to that in the Hebrew Bible.

Apart from these two occurrences, no other pre-biblical sources have been found for the root. However, the root is also used in Arabic as *ṭhr* (*to make* or *declare ceremonially clean*), and in Aramaic *ṭehar* (טְהַר, *emptiness*) and *ṭîhara'* (טִיהֲרָא, brightness). It is also used by Ethiopian texts in the meaning of "purify, wash oneself with water".[156]

[150]Brown–Driver–Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 372–373.
[151]Jenni – Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament.*, 462.
[152]Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary*, 131.
[153]Ibid. Ug. 5 130 iii 19 (polyglot vocab.)
[154]Ibid. Ug. 5 137 ii 1 (plyglot vocab.)
[155]Akkadian Dictionary, Association Assyrophile de France, www.assyrianlanguages.org.
[156]Brown–Driver–Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 372.

Based on the Ugaritic evidence, it seems that the root *ṭhr* was in use in Ugarit as early as the Late Bronze Age, as the relevant texts are dated before 1178 BC.[157] Since we cannot observe early usage forms in literary texts, we may assume, based on polyglot vocabularies, that the word was in use as an adjective meaning "pure", similarly to later biblical usage.

4.1.2. "Unclean" (טמא)

As in the case of the root טהר with regard to purity, I concentrate on טמא, although other roots can also express impurity in certain contexts, such as נדה or גאל. The *terminus technicus* of the priestly impurity is טמא, which is significant in the semantic analysis below.

The root טמא also has verbal, nominal, and adjectival forms:[158]

1. **Verbal:** Qal: "be or become unclean" (טָמֵא, Lev. 11:25); Niphal: "to defile oneself" (נִטְמָא, Hos. 5:3); Piel: "to defile" (טִמֵּא, Gen. 34:5) – BDB distinguishes sexual, religious and ceremonial meanings.

2. **Nominal:** "uncleanness" (טֻמְאָה, Num. 5:19) – again, sexual, ethical / religious and ceremonial meanings are assumed by BDB; טָמְאָה form in Mic 2:10 seems to be a corrupt form.

3. **Adjectival:** "unclean" (טָמֵא, Lev. 5:2).

The root is known only from Aramaic and Arabic texts, but does not occur in Akkadian or Ugaritic literature. However, as discussed in the analysis above, the root was used in pre-exilic times too, as the story of Shechem (Gen. 34:5) proves.

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[157]Yon, Marguerite. *The City of Ugarit at Tell Ras Shamra*, 18ff.
[158]Brown-Driver-Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 379.

	Aesthetic domain		Cultic domain			
Figure 3: The Semantic Map of טהר						
	Brightness (epiphanies)	Clean (shining?) gold	Priestly concept of "separation"	Clean and unclean animals	Clean (from leprosy) - Lev 14:57 "the law of the leprosy"	Sexual (menstruation, pollution, birth)
Gen.				7:2.2.8.8; 8:20.20 (Flood narrative)		
Exod.	noun: 24:10 (like the very heaven for brightness)	adj: Ex. 25:11.17. 24.29.31. 36.38.39; 28:14.22.36; 30:3.35; 31:8; 37:2.6.11.16.17.22.23.24.26.29; 39.15.25.30.37				
Lev.		adj: Lev 24:4.6;	adj: 10:10 - to distinguish between holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; 11:47 see ->	adj: 11:47 to make a distinction between the unclean between the unclean and clean, ie. animals that can be eaten; 20:25 distinguish between clean and unclean animals (P)	verb: 13:6.6; adj: 13:13.17.23.28.34.34.37.39.40.41.58.59; 14:4.7.7.8.8.9.11.14.17.18.19.20.25.28.29.31.48.53.57; 15:13.13.28.28	12:6.7.8 (birth); 15:8 (ejaculation); noun: 12:4.6;
Num.						5:28 (from adultery)
Deut.				14:11.20 (clean birds)		23:11 (ejaculation)
Joshua						
1Sam.						
2Kings					only verb: 5:10.12.13.14 (of Naaman)	
1Chron.		adj: 28:17				
2Chron.		adj: 3:4; 9:17; 13:11				
Ezra						
Neh.						
Job	37:21 (of sky)	28:19 (clean gold)	14:4 „clean thing out of unclean"			
Psalms						
Prov.						
Prov.						
Isa.						
Jer.						
Ezek.			22:26; 44:23 difference between the holy and common, unclean and clean			
Hab.						
Zech.						
Mal.						

Figure 3: The Semantic Map of טהר (continued)						
Cultic domain			**National domain**	**Moral domain**		
Ritually clean (of humans and things) - temporary status	A clean place (ritually?)	Ritual cleansing of levites for passover or regular service	Cleanse from everything foreign	Morally clean (from sins, incl. idolatry)	Opposite	Paralel
		35:2 (verb)			not clean (לֹא טהור) 7:2; not clean אֵין טָהוֹר 7:8	
adj: 7:19 (of humans) vs. unclean; 11:36.37 (sowing seed, water); 11:32 (of vessels, after touching dead animals); 17:15 (of dead animals); 22:4.7 (of leprosy, of menstruation, of dead animals and of ejaculation)	adj: 4:12; 6:4; 10:14 (a "clean place" outside the camp; a clean place where to eat)	16:19.30.30 (the day of atonement)			unclean (טמא): 10:10; 11:36.47.57 (context: leprosy) 15:8 (ejaculation); 20:25 (animals); 20:25 שקץ to detest	
9:12.12.13.19 (because of touching a dead); adj: 9:13;18:11;18:13; 19:9.18.19 (ritually clean, eligible for cultic acts) verb: 31:23.24 (law of battle)	19:9 (a "clean place" outside the camp)	verb: 8:6.7.7.15.21 (of levites)			unclean (טמא): 19:19 sin as "the water of expiation" (מֵי חַטָּאת): 8:7	
adj: 12:15.22; 15:22; 22:17 adj: 20:26.26; (of David)					unclean (טמא): 12:15 22:17 sin (עָוֹן)	
		verb: 30:18 (of priests and levites for passover) 6:20 (adj+verb) verb: 12:30.30; 13:9.22; (a cleaning ritual of the priests and the walls)	verb: 29:15.16.18 (cleaning of the temple under Hezekiah) 34:3.5.8 (Josiah) verb: 13:30 (cleansing from everything foreign)		29:16 uncleanness (טֻמְאָה)	29:15 sanctify himself (הִתְקַדֵּשׁ)
				4:17; 11:4; 17:9; 51:2/4.7/9.10/12 (a clean heart) 12:7 the words of the Lord are pure 19:10 the fear of the Lord is clean 89:45 (clean = glory of a human) adj: 15:26 (clean ones); 22:11 (the purity of heart); 30:12 (a clean generation) verb: 20:9 (pure from sins)	51:2/4 (עָוֹן) sin, (חַטָּאת) sin 30:12 (צֹאָה) filthiness 20:9 (חַטָּאת) sin	17:9; 4:17 (צַדִּיק) righteous 12:7 (מְזֻקָּק) purified silver 51:6 (זָכָה) to be pure 22:11 (חֵן) grace 20:9 (זָכָה) to be pure
				9:2 „the righteous and the wicked, the good and the evil, the clean and the unclean"	9:2 (רָשָׁע) wicked, (טָמֵא) unclean, (אֵינֶנּוּ זֹבֵחַ) he who does not sacrifice, (חֹטֵא) sinner, (שְׁבוּעָה יָרֵא) who shuns an oath	9:2 (צַדִּיק) righteous, (טוֹב) good, (זֹבֵחַ) he who sacrifices, (נִשְׁבָּע) who swears
66:20 in clean vessel		66:17 who sanctify and purify themselves				66:17 (מִתְקַדֵּשׁ) sanctify himself
				adj: 13:27 verb: 33:8	13:27 (עָוֹן) sin, (חטא) to sin, (פֶּשַׁע) to rebel (against God)	
		43:26		22:24; 24:13.13.13; 36:25.25.33; 37:23; 36:25 (clean water) verb: 39:12.14.16 (to cleanse the land)		
				1:13 (pure eyes) 3:5 clean turban of Joshua (technical) 1:11 pure offering; 3:3.3 God will purify the sons of Levi	1:13 (רָע) evil	

Figure 4: The Semantic Map of טמא					
Physical domain		**Cultic domain**			
To destroy (a sanctuary)	To commit sinful (violent?) sexual intercourse	Adultery	Unclean animals	Diseases	Genital discharges
Gen.	verb: 34:5.13.27 to defile a woman (JE)				
Lev.		18:20 to defile himself with his neighbor's wife 18:23.24.24 to defile herself with an animal (sexually)	adj: 7:21 unclean beast (dubious); 11:4.5.6.7.8.26.27.27.29.31 unclean type of animals adj: 11:47 to make a distinction between the unclean and clean, ie. animals that can be eaten; 20:25.25.25 distinguish between clean and unclean animals and to be defiled by them 27:11.27 unclean animals	adj: 13:3.8.11.11.14.15.15.20.22.25.27.30. 36.44.44.44.45.45.46.46.51.55 unclean because of leprosy; 13:59;14:36.40.41.44.45 unclean cloths, utensils and houses because of leprosy; 14:57 the law of leprosy	adj: 12:2.2.5 Woman after birth; 15:2.5.6.7.8.16.32 male because of ejaculation vb: 15:20.20 menstruating woman 15:25.33 (adj) woman after menstruation
Num.		verb: 5.13.14.14.19.20.27.2 8.29 (the law of ordeal)		adj 18:15 redeeming the firstling of unclean animals	(impl. 5:2.3 leprosy)	(impl. 5:2.3 ejaculation)
Deut.		24:24 a divorced woman is defiled;		adj 14:7.8.10.19; 15:22		
Joshua						
Judges				adj 13:4 to eat any unclean		
2Sam.						
2Kings	23:8.10(.13).16 the king (Josiah) defiles (=destroys) the pagan high places (Dtr)					
2Chron.						
Job						
Psalms						
Prov.						
Isa.	30:22 to defile (destroy) the graven images					
Jer.						
Lam.						
Ezek.		18:6.11.15; 33:26 to defile a neighbor's wife with adultery 22:10.11 to defile his daughter-in-law				18:6 menstruation 22:10 menstruation
Hosea						
Amos						
Micah						
Haggai						
Zech.						

Figure 4: The Semantic Map of טמא (continued)					
Cultic domain					
Death	To defile the temple with idolatry	To defile the Land with idolatry	Declaration of dichotomies	Opposite term	Parallel term
verb: 5:2; 5:3.3; 7:20.21; 7:19.21; 11:24.24.25.26.32-36.39; unclean human; 11:28.28.31.39.40.40;17:15 unclean human because it touches carcasses; verb: 11:43.43.44; 14:19; 14:46 unlean because of entering an unclean house (of leprosy) 15:4.4.7.8.9.17 touches an unclean man; 15:10.10.11 because of touching an unclean man after ejaculation 15:18 having sexual relation with an unclean man or woman 15:21.22.23.24.24.26.27.27 touching an unclean woman (menstruation); 15:30.31.31, 18:19; 19:31 to defile himself with mediums or wizards 21:1.3.4.11;22:4 touching a dead man 22:5.5.6.8 touching an unclean animal; 22:3.5	15:31.31 to defile the tabernacle by uncleanness of people 20:3 to defile the Tabernacle and God's name with Molok	18:25.27.28.30 the land is defiled by sins	adj: 10:10 - to distinguish between holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; 11:47 see ->		5:2 shall be guilty 11:44 ;(אָשֵׁם) holy ()
adj 5:2.3 because of a dead man 6:7.9.12 a nazir by a dead man 19:20.20.21.22.22.22 generally: any cleanness should be cleansed (יִתְחַטָּא) 9:6.7.10 because of touching a dead man 19:7.8.10.13.13.14.15.16.17.19 touching any dead man		verb: 35:34 to defile the land		19:19 clean 19:20 to cleanse (יִתְחַטָּא)	35:33 to pollute (תַּחֲנִיפוּ)
12:15.22; 26:14 anyone in unclean status		21:23 to defile the land			24:4 to bring guilt upon the land (תַּחֲטִיא)
		adj 22:19 the land seems to be defiled			
13:7.14					
11:04					
	36:14 to defile the temple				23:13 abomination (תּוֹעֵבָה)
23:19 who is in any way unclean	29:16 with unclean ritual objects 36:14 they polluted the house of the Lord				
14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of the unclean?					
	79:1 the heathen defiled the holy temple 106:39 the nation became unclean by idolatry				106:39 playing the harlot (זָנָה)
9.2 to the clean and the unclean 6:5.5 a man of unclean lips 64:5 we all become one who is unclean 52:1 the uncircumcised and the unclean 52:11 unclean					6:5->6:7 sin (עָוֺן)
	2:7.23; 7:30; 19:13; 32:34 defiling persons or the temple with foreign gods	verb: 2:7 you defiled my land			2:7 abomination (תּוֹעֵבָה) 32:34 abomination (שִׁקּוּץ)
4:15 the victims of the war are handled as unclean people		1:9 Jerusalem as whore			
44:25.25 being unclean by a dead man	4:13.14 unclean bread of the pagans 5:11 you have defiled my sanctuary 6:21 the uncleanness of foreign nations; 9:7.11; 14:11 the nation defiles itself with transgrassions (idolatry) 20:7.18.26.30.31.43; 22:3.4.5 with idols of Egypt, Molok etc. 22:15 23:7.13.17.17.30.38 with idols (sexual metaphore); 24:11.13.13; 36:17.25.29; 36:17.18 verb (to defile) 37:23 with idols, detestable things and idols 39:24 43:7.8 to defile the Lord's name with idolatry	36:17.18 the house of the land with idolatry (as the cleanness of menstruation)	22:26 the priests made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean 44:23 to teach the nation what is the difference between clean and unclean, holy and common		20:30 adultery (זָנָה) 22:26 to profane (חלל) 32:34 abomination (שִׁקּוּץ)
9:3.4 they eat unclean things		5:3; 6:10 Israel is defiled (by idolatry)			
		7:17 you die on an unclean land			
		2:10 uncleanness, sins			
2:13.13.14 unclean because of touching an unclean body					
		13:2;			

4.2. The Semantic Maps of Clean (טהר) and Unclean (טמא)

Like the semantic map of the בדל root, both the טהר and the טמא roots are analyzed on a semantic map, shown in the previous pages. For easier readability, verbal, nominal, and adjectival usages are enumerated and sorted by semantic fields. Major thematic blocks, that is, *semantic domains,* are marked again with a bold frame and labeled as on the בדל map. Not too surprisingly, major semantic domains (cultic, national, and moral) seem to match and overlap with the same semantic domains of the בדל semantic map, which indicates that all elements of the priestly concept evolved together. The dichotomies were formed according to the guiding principles of the given age and author community. The semantic map of טהר and טמא reveals a major driver behind the concept of "separation".

4.3. The Aesthetic Domain

Clean gold. As can be seen on the map of טהר *(left-hand side)*, one of the main usages of the root is the adjectival usage in "clean gold" (זָהָב טָהוֹר).[159] All occurrences are of post-exilic origin: the Exodus and Leviticus verses are all from P,[160] all further occurrences are from the Chronicles and one from Job. Apparently, the "clean gold" expression originates from priestly circles. More interestingly, all occurrences (incl. those from Chronicles) are closely related to the cultic usage, that is, as a raw material of cultic objects. Gold was a preferred material for creating both cultic objects and jewelry due to its easy workability, beauty, and high value; but "clean gold" (זָהָב טָהוֹר) appears only in cult-related verses.

For of this reason, it is up for discussion whether to put all these occurrences into the *cultic domain* – considering that the טהר root is a *terminus technicus* in the Priestly writing. I

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[159]Ex. 25:11.17.24.29.31; 36.38.39; 28:14.22.36; 30:3.35; 31:8; 37:2.6.11.16.17.22.23.24.26.29; 39.15.25.30.37. Lev. 24:4.6; 1Chron. 28:17; 2Chron. 3:4; 9:17; 13:11; Job 28:19.
[160]Friedman, *Who wrote the Bible?*, 246ff.

believe however, that this adjective originally referred to the shining, "clean" attribute of gold as a raw material, and not to "purity" as a ritual status. Nevertheless, the correlation between ritual cleanness and the "cleanness of gold" surely exists – "clean gold" is perfectly suitable to establish a "clean" (that is, *ritually suitable*) space. That is to say, the "clean" adjective in the expression "clean gold" (זָהָב טָהוֹר) has an inherent reference to ritual cleanness.

Clean (bright?) heavens (Ex. 24:10). Apart from the occurrences of "clean gold", there are only two texts where טהר is used as an aesthetic adjective. One is Exodus 24:10, where the God of Israel appears and there is pavement of sapphire stone below his feet, "like the very heaven for clearness" (וּכְעֶצֶם הַשָּׁמַיִם לָטֹהַר, Ex. 24:10). Although Friedmann identifies the Horeb scene as an E source[161] (that is, as a pre-exilic tradition, today considered as JE), sapphire appears as God's standing or sitting platform only in Ezek. 1:26 and 10:1, which may recall the Exodus tradition,[162] the epiphany in Exodus 24:10 went through in a post-exilic reduction. Being a single, potentially pre-exilic occurrence, the expression itself may however be a later insertion, particularly in the light of the sentence structure, which does not require this expression at the end (Ex. 24:10):

וַיִּרְאֹוּ אֵת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְתַחַת רַגְלָיו כְּמַעֲשֵׂה לִבְנַת הַסַּפִּיר
[וּכְעֶצֶם הַשָּׁמַיִם לָטֹהַר]
(Ex. 24:10)

The question of whether Ex. 24:10 is part of a pre-exilic tradition or a post-exilic insert, has utmost importance in this research, because this is the only potentially pre-exilic verse that could prove the pre-exilic origin of the טהר root and usage. The other occurrence in Job further strengthens the conjecture that the root טהר is ultimately related to (pre-exilic?) epiphanies.

Job 37:21. The verses of Job 37:21–22 probably also describe an epiphany:

"And now no one looks on the light

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[161]Friedmann, *Who wrote the Bible*, 251.
[162]Thus Stuart, *Exodus* (NAC), at Ex. 24:10.

> when it is bright in the skies,
> when the wind has passed and cleared them.
> Out of the north comes golden splendor;
> God is clothed with awesome majesty." (Job 37:21–22)

Although the second verse clearly describes the context of an epiphany (that is, God appears "when it is bright in the skies", and the wind "cleanses them", (וַתְּטַהֲרֵם). A number of experts incl. Fohrer[163] support this interpretation; Clines thinks that the scene is merely meteorologic, arguing that "the scenario does not really suit the language".[164] Clines's arguments are that "it is never told that an epiphany is too bright to look upon"; that the "bright in the cloud" can also be translated as "dark with clouds"; and also that the wind blowing simply refers to a skyscape as wind is never said to surround the deity.[165] In contrast to Clines, as is voiced by other commentators, I also believe the second verse establishes an epiphanic context,[166] especially considering the expression "out of the north" (מִצָּפוֹן, i.e., "from the Zaphon") in verse 22, which, according to F. M. Cross and others, is a reference to sacred high places, exemplified by Ugaritic texts.[167]

In Job 37:21, the טהר root used as a verb (וַתְּטַהֲרֵם), translated usually as "cleaning" (that is, the wind is cleansing the sky of clouds). In the case of the previous epiphany in Ex. 24:10, the root is used as a noun (טֹהַר, "purity"). It is not easy to argue against this translation, as the טהר root is usually understood as "clean" in other contexts. However, considering the epiphanic context, the meaning of "shining" better fits the full picture: the heaven/sky is *shining* when God appears. Considering that radiance is a key divine attribute in the Ancient

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[163]Fohrer, G. *Das Buch Hiob.* KAT 16. (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1963).

[164]Clines, David J. A. *Job 21–37.* WBC 18a. New edition. Zondervan, 2015.

[165]Clines, *Job 21–37*, WBC 18a at 37:21.

[166]See also Alden, *Job: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC, ad loc. Job 37:22.

[167]Hector Avalos, *Mount Zaphon* in Anchor Bible Dictionary.

Near East, symbolizing god's power,[168] and that supernatural shining is a key characteristic of epiphanies in the Hebrew Bible,[169] the translation "shining" is more suitable.

From this perspective, the translation of the expression "clean gold" (זָהָב טָהוֹר) should also be reconsidered. Instead of, or together with "cleanness", the "shining" motif also fits gold (and sapphire), especially because both precious materials appear in dichotomies as shown above. If this is the case, the primary (original) meaning of טהר could be "shining", "radiance", and was related to divine presence and epiphanies – this is why this attribute appears exclusively in cultic or epiphany contexts, but *never* in a non-cultic situation.

If this is the case, together with the potential pre-exilic origin of Ex. 24:10, it is possible (but not fully certain) that טהר is a pre-exilic root, with the original meaning of (divine) "radiation, shining" – captured by the post-exilic Priestly tradition and converted to the clean-unclean ("shining–not shining", "divine–not divine"?) dichotomy. If so, the טהר ("[divine] radiation") would be on a par with the other pre-exilic divine attribute, the קדש ("holy"), which is also related to the concept of cleanness in other respects (see in the next chapter).

The logic also works in reverse. If the cultic "clean" (טהר) usage preceded a possible later meaning "divine radiation", then the epiphanies were worded using the priestly [cultic] "clean" concept. Be that as it may, *the cultic domain associates the "clean" attribute to divine presence.*

This recognition is of utmost importance for this research, as the perception of טהר, "clean" (possibly: "shining, radiating") as divine establishes a link between the two dichotomies – because in the טמא/קדש ("sacred/profane") dichotomy the קדש also represents

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[168]See Glenn S. Holland, *Gods in the Desert. Religions in the Ancient Near East.* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 111.

[169]See e.g. Ex. 34:29, where Moses' face is *radiant* after meeting God; similarly to near-eastern parallel text about Samsu–iluna. See Edmond Sollberger, *Samsu-iluna's Bilingual Inscriptions C and D*, RA 63, 1969, 29–43.

an ultimate divine attribute. If this is so, the presence of קדשׁ and טהר together expresses
God's presence.

4.4. The Cultic Domain

Occurrences in the cultic domain substantiate the essence of the priestly dichotomy system,
that is, the "distinction between clean and unclean" (Lev. 10:10), and the exclusion of the
impurity from the cult and the temple, i.e. the realm of the *Holy*. As frequently emphasized in
scholarly works,[170] priestly dichotomies establish a *ritual status* expressing the *suitability for
cultic usage or participation in the cult*. Klawans also makes a distinction between "ritual"
and "moral" impurities, claiming that

> "The Hebrew Bible is concerned with another form of purity and impurity, often referred to as
> 'moral.' (Some scholars draw this distinction in different terms, speaking of 'permitted' [ritual]
> and ['prohibited'] moral impurities.) Moral impurity results from committing certain acts so
> heinous that they are considered defiling. Such behaviors include sexual sins (e.g., Lev. 18:24–
> 30), idolatry (e.g., 19:31; 20:1–3), and bloodshed (e.g., Num. 35:33–34). These 'abominations'
> (תּוֹעֵבָת) bring about an impurity that morally – but not ritually – defiles the sinner (Lev. 18:24), the
> land of Israel (Lev. 18:25, Ezek. 36:17), and the sanctuary of God (Lev. 20:3; Ezek. 5:11)."[171]

The moral aspect of adultery and idolatry will be examined below. However, *bloodshed* falls
into a different category, as the text (Num. 35:33–34) does not use the root "unclean" (טמא),
but the root חנף ("to pollute, defile"), which – as Klawans admits in the citation above – does
not defile the sinner ritually. Since the focus of this dissertation is the priestly dichotomy
system built on the roots טהר and טמא as *termini technici*, and because the sin of bloodshed
apparently does not establish ritual unsuitability, this case is not discussed in my analysis –
even if the English translations suggest "pollution" (ESV) or "defilement" (CSB, KJV, CJB)
for the חנף root. The scope of this analysis is only the priestly dichotomy system.

Thus, there are six main cases within the subject of purity and impurity:

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[170]See Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism.*, 53ff; Grohmann, *Heiligkeit und Reinheit im Buch
Leviticus*, 274ff.
[171]Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 55.

1. Diseases (leprosy)

2. Death and contacting a corpse

3. Genital discharges (menstruation, childbirth, ejaculation)

4. Clean and unclean animals

5. Adultery

6. Idolatry

4.4.1. 1–3: Natural Anomalies

The first three categories consist of bodily discharges. As Klawans summarizes, "*the sources of ritual impurity are natural*"[172], meaning these are natural inherent phenomena of human life, more or less unavoidable and most of them are only temporary. It is understandable why these phenomena are banned from the cult in the Priestly system, not only as obvious symptoms of *imperfections*, but also from the perspective of primitive taboos.[173]

On the semantic map it is apparent that these three topics are concentrated in the priestly writing (mostly Leviticus and Numbers). In other biblical books there are only three occurrences deserving attention:

1Sam. 20:26. In this story, David hides in the field, and therefore is missing from the table by New Moon. The king therefore assumes that "something has happened to him. He is not clean; surely he is not clean" (בִּלְתִּי טָהוֹר הוּא כִּי־לֹא טָהוֹר). The narrative in 1Sam. 20 is a part of HDR,[174] therefore it is considered to be pre-exilic. However, this moment of the story assumes the existence of the whole priestly dichotomy system: the clean/unclean terms; the regulations regarding uncleanness and festivals, and that one becomes unclean by any bodily

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[172]Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 54.

[173]These have been studied thoroughly by cultural anthropologists, cf. Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.* London: Routledge, 1966.

[174]HDR stands for "History of David's Rise to power", see L. Rost, *Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids* (BWANT 3/6; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1926).

discharges or contact with the dead.[175] Since this occurrence would be the only case that a pre-exilic text would assume the whole priestly cultic system, it can be argued that this element of the narrative is post-exilic.

2Kings 5 (Story of Naaman). Similarly to the previous narrative, the story of Naaman assumes the post-exilic priestly concept of cleanness, also related to diseases. Not only because of this, but also because of further evidence, the story of Naaman is accepted to be post-exilic among scholars.[176]

Ezek. 22:10. The Book of Ezekiel seems to incorporate the concept of "menstrual impurity" (טֻמְאַת הַנִּדָּה). According to scholarly consensus, the oracle must have been aware of the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, and have been written in dialogue with Zeph. 3:3–4:8.[177] With regards to the sin list in verses 6–10, Block points out that the verse 8 reworks P's Lev. 19:30 with a "distinctly Ezekielian touch".[178] Verse 10 is dependent on Lev. 18:25–28. That is to say, the whole section assumes P's concept and thus does not precede the regulations of Leviticus. The same applies to Ezekiel 44:25, which – together with Ezek. 40–48 – also assumes priestly material.[179]

As a summary, the cultic ban of bodily discharges was the invention of the post-exilic priestly circles, perhaps aggregating already existing social taboos. This is a core concept of priestly theology. Although some later narratives and prophetic oracles rely on related priestly materials, only the priestly authors are interested in these phenomena on a conceptual level.

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[175]The narrative itself does not give an explanation in what way David could be *unclean*; however, as commentators point out, the reader should know that it is possible by bodily discharges or contact with the dead. See Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, WBC 10, at 1Sam. 20:26.

[176]Volkmar Fritz, *1 &2 Kings*, 259.

[177]Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, WBC, ad loc. Ezek. 22:1.

[178]Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, ad loc. Ezek. 22:8.

[179]Ibid. 498–501.

4.4.2. 4: Clean and Unclean Animals

The topic of clean and unclean animals is somewhat unique in the priestly dichotomy system, as it indicates a permanent classification of living creatures based on their inherent essence; rather then temporary, external health status or human deeds (like adultery or idolatry). In other words, though the impurity of some species excludes them from cultic suitability, the impurity is less an *external status* than an *inherent attribute* of the animals.

The question of clean and unclean animals is a well-researched topic in both the Old Testament discipline and cultural anthropology.[180] The main areas of focus of this research are the rationales behind the dietary laws[181] and their setting in the Priestly theology, with special attention paid to the intertextuality between the laws of Leviticus and the cosmogony of Genesis.[182] With regard to the broad scope of these topics, I highlight here only some aspects that are most relevant for this research.

I think that from the very point that the dietary laws were incorporated into the Priestly dichotomy system, their theological position within Priestly thinking is clear. The animals on a dietary (and as a consequence breeding) blacklist are not suitable for cultic use and are banned from the cult. Houston's hypothesis that dietary lists were developed by sanctuaries so as to ensure the purity of the worshippers[183] seems viable, although in my opinion it works in the opposite direction: instead of taking over the list of ritually-permitted animals for dietary use, the application of preexisting social dietary norms for cultic regulation is more probable. In fact, the question of whether dietary laws preceded cultic laws or vice versa is not decisive since (before the cult centralization) animal sacrifices and subsequent food consumption

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[180]Walter J. Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law.* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 140. (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.); also Jirí Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals in Leviticus 11: Their Nature, Theology, and Rationale (An Intertextual Study).* ATS Dissertation Series, vol. 4. (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society, 2000.) and Yerkes, R. K. "The Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14." JQR 14 (1923/24): 1–29.

[181]Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals in Leviticus 11*, 111ff.

[182]Ibid. 199ff.

[183]Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in biblical Law.*, 123.

formed a natural unity.[184] Therefore, dietary and ritual usability lists must inevitably have overlapped, though the dietary list is longer than the cultic one, including for instance locusts, crickets and grasshoppers (Lev. 11: 22) that were not sacrificed in the temple.

The key question here is whether the idea of clean and unclean animals preceded the priestly dichotomy system, or whether it was an invention of the post-exilic priesthood. If the concept preceded the priestly system, then the latter was the extension of the former. Put differently: if the idea of *clean/unclean* animals was an earlier tradition, then it would prove the ancient origin of the *clean/unclean* dichotomy and that the post-exilic system was an extension of a preceding tradition.

That some kind of dietary policy in Israelite society preceded the 7th century BCE is beyond doubt. Archaeological surveys prove that pork taboo was a key characteristic of Israelite settlements in the Iron Age, although the pig was widespread among surrounding Philistine, Ammonite and Moabite populations.[185] The fact that the pork taboo characterized only the Israelite population but not the surrounding nations narrows the scope of possible explanations, which otherwise would have ranged from hygienic to cultural, to theological and symbolic explanations.[186] Given the fact that pork taboo is (shepherd-) population-specific, I think that the possible explanations are as follows:

- **Cultural:** Pigs, together with camels and horses belong to the class of later domesticated animals, while, as a shepherd population, early Israelites raised only cattle, sheep and goats. Also, pigs' resource needs (esp. surface water) could not be satisfied in the Judaean and Samarian highlands, thus these animals simply could not gain acceptance among Israelite clans.[187] Simply, Israelites did not breed pigs because pigs were unsuitable for the highlander shepherd lifestyle.

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[184]Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 187ff.
[185]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 119; Houston, *Purity and Monotheism*, 129ff.
[186]An overview of rationales see Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 112–144.
[187]Houston, *Purity and Monotheism*, 88.

- **Economic:** A similar, but more economic explanation argues that pigs, being mixed feeding animals, were in direct competition with humans for grains.[188] Therefore, breeding pigs would have been inefficient for Israelite tribes who followed a desert nomadic lifestyle. A similar economic argument applies to camel, which was an inefficient resource for regular meet-raising and milk production, being a desert-oriented animal with slow reproductive cycle.[189]

- **Symbolic:** Finally, even if economic arguments apply to the shepherd clans, why did settled agricultural populations not start raising pigs? A possible explanation, argue Finkelstein and Silberman, is that the tradition to ban pigs had become a symbol of national identity and ethnical differentiation. [190]

Even if the pig taboo was a preceding Israelite tradition, was it also part of the *clean/unclean* distinction, as it was applied in the post-exilic priestly system? This question is still open, and will be answered with the help of written sources. On the semantic maps of both the clean and the unclean, there are some potential candidates that could prove the pre-exilic origin of the clean/unclean classification of animals.

Deut. 14–15. The list of clean and unclean animals belongs to the Deuteronomic Code (Deut. 12:1–26:15). This is a heterogeneous collection of laws and regulations that shows some similarities with P and H, but also unique characteristics, and is a subject of extensive discussion in biblical research.[191] The dietary laws in Deut. 14 are considered to have used Leviticus 11 as source, because "such laws are typical of Leviticus but exceptional in Deuteronomy".[192]

An argument for the late origin of a text on the grounds of its atypical style or theme within the text corpus comes with the risk that the proof itself is left out during the proof

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[188]Houston, *Purity and Monotheism*, 85.
[189]Ibid. 86.
[190]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 119–120.
[191]Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 177.
[192]Ibid. 178.

procedure. In this case, Deut. 14. could be the proof that the catalogue of clean and unclean animals had already existed before the Exile. However (even on the semantic map) – apart from some cases in the canonical Deuteronomy – the whole idea of *separation* is missing from Deuteronomy on a conceptual level. In Deuteronomy there are some sporadic occurrences of both טהר and טמא.[193] However, these occurrences do not form such an overarching concept as in the Priestly writing, which suggests that the author was either working from even earlier sources (which is not the case); or that the section was inserted into the text corpus at a later age. As the concept of *clean and unclean* is scarce in Deuteronomy, and as this kind of classification is foreign to Deuteronomic concepts (especially with the word set of the Priestly writing, e.g. טהר and טמא), it can be stated that the list of clean and unclean animals in Deut. 14 comes later than the Priestly concept.

Judges 13:4. A similar rule applies to this single occurrence in Judges, which prescribes that a Nazirite shall eat "nothing unclean" (כָּל־טָמֵא). Beyond the single occurrence of the root טמא in the text corpus, commentators point out that the sentence assumes the knowledge of clean and unclean animals and is thus dependent on Lev. 11 and Deut. 14.[194] The whole section in Judges 13 relies on the Nazirite Vow of Numbers 6. That is to say, this section is interdependent with the Priestly theology, and – being a single occurrence in Judges – can hardly prove any tradition preceding the Priestly concept.

The Noah tradition (Gen. 7–8). The last group of occurrences to be discussed here is the story of Noah, who took clean and unclean animals into the ark. The intertextuality between Lev. 11 and the Flood Account is analyzed thoroughly by Moskala.[195] Here I focus only on the historical aspect: does the story of Noah assume the priestly clean/unclean dichotomy? Or does the Flood Narrative prove that the concept of clean and unclean animals was in use in pre-exilic times?

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[193]Deut. 14.7.8.10.11.19.20; 23:11; 12:15.22; 15:22; 24:24.
[194]Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, NAC, at Judg. 13:4.
[195]Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals in Leviticus 11*, 233–250.

Following the early discovery of Jean Astruc in his classic work,[196] the story of the
Flood is a composition of multiple sources. According to the generally accepted
classification,[197] the narrative has three layers: a (pre-exilic) J, a (post-exilic) P, and a later
Editor. These three layers have different opinions about the length of the Flood (40 days vs.
150 days); and the number of clean animals that Noah took into the ark (seven pairs of clean
animals vs. two pairs of all animals). According this classification, the verses about the
animals taken into the ark belong to the J and the third Editor layers: [198]

> **J (i.e. pre-exilic) layer.** 7:1 Then the Lord said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your
> household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. 2 Take with you
> seven pairs of all clean animals (הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהוֹרָה), the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals
> that are not clean (הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא טְהֹרָה), the male and his mate, 3 and seven pairs of the birds of
> the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. (Gen.
> 7:1–3, J source)
> **Editor (i.e. post-exilic) layer.** 7:8 Of clean animals (הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהוֹרָה), and of animals that are not
> clean (אֲשֶׁר אֵינֶנָּה טְהֹרָה וּמִן־הַבְּהֵמָה), and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, 9
> two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. (Gen.
> 7:8–9)

What immediately catches the reader's eye is that both texts apply the root טהר ("clean").
This is rather surprising, since the classical documentary hypothesis dated the J layer in pre-
exilic times – which would have the consequence that the root טהר would have been in use
before the exile, together with the concept of *clean animals*. Another observation is that the J
source does not apply the root טמא ("unclean"); it uses the expression "not clean" (לֹא טְהֹר)
instead. Finally, the Editor's text uses almost the same expression (הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר אֵינֶנָּה טְהֹרָה)
as J (הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא טְהֹרָה).

Although the original classification was firm in its view that in this narrative the J layer
preceded P (and therefore also the latest editor layer), recent research is of the opposite view.
It was already discovered by Westermann that the basic layer of the narrative is P, and J was

[196]Jean Astruc, *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il parait que Moyse s'est servi pour composer le
récit de la Genése.* (1753).
[197]Wenham, *Genesis*, WBC, ad loc. Gen. 6:9; also Friedmann, *Who wrote the Bible?*, 246. In this section I use
the original classification of sources (notably J) for easy readability.
[198]Wenham, *Genesis*, WBC, ad loc. Gen. 6:9.

worked into it later.[199] In the light of Mesopotamian parallels, Wenham thinks that certain elements of the flood tradition are missing from P (e.g. closing the ark's door, opening the window, the sacrifice) but also from J (building the ark, landing on a mountain and exiting from the ark). He assumes that the J editor used a source that contained all the elements, and combined it with P's material.[200]

In any event, the problem of clean animals (הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהוֹרָה) in the Flood Narrative is still unsolved. Based on the original classification one could argue that the (pre-exilic) J layer already knew and used the term טהר ("clean") for permitted animals (without the טמא counterpart, as it used לֹא טָהֹר instead). However, as Hamilton argues, J *"discretely avoids using the word ṭāmē"*,[201] that is, it omits the term so that God shall not command to save *unclean* animals. It also means that the author could be entirely aware of the (priestly) concept of clean and unclean animals, thus it can be dated in post-exilic times. In sum, the story of the Flood does not prove the pre-exilic usage of the טהר ("clean") term.

4.4.3. Summary: Clean and Unclean Animals

As a summary, archaeological surveys suggest that pig taboo was a differentiating characteristic of Israelite population as early as in the Iron Age. The underlying rationales were primarily historical-economic. That is, small livestock breeding on the highlands was not economic, therefore Israelite tribes did not employ it in the first place, which later might have been become a symbolic differentiator against Canaanite and Philistine population. As animal breeding, consumption and sacrifices formed a natural unity in traditional tribal religions, sacrifices obviously targeted those animals which were the basics of the economy, namely small livestock and cattle – it is self evident that non-edible animals were not permitted to be sacrificed. It is also a possible but not evidenced hypothesis that edibility lists might have been created by sanctuaries even before the Babylonian Exile. Nevertheless, the

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[199]Westermann, *Genesis*, 533.
[200]Wenham, *Genesis*, WBC, ad loc. Gen. 6:9.
[201]Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1–17*, NICOT, ad loc. Gen. 7:2.

post-exilic Jerusalem priesthood made the list of edible and non-edible animals a core concept of its ritual/theological system, and the concept apparently fits into the system of separation, although – being an inherent feature and not a temporary ritual status – the logic of clean and unclean animals differs from bodily diseases and discharges that are also banned from the cult. Although the topic of *clean/unclean* animals also appears sporadically in other books in the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 7:2.8.20; Deut. 14–15; Judges 13:4), all these texts assume an interdependence with the Priestly theology and the list of Lev. 11 in all cases, as shown above; rather than the pre-existence of the tradition before the Exile. The ban of unaccepted animals, and labeling them as "unclean" parallels the ban of health disorders from the *holy* place; and the extensive lists of "clean" (i.e. permitted) and "unclean" (i.e. not permitted) animals is either a product of the post-exilic priesthood, or perhaps an incorporation of previous similar lists, as Houston assumes.[202]

4.4.4. 5–6: "Moral" Anomalies: Adultery and Idolatry

The four categories of bodily discharges, diseases and non-permitted animals were "technical" reasons for exclusion from the cult. They are excluded from the *sacred* space for aesthetic reasons. Hence these form a "ritual domain" to indicate that these exclusions are valid only in the context of rituals, but otherwise they are not a subject of moral judgment.

The remaining two categories, however, seem to be judged as moral cases. Adultery and idolatry are equally ineligible for the cult. Moreover, both are referred to as serious sins with severe consequences, invoking the anger of God.[203] One is often used as a metaphor for the other. Idolatry is like adultery,[204] and Jerusalem who worships foreign gods is like a whore.[205] As these topics are intensified in H and Chr, there is a scholarly consensus that

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[202]Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law.*, 123.
[203]2Kings 23:13 (the abomination of the Ammonites); 2Chr. 36:14 (the house of the Lord is polluted); Ps. 106:39 (the nation became unclean by idolatry); Ezek. 43:7.8 (to defile the Lord's name with idolatry) etc.
[204]Ezek. 23:7.13.17.30.38.
[205]Lam. 1:9.

there is a "moral shift" from P to H, assuming that H edited P and injected its own moral codex into P.[206]

There are, however, two concerns with regard to the ritual status of adultery and idolatry:

1. If there was a moral shift between P and H, what was the original position of P regarding idolatry? Can it be interpreted as non-moral? What was on P's agenda?

2. Although adultery is a sin even in the earliest layers of the Hebrew Bible (Ex. 20:14), why exactly was this sin explicitly banned from the cult (and not all the other similar sins like stealing, false witnessing, murder etc.)?

Idolatry

In regards to the first question, in the semantic maps it can be seen that, as opposed to all the other categories (diseases, bodily discharges, unclean animals and even adultery), there is no such explicit ritual status for individuals who are "unclean by idolatry", neither in direct nor indirect cases. Touching an unclean woman (Lev. 15:21) or a corpse (Num. 5:2) or even an unclean animal (Lev. 22:5) makes one ritually unclean, but there is no a regulation that touching an idol would make one (temporarily) unclean. In other words, idolatry is not a subject of P's binary impurity laws.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the presence of any other gods than Yahweh *defiles/pollutes* the temple (both the roots טמא and חלל are used in this context, e.g. Lev. 20:3 and Ezek. 43:7). Idolatry inherently eliminates the cleanness of the sacred space (2Kings 36:14, Jer. 2:7 etc.). The relation between monotheism and cleanness becomes clear in these cases. The *clean/unclean* system is intended to safeguard the perfection/aesthetics of the *holiness*, and the presence of any spot or imperfection diminishes the holiness of the place

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[206]Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 50–51.

(i.e., the suitability of the place or people for ritual purposes).[207] From this angle, other cultic practices than were permitted or the presence of other gods than Yahweh *per definitionem* makes the holy space unsuitable and inherently ritually *unclean* – but no such a ritual status as "unclean by idolatry" exists (at least not for humans).

Was idolatry immoral, then? Certainly it was, as it violated the very foundation of the priestly system, the worship of the single God Yahweh and the exclusion of all other gods from the cult. Idolatry was as immoral as could be, and it is understandable that it was accompanied by the overwhelming wrath of the prophets (Jer. 2:7, 7:3, 19:13, 32:34; Ezek. 5:11, 14:11, 20:7 etc.), as "other" gods endangered the realm of Yahweh and his temple. The immorality of idolatry (i.e., anything other than the elements of Yahweh-cult) was axiomatic, as well as that idolatry contradicted ritual purity. Despite this, or precisely for this reason, idolatry itself was not part of the priestly purity dichotomy, as idolatry itself endangered the foundation of the whole system, and thus represented the ultimate impurity. This is why idolatrous acts or touching an idol were not classified in the same way as with individual impurity factors – there was no procedure for purification in case somebody "accidentally" got in contact with an idol. Even if textual and some rare archaeological evidence (foremost Isaiah 57, the Elephantine Papyri, and some cist and shaft tombs from the 6th and 5th century[208]) suggest that the cult monopoly was not fully executed, the priestly system simply ignores idolatry, as it is not an event that *should* happen everyday in Yahweh's realm.[209]

Pre-exilic Roots: the Destruction of Foreign Sanctuaries

We now come to one of the most surprising parts of the semantic map of טמא: the demolition of foreign sanctuaries. As the semantic map indicates, the core chapter of the

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[207]On the relation between monotheism and purity see Houston, Walter J. *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in biblical Law.*, 218ff.

[208]Hess, *Israelite Religions*, 341–342.

[209]In contrast e.g. to later rabbinical discussions about the types of idolatry, see Avodah Zarah in the Babylonian Talmud.

Deuteronomistic History, 2Kings 23, extensively utilizes the root טמא, in the execution catalogue of 23:4–20. What was King Josiah doing with foreign gods and their sanctuaries?

- He **burnt** (וַיִּשְׂרְפֵם) the vessels made for Baal, Asherah and for all the hosts of heaven. (23:4b)

- He **deposed** (וְהִשְׁבִּית) the priests who burned incense to Baal and the moon (23:5)

- He **burned** (וַיִּשְׂרֹף) the Asherah at the brook Kidron (23:6)

- He **broke down** (וַיִּתֹץ) the houses of the male cult prostitutes (23:7)

- He **defiled** (וַיְטַמֵּא) the high places where the priests had made offerings (23:8a)

- He **broke down** (וְנָתַץ) the high places of the gates (23:8b)

- He **defiled** (וְטִמֵּא) the Topheth (23:10)

- He **removed** (וַיַּשְׁבֵּת) the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun (23:11a)

- He **burned** (שָׂרַף) the chariots of the sun with fire (23:11b)

- He **pulled down** (וַיָּרָץ) the altars on the roof (23:12:b)

- He **defiled** (טִמֵּא) the high places at the east of Jerusalem (23:13)

- He **broke in pieces** (וַיְשַׁבַּר) the pillars and the Asherim (23:14)

- He **pulled down and burned** (הֵדַק, וַיִּשְׂרֹף) the altar at Bethel (23:15a)

- He **burned** (וְשָׂרַף) the Asherah (23:15b)

- He **burned and defiled** (וַיִּשְׂרֹף וַיְטַמְאֵהוּ) the tombs on the mount (23:16)

- He **removed** (הֵסִיר) all the shrines in the cities of Samaria (23:19)

- He **sacrificed and burned** (וַיִּשְׂרֹף, וַיִּזְבַּח) the priests (23:20)

Josiah's cult reform (2Kings 22–23) is one of the most discussed sections in biblical research. Since de Wette's assumption that the Book of Law found may be identical with Deuteronomy,[210] the story of the reform has been used to date the book of Deuteronomy.[211]

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[210]W.M.L. de Wette, *Dissertatio critica*, 1805. [Incomplete citation]
[211]See e.g. Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 114–19.

The text is usually broken down to three or more redactional layers, e.g. Würthwein identifies a "discovery-covenant report" (22:3–23:3), a "reform report" (23:4–15) and a later insertion in 23:16–20.[212] Other commentators suggest a more or less similar distribution, assuming pre-deuteronomistic and deuteronomistic layers, but ultimately agree that "the whole is the product, from whatever sources, of the deuteronomist"; and that "the style throughout is deuteronomistic".[213]

Accepting that the narrative is mostly a Deuteronomistic writing, it is striking that the root טמא is used three times in it, moreover in a section not considered to be a post-Deuteronomistic insert (23:8.10.13; Würthwein's "reform breport" in 23:4–15)! That would assume that either the use of this root is a work of a post-exilic (priestly) editor, or the root was known and used by the Deuteronomist even before the Exile.

Similar to the "single occurrence" arguments already applied in this analysis, it is again a valid idea that the presence of the root טמא is the work of a post-exilic editor who reworked the execution catalogue of 23:4–20 according to the priestly concept and word usage. There are, however, strong arguments against this idea:

1. First, the logic of the "single occurrence" argument is not applicable here. In the case of Deut. 14–15 and Judges 13:4, the word usage assumed the knowledge of the total *clean/unclean* concept. The word טמא was used explicitly to refer to the *unclean* manner of some animals (the concept found in Lev. 11). In 2Kings however, the root טמא does not refer to any impurity and the author does not assume that the reader knows the *clean/unclean* concept.

2. Not only does the author not assume the priestly *clean/unclean* concept, but it makes no sense to assume that King Josiah would have "polluted" the foreign sanctuaries. A foreign god and his/her sanctuary are unclean by definition, the ultimate

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[212]E. Würthwein, *Die Josianische Reform und das Deuteronomium*, ZTK 73 (1976), 395–423.
[213]T. R. Hobbs, *2Kings*, WBC 13, at 2Kings 22.

abomination (תּוֹעֵבָה, the word is used explicitly in 23:13). It would be contradictory if King Josiah "polluted" foreign high places. The term, "טמא-ing the high places outside Jerusalem" contradicts the priestly dichotomy.

3. Finally, the word parallels suggest explicit destruction rather than simple "pollution": burning (שׂרף), breaking (שׁבר, נתץ) and removing (הֵסִיר) are heading this list, which suggest a meaning of elimination, destruction also for טמא. Although Bible translations translate it in 23:8b as "smashed" (CJB); "defiled" (ESV) and "desecrated" (KJV). From the parallels it is clear that the proper translation is "destroy, demolish or devastate", and also that the usage of the root טמא here does not carry any connotation of the post-exilic priestly concept of *clean/unclean*.

Isaiah 30:22. The same applies to the homily of Isa. 30:19–33 that predicts God's salvation after the fall of Judah "in a Wisdom/Deuteronomic style",[214] and the destruction (וְטִמֵּאתֶם) of "carved idols overlaid with silver and your gold-plated metal images" (Isa 30:22). Although Oswalt thinks that the root טמא here means "a specific act of deconsecration, even to the point of destruction", which would refer to "the connection of cleanness with the holy".[215] The passage in Isaiah 30 does not assume the priestly purity system, and the vocabulary of 30:22 resembles 2Kings 23. The author simply wants to see the carved images *destroyed*, not "deconsecrated". Deconsecrating an abomination would have been a contradiction anyway.

In summary, the destruction of sanctuaries and idols in 2Kings 23 and Isaiah 30 seems to preserve a trace of pre-exilic usage of the root טמא. Here, the word is used with the meaning of "destruction", paralleled by burning (שׂרף), breaking (שׁבר, נתץ) and removing (הֵסִיר). As these occurrences seem to be the most ancient usages of the root טמא in the Hebrew Bible, the conclusion can be drawn that the original meaning of the root טמא was

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[214]John D. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, WBC at Isa. 30:19.
[215]John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, at Isa. 30:19.

"destruction", and it was only later transformed by the priestly dichotomy system to mean "uncleanness". The original meaning also has a place in the priestly context: what is not (aesthetically) *perfect* (or an idolatry as-is), *destroys* the holiness of the cult.

Interestingly, all the cases discussed in the previous section, complaining about the uncleanness/defilement of the temple (Ezek. 5:11) or the Land (Jer. 2:7), match both the Deuteronomic and Priestly context: in the original meaning of the word, an idol "destructs" the holiness of a place as if it were physically destroyed. In the Priestly context, it means that the idol makes the place *unclean* and therefore unsuitable for the cult. Either way, idolatry is the most terrible thing that can happen to the temple or to the land.

Adultery and Other Sexual Sins

We come to the last category of uncleanness within the *cultic domain*, namely, adultery and sexual sins. As pointed out above, adultery is a standard metaphor for idolatry in biblical literature (Ezek. 23:7 etc.). Perhaps this is why exegetes often overlook its *uniqueness* within the priestly dichotomy system, and classify adultery as a moral sin prohibited by the priestly law.[216]

The enumeration of adultery with aspects of impurity is strange because it does not fit into the overall picture. As discussed above, the impurity factors are fundamentally aesthetic: health issues and bodily discharges, unclean animals (likely an incorporation of an earlier tradition), and foreign cultic objects that contradicted holiness and therefore were unclean. The latter were an extreme case, for they did not belong to temporary impurity factors while the others did. Adultery, however, is a rather strange item on this list, considering that no other sins (theft, homicide, false testimony or eating blood etc.) are enumerated as an

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[216] The question is not that adultery is a sin or not, as adultery is obviously a sin according to Exod. 20:14, and it is enumerated among other sexual transgressions in Lev. 18:20. It is also not a question whether adultery itself is assessed as an immoral act, because obviously it is. The question is, whether the usage of the root טמא in Lev. 18:20 and especially in pre-exilic texts (Gen. 34:5, Deut. 24:24) refers to ritual defilement or not.

impurity factor. Why would adultery and sexual sins be "privileged"? More interestingly, not the sinner, but the victim is defiled: in Deut. 24:24 a divorced woman; in Ezek. 18:11 the neighbor's wife; in Ezek. 22:11 a daughter-in-law is "defiled". Does it then count as a moral sin?

Lev. 18:19–25. We first examine the list of sexual sins in Lev. 18. This verse belongs to the Holiness Code (Lev. 17–26), which enumerates unlawful sexual relations.

19 You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness while she is in her menstrual uncleanness (בְּנִדַּת טֻמְאָתָהּ).
20 And you shall not lie sexually with your neighbor's wife and so make yourself unclean with her (לְטָמְאָה־בָהּ).
21 You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane (תְחַלֵּל) the name of your God: I am the Lord.
22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination (תּוֹעֵבָה).
23 And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean (לְטָמְאָה־בָהּ) with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion (תֶּבֶל).
24 "Do not make yourselves unclean (אַל־תִּטַּמְּאוּ) by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean (נִטְמְאוּ),
25 and the land became unclean (וַתִּטְמָא), so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

In the quotation, text cohesion is maintained by the consecutive use of "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה) and "unclean" (טָמְאָה). Apparently, the core idea behind the section is that these sexual sins (approaching a woman during menses, adultery, [offering a child to Molech], homosexuality and bestiality) make not only the perpetrator, but also the land *unclean* (טמא).

One of the key terms, "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה), appears only 6 times in Leviticus (18:22.26.27.29.30 and 20:13), but it is extensively used in Deuteronomy and Ezekiel, to describe practices of the surrounding nations such as idolatry (Deut. 7:25, 27:15), eating and sacrificing defected animals (17:1), human sacrifice (12:31) and witchcraft (18:9–14).[217] Ezekiel uses the term similarly to inordinate sexual acts (22:11, 33:26), idolatry (6:9, 11; 8:20; 11:18), immorality (18:12) and profaning the temple (43:8).[218] Obviously, the term refers to ritual anomalies, which are not permitted in the monotheistic system (already in

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[217]Hartley, John E., *Leviticus*, WBC, at Lev. 18:1.
[218]Ibid. at Lev. 18:1.

Deuteronomy), and which characterizes the surrounding nations (only). The word "perversion" (תֶּבֶל) can also mean "confusion", derived as it is from the root בלל ("to mix, mingle, confuse"[219]).

As usually understood by commentators, prohibited sexual practices (incest, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality) and further idolatry (divination, spiritism, sorcery and necromancy) are considered a disorder in God's world by the author of the Holiness Code.[220] The argumentation is polemic: these practices are made by foreign nations – commentators refer here to homosexual and bestiality practices in Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Canaanite and Hittite sources and laws.[221] The whole chapter (Lev. 18) is formulated as a contract between Yahweh and Israel - it starts with a formula ("*I am the Lord your God*") very similar to the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:2 and Deut. 5:6). Commentators usually regard the chapter as parallel to Hittite treaties.[222]

I believe that the cataloging of sexual sins in the Holiness Code is similar to the list of clean and unclean animals in Lev. 11. The list of permitted and prohibited sexual behaviors was either a previously existing tradition, or a construct of the priestly authors. Although the argumentation of H would suggest that these practices are prohibited because they are the practices of foreign nations (Lev. 18:24.27), the question remains: where does the intense interest of H in sexual disorders come from?

Num. 5:11–31. The law of ordeal is a subject of extensive discussion in biblical research, as well as in the early and medieval rabbinic tradition (tractate Sotah in the Mishnah and in the Talmud). The range of discussion exceeds the scope of this dissertation, for which reason I highlight only some major aspects. As ordeals were widespread in the Ancient Near East,[223] the custom (and law) of ordeal must have gone back to a preceding era.[224] However,

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[219] Brown-Driver-Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 117.
[220]Thus Hartley, John E., *Leviticus*, WBC, Explanation at Lev. 18.
[221]Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT, at Lev. 18.
[222]Ibid. at Lev. 18.
[223]T. H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 280–300.

referring to both literary problems and parallels, B. Stade identified two sources for the text that had been woven together: a meal offering of remembrance (Num. 5:11–12, 13a, 15–18a, 19–20, 22a, 23–24, 25b–26a, 31) and a meal offering of jealousy (Num. 5:13a, 14, 18a, 21–22b, 25ab, 27-30).[225] However, despite the compound nature of the text, some commentators consider word repetitions and parallels in the text as a literary tool to push the message of the editor:[226] that is, "Num. 5 as a whole is about the sanctification of the community".[227]

What is interesting in this current investigation is the question of what is needed for the "sanctification" of the community? A deeper look into the text reveals the nature of (moral?) *impurity*:

> Num. 5:13 if a man lies with her sexually, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and she is undetected though she has defiled herself (וְהִיא נִטְמָאָה), and there is no witness against her, since she was not taken in the act,
> 14 and if the spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife who has defiled herself (וְהִיא נִטְמָאָה), or if the spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife, though she has not defiled herself,
> […]
> 19 Then the priest shall make her take an oath, saying, 'If no man has lain with you, and if you have not turned aside to uncleanness (טָמְאָה) while you were under your husband's authority, be free from this water of bitterness that brings the curse.
> 20 But if you have gone astray, though you are under your husband's authority, and if you have defiled yourself (נִטְמֵאת), and some man other than your husband has lain with you,
> […]
> 27 And when he has made her drink the water, then, if she has defiled herself (נִטְמָאָה) and has broken faith with her husband, the water that brings the curse shall enter into her and cause bitter pain, and her womb shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away, and the woman shall become a curse among her people.
> 28 But if the woman has not defiled herself (לֹא נִטְמָאָה) and is clean (וּטְהֹרָה), then she shall be free and shall conceive children.
> 29 "This is the law in cases of jealousy, when a wife, though under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself (וְנִטְמָאָה)

The differences between this text and the list of Num. 18 discussed earlier are noteworthy. As opposed to the sexual disorder list of H, this text does not draw a generic conclusion that the adulterous wife would pollute the whole land and therefore should be cut from Israel. It does

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[224]So also Budd, *Numbers*, WBC, ad loc. Num. 5:11ff.
[225]Stade, "Die Eiferopferthora," ZAW 15 (1895) 166–78.
[226]Timothy R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, NICOT.
[227]Budd, *Numbers*, WBC, ad loc. Num. 5:11ff.

not mention any abomination (תּוֹעֵבָה) that would be the custom of the Canaanites. It also

does not assume that the name of God would be profaned (as in Lev. 18:21).

Instead, the text apparently uses the "defiles herself" (וְהִיא נִטְמָאָה) as a *terminus*

technicus, denoting the sexual act itself, in all cases in Niphal except the nominal form

(טֻמְאָה) in 19. In one verse (28), its priestly opposite "clean" (וּטְהָרָה) also appears, indicating

that not committing the act indicates ritual cleanness – and that the editor of the text knew the

priestly *clean/unclean* dichotomy! Though, the dispassionate usage of "defile" (נִטְמָאָה)

throughout the whole text, and the fact that there are no closing curses on those who commit

adultery, reinforces the suspicion that the "defile" (נִטְמָאָה) word is used here as a mere

technical term for the sexual act, of which the wife is accused.

Adultery in Ezekiel. Similar to the previous case, the root טמא is used for committing

adultery by Ezekiel:

> 18:6 if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel,
> does not defile (לֹא טִמֵּא) his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual
> impurity,
> 18:11b who even eats upon the mountains, defiles (טִמֵּא) his neighbor's wife,
> 18:15 he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel,
> does not defile (לֹא טִמֵּא) his neighbor's wife
> 22:11 One commits abomination (עָשָׂה תּוֹעֵבָה) with his neighbor's wife; another lewdly defiles
> (טִמֵּא) his daughter-in-law; another in you violates his sister, his father's daughter.
> 33:26 You rely on the sword, you commit abominations (עֲשִׂיתֶן תּוֹעֵבָה), and each of you defiles
> his neighbor's wife (טִמֵּאתֶם); shall you then possess the land?

The verses apparently use the Deuteronomic logic ("possess the land", 33:26) and vocabulary

("abomination", תּוֹעֵבָה). In the meantime, they apply "defile" (טִמֵּא) consistently like Num. 5,

as an apparent *terminus technicus* for an illegal sexual act with "the neighbor's wife" or with

a daughter-in-law. These texts do not assume the knowledge of the priestly clean/unclean

dichotomy system, nor do they proclaim that the illegal sexual act would defile the whole

land. Instead, the term "defile" (טִמֵּא) is used only to describe the act itself without its further

implications. The punishment for the act is typical Deuteronomic ("shall you then possess the

land?" 33:26), which indicates that the root טמא was in use even before the priestly system as

a description of sinful sexual intercourse.

Deut. 24:4. Another occurrence in Deuteronomy confirms the assumption that the root

טמא was merely used as a *terminus technicus* for sexual intercourse in the Deuteronomic

literature.

> 24:4 [If a woman divorces the second time] then her former husband, who sent her away, may not
> take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled (הֻטַּמָּאָה), for that is an abomination
> (תוֹעֵבָה) before the Lord.

There can hardly be better proof that the term "defile" (טִמֵּא) is a *terminus technicus* for

sexual intercourse. As the second marriage of the woman was also a legal marriage, the case

of adultery does not stand legally. Craigie thinks that the usage of the word "defile" (טִמֵּא)

suggests adultery, and refers to Lev. 18:20.[228] However, a reference to the list of H in Lev. 18

is not adequate, as the laws in Deut. 24 are deuteronomic[229] and therefore stem from a

preceding era. The text itself does not even require the priestly concept of purity. The word

"defile" (טִמֵּא) is used here as a word for sexual intercourse, without the purity system of the

later priestly school.

The defiling of Dinah (Gen. 34) In the story of Dinah, one can find further evidence

for the pre-exilic use of the root טמא. The relevant verses in Gen. 34 are:

> 5   Now Jacob heard that he had defiled (טִמֵּא) his daughter Dinah.
> 13   The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully, because he had
>   defiled (טִמֵּא) their sister Dinah.
> 27   The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered the city, because they had defiled
>   (טִמְּאוּ) their sister.

The narrative of Dinah is a pre-exilic tradition (traditionally classified as JE). According to

the story, Dina, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, visits the Hivites where Shechem violates

(that is, rapes: וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֹתָהּ) her. Afterwards, Shechem wants to marry Dina, but her brothers

take revenge instead. As the verses above show, the narrative uses the root טמא three times,

each time in Piel again, in the meaning "defile" (טִמֵּא). Obviously this text again does not

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[228]Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT ad loc. Deut. 24:1–3.
[229]See also Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, WBC ad loc. Deut. 24:1.

assume knowledge of the priestly dichotomic system – it uses the טמא word as a synonym of violent intercourse.[230]

As a summary, evidence reveals another pre-exilic usage and meaning of the root טמא, namely, *a synonym for abusive sexual intercourse*. This usage is evidenced by multiple deuteronomic instances and Ezekiel and thus this meaning seems to have been the original scope of the root טמא.

4.5. The National Domain

On the semantic map of טמא ("unclean"), it is clear that the "national domain" frame occupies a widespread area, embracing occurrences from 2Kings and Leviticus to Zechariah. This is not surprising, as the contempt of foreign gods and cults (and thus: surrounding nations) was already official policy in the age of Deuteronomy, and this trend – as discussed above, Lev. 18 – continued after the Exile, and even intensified in the theology of the Holiness Code.

While Deuteronomy mostly protested the religious practices of foreign nations (therefore, according to the Deuteronomist, the Canaanites should have been exterminated from the Land, Deut. 7:2); the Holiness Code thought also that foreign nations were characterized by sexual perversions like homosexuality and bestiality in addition to the "normal" child sacrifices to Molech, witchcraft and wizardry (Lev 18:19–30). The Deuteronomist opposed to the Canaanites because of their foreign gods (clearly motivated by the emerging monotheism and the royal monopoly of the cult); the Holiness Code enumerates and condemns the a wide range of customs of foreign nations.

As practices of the foreign nations are disgusting abominations (תּוֹעֵבָה) in the eyes of the Deuteronomist (e.g. Deut. 24:4), the Holiness Code holds the same opinion:

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[230]Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 18–50*, NICOT, is on a similar opinion: "ṭāmēʾ is sometimes used for the violation of chastity". at Gen. 34:5.

Lev. 18:24 "Do not make yourselves unclean (אַל־תִּטַּמְּאוּ) by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean (נִטְמְאוּ הַגּוֹיִם),

25 and the land became unclean (וַתִּטְמָא הָאָרֶץ), so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

26 But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations (הַתּוֹעֵבֹת), either the native or the stranger (הָאֶזְרָח וְהַגֵּר) who sojourns among you

27 [for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations (אֶת־כָּל־הַתּוֹעֵבֹת), so that the land became unclean. (וַתִּטְמָא הָאָרֶץ)]"

Apparently, H took over the key terms and concepts from Deuteronomy (such as foreign practices are abominations (הַתּוֹעֵבֹת) etc.), then added the *clean/unclean* system of P (abominations make the land unclean) and thereby formed a strong opinion of the religion, sexuality and lifestyle of the surrounding nations.

However, some important observations need to be made about the Holiness Code:

1. Opposition against the foreign nations is based only on religious practices, and H is not by nature xenophobic. In the quotation above, Lev. 18:26 says that "strangers" (הַגֵּר) are to keep God's rules as well – but never that foreigners themselves are disgusting. H feels aversion only to foreign customs, but not foreign nations *per se*.

2. Foreigners do not appear as impure in P. Although idolatry is obviously banned from the cult, being the ultimate impurity, foreigners are not banned, nor do they cause a derived impurity. Contacting or touching a foreigner, or taking a walk in *unclean* foreign lands, does not make one unclean. Although the rhetoric against foreign cults and practices is extensively present, especially in H, the *clean/unclean* system of P did not institutionalize xenophobia.

The position regarding foreigners radically shifted towards xenophobia in late post-exilic works, notably in Ezra-Nehemia (Ezra 9–10). Nevertheless, Ezra still does not argue on the grounds of any *impurities* of foreign wives, but with the community's having forsaken God's [Deuteronomic] commandments

Ezra 9:11 … which you commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land that you are entering, to take possession of it, is a land impure (נִדָּה!) with the impurity (בְּנִדַּת) of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations (בְּתוֹעֲבֹתֵיהֶם) that have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness (בְּטֻמְאָתָם).

12 Therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.'

13 And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, seeing that you, our God, have punished us less than our iniquities deserved and have given us such a remnant as this,

14 shall we break your commandments again and intermarry with the peoples who practice these abominations? (הַתֹּעֵבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה)

Apparently, Ezra shows little interest for the Priestly dichotomy – instead sticking to old, deuteronomic traditions and referring to the deuteronomic prohibition of mixing with Canaanite people (Deut. 7). Although the term "uncleanness" (בְּטֻמְאָתָם) is used about the Priestly system (indicating at least knowledge of this usage of the word), the argument does not need and does not appropriate the system of P or H (e.g. that the presence of foreign wives would make sacrifices unclean etc.). Interestingly, the whole book of Ezra-Nehemiah shows almost no interest in the Priestly rules of cleanness. Rather, it discards the whole dichotomic concept and applies the rules of Deuteronomy. The only exception is Nehemiah 13:30, where Nehemiah says

> Neh. 13:30 "Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign (וְטִהַרְתִּים מִכָּל־נֵכָר), and I established the duties of the priests and Levites, each in his work."

Here, although Nehemiah uses the root טהר ("to cleanse" in Piel), and there is a loose connection between the "foreign" and "impurity" (only once in Ezra 9:11), but the text uses the word rather in a *technical* sense, such as in a description of sweeping (and thus "cleansing") the strangers out of the country. Otherwise, Nehemiah too shows little interest in the Priestly dichotomic system. We can suppose that the sophisticated, cult-oriented system did not fit well to the pragmatism of Ezra-Nehemiah; the passion of the Deuteronomist better fit to him, and it contained all the elements a xenophobic ideology required.

4.6. The Moral Domain

Finally, we come to the moral domain. These texts characterize the individual's personal attitude, often with bodily metaphors like "purity of heart" (Prov. 22:11), "clean heart" (Ps. 51:2), "pure eyes" (Hab. 1:13). These writings use the root טהר ("clean") in quite a "modern"

way, characterizing a positive, good, sinless, and therefore, *moral* attitude. As it can be seen, these occurrences appear exclusively in late literature:

- Hiob 4:17, 11:4, 17:9
- Psalms 51 (a clean heart), 12:7 (the pure words of the Lord), 19 (the fear of the Lord is clean), 89 (the glory of humans)
- Prov. 15:26 (clean ones), 22:11 (the purity of heart), 30:12 (a clean generation), 20:9 (pure from sins)
- Ecc. 9:2 ("the righteous and the wicked, the good and the evil, the clean and the unclean")
- Hab. 1:13 (pure eyes)
- Zech. 3:5 (a clean turban of Joshua)

An analysis of these books is beyond the scope of this current dissertation. In what follows, I highlight only some major aspects relevant for the overall evolution of the priestly dichotomies.

1. The shift of the "clean" attribute towards morality was not automatically followed by a similar shift of the "unclean" attribute. Even though Ecc. 9:2 plays with dichotomy pairs ("the righteous and the wicked, the good and the evil, the clean and the unclean") as a poetic instrument, there are significantly less "unclean" incidences in the moral domain, than "clean" ones. At the advent of individual poetry, in a new, moral context, the original priestly dichotomy system began to dissolve.

2. Secondly, the usage of the root טהר is far from the original scope of the priestly dichotomies. The role of the original impurity factors (diseases, bodily discharges, touching unclean animals) is taken over by moral factors like "transgression" (פֶּשַׁע, Psa. 51:2), "sin" (עָוֹן, Psa. 51:4), "offence" (חֵטְא, Psa. 51:11). Again, the original priestly dichotomy system began to dissolve. The root טהר stopped being a cultic *terminus technicus*, strictly opposed by טמא ("unclean"). Instead, it became an overarching moral attribute, interchangeable with "good" and opposed to words for multiple immoral intentions and acts.

3. Third, instead of the national-monotheistic agenda of the Deuteronomist or Ezra-Nehemiah, these late literary works rather focus on the individual's personal

interactions, beliefs and intentions. Ultimately, it seems that late literary works utilize the root טהר ("clean") almost irrespective of their original concept; in a semantic sense the moral usage is almost disconnected from both the ritual and national scopes.

4.7. Summary: the Clean and the Unclean in a Diachronic View

This chapter has provided an overview of the evolution of clean and unclean dichotomies. The first and most important finding is that the usage of the טהר ("clean") and טמא ("unclean") roots were not unchanged over time, but rather major semantic shifts can be observed through biblical eras and sources.

The *clean/unclean* dichotomy did not exist before the exile. It seems to have been a construct of the post-exilic Jerusalem priesthood, from two inherited, but previously independent words. Pre-exilic and exilic but pre-priestly texts (JE, D, Isaiah, earlier layers of Ezekiel) use at least the root טמא ("unclean"), but not in the same sense as P and H, and their concept does not need and does not assume the priestly *clean/unclean* concept.

The original meaning of the root טהר ("clean") is not completely clear. However, based on Ex. 24:10 and Job 37:21, a possible original meaning is "shining", supported also by the generic nominal meaning "clean (shining?) gold" of the word.

The root טמא ("unclean") seems to have had two original meanings: one is "sinful (perhaps violent) sexual intercourse"; and the other is "destruction" (of a place, first of all sanctuaries). D uses this root extensively, as it perfectly fits its agenda (to destroy the sanctuaries of the foreign nations) without the a priori knowledge of the priestly concept. Although the translation "to pollute" is satisfactory for the contemporary reader (as our culture has also been socialized with this translation), a more precise translation of the root would be "to destroy" and "to penetrate (sexually)", without the connotation of "desacralizing" (to avoid confusion with the Priestly theology).

It seems that the priestly theology created its dichotomy system using these two existing roots, performing a *semantic shift* and compiling them into a dichotomy. The purpose of the *clean/unclean* dichotomy system was to ensure the uniqueness and *spotlessness* (that is, aesthetical perfection) of the cult, thus securing the *holy's* unique position against the (also newly created) *profane* world.

Although the *clean/unclean* dichotomy could at first sight have been used in the context of national isolation, Ezra-Nehemiah seems to ignore the priestly concept and leans on the Deuteronomic agenda. It uses the *clean/unclean* terms very rarely, and it takes its argumentation from the Deuteronomic logic instead of from the Priestly theology. The reason may be that the passion and dynamics of the Deuteronomic tradition better fit the pragmatism of Ezra, rather than the sophisticated ritual system of P or H.

Finally, in late poetic literature the aspect of individual morality appears, utilizing the root טהר in a moral context, in opposition to "transgression" (פֶּשַׁע), "sin" (עָוֹן) or "offence" (חֵטְא). It seems that – regardless of its original *Sitz im Leben*, the Jerusalem cult – the priestly dichotomies began to dissolve, creating room for further semantic shifts of the terms.

Figure 5: The Semantic Development of טהר and טמא
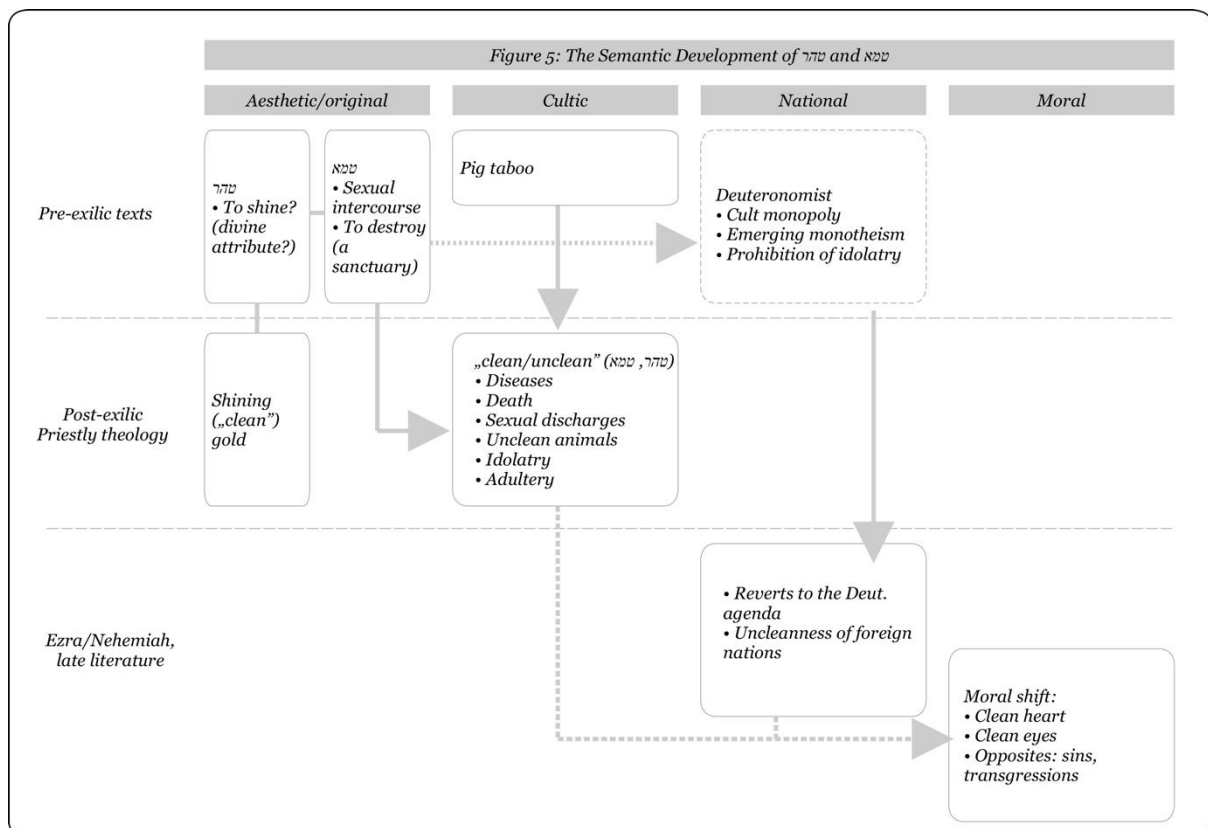
5. The Sacred and the Profane

This chapter discusses what is perhaps the best-known element of the priestly dichotomy system, the *sacred* (*holy*) and the *profane*. Due to anthropologists who drew attention to the *sacred/profane* dichotomy (notably Mircea Eliade[231]) and perhaps to the rabbinical tradition, where the קודש לחול is a common concept, and certainly also to P, who made the distinction between sacred and profane a programmatic concept (Lev. 10:10), theological works usually acknowledge the significance of this dichotomy in biblical theology. In Gerhard von Rad's wording:

> "This continuing struggle between the sacred and the secular, which runs right through the whole of Jahweh's creation (vide the list of unclean animals), is, however, regarded even by P as something temporary. P too knows a final condition of things where the holiness of Jahweh will attain its goal, since 'all the earth will be full of the glory of God' (Nurn. XIV. 21)."[232]

Despite the common perception, however, the dichotomy is not nearly balanced in the Hebrew Bible, nor the Priestly document or the Holiness Code, as shown below. While P elaborates the *clean/unclean* dichotomy in great detail, not to mention the Holiness Code, much less attention is paid to the *sacred/profane* dichotomy. The word "profane" (חֹל) itself occurs only seven times in the whole Hebrew Bible,[233] and is distributed throughout only three books (Lev., 1Sam with a late insertion, and Ezekiel). Three out of seven occurrences recite the Priestly programmatic concept ("to make a distinction between the holy and common"[234]). In a verbal form, the root חלל ("to defile") appears more frequently, but it is still not comparable to the extensive presence of the root קדש ("holy") in the Hebrew Bible. In general, the dichotomic usage of the word קדש is much less significant than the standalone

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[231]Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion.* (trans. Willard R. Trask), New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961.
[232]Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology I.*, 279.
[233]Lev. 10:10; 1Sam. 21:4.5; Ezek. 22:26, 42:20, 44:23, 48:15.
[234]Lev. 10:10; Ezek. 22:26, 44:23.

usage, as shown below. Also, the presence of the *sacred/profane* dichotomy is much less apparent in post-exilic texts than that of the *clean/unclean*.

5.1. Sacred and Profane in Biblical Hebrew and their Semitic Origins

5.1.1. "Sacred" (קדשׁ)

The root *qdš* was in use in both eastern and western Semitic languages, coming from two proto-Semitic ground forms:

1. ***qadiš***, based on Akkadian *qadištu(m)* ("pure, consecrated") and *qadiiš* ("being consecrated", stative G stem); also *qa-di-šu* in Ugaritic ("being holy", also stative G stem).[235] Similarly to Biblical Hebrew's *qiddēš* (Piᶜel), Akkadian's *quddušu* (D-stem, "to conceccrate") refers to a ritual procedure of consecrating persons, buildings, divine images and equipment for rituals. In Akkadian, the root was also used with a euphonic metathesis as *qašadu* ("to be pure" in G-stem) and *quššudu* ("to purify" in D-stem); and also as an adjective *qašdu* ("pure, holy") and *quššudu* ("most holy").[236]

2. ***qaduš***, based on Hebrew קָדֹשׁ ("holy") and קֹדֶשׁ ("sanctuary"); similarly in Syriac *qudša* ("holiness, sanctuary") and arabic *qadusa* ("to be holy").[237]

In Biblical Hebrew, the root is used in various forms:

1. **Verbal forms.** In **Qal**, קָדַשׁ means "to be consecrated, to be sacred" (1Sam. 21:6). In **Niphal**, נִקְדַּשׁ means "to show oneself sacred" (Ezek. 20:41) or "to be treated as sacred" (Lev. 10:3). As for transitive meanings, the root is used both in **Piel** (קִדַּשׁ, Num. 6:11) and in **Hiphil** (הִקְדִּישׁ, Zeph. 1:7) to express "to devote,

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[235]Müller, "קדשׁ / holy" in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Jenni – Westermann edit.), 1103–1118.
[236]Jacob Milgrom, *The Changing Concept of Holiness*, in Reading Leviticus: Responses to Mary Douglas, 65.
[237]Müller, "קדשׁ / holy" in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Jenni – Westermann edit.), 1104.

consecrate". The reflexive form, **Hithpael** (הִתְקַדֵּשׁ, "to keep oneself away from unclean things Lev. 11:44; "to consecrate oneself" Ex. 19:22) is also used extensively.

2. **As an adjective,** one form is used, קָדוֹשׁ, "to be sacred/holy" (of God, places, persons and further objects and the Sabbath).

3. **Nominal forms.** קֹדֶשׁ (Ex. 3:5) refers to "divine sacredness" and is used in different expressions related to God's presence, e.g. in Ex. 15:11: בַּקֹּדֶשׁ ("in holiness", expressing majesty in victory); also of sacred places such as הֵיכַל קֹדֶשׁ ("holy temple"), and consecrated utensils such as אֲרוֹן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ ("holy ark", 2Chron. 35:3).

4. Another nominal form, מִקְדָּשׁ denotes old sanctuaries (Jos. 26:31), the tabernacle (Ex. 25:8) and the temple (1Chron. 22:19).

5. קָדֵשׁ ("temple-prostitute", Deut. 23:18) is used also in female form קְדֵשָׁה (Deut. 23:18).

6. **Location names.** The word appears in several location names, such as *Kādēš* (Gen. 16:14) *Kādēš Barnea* (Num. 32:8). The same for Hittite capital Orontes (2Sam. 24:6).

5.1.2. "Profane" (חלל)

The חלל root in Biblical Hebrew is basically used in three ways:

1. **"To pierce, slay."** (Isa. 51:9), and therefore in nominal form חָלָל ("killed, wounded", Gen. 34:27). BDB (319) derives further nouns from this meaning: חַלָּה ("cake", Num. 15:20); חַלּוֹן ("window", Gen. 26:8); חָלִיל ("flute", 1Sam 10:5).

2. **"To pollute, defile, desecrate."** (Ex. 20:25); also used "to defile a woman" (Lev. 19:29) – whether this latter belongs to [1] or to [2], see below. As a noun used as חֹל ("profane, common", 1Sam. 21:5).

3. **"To begin."** In Hiphil (Gen. 6:1). BDB (320) classifies this below [2]. Therefore, the noun, תְּחִלָּה ("beginning", Gen. 13:3) is frequently used.

The root was also in use in other Semitic languages, but with a very different (even opposing) meaning. The Akkadian *elēlu(m)* means "*to be[come] pure (ritually)*" in G-stem; and "*to purify*" in D-stem, both ritually and also physically: to purify weapons in the sea, purify the body, mouth, hands. It also means "to be free" from claims.[238] In Arabic it is used as *ḥll*, meaning "to be free, permitted".[239] The meaning "desecrate, profane" was dominant only in late and post-biblical Hebrew and Aramaic. In other words, it seems to be an innovation in Biblical Hebrew.[240]

5.2. The Holy (קדשׁ) in the Hebrew Bible in Outline

The usage of the root קדשׁ shares many common characteristics with the usage in other cultures across the Ancient Near East. In other Semitic languages, incl. Akkadian and Ugaritic, *qdš* expresses "*a conception of numinous quality sui generis*" (Müller[241]). That is, the concept includes "holy" as the main divine attribute; "sacred" as an attribute of cult-related spaces, persons and objects; cult-related ritual procedures; and finally, "holy" as a moral quality. Although "holy" and "pure" are used interchangeably sometimes even in

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[238]Black, Jeremy – George, Andrew – Postgate, Nicholas. *Consice Dictionary of Akkadian.* 2nd printing. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000. at "elelu(m)".

[239]BDB 320.

[240]Maass, "חלל / to desecrate" in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Jenni – Westermann edit.), 427–428; also BDB 320.

[241]Müller, "קדשׁ / holy" in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Jenni – Westermann edit.), 1104.

theological works, a clear distinction should be made between them – as Müller notes, "*the concept of ethical purity is probably secondary everywhere*".[242]

	Figure 6: The Distribution of Occurrences of קדשׁ						
	Holy, sacred (קֹדֶשׁ)	To consecrate (קָדַשׁ)	Sanctuary (מִקְדָּשׁ)	Prostitutes (קָדֵשׁ, קְדֵשָׁה)	Kedesh city (קֶדֶשׁ)	Kadesh city (קָדֵשׁ)	Kadesh Barnea (קָדֵשׁ בַּרְנֵעַ)
Gen.		1		3 female		3	
Exod.	69	29	2				
Lev.	92	32	8				
Num.	56	11	3:38; 10:21; 18:1.29; 19:20			8	2
Deut.	4	4		1 male, 1 female		2	4
Josh.	2	4	24:26		5		4
Judges		1			4	2	
1Sam.	3	4					
2Sam.		3					
1Kings	12	3		3 male			
2Kings	3	2		2 male	1		
1Chron.	16	8	22:19; 28:10		2		
2Chron.	30	22	20:8. 26:18; 29:21; 30:8; 36:17				
Ezra	6						
Neh.	7	5	10:39				
Job		1		1 male			
Psalm	45		68:35; 73:17; 74:7; 78:69; 96:6			1	
Prov.	1						
Isa.	22	8	8:14; 16:12; 60:13; 63:18				
Jer.	6	9	17:12; 51:51				
Lam.	1		1:10; 2:7.20				
Ezek.	59	15	5:11; 8:6; 9:6; 11:16; 21:2; 23:38.39; 24:21; 25:3; 28:18; 37:26.28; 43:21; 44:1.5.7.8.9.11.15.16; 45:3.4.4.4.18; 47:12; 48:8.10.21			2	
Dan.	13		8:11; 9:17; 11:31				
Joel	3	4					
Hos.				1 female			
Amos	2		7:9.13				
Obad.	2						
Jon.	2						
Mic.	1						
Hab.	1						
Nah.							
Zeph.	2	1					
Hag.	1	1					
Zech.	4						
Mal.	1						

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[242]Müller, "קדשׁ / holy" in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Jenni – Westermann edit.), 1104.

5.2.1. Holy as Divine Attribute

'Holy' (קָדוֹשׁ) is the main divine attribute both in the Hebrew Bible and in the Canaan region, as well as in other regions of the Ancient Near East in general. In Mesopotamian literature, goddesses are frequently characterized as *qdš* ("Holy Inanna", "Holy An", e.g. in the Hymnal prayer of Enheduanna[243]). In Ugaritic texts, both gods and mountains (their dwelling place, e.g. *Mount Ṣapan* for Baal) are called holy (*qdš*). A common reference to gods is *bn qdš* ("the son of the holy[ness]", a frequent homonym for chief god *il*) and also *qdšm* ("the holy ones").[244] As early as the sixties, scholars came to the conclusion that, due to the extensive use of the word *qdš* in both Ugaritic literature and some inscriptions, the proclamation that "*Yahweh is holy*" indicates Canaanite influence.[245] In the light of archaeological and textual evidence, Israelite religion not only seems to have been influenced by Canaanite religions, but in fact is considered a type of Canaanite religions by recent scholarly works.[246]

In the Hebrew Bible, קָדוֹשׁ is also a primeval divine attribute. The holiness of Yahweh is a central message of epiphanies:

> "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.' (קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם)". (Lev. 19:1–2)

The character of Yahweh's perceived *holiness* in the Hebrew Bible shares similarities with Rudolf Otto's *mysterium tremendum*.[247] Epiphanies are accompanied with thunder, lightning, fire, and earthquakes (Ex. 19:16.19). Yahweh appears with power (כָּבוֹד, Num. 20:6), and during epiphanies fear towards Yahweh is a significant human feeling (Ex. 3:6; Isa. 6:5), even a requirement (Jos. 24:14, 1Sam. 12:24). In the late wisdom literature, "fear of Yahweh"

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[243]Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, Volume II, 1975.

[244]Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle.*, 62. Also Gregorio del Olmo Lete – Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language*, 695.

[245]Schmidt, *Wo hat die Aussage: Jahwe "der Heilige" ihren Ursprung?"*, ZAW 74, 1962, 62–66.

[246]See e.g. Hess, *Israelite Religions*, 347–351.

[247]Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 22ff.

(יִרְאַת יְהוָה) is parallel to "the knowledge of the Holy One" (דַעַת קְדֹשִׁים).[248] On the other hand, Yahweh's holiness is miserable: God (and his name) shall be praised because he is holy (Isa. 6:3, Psalm 99:3.5; 103:1).

5.2.2. Holiness as Human Attitude

Holiness is not only Yahweh's attribute in the Hebrew Bible, but also appears as a desirable human attribute. This concept already appears in the Covenant Code (Ex. 20:19–23:33) to some extent, but it is fully elaborated and propagated by the Holiness Code (Lev. 17–26).

In the original priestly writing, only Yahweh's dwelling place, the קֹדֶשׁ הַקֳּדָשִׁים ("Most Holy", Ex. 26:33) is inherently *holy*, this also includes the personnel of the temple, the priests, who are *sanctified* through the ritual process of anointment (Lev. 8:10–11.15.30). In P's interpretation, human holiness is *dedication to Yahweh*; this is also why Nazirites (Num. 6:2–8) and the firstborn (Num. 3:13; 8:17) are acknowledged as "sanctified by Yahweh". As Milgrom (1966) summarizes, in the original Priestly writing the *consecrating* of people, spaces, and dedicated times – expressed with Piel and Hiphil of קדש – was applied only to a certain circle of people, persons and time, meaning "to set apart for God".[249]

The Holiness Code largely extends the holiness concept of P. In H, Yahweh's holiness holds an "obligatory character" (H.-P. Müller[250]), expressed by Lev. 19:2: "*You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy*". Later, the text explains what it means by the holiness of people:

> "You shall be holy to me (וִהְיִיתֶם לִי קְדֹשִׁים), for I the Lord am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine." (Lev. 20:26)

The interpretation of the requirement to be holy varies among scholars. As the *clean/unclean* question is also a central topic in H, scholars usually link the expectation to be holy to the question of cleanness. Müller thinks that in the Holiness Code "'Holy' assumes the

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[248]Prov. 9:10.
[249]Milgrom, *The Changing Concept of Holiness*, 67.
[250]Müller, "קדשׁ / holy" in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Jenni – Westermann edit.), 1111.

significance of ethical purity".[251] Milgrom also emphasizes that in the Holiness Code, "holiness is not just a matter of adhering to a regimen of prohibitive commandments, taboos; it embraces positive, perfomative commandments that are ethical in nature".[252] Others, such as Sklar, emphasize the importance of obedience to Yahweh, that is, the essence of being *holy* is being dedicated to God and obeying to his laws (of the Holiness Code).[253]

The paradigm shift in H as compared to P is indeed remarkable. While in P, the *sacred* nature of the sanctuary, the temple, the cult utensils, and the priests are all derived only from being *dedicated* to the cult (to serve Yahweh); H extends this scope to the whole nation and sets up the obedience of divine laws as a standard of *holiness*. This interpretation of *holiness* is a step towards the holiness concept in later literature (Psalm 34:10, Dan. 7:21.25), where קְדוֹשִׁים ("the holy ones") becomes a synonym for "believers".[254]

5.2.3. Consecration as Procedure

While Yahweh's presence *sanctifies* the place of the epiphany (Ex. 3:5), a whole series of ritual procedures aims to *consecrate* the circumstances of the cult including the priesthood, the temple, cultic vessels, and further components. The consecration procedure is expressed by Piel and Hiphil of קדש, similarly to the Akkadian *quššudu* in D-stem.[255] It can be performed by washing in water (Ex. 19:10); sprinkling sacred water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer (Num. 19:18); shaving the head (of a Nazirite, Num. 6:11b); dipping the lintel and two doorposts of a house with blood (Ex. 12:22) and with anointing oil (Lev. 8:10).

The object of consecration (that is: *dedication*) can be places (Sinai: Ex. 19:23), the Temple and its parts (Ex. 40) and utensils (2Chron. 29:19), persons (especially priests) (Ex. 28:3), the firstborn (Ex. 13:2) and the keepers of the ark (1Sam. 7:1). Dedicated days, feasts

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[251]Müller, "קדש / holy" in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Jenni – Westermann edit.), 1111.
[252]Milgrom, *The Changing Concept of Holiness*, 67.
[253]Jay Sklar, *Leviticus*, at Lev. 20:26.
[254]Müller, "קדש / holy" in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Jenni – Westermann edit.), 1116.
[255]Jacob Milgrom, *The Changing Concept of Holiness*, 65.

and esp. the Sabbath shall also be *sanctified* (Ex. 20:3). God himself also keeps his people sacred (Ex. 31:13).

As can be read from the semantic map of קדשׁ, the usage of the root is especially intensive in Exodus, Leviticus, Numeri, 2Chronicles and Ezekiel, indicating that consecrating rituals and consecration itself was a central concept in the post-exilic, especially in priestly literature. While in the case of epiphanies the consecration of the place is autonomous, priestly procedures *create* the sacred space. Consecration as a process was established as a *programmatic core* in the priestly concept, securing a unique position for the consecrated space: the temple and its properties. In previous ages, the *sacred* didn't need or generate an opposite pole: there was no need for a "profane space." In the priestly concept, the consecration (that is, *dedication*) of the sacred space induced the creation of an opposite pole, the *profane* (or: "common"), to give an even bigger emphasis to the *separatedness* of the sacred space. The development of the word "profane" (חֹל) clearly indicates this, as shown below.

5.2.4. Summary: the Nature of Holiness

While it is indeed not easy to define what *holiness* means, the Hebrew Bible depicts a gradual shift away from the divine attribute of *tremendous* power towards a human attitude, which is assessed by the obedience to God – up to individual morals. The development of the *holiness* concept is in parallel with the shift of the *separation* concept and the *clean/unclean* dichotomy, as has been outlined in the previous chapters.

Being a divine attribute of absolute, terrifying power, *holiness* does not need a counterpoint or an opposite – and based on the textual evidences, as shown below, it does not seem to have had any. Only when *consecration* as a procedure became a programmatic concept of the (post-exilic) priesthood did it become important to somehow denote the realm of the un-consecrated: this is why the term חֹל ("profane") was created. The *profane* term owes its existence to the priestly focus on consecrating procedures, which highlighted the significance of the *sacred* [dedicated] *place* – the non-dedicated space must have been

denoted somehow. Later, when the concept of *holiness* shifted towards the national and individual scopes and became independent from consecrating procedures, the חֹל term lost its eligibility and it faded from use.

5.3. The Nature and Development of the Profane (חלל/חֹל)

5.3.1. Nominal Usage: the Realm of the *Profane* (חֹל)

In the post-exilic priestly dichotomy system, the opposite pole of קָדוֹשׁ is חֹל ("common", "profane"). Used as a *terminus technicus*, the noun appears only in this context and is a programmatic opposite of קָדוֹשׁ by P. The dichotomy is defined in Lev. 10:10, recited by Ezek. 22:26 and 44:23:

> "You are to distinguish between the holy and the common (וּלֲהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין הַחֹל), and between the unclean and the clean." (Lev. 10:10)

Otherwise, as the semantic map indicates, the noun חֹל occurs only 7 times in the Hebrew Bible: apart from the 3 mentioned, there are only 2 occurrences in 1Sam. 21:4.5 and 2 occurrences in Ezek. 42:20 and 48:15.

Lev. 10:10. As discussed earlier, the section belongs to the core of the priestly document (P). In Lev. 10:8–11, God speaks to Aaron (that is, the subsequent orders are given to the priesthood), and enumerates two major reasons why a priest may not drink wine: because under the influence of alcohol the priest cannot distinguish between the *clean and unclean, sacred and profane*. That is, he cannot properly perform the rituals. Secondly, it is because the priest should teach the people of Israel the laws (כָּל־הַחֻקִּים). The key *duty* of the priesthood is thus to properly maintain the cult system, and to make the people maintain it. The ultimate goal of the priesthood is to safeguard and to properly manage Yahweh's (monopolistic) cult.

	Killed, wounded (חָלָל)	To pierce, slay…	To defile a girl	To profane holy things like…	Profane (חֹל)
				Figure 7: The Semantic Map of חלל	
Gen.	34:27				
Exod.				20:25 an altar; 31:14 the Shabbat	
Lev.	21:7; 21:14 (defiled woman)		19:29; 21:15 a girl by making her prostitute; 21:9 a girl herself by whoring;	18:21; 19:12; 20:3; 21:6; 22:2.32 the name of God; 19:8 a sacrifice; 21:4 a man himself; 21:12.23; a sanctuary 22:9.15; 18:32 holy things	10:10
Num.	19:16.18; 23:24; 31:8; 31:19			18:32 holy things; 30:2 break his oath (?)	
Deut.	21:1.3.6; 32:42;				
Joshua	11:6; 13:22;				
Judges	9:40; 16:24; 20:31; 20:39;				
1Sam.	17:52 (wounded); 31:1.8				21:4.5
2Sam.	1:19.22.25; 23:8.18;				
1Kings	11:15				
1Chron.	5:22; 10:1; 10:8; 11:11.20		5:1 his father's couch		
2Chron.	13:17				
Neh.				13:17.18 the Sabbath	
Job	24:12; 39:30				
Psalms	69:26; 88:5; 89:10;			55:20; 89:31.34 violated the covenant; 74:7 the temple; 109:22 heart is stricken	
Prov.	7:26				
Isa.	22:2; 34:3; 66:16	23:9 the glory; 43:28 God, the princes of the sanctuary; 51:9 pierced a dragon; 53:5 the servant of the Lord is pierced;		48:11 God's name; 56:2 the Sabbath; 56:6 the Sabbath	
Jer.	9:1; 25:33; 41:9; 51:4; 51:47.49.52			16:18 polluted the Land with carcasses; 34:16 God's name	
Lam.	2:12; 4:9.9;	2:2 Dishonor the kingdom			
Ezek.	6:4.7.13; 9:7; 11:6.6.7; 21:14.14.25 (profane?); 28:8.23; 30:4.11.24; 31:17.18; 32:20.21.22.23.24.25.28.30.31.32; 35:8.8	22:16 God profanes Jerusalem; 28:7.9.16 foreigners defile Tyre's splendor, slay Tyre; 32:26 foreigners slay		7:22, 23:39, 24:21, 25:3, 44:7 The temple; 7:24 nations' holy places; 13:19 God; 20:9.14.22.39, 36:20.21.22.23, 39:7 God's name; 20:13.16.21.24; 22:8, 23:38 the Sabbath; 22:26 God's holy things; 28:18 Tyre's sanctuaries	22:26 (recites Lev 10:10) 42:20 (a wall to make a separation between the holy and the common) 44:23 (recites Lev 10:10) 48:15 (for common use of the city)
Dan.	11:26	11:31 destroy the temple and the fortress			
Hos.		8:10 king and princes writhe			
Amos				2:7 God's holy name	
Nah.	3:3				
Zeph.	2:12			3:4 priests profane the holy	
Mal.				1:12 God's name; 2:10 the covenant of our fathers; 2:11 the sanctuary of the Lord	

Ezek. 22:26 and 44:23. Somewhat surprisingly, Ezek. 22:26 properly recites the theses of Lev. 10:10, indicating that the author must have known the text of Lev. 10:10. Furthermore, this verse is the only one in Ezekiel 1–39 that presents Ezekiel's own social class, the priesthood, in a negative light.[256] The author obviously knows the priestly law that it refers to, and complains that the priesthood does not fulfill it. Moreover they, disregard Sabbaths, an otherwise recurring topic in Ezekiel (20:13.16.21.24 etc.). Based on the textual evidence and considering the context (the section is obviously a subsection from a larger law collection, better suited to P as an original context), Ezek. 22:26 is considered to be a late

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[256]Daniel J. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, at Ezek. 22:26.

insertion that was edited after the priestly document had been created and became well known. The same applies to Ezek. 44:23, which also recites the priestly law.

Ezek. 42:20 and 48:15. According to the widely-accepted scholarly consensus, Ezekiel 40–48 is a section of late origin, supposedly composed by a post-exilic priestly author.[257] The two occurrences of the word חֹל in this book perfectly fit the priestly concept, focusing on the sacred space of the cult. The vision in Ezek. 42:15–20 depicts the *outer wall* of the temple area, a rectangle of 500 cubits width. The last verse explains the purpose of the wall: "*to make a separation between the holy and the common*" (Ezek. 42:20). Actually, this is one of the three verses that explain what is behind the concept of the *holy and profane*: the "profane" (*ḥôl*) is what is *outside* the wall of the temple yard and the *holy* is what is inside.

The other section belongs to Ezek. 48, which describes a vision about the distribution of the land of (the future) Israel among the tribes of Israel. In the heart of this country, there is an area "set apart for the Lord" (48:9) and this "holy portion" (48:10) is split between the area of the priests (48:11), the area of the Levites (48:13) and finally, a smaller piece of land is kept "in common use of the city" (חֹל־הוּא לָעִיר, Ezek. 48:15). Here, too, the חֹל denotes a non-cultic or common area. That is to say, in these two verses in (late) Ezekiel, the use of חֹל is similar to the rabbinic interpretation: the temple area is קָדוֹשׁ, while the outside area is the חֹל, without any negative evaluation. The expression in 48:15 ("in common use of the city") especially indicates that the חֹל is not at all evaluated negatively, though it is strictly separated from the realm of the קָדוֹשׁ.

1Sam. 21:4.5. Finally, two (somewhat surprising) occurrences in 1Samuel, a book believed to contain mostly pre-exilic sources.[258] In the story of Ahimelech, David meets the priest, who can serve him only *sacred* bread (לֶחֶם קֹדֶשׁ), because he does not have *common bread* (לֶחֶם חֹל) at hand. The location where the story plays out, Nob, is identified as *el-*

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[257]Zenger, Erich. *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 503.

[258]John J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd edition, 227.

'Isāwîyeh, north of Jerusalem.[259] According to 22:19, the town of Nob was populated by priests, and according to 1Sam 14:3, it functioned as a local Yahwist center.[260] The presence of the sacred and common bread in 21:4.5 also suggests an established cultic activity. The issue of the sacred bread derives from the priestly law in Lev. 24:5–9, which forbids common consumption of cultic bread even for ritually clean persons.[261] Again, the typical priestly wording and problems, the assumption of arguably post-exilic priestly laws, and the sole usage of the חֹל term in a non-priestly context, suggest the story has a post-exilic origin. Alternatively, these two verses would constitute the only proof of the pre-exilic existence of the *sacred and profane* dichotomy.

Summary: Profane. There is only one occurrence (twice in 1Sam. 21:4-5) that could be invoked to prove the pre-exilic existence of the *sacred and profane* dichotomy and the word חֹל itself. Although the pre-exilic origin of these verses cannot be completely uncovered, the circumstances suggest that these verses must be post-exilic insertions in 1Samuel. If this is the case, the *sacred/profane* dichotomy, as well as the term חֹל itself, must have been a post-exilic innovation. The latter term is a unique *terminus technicus* of the priestly theology, denoting the internal space of the temple complex and separated from the "common" (חֹל) by the outside walls of the temple.

5.3.2. Verbal Usage: to Defile

Beyond the חֹל noun, the חלל root is also used in further nominal and verbal forms, as can be seen in the semantic map of "profane".

חָלָל (**"killed, wounded"**). The word means "killed" (Gen. 34:27), and in some cases "wounded" (1Sam 17:52) – the meaning comes from the original meaning of the חלל root: "to pierce".[262] As the semantic map indicates, the word is extensively used both in pre-exilic

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[259]David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT, at 1Sam. 21:1.
[260]Robert D. Bergen, *1–2 Samuel* ad loc. 1Sam. 21:1; Jeffries M. Hamilton, *Nob* in Anchor Bible Dictionary.
[261]Evans, *1 & 2 Samuel*, UBC, ad loc. 1Sam. 22:11.
[262]BDB 803.

texts (Joshua, Judges, 1–2Samuel) and post-exilic sources, especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but also in P (Num. 19:16.18) and H (Lev. 21:7.14) – although the Holiness Code uses the word as "defiled woman": אִשָּׁה זֹנָה וַחֲלָלָה, "*a prostitute or a defiled woman*".

חִלֵּל (Piel) and הֵחֵל (Hiphil). As a verb, the root has three major meanings, represented by three consecutive columns in the semantic map. The primary meaning is "to pierce" (Isa. 51:9); but it is also used in a broader sense, "to slay": in Ezek. 28:7.9.16, foreigners *slay* Tyre. Interestingly, as opposed to the חָלָל nominal form, the verbal form appears only in post-exilic texts (Isaiah, Lam., Ezekiel, Daniel and one dubious occurrence Hos. 8:10).

The verb (esp. in Piel) was also used in the context of priestly dichotomy, meaning "to desacrate, profane". The semantic map indicates that this usage is also a post-exilic innovation, as it is missing from Genesis, Deuteronomium and the historical books. Practically, anything that *should be* sanctified can also be profaned: God's holy name (Lev. 22:2.32), the altar (Ex. 20:25), a sacrifice (lev. 19:8), the Sabbath (Neh. 13:17–18). As opposed to the חֹל, which indicates a ritually neutral area, the verbal form is both ritually and morally a negative term – that is, the exact opposite of *sanctification*. The act of defiling sacred things appears as morally condemned in post-exilic writings. The same applies to the meaning "to defile a girl" (Lev. 19:29; 21:9.15), where also the motif of *desacralizing* (that is, to make ritually unclean) appears with a rather negative overtone.

5.4. Summary: the Sacred and the Profane in a Diachronic View

Holy (*qdš*) as a common divine attribute in the Ancient Near East including Canaan, is present as well in most layers of the Hebrew Bible. That is to say, *holy* is the primeval divine attribute a characteristic close to Rudolf Otto's *numinous*. Holiness also transcends the cult, where everything must be *sacred*, incl. persons, the place, and all utensils. The ritual process that makes people and other cultic elements ritually suitable, i.e., *consecration,* is also expressed with the *qdš* root, similar to the Akkadian language. In the Hebrew Bible, obviously the ritual process of *consecration* is in focus in the priestly writing (P), which deals

only with the sacredness of the priesthood and the cultic environment. The Holiness Code extended this scope to the whole nation, making holiness a moral obligation for the people of Israel.

On the other hand, it seems that the Holy did not have any counterpart at all before the exile. The representation of the Holy was not dichotomic, but the Holy existed in its own right, without the need of an explicit counter-pole. The *sacred/profane* dichotomy seems to have been an innovation of the Priestly source, i.e. the post-exilic Jerusalem priesthood, who construed the word חֹל ("common") to express being outside the Holy's realm – matching the development of the concept of *separation* as it is discussed in the third chapter. The next two chapters outline the theological and socio-historical background of this development.

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6. A Theology of the Holy in Outline

As argued in Chapter 2, the concept of the *sacred and profane* has been a major topic in Old Testament theology since the work of Gerhard von Rad[263], who was influenced by the contemporary work of Mircea Eliade[264] and earlier works of Émile Durkheim[265] and Rudolf Otto.[266] Since then, this concept has been further investigated by Jacob Milgrom[267] and Philip P. Jenson,[268] who made an attempt to reconcile Eliade's binary *sacred and profane* model with the results of Old Testament research, which uses the dichotomy differently in different contexts and traditions. This picture was further refined by recent theological works that analyze the theology of the *sacred/profane* and *clean/unclean* dichotomies, concentrating on post-exilic priestly theology.[269]

The semantic analysis of the priestly dichotomies in the previous chapters provides further details of the internal development of the priestly dichotomy system. Both the *sacred/profane* and the *clean/unclean* dichotomies were results of a historical development, not an a priori given concept in biblical tradition. Similarly, the motif of separation, which glues together the dichotomy system, was also created only after the exile by a semantic transformation of the original root בדל "to assign, select".

Within semantic analysis, four major *semantic domains* have been identified:

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[263]Rad, Gerhard von. *Old Testament Theology I.* New York: Oliver & Boyd, 1962.

[264]Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion.* (trans. Willard R. Trask) New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961.

[265]Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of the religious life.* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1912.

[266]Otto, Rudolf. *The idea of the holy.* Oxford University Press, 1958.

[267]Milgrom, Jacob (1998). *Leviticus 1-16.* New York: Anchor Bible. P. 691ff;
Milgrom, Jacob (2000). *Leviticus 17–22.* New York: Anchor Bible. P. 711ff.

[268]Jenson, Philip P. *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World.* JSOT Supplement Series 106. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992.

[269]See Klawans, J. *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. and Grohmann, Marianne. "Heiligkeit und Reinheit im Buch Leviticus." In *Gott – Götter – Götzen.* XIV. Europaischer Kongress für Theologie. VWGTh 38. (Christoph Schwöbel, edit.) Leipzig, 2013.

1. **Aesthetic domain.** These semantic fields use the *sacred* (קדֹשׁ) and *clean* (טהר) words as merely aesthetic attributes: either for physical attributes ("pure gold"), or as a divine attribute ("holy") – in all cases without opposing terms.

2. **Cultic domain.** The dichotomies are used within the cultic context and the range of usage evaluates ritual suitability.

3. **National domain.** The dichotomies are used in the context of national identity against the outside world.

4. **Moral domain.** The terms are used as moral premises, mostly in individual moral contexts.

The key information gleaned from the semantic analysis is that the theological view understood as "moving" (Milgrom) or "graded" (Jenson) holiness in synchronic/canonical models, is in fact a historically transforming theological concept. It was created in a distinctive historical situation (post-exilic restoration) and later evolved further over the course of time, shifting away from the original focus of the cultic domain.

The internal theological concept of the semantic domain has been thoroughly analyzed in theological works, especially that of the cultic domain in the broader context of post-exilic priestly theology. However, no attention has been given to the fact that the *sacred/profane* dichotomy is absent from pre-exilic texts. Also neglected is the fact that the single pre-exilic tradition, in which the distinction between clean and *not* clean animals appears, was fundamentally different in focus from the later clean/*un*clean priestly dichotomy.

Moreover, in addition to a detailed analysis of Priestly, Deuteronomistic and comparable theologies, a further theological question can be raised. That is, whether a theology of the *sacred and profane* and *clean and unclean* exists at all, or: is there a universal, overarching concept that can be applied to all semantic domains, or are there just contextual sub-theologies that are valid only in a given context and age? In other words: is

there any successive link between semantic domains, or they are just snapshots of an inherited and contextually re-interpreted tradition?

6.1.1. The Structural Model of "Separation"

Based on my semantic analysis, I propose the following model that claims interdependence between semantic domains and helps to interpret semantic transformations through the centuries:

Figure 8: The Structural Model of "Separation"
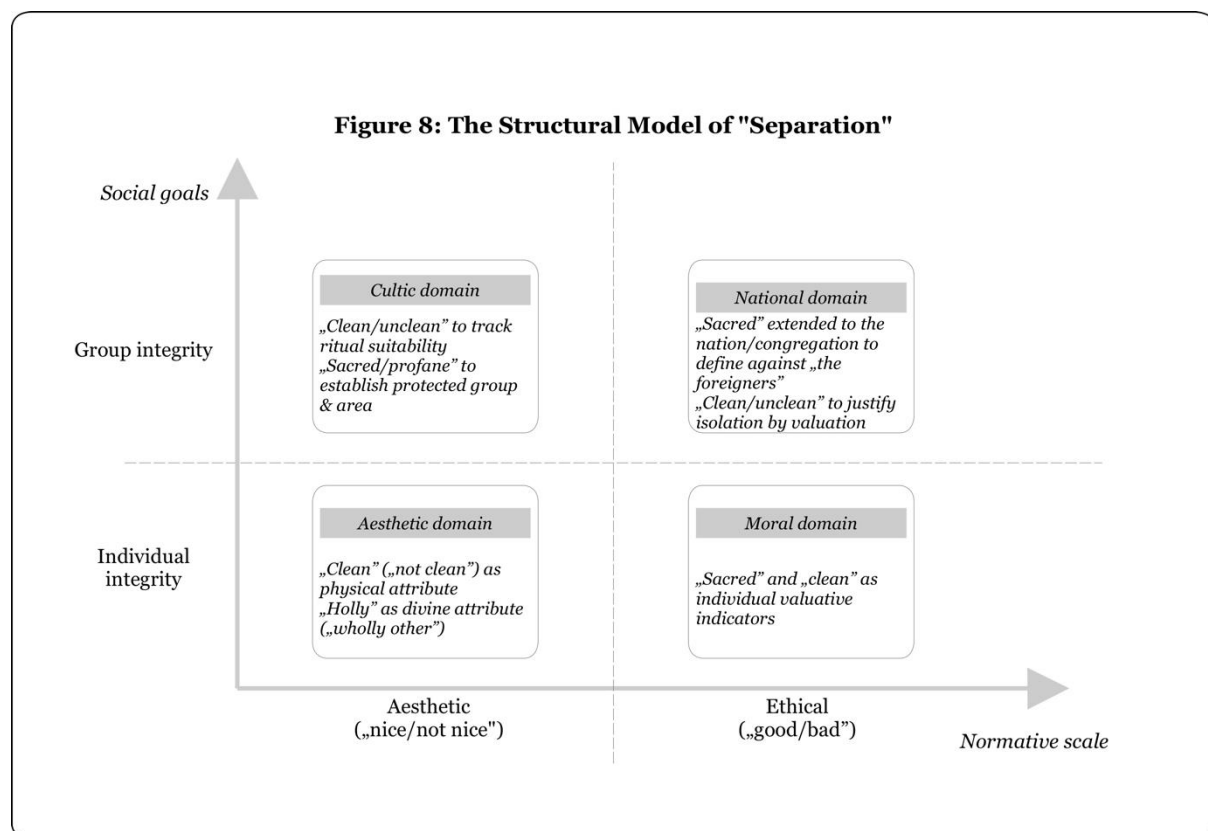
Normative scales. Regarding the priestly dichotomy system, the distinction between the *moral* and *ritual* domain is frequently emphasized in theological works.[270] Ritual status is not a subject of moral evaluation, that is, being ritually clean or unclean is not assessed as being good or bad. Ritual status is clearly an *aesthetic* category: it evaluates entities according to

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[270]For a summary see Grohmann, *Heiligkeit und Reinheit im Buch Leviticus*, 276–279.

their *aesthetics* in order to be sure about their ritual suitability. No defective animals can be used in the cult,[271] nor are humans with any *apparent* blemish (leprosy, ejaculation etc.) suitable for cultic participation.[272] *Rituality is about aesthetics*, and not being aesthetically (ritually) suitable does not automatically make a subject good or bad.

The distinction between ritual and moral judgment is not always clear in the Hebrew Bible and in some cases requires thorough exegesis, because biblical authors sometimes handle the fulfillment of ritual laws as moral acts. The best example of this is uncleanness by adultery,[273] which transgresses both moral and ritual guidelines, and may therefore be confusing for assessment in the priestly framework.

The pure aesthetic category (physical aesthetics of "pure gold"[274], "brightening heavens"[275], or the aesthetics of epiphany[276]) also belongs to the normative scale. Eventually, both in the case of "holy" (קדש) and "clean" (טהר), this became historically the original semantic domain, from before the Exile.

By contrast, **the ethical scale** assesses entities based on internal qualitative premises of *good and bad*. Individual morality is an obvious example of this: human acts, intentions, thoughts and motivations are evaluated according to the standards of the community regarding good and bad. Furthermore, not only individuals, but also groups of individuals can be assessed as good or bad based on their perceived behavior or stereotypes about the given group.

In moral theories, morality is interpreted in several ways.[277] As a basic definition, morality is a set of personal deeds and beliefs assessed against written or non-written

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[271] Lev. 22:21–25.
[272] Lev. 13, 14; Lev. 12, 15.
[273] Lev. 18:20, one who defiles himself with the neighbour's wife.
[274] Ex. 25, 37.
[275] Exodus 24:10.
[276] Ex. 19:16ff.
[277] For theories of morality see Joyce, Richard. *The Evolution of Morality.* Life and Mind: Philosophical Issues in Biology and Phychology (Kim Sterelny – Robart A. Wilson, ed.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2006. and especially Louden, Robert B. *Morality and Moral Theory. A Reappraisal and Reaffirmation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. 129ff.

community norms. Historically, morality grew out of basic biological needs for love, mutual support, or altruism, and was later extended to community beliefs and common values, termed "subscription to standards" by Joyce.[278] Generally, the morality of an act can be assessed on the scale of "good" or "bad", and the act can have consequences for another being incl. human or transhuman persons, animals, other creatures, or nature itself. Due to the consequences of acts, morality comes with personal responsibility for the deeds. Morality is "personal" insofar as personal decisions are involved.

Individual and collective systems. One of the most challenging questions in moral systems is group morality. That is, whether a human group can have a collective morality at all, and how group behavior relates to individual morality (and responsibility).[279] In the Hebrew Bible, the *national domain* is a typical example of group evaluation, where "lands" (i.e. other nations) and wives are assessed just because they are "foreign",[280] even if explained by the uncleanness of foreign nations.[281]

Basically, biblical occurrences in the "national" domain draw a line between "Israel" (as a nation) and the surrounding world, leaving no opportunity for foreigners to improve their evaluation on a moral scale. Here, the dichotomy system becomes an expression of national isolation – with or without additional moral justification. The distinction between individual morality and group assessment becomes clear in the case of the foreign wives,[282] where the individual morals or acts of the wives are not taken into consideration during the collective divorce process at all.

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[278]Richard Joyce, *The Evolution of Morality*, 70ff.

[279] Morality itself is already a social – that is, community – function, based on a set of common values optimized for cooperation and reciprocal altruism, according to the evolutionary psychologists (Broom, *The Evolution of Morality and Religion*, 228.). Group morality is usually interpreted on the in-group and out-group scale, explaining the individual's bias towards external groups. The topic is extensively reserached in social psychology, see e.g. Taylor, Donald M.; Doria, Janet R. (April 1981). "Self-serving and group-serving bias in attribution". Journal of Social Psychology. 113 (2): 201–211.

[280]Ezra 10:11.

[281]Ezra 6:21. Basically, the argument that foreign nations are "unclean" is tautological, as being ritually clean means complying with the community (ritual) standards; obviously, foreigners do not comply with these closed standards and thus they are "foreigners" or just simply "others".

[282]Ezra 9–11.

The "national" domain establishes an us/them dimension, where belonging to the community is evaluated as good, and being a foreigner is bad. The purpose of this domain is to strengthen group coherence, draw a line between the community and the outside world, and also to help identify the good and the bad – irrespectively of individual morals. As will be discussed in the next chapter, in this specific case, the collective evaluation of the "foreign wives" reflects an internal social conflict between the "sons of the exile" (בְּנֵי גוֹלָה, Ezra 4:1) and "the peoples of the lands" (עַמֵּי הָאֲרָצוֹת, Ezra 3:3).[283]

As a matter of fact, the ritual domain is also one of the group's cohesive functions. In anthropological interpretations, religions and ritual behavior are intended to establish group cohesion and to enhance group synchronization through standard and iterative ritual acts such as music, dance, recitation or symbolic gestures.[284] Thus, rituality itself is a core function of group integrity.

Assessing P's rituals, the priestly concept of "separation" has double community goals:

1.   To take control over the whole society by setting the ritual standard as an ultimate guidance for the whole Judahite society (even surpassing individual moral aspects);

2.   To strengthen the position of the priesthood itself within Judahite society, that is, to secure the position of the priesthood as a leading social class within society.

Ultimately, both the ritual and the national domains can be evaluated as group cohesive functions – with different foci and scopes through the centuries. The shift will be explained in the next chapter.

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[283]Kessler, *Az ókori Izrael társadalma*, 155.
[284]About group cohesive functions see Vilmos Csányi, *Az emberi természet* ("the human nature"), Budapest:Vince, 2003. p. 209ff.

6.1.2. A Theology of the Holy: can God be Monopolized?

The Holy as standalone aesthetic

Being one of the most important divine attributes in the Hebrew Bible, the holiness of God[285]

(and, as a derivative and moral requirement, the holiness of the priesthood and the nation[286])

has always been a notable topic of theological work through the centuries. God's holiness is a

special axiom that could preserve its unique and universal position across all ages,

theological viewpoints, and even religions. "Holy", as a divine attribute, expresses the

ultimate divinity, aptly described in Tillich's Systematic Theology:

> "The sphere of the gods is the sphere of holiness. A sacred realm is established wherever the divine is manifest. The divine is the holy. (…) The divine and the holiness must be interpreted correlatively."[287]

One of the most powerful modern works on the notion of holiness is Rudolf Otto's *The Idea*

of the Holy,[288] which uniquely translates the unspoken feelings of thousands of years into

scholarly language. In the last (almost) 60 years, Otto's terms and definitions have heavily

influenced theological and other scholarly works.[289]

The expressive power of Otto's work stands out among Durkheim's, Eliade's and later

scholars' work. I believe that Otto's intention is not merely to analyze, but rather to shock the

reader. And the ultimate, terrible power of the *numinous* is shocking, even without a

"profane" or other complementary element.

Otto's viewpoint on a standalone, unmatched *Holy* corresponds with the pre-exilic

concept of *qdš*, which also did not have a "profane" contrast. The ultimate divine attribute,

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[285]God explicitly calls himself 'holy' e.g. in Lev. 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:26; 21:8; Isaiah calls God "the Holy One of Israel" (קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל) 27 times, e.g. 1:4; 5:19; 5:24; this form is also used by Jeremiah in 50:29 and 51:5; also in the Psalms 71:22; 78:41; 89:19.

[286]Lev. 11:44b: "Consecrate yourselves (וְהִתְקַדִּשְׁתֶּם) therefore, and be holy (וִהְיִיתֶם קְדֹשִׁים), for I am holy." Also: Lev.19:2; 20:7; 20:26; Lev. 21:7– 8. (about priests of God); Exodus 19:6 (a "holy nation", גּוֹי קָדוֹשׁ).

[287]Tillich, Paul. *Systematic theology.* Vol. 1. University of Chicago Press, 1951. P. 215.

[288]Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy.* Oxford University Press, 1958.

[289]For example, Jenni-Westermann's TLOT defines "holiness" as "a conception of numinous quality sui generis"; and also "the experience of wholly other". Jenni – Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1104.

the *holy*, the *wholly other*, has always been powerful, even without any alternative or opposition. Therefore, a theology of the holy can be written without a profane counterpart. The *qdš* shines alone with *tremendous* power – as in the revelation of Isaiah.[290]

As illustrated by the semantic model, the Holy is a standalone, *sui generis* aesthetics. It is beautiful in itself, without any further given context. Therefore all three other domains in the model are secondary – they gain their power and existence from the pure aesthetic *Holy*.

The captivity of the Holy and resistance to dualism

The cultic context is a severe limitation for the aesthetics of the Holy. In the realm of the Jerusalem priesthood, the Holy dwells in the one and only Jerusalem temple, and the holiness is actually limited primarily to the area of the temple, secondarily to the congregation. But the Holy as a *mysterium tremendum* is ultimately monopolized by the priesthood of Jerusalem – all the others, Canaanites or Philistines can meet him only in the context of revenge. The word קֹדֶשׁ was paradoxically partly desacralized and became a *terminus technicus* for the properties of the temple, as opposed to the חֹל, the common. Yet again paradoxically, the de facto monopolization of the *sacred* secured the unique, "wholly other" position for the Holy in Judahite society and the Hebrew tradition.

After all, what is the essence of the priestly dichotomy system? And why did they need two dichotomies instead of only one? What is the ultimate difference between the *clean/unclean* and the *sacred/profane* dichotomy in a cultic context?

- **Sacred/profane (קֹדֶשׁ /חֹל):** to secure the position of the temple (and obviously its staff, the priesthood) within Judahite society, expressing their unique position, justified by the monopolization of the Holy

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[290]Isa. 6:1–5.

- **Clean/unclean (טהר/טמא):** to preserve the aesthetics of the Holy, by perfecting the cult as the ultimate act of group cohesion within the monopolized realm of the Holy (and the priesthood)

The two dichotomies function only together: the first draws the border between the "wholly other" and the "others" (as a first step within the nation, as a second step between the nation and all the others); the second maintains the whole system by ensuring the ultimate aesthetics of perfection for the *protected*.

Although the post-exilic priesthood of Jerusalem can be accused of monopolizing the *Holy* and using Him to secure its own position (perhaps even with a kind of desacralization of the *numinous* by using the *sacred* term as a technical term), from a theological perspective the post-exilic priestly theology had an unmistakable advantage. That is, *avoiding the temptation of dualism*. Even though a new term (חֹל) was created in order to delimit the outside territory, the *profane* remained strictly in its context, and it was elevated back to the level of the Holy. The Holy still remained unparalleled in the divine sphere.

In sum, the goal of the priestly dichotomy system was to express and secure the special position of the priesthood within the society, achieved by forming two dichotomies: one to draw a line between Yahweh's property and "the common"; and the second to maintain the ultimate aesthetics (perfection) of the cult.

Moral perspectives: two applications of the dichotomies

As the semantic analysis indicates, the priestly dichotomy system was refocused after a while and the border between the *sacred* and the *profane* was re-established, isolating Judah from

the surrounding nations. What Jenson calls a "graded holiness",[291] was actually a strong shift in focus: the "realm of Holy" was no longer primarily the temple, but the whole nation. [292]

As the semantic model indicates, the *national domain* finds itself already among the *ethical* domains – belonging to the "others" automatically means a negative evaluation on the moral scale. In this internal system, belonging to the outside world is implicitly evil and perverted. Mixing "the holy nation" with foreigners is an abomination.[293] The cohesive force of the priestly dichotomy system was now applied so as to justify conflicts with surrounding nations.[294]

The other application of the priestly dichotomy system became that of individual morality in late poetry. On one hand, this defined the individualization of late Hebrew poetry in the Hebrew Bible. On the other, the originally robust priestly dichotomy system started to fade, and was soon deconstructed. The *holy* started to indicate moral qualities that characterize the acts of the individual. The dichotomy system departed from its original role of group cohesion and moved towards individual moral interpretation.

Summary: the real power of the *Holy*

The theology of the Holy can be written as an ultimate, standalone aesthetics, a basic human experience, as illustrated by Rudol Otto's Numinous. The Holy does not need a profane to define itself. The sacred and profane dichotomy was a response in a distinct socio-historical situation, the post-exilic restoration. But as soon as the social situation changed, the priestly dichotomy system started to shift its focus. The real power of the Holy laid in its ability to retain its intact quality and internal power over the centuries.

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[291]Jenson, Philip P. *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World.* JSOT Supplement Series 106. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992.

[292]Actually, there are slight differences between the models of Barr (1972), Jenson (1992), and Milgrom (2000) in their historical approaches. Driven by the canonical logic, these models try to reconcile the different versions of the priestly dichotomy system into one coherent model, which is challenging due to the internal development of the Biblical traditions.

[293]Ezra 9:1–2.

[294] The opposition between Israel and the surrounding nations was not a new phenomenon in the 5th century BCE, it had started no later than the 8th century BCE; but the application of the priestly dichotomy system to describe the situation is the development attributed to the Chronicles and the book of Ezra–Nehemiah.

7. Separation as Social Experience: a Socio-historical Background

In the second chapter of this dissertation I offer a concise summary of the research history of priestly dichotomies, starting with the classical works of Durkheim, Otto, Eliade, and Douglas, and extending to the models proposed by Milgrom and Jenson. The key conclusion of this chapter is that up to this point little attention has been paid to the *historical aspect* of these dichotomies.[295] Later, even if some aspects of internal textual development were considered (notably the differences between P and H), no overarching models were created to reveal the origin and development of these dichotomies. Even Jacob Milgrom, in his brilliant Leviticus commentary,[296] creates a *synchronic* model of holiness in priestly theology and focuses less on the social-historical aspects and internal development of the concept of "separation".

This task of this dissertation has been to address this by conducting a semantic analysis of the priestly dichotomies on the biblical text corpus, resulting in the key finding that neither the dichotomies nor the terms *profane* (חֹל) or *unclean* (טָמֵא) were in use in pre-exilic literature. The key term, "to separate" (הִבְדִּיל), was used only with a different meaning (to select, designate somebody for a task, without the moment of "separation"). That is, the priestly dichotomies were not given theological or linguistic constructs before the Babylonian Exile (starting with 586 BCE). Rather, they were created during or after the exile in order to support the Priestly theology with a core concept.

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[295] The theory that the *sacred/profane* dichotomy is an *a priori*, primordial structure in human culture was shared by most classical anthropologists in the first half of the last century, including Durkheim and Eliade. For theologists such as Gerhard von Rad, this belief was also self-evident. Considering this background, it is not surprising that the historicity of the dichotomies was not in focus in the classical works.

[296] Milgrom, Jacob. *Leviticus 1-16. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* The Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1991; Milgrom, Jacob. *Leviticus 17–22. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* The Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 2001; Milgrom, Jacob. *Leviticus 23–27. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* The Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 2001.

The semantic analysis of Chapter 3 also shows that the development of the concept did not end with the restoration of the Second Temple. In fact, it evolved further during the following decades (and through later centuries), and the focus of *separation* moved from the *internal* separation between the priesthood and the rest of the society to the isolation of Judah from the surrounding nations. Finally, in the late poetry, the individual aspect of moral separation appears, expressing the isolation of the individual from God.

The role of the *clean/unclean* and *sacred/profane* dichotomy system within post-exilic priestly theology is a relatively well-researched topic in biblical studies.[297] However, little attention has been given to the *diachronic* aspect of the separation concept, namely the socio-historical conditions of its conception and development. In this chapter, I explore the following questions:

- Which social and historical preconditions led to the development of the dichotomies, and why were they created specifically in this era?
- What was the social function of the dichotomy system and what was it meant to express?

The intention of this chapter is to reveal the underlying socio-historical conditions that inspired and contributed to the creation of the priestly dichotomy system.

A comment on the methodology of this chapter

Referring to the social function of the dichotomies, is it legitimate to question the social phenomena and motivators of such theological concepts? Is it not possible that religious thoughts and concepts came into existence *independently of certain* underlying social changes?

The answer is not at all evident. The historicity of the *clean/unclean* dichotomy has never been the focus of biblical scholars, even when possible underlying (hygienic etc.)

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[297]For a summary of the research see e.g. Grohmann, *Heiligkeit und Reiheit im Buch Leviticus*, 2013.

rationales have been discussed in detail.[298] In the case of the *sacred and profane*, neither its historicity nor its rationale has ever been in focus.[299] Instead, the notion of the *sacred and the profane* is usually assumed to be an a priori, given "conception of numinous quality sui generis".[300] That is, a basic human experience, which is as old as humanity itself. In fact, both classical anthropology (Durkheim, Eliade) and canonical theology (von Rad, Waltke) developed by assuming the mere *existence* of these dichotomies but without discussing their underlying social motivation or historical origins.

Nevertheless, I think there are two good reasons to investigate underlying social drivers, not only for the *sacred/profane* dichotomy, but also for the priestly concept of *separation*:

1. **Religion is social.** Religion itself is a social phenomenon and therefore is also exposed to social change. It is logical to believe that behind the changes of religious thinking and practices there must be other social changes influencing these practices. Religion's social function is not completely detached from society.

2. **Language is social.** Verbal interactions happen in the social space, and therefore language is closely related to social reality. Social changes can considerably influence spoken language. Therefore, it is a legitimate assumption that the multi-step semantic transformations of the root בדל or the newly created 'profane' and 'unclean' lexemes, for example, indicate changes in the society after the Exile.[301]

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[298]For a summary of the rationale behind the clean/unclean dichotomy see Moskala, Jiři. *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals in Leviticus 11: Their Nature, Theology, and Rationale (An Intertextual Study).* ATS Dissertation Series, vol. 4. Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society, 2000.

[299]For example, the classical Old Testament theology work of Gerhard von Rad (Rad, *OT Theology I.*, 217) discusses underlying social drivers for the clean/unclean dichotomy but not for the sacred/profane. Similarly Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology,* 467. does not mention underlying drivers for the sacred/profane dichotomy.

[300]Interestingly, Jenni – Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament,* 1104. also

[301]Similar applied research is carried out by Koltai (2017), who investigates the social background of bilingualism in the Book of Daniel. See Koltai, Kornelia, *A kétnyelvűség szerepe Dániel könyvében*, in: Axis III/2. (2017); "Dániel könyve. A Sapientia Szerzetesi Hittudományi Főiskola Bibliatudomány Tanszék

As is shown in the semantic analysis, the origin and existence of priestly dichotomies are linked to post-exilic priesthood. In this chapter, I discuss the underlying social changes within the Judahite society that led to the special position of the priesthood of Jerusalem, and the key drivers that led to the evolution of the priestly "separation" concept.

7.1.1. Scope

Semantic analysis indicates that the meaning of the root בדל shifted towards "separation" only after the Babylonian Exile, while the priestly dichotomies were also formed only in post-exilic times. Both the divine attribute קדשׁ and the concept of clean animals had existed in earlier times (without counterparts). However, the dichotomies themselves were created only after the exile in order to form a core concept in priestly theology.

Although the semantic analysis of the priestly dichotomy system sheds light on the post-exilic era, social changes that led to the rise of the Jerusalem priesthood had, in fact, already begun after the fall of the northern kingdom, that is, in the second half of the 8th century BCE. This complex process encompassed not only the early development of the social classes within the Judahite society, but also the development of further underlying concepts such as cult centralization and the royal monopolization of the Holy. Therefore, this chapter concentrates on three major topics:

1. The rise of Judah in the 7th century BCE and the royal monopoly of the Holy

2. The internal social development of pre-exilic Judah and the rise of the priesthood

3. Post-exilic society in Judah: the realm of the *sacred* and the *profane*

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szimpóziumának előadásai", pp. 29–38. On the relation between language and society, see Wardhaugh, Ronald. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics.* 5th edition. Malden: Blackwell, 2006. Page 10ff.

7.2. The rise of Judah in the 7th Century BCE and the Royal Monopoly of the Holy

7.2.1. Yahweh and the only place of the *Holy*

In priestly theology, the only dwelling place – the Jerusalem temple – of the only God Yahweh is meant to be *holy*,[302] or its blueprint,[303] the Tabernacle.[304] Only two exceptions verify this rule. The exceptions are occasional locations of epiphanies (of Yahweh): Mount Horeb at the burning bush[305] and a place where Joshua met the commander of the army of Yahweh at Jericho.[306] In both cases, the Israelite God Yahweh (or his angel) appears in some form, which makes the place *holy*, therefore the sandal shall be taken from the foot. Obviously, both locations are *holy* only due to the presence of Yahweh; this is why these two cases verify the rule. Otherwise, nowhere else is thought to be holy, including Bethel, the ancient sanctuary, which was personally raised by Jacob according to (northern) tradition,[307] or further sanctuaries or altars. Post-exilic (and, in fact, already early Deuteronomistic) sources introduce the temple of Jerusalem as *axis mundi*[308] – the only place where God is dwelling. Neither the redactors of the book of Kings, nor the prophets, nor the Priestly source or the Chronicler want to know about any holy places other than the temple mount. This suggests that the investigation of the *sacred and profane* should begin with the age of cult

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[302]1Kings 6:16, 7:50, 8:6.8.10; 1Chron. 6:49; 2Chron. 3:8.10, 4:22; 5:7.9.11, 29:5.7, 35:5; Psalms 24:3, 134:2; Isa 57:15; Ez. 41:4.21.23, 42:13.14, 44:27, 45:3.4, 48:12; Ezra 9:8; Dan. 9:24 ("Holy City"); Eccl. 8:10.

[303]The Tabernacle is was either a fictional projection of the Jerusalem temple (Graf, Wellhausen), or a description of an actual tent shrine (Cross, Haran) in the Priestly writing; a summary on the research see in Richard Eliott Friedman, *Tabernacle*, in Anchor Bible Dictionary (Doubleday 1992). In fact, from the point of view of the dwelling place of Yahweh, both Wellhausen's and Cross's theroies are viable, as even if tent shrines existed in the Canaanite region, P handles the Tabernacle as a single, unique dwelling place of Yahweh, that is as an antitype of the Jerusalem temple.

[304]In the Priestly tradition, the term "holy place" (מְקוֹם קָדֹשׁ) is applied to the Tabernacle several times: Ex. 26:33.34, 28:29.35.43, 29:30.31, 31:11, 35:19, 39:1.41; Lev. 6:16.25-27.30, 7:6, 10:13.17, 14:13, 16:2.3.16.17.20.23.24.27.32, 24:9; Num. 18:10, 28:7.

[305]Ex. 3:5.

[306]Joshua 5:15.

[307]Gen. 35:1kk

[308]In Mircea Eliade's theory, the *axis mundi* is the „center of the world", that is established by „the image of a universal pilar", that is a sacred place that „constitutes a break in the homogeneity of space". Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 35–36ff.

centralization, when the sanctuary of Jerusalem had become unique and "*wholly other*"[309] among all other ancient high places.

A God who was the *only one*, and a temple that was the *only holy place* on earth, were unique – at least in the Ancient Near East, where gods and goddesses were thought of as *dwelling* in multiple ancient temples, shrines, and caves. The only God who is alone in the universe, who does not have a wife and does not visit other gods, is governing his own land, his own people, and stays outside cultural and trade life, which was common not only in the ANE in general,[310] but also in the Canaanite region.[311] This chapter intends to provide a brief overview of how Yahweh and his *holy* temple were monopolized by the King(dom) of Judah.

7.2.2. The Rise of Judah

Today, biblical scholars agree that the demographic and economic rise of the Kingdom of Judah started with King Ahaz's decision not to resist the Assyrian army of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 BCE), and rather be a vassal paying an enormous redemption.[312] According to archaeological research first revealed by Magen Broshi, by the end of the 8th century BCE the population of Jerusalem had suddenly grown to an unprecedented size. The sudden demographic boom is proven by the size of the city that expanded from the former "City of David" area to cover the entire western hill. The former modest little town of ca. 10–12 acres had grown to 150 acres, and had become a densely populated, large city.[313] A similar growth took place in the entire area of Judah: many new farming settlements were established. Some

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[309]Rudolf Otto, *The idea of the holy*, 25.

[310]Oppenheim, A. Leo. *Ancient Mesopotamia. Portrait of a Dead Civilization.* Chicago: Chicago Press, 1977. p. 171ff; McIntosh, Jane R. *Ancient Mesopotamia. New Perspectives.* Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005. p. 207ff.

[311]Hess, Richard S. *Israelite Religions.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. p. 125ff.

[312]Ben-Sasson, H. H. (edit.), *A History of the Jewish People*, 139ff.

[313]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 243.

cities, like Lachish, grew to be large administrative centers with considerable military defense. The total population of Judah suddenly jumped to 120,000.[314]

This sudden demographic explosion, also fuelled by the large number of refugees from the destroyed Northern Kingdom, was accompanied by both economic prosperity and internal social evolution. Archaeologists discovered signs of mature state formation: monumental inscriptions, seals, seal impressions, royal ostraca, as well as mass-production and country-wide distribution of pottery and other crafts. The rise of middle-sized cities and the multiplication of oil and wine pressing facilities are also indications of a flourishing economy shifting from private production to state industry.[315]

Even if the Kingdom of Judah was surrounded by Assyrian vassal states, which were filled with a foreign population due to the Assyrian deportation policy[316] after the fall of Samaria (721 BCE), such exponential economic growth cannot be conceived in isolation – not even if the terrain of the Judean hills suggested a secluded spot on the Assyrian imperial map. The economic welfare was fuelled by the active participation in Assyrian trade routes. The intensification of oil and wine production is a sign of lively economic ties between Judah and the Assyrian Empire.[317]

7.2.3. Isolation as National Experience

Despite the assumed flourishing of economic relations between Judah and surrounding vassal states, cultural and ethnic isolation was a fundamental experience in Judahite culture. Firstly, a large number of new settlers on the hills of Judah were certainly refugees from the Northern Kingdom, suffering from memories of the war and bitterness from their lost homeland. When Samaria was demolished and occupied, the Assyrian Empire deported huge masses to foreign

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[314]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 253. also Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People from the Written & Archaeological Sources*, 290.
[315]Finkelstein – Silberman, The Bible Unearthed, 245; Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People*, 291.
[316]Thomson, *Early History of the Israelite People*, 339.
[317]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 246.

areas and resettled foreign populations, so a hostile empire and foreign people surrounded the whole of Judah. Secondly, the Assyrian Empire also settled its cult in occupied countries, meaning foreign cult and religious practices were spread all around, which led to growing tensions between the Judahite and the surrounding gods.

The political cataclysm by the end of the 8th century further strengthened the isolation of Judah from the surrounding nations. After the death of Sargon in 705 BCE, King Hezekiah decided to join the anti-Assyrian coalition, making considerable preparations for a military defense. Jerusalem was fortified with a 6-meter thick wall, also mentioned by Isaiah, who condemns this, stating, "you counted the houses of Jerusalem so that you could tear them down to fortify the wall" (Isa 22:9–16). The other well-known military preparation was the water tunnel recorded by the famous Siloam-inscription.[318] The second biggest city, Lachish, was also considerably strengthened by a fortification system, including a six-chambered gate, large stable facilities and presumably also a water system. Archaeological findings report a centralized logistics system with mass produced store jars, marked with the royal seal (למלך, "belonging to the King").[319]

Despite the thorough preparations for the war, Judah paid an enormous price for participating in the rebellion. Sennacherib's revenge had virtually destroyed the economic environment of the kingdom in 701 BCE. The archaeological findings show not only the exact course of the siege and the subsequent destruction of Lachish,[320] but also a systematic devastation of Judahite cities and agricultural facilities along the whole Shephelah, crushing the flourishing economy of the Southern Kingdom. Although Jerusalem itself and the almost insurmountable mountains of Judah eventually escaped devastation, Sennacherib ultimately reached his goal to utterly punish Hezekiah for his rebellion and to destroy the prosperity of Judah. Archaeological surveys have shown that the wealthy region of the Shephelah never

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[318]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 256.
[319]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*. 259.
[320]About the siege of Lachish see David Ussishkin. *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib.* Publications of the Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University, No. 6. Tel Aviv, 1983.

recovered from the destruction of war. Even during the economic recovery in the following decades under King Manasseh, the Shephelah was sparsely inhabited and despite the few rebuilt towns, the majority of the villages and farm houses were left in ruins.[321]

In response to King Hezekiah's revolt, the Assyrian army dealt a fatal blow to the Kingdom of Judah, which suffered terrible economic loss during the campaign. Economically speaking, it never fully recovered. The economically effective area of the Kingdom was shrinking, furthering the national sense of solitude and isolation. The desolation of the Shephelah by the Assyrian army led to a second wave of refugees to the hills of Judah, ultimately resulting in clans losing attachment to their historical territories.[322] The two Assyrian campaigns thrust the Israelite population into the Judean mountains for the next century while Philistine cities annexed large areas of the Shephelah.

7.2.4. King Manasseh and Recovery after the Escape of Jerusalem

The subsequent economic recovery during the decades of King Manasseh (687–643 BCE) was limited to the territory of the Judean hills and Jerusalem. Archaeological surveys show that after the Assyrian campaign, the population density of the Judean highlands was growing, together with an intensified agricultural production in the Jerusalem and Bethlehem area.[323] Also, in the 7th century BCE, the formerly unproductive Judean desert began to be cultivated, with an estimated tenfold growth in population. Archaeologists discovered a number of new settlements both in the Judean desert and in the northern Negev.[324] Finkelstein suggests that King Manasseh's economic policy that compensated for the production of lost farmlands in the Shephelah was the cause of this development.[325] Nevertheless, despite vast territorial losses, the economy of Judah prospered again during the long reign of King

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[321]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 263–264.
[322]Ibid. 273.
[323]Ibid. 266.
[324] Mazar, Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 438ff.
[325]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 266.

Manasseh, due to his peace policy with the Assyrian Empire and participation in the Assyrian trade system (including the Arabian Caravan trade routes). The key agricultural product of the region, olive, remained a firm foundation of the Judean economy during the first half of the seventh century BCE, also supplying the Philistine Ekron's oil industry with olives. Archaeological findings, such as the growing number of royal seals, administrative ostraca, and official weights suggest a centralized production and logistics system played a role in the strengthening kingdom.[326]

7.2.5. King Josiah and his Great Reform

After the death of King Manasseh in 642 BCE and a short, two-year reign of his son, King Amon (whose life was ended by a *coup d'etat)*, the grandson of Manasseh, the 8-year old Josiah, was placed on the throne. In economic terms, during his reign of 31 years, Josiah continued what his grandfather had begun: centralized, well-organized mass production of goods, especially olives for foreign trade, accompanied by centralized royal administration and logistics. Archaeologists face challenges in verifying the Chronicler's claim that Josiah cleansed "*the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali and on their surrounding mountain shrines.*" (2Chr. 34:6). Based on the results of recent archaeological surveys, neither did the territory of Josiah's Kingdom expand considerably,[327] nor did its population grow significantly as compared to during Menasseh's reign.[328] The little Israelite kingdom tried to maximize its economic and commercial capabilities. It utilized its modest geographical setting and position on an important trading route and waited for the next opportunity to shake off the Assyrian army's yoke with the help of Egypt.

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[326]Ibid. 269–270.

[327]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 347–353.

[328] The territorial expansion of Judah during the reign of Josiah is a subject of controversial disputes. Classical historiography thinks that „the reign of Josiah was also a period of territorial expansion and economic prosperity" (Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People*, 151.) In the light of the geopolitical realities of the era in the ANE, I believe the minimalist view on king Josiah's expansion is closer to the actual capabilities of the Judahite kingdom.

The cultic reforms of King Josiah and the work of the Deuteronomist should be interpreted in this historical and economic context. The cult centralization itself demonstrates the economic and administrative centralization efforts of the kingdom: the cult is a royal monopoly and the sporadic, local cult was no longer tolerated. The moderate size of a country with basically one considerable city and cultic centre and surrounded by both ethnic and religious strangers led almost automatically to a centrally-defined cult, the exclusivity of the only legitimate *holy place*, and the exclusivity of the only God, Yahweh, who was actually dwelling at that place. The monopolization of the cult, the *holy place* and its occupant, Yahweh, was the penultimate step towards the monotheism that would come later, presumably during the Exile, with the denial of the existence of any other gods. Nevertheless, the monopoly of Yahweh and his cult clearly suited Josiah's policy and the scene of a small sized, isolated, ethnically cohesive – if not fully homogeneous – population with one considerable cultic place, surrounded by hostile empires and foreign gods.

7.2.6. Cult Centralization: Necessity or a Conscious Decision?

The moderate size of the Kingdom of Judah and the fact that it had practically only one "high place" in Jerusalem played a major role in the concept of monolatric religious policies and cult centralization. Diana Edelman follows this logic, and proved in her "*Hezekiah's Alleged Cultic Centralization*" study[329] that Hezekiah's so-called cult centralization was only an acknowledgement of historical realities.

Edelman argues that the territory of the kingdom of Judah was limited to a narrow area, and thus cult centralization originated as an experience of the limited circumstances that enabled cultic activities only in Jerusalem. However, since the author of the Books of Kings showed no specific interest in the original driving forces behind cult limitation, he gave a

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[329]Edelman, Diana. "Hezekiah's Alleged Cultic Centralization" In: *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32.4 (2008): 395-434.

theological answer to the limited practice, "*so he had no need to concern himself with the historical details.*"[330]

Monolatry, i.e. the requirement to worship only one God, in this case Yahweh, who dwelt in the single authorized cultic centre, originated together with the royal cult centralization: the "royal God", that is, Yahweh of Jerusalem, claimed authority throughout the Kingdom. Not only the cult, but also the person of God became a monopoly. The extent to which the royal ambitions of cult centralization were translated into actual practice is a moot point. This is suggested by archaeological findings, e.g. a great number of *Asheras* all around the country,[331] but the royal intention of a monopolized cult was obvious.

The intention of the Deuteronomistic circles to compile a monumental historical work (identified as the Deuteronomistic History, DtrH) in order to strengthen the national cohesion and provide future perspectives to the lost heritage of the Northern Kingdom is also understandable for an ambitious king who saw an opportunity in the weakening Assyrian Empire and an emerging Egyptian Empire under the reign of Pharaoh Psammetichus I. (664–610 BCE). In a political sense, the efforts of King Josiah failed with his death, the conquest of Judah and the Babylonian Exile. Nevertheless the Israelite self-conscience, the "found" book of law, the national epic and dreams, and above all, the only true God Yahweh and his monopolized cult remained for posterity.

7.2.7. Centralized Cult: Linear Evolution or Fluctuating Policies?

One can argue that the development of Judahite religion towards a centralized, monolithic royal cult was not a continuous, linear process in the late 8th and the 7th century BCE, but a fluctuating royal policy with two outstanding geniuses, Hezekiah and Josiah, both cleansing the temple and the Kingdom from alien gods and practices.

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[330]Edelman, *Hezekiah's Alleged Cultic Centralization*, 425.
[331]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 288.; also Hess, *Isrealite Religions*, 330ff.

[Hezekiah] "removed the high places, shattered the sacred pillars, and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake that Moses made, for until then the Israelites were burning incense to it. It was called Nehushtan." (2Ki. 18:4)

[Josiah] "commanded the high priest Hilkiah and the priests of the second rank and the doorkeepers to bring out of the Lord's sanctuary all the articles made for Baal, Asherah, and all the stars in the sky. He burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron and carried their ashes to Bethel. Then he did away with the idolatrous priests the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense at the high places in the cities of Judah and in the areas surrounding Jerusalem." (2Ki 23:4–5a)

In between, according to biblical records, a serious setback took place with the most corrupt king in Judah. This was Manasseh, who

"…rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed and reestablished the altars for Baal. He made an Asherah, as King Ahab of Israel had done; he also bowed in worship to all the stars in the sky and served them. He built altars in the Lord's temple, where the Lord had said, "Jerusalem is where I will put my name." He built altars to all the stars in the sky in both courtyards of the Lord's temple. 6 He sacrificed his son in the fire, practiced witchcraft and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did a huge amount of evil in the Lord's sight, angering him." (2Kings 21:3–6)

For a long time, biblical scholarship fully accepted the biblical account for both Hezekiah's cult reform and Manasseh's backward religious policies.[332] However, the credibility of the report on Hezekiah's cult reform was questioned by Wellhausen and others, based on the argument of clear Deuteronomic tendencies.[333] Later, the early arguments of biblical source analysis were complemented by archaeological evidence, as summarized by Nadav Na'aman:[334]

1. The description of Hezekiah's reform (2 Kings 18:4) follows the text of the Deuteronomic law (Deut. 7:5) in every detail: breaking down the altars, dashing in pieces sacred pillars, hewing down Asherim and burning graven images with fire. The only unique element in the description of Hezekiah's reform is the destruction of the Nehushtan, which is therefore thought to be a core archival note, expanded later by the editor of the Book of the Kings. Whether this expansion was based on

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[332]See Haran (1978) p. 132–142, and also literature in Nadar (1995) ZAW 107. P. 179.

[333]About a summary of this research see Lowery, R.H. *The Reforming Kings* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 147–149.

[334]Na'aman, Nadav, *The Debated Historicity of Hezekiah's Reform in Light of Historical and Archaeological Research*. ZAW (1995) 107. p. 107–195.

the description of Josiah's reform, or on the pattern of the Deuteronomic law, is a subject of debate; Na'aman himself opts for the latter option, which seems to be more plausible also to me, considering the regular recitation of the Deuteronomic pattern and the description of the cult reform of Asa (1 Kings 15:12-13), which is built upon the same pattern.[335]

2.   Another consideration is the low probability that Hezekiah would have demolished high places or cultic places in the shadow of the Assyrian Empire. After having been conquered in 721 BCE, the city of Samaria was rebuilt by Sargon, who established his own administration in the new province. Judah was in the close neighborhood of the Assyrian Empire, and the destruction of "holy places" would have caused severe punishment on Judah. Based on these circumstances, according to Na'aman it is highly unlikely that Hezekiah would have been involved in any destruction of high places or cultic objects outside his territorially limited kingdom.[336]

3.   A similar argument applies to the activities of Manasseh (2Ki 21:3), which seems to have been a reversal of Hezekiah's reforms. The Bible claims that the king rebuilt the high places, erected altars for the Baal and made an Asherah – as an exact recitation of the Deuteronomic law in a negative form. However, according to Na'aman, it is highly unlikely that these activities took place in the first half of the seventh century. At that time, most Judean sites were, according to archaeological finds, in ruins. Na'aman believes that the current composition of the Book of Kings is the work of the Deuteronomist who combined the memories about the removal of the Nehushtan with the laws of Dtr. 7:5 and 12:3.[337]

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[335]Na'aman, *The Debated Historicity of Hezekiah's Reform*, 107ff. There is also a linguistic evidence for the composition of different sources based on 2Kings 4a, where some scholars expect waw + imperfect instead of the current waw + perfect (וְכִתַּת). However in my opinion this evidence is not convincing because of the structure of the whole verse (all the other verbs are in the same tense).

[336]Na'aman (1995) p. 175.

[337]Na'aman (1995) p. 177.

4. Some scholars argue that Jeremiah 26:17-19 refers to Hezekiah's reform under the impact of Micah's preaching.[338] In contrast to this assumption, Na'aman claims these verses refer to Hezekiah's repentance in the face of a threat to Jerusalem. He argues that "*the author of Jeremiah 26 combined Micah's warnings against relying on the divine inviolability of Jerusalem with the narrative of Hezekiah's reaction to the Assyrian threat as expressed in the words of the Rab-shakeh. […] The narrative in Jer. 26:17–19 refers to the story of the Assyrian campaign against Jerusalem and has nothing to do with the short note of Hezekiah's cultic reform*".[339]

5. Beyond literary and historical arguments, Na'aman also takes archaeological evidence into account. At the time of his article, only two excavations could provide evidence for changes of cultic activities during the time of Hezekiah: a small shrine at Tel Arad and fragments of a large-ashlar built horned altar at Tel Beer-sheba. However, archaeological research suggests to date the destruction of Tel Arad at the end of the 7th century, while the function and even identity of Tel Beer-sheba is debated and cannot serve as an evidence for Hezekiah's cleansing efforts.[340]

6. The final argument is that the Lachish reliefs, erected by Sennacherib in Nineveh after having successfully occupied Lachish, illustrates several cult vessels and utensils that were taken from the city. Consequently, the cultic activity could not have been discontinued during the previous years, even though at that time Lachish was the second most important city in Judah. Thus, Na'aman finally rejects the reliability of Hezekiah's cult reforms.[341]

The uncertainty of the biblical report on Hezekiah's cult reform also raises doubts about reports on the backward religious policies of King Manasseh. There is no evidence for a

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[338]Williamson (1982) p. 372.
[339]Na'aman (1995) p. 178.
[340]Na'aman (1995) p. 180.
[341]Na'aman (1995) p. 185-186.

country-wide cleansing of cult sites in the age of Hezekiah, nor evidence for the building of new "high places" in the time of Manasseh. Further, in light of the apparently centralized economics and royal administration, it is highly improbable that Manasseh would have built alternative cultic centers, especially in such a territorially limited kingdom. It is more probable that the level of centralization of the whole economy further evolved, together with the emerging monopoly of the cult, from a historically given situation, viz. that the ethnically isolated kingdom had only one single "holy place" with one local God, Yahweh.

Certainly, the religious traditions preserved by a large number of Israelite refugees from the Northern Kingdom continued to survive, as evidenced both by biblical records and archaeological findings. But a royal policy actively supporting the religious heterogeneity, particularly one that founded additional cult sites outside the royal centre, is unlikely. It is much more likely that the Deuteronomist evaluates Manasseh's reign as evil because of his cooperation of the Assyrian Empire – which otherwise secured the peaceful development of the country for more than 50 years.

7.2.8. Summary: National Isolation and the Monopolization of the Holy

Isolation as a national experience is as old as the rise of the Kingdom of Judah. The Assyrian expansion persecuted the Israelite population into the Judean hills, which was a catalyst for the internal development of the Southern Kingdom after the destruction of Samaria in 721 BCE. After the initial, economically successful two decades, the Assyrian army further narrowed the boundaries of the Judahite Kingdom, leaving only the capital intact. In the next century, Judah had to stabilize its position in this geographical and political situation (that is, closed into the Judean hills with one considerable city), which could be successfully achieved due to centralized agricultural production and logistics system, with centralized royal administration and a growing monopoly of the cult of Yahweh, the only God who had a dwelling place in the Kingdom. Both the experience of national isolation and the

monopolized royal cult were essential conditions for the rise of the Jerusalem priesthood and the post-exilic priestly concept of *separation*.

7.3. The Internal Social Development of the Pre-exilic Judah and the Rise of the Priesthood

The champion of this historical constellation was certainly the priesthood of Jerusalem, which secured a privileged position for itself as evidenced by the story of King Josiah's cult reform (2Kings 23) and further textual evidence (below). Although the priesthood could secure for itself the ultimate leading position only after the Exile, its position was a result of the internal social development of pre-exilic Judah.

Unfortunately, we have only fragmentary records about the social changes of Judah during the period discussed. Therefore, the full picture must be pieced together from the textual evidence of the Hebrew Bible, supplemented by archaeological surveys. In the history of the era, we can identify the following major social trends that characterized the internal development of Judahite society in the 8th century BCE:

1. **The exodus of war refugees and land-grabbing in the Judean hills**: a "kickstarted society" due to the war crisis, the merging of northern and southern Israelites under special circumstances.

2. **The transition from a traditional tribal society to an early form of class society**, where the boosting economic production soon started to produce social inequality.

3. **The development of the royal administration**, the merger of clan-based tribal power structures with an emerging hierarchy of the royal power system.

4. **The rise of the priesthood and the prophets**: the development of religious functions of society into a simple tripartite structure.

In other words, the social development of the era can be described as a result of multiple social processes, of which the Jerusalem priesthood held the most influence.

7.3.1. The exodus of war refugees and land grabbing in the Judean hills

According to archaeological evidence, simultaneously to the Assyrian campaign in the Northern Kingdom, the sparsely populated hills of Judah saw considerable demographic growth, obviously driven by a large number of refugees from the war zone.[342] The explosive demographic growth of the population – from a few tens of thousands up to ca. 120,000[343] in a couple of years – can only be explained by the settlement of a large number of war refugees from the ruined Northern Kingdom. Previously, Judah was a sparsely populated rural area with a modest capital and no considerable buildings or fortifications, surrounded only by a few agricultural settlements.[344] The new arrivals settled both in Jerusalem and in the countryside, establishing a large number of settlements around the whole country.[345]

The sudden demographic situation included the forced merger of several social groups coming from different regions in the Kingdom of Israel, settling among the indigenous population of the Judean hills. The historical compulsion created an unusual social situation, in which both the newcomers and the local inhabitants tried to find a favorable position for themselves in this newly "kickstarted" society. We know little about the land grabbing process. However, due to the initially densely settled rural area, it could not have led to major conflicts during the first decades. As the archaeological surveys show, the Judean hills before the war crisis were an underdeveloped rural area with sporadic agricultural activities, rather than a flourishing economy with considerable wealth. The mass of war refugees left their properties in the destroyed war zone and the new, mixed society started to develop from the relative equality of poverty. The wave of refugees established dozens of new settlements. The land could feed even the suddenly tripled population, and free land was not a scarce resource. Potential conflicts fell into three major categories:

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[342]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 243.
[343]Ibid. 245.
[344]Ibid. 239.
[345]Ibid. 245.

1. Expanding settlements over pasture areas and a conflicting lifestyle of settlers and shepherd tribes.

2. Competition for social positions between indigenous Judeans and newcomer Israelites: Considering the early stage of statehood and economic development, there were only a few social subsystems that could be attained – beyond individual positioning in the royal hierarchy, the priesthood was the only established institution. It could be an area of conflict from the outset. Indeed, written sources confirm that the fusion of the native Judahite priesthood and priests from other regions was not without conflict – see the Phinehas conflict in Num. 25.

3. Beyond the merger of northern and southern people and their social functions, national, local, and spiritual traditions were also harmonized and pieced together into one common Israelite tradition – peaking with the Deuteronomistic History that was meant as a national epic, justifying King Josiah's claim to be king of all Israelites and to rule over the territories of the lost Northern Kingdom. In parallel, religious traditions also merged: some of the gods were identified with Yahweh; while other gods and goddesses were displaced from Yahweh's monolatric kingdom.

Ultimately, the fusion of the northern and southern population was successful, considering that it proceeded without major internal social conflict. It resulted in a merged society that could successfully rebuild itself after the trauma of war. The successful merge manifested itself in the (almost) smooth fusion of major social subsystems, first of all the priesthood; and in parallel, the fusion of northern and southern traditions into a combined national epic, indicating Jerusalem as the capital of a united Israel; the king of Jerusalem as the king of all Israelites; and Yahweh as the one and only God of the Israelite people, dwelling in the one and only temple of Israel.

7.3.2. The Transition from a Tribal Society to an Early Form of Class Society

Beyond the fusion of war refugees and original inhabitants, another major trend was forming in the society of the emerging Judahite Kingdom at of the end of the 8th century BCE: the transition from a clan-based, tribal shepherd society to an early form of a class-based agricultural society. The disintegration of the traditional clan-based, tribal social structure of the nomadic population is a natural consequence of population growth and economic development. Both land ownership and agricultural production tend to be individualized with the emergence of agricultural settlements in societies where large differing interest groups are formed, all of this accompanied by growing economic differences.

As the prophecies of Amos[346] indicate, the social development had happened earlier in the Northern Kingdom, at the latest by the mid-8th century, when the population of Judah – according to archaeological surveys – mostly consisted of nomadic shepherds with a small number of scattered settlements. This landscape fundamentally changed with the arrival of war refugees, who tripled the population of Judah and changed the social structure of the whole country. This process was affected by not only the sudden population growth and the dozens of new settlements, but also the fact that the new settlers – who probably outnumbered the indigenous Judahite population – were arriving from a more advanced society that had long since broken with its tribal roots and had been an emerging class society before the Assyrian campaign.[347]

Thus, from the start, the social situation was a freshly-settled agricultural society under less-than-beneficial economic conditions due to the war and relative social equality among the settlers. In the following century, together with the economic prosperity, the first signs of

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[346]Amos 2:6–8; 4:1; 5:10–12; 8:4-6.

[347]Kessler, *Az ókori Izráel társadalma* (Sozialgeschichte des alten Israel), 124, suggests that both the Northern and Southern Kingdom were developing on the same track "with some time difference", and that "the social relations did not change so much" between the time of Amos and the southern prophets of the 7th century (Ibid. p. 125.). Kessler does not emphasize the significance of waves of war refugee in the the social development of Judah. But without this impact, neither the exponential boom of Judah's economy, nor the resulting social development could have occurred at such an accelerated pace.

an early class society were beginning to appear,[348] evidencing the early development of the

following social classes:

The poor. In the sudden economic boom, social differences began to emerge relatively

quickly. Isaiah complains that some "*add house to house and join field to field*", that is

accumulate wealth (Isa. 5:8). In parallel, Micah complains that "*you force the women of my*

people out of their comfortable homes, and you take my blessing from their children forever"

(Mic. 2:9). The Deuteronomic law provides in detail for the rights of debt slaves (Ex. 21:1–6;

Deut. 15:11–18). Although that was the case and suggested a common phenomenon, slavery

did not establish a classic social class. With several provisions, such as the six-year limit for

debt slavery (Ex. 21:1), the law tried to reintegrate such slaves in society. However, as

Walton points out, [349] the freed debt slaves remained on the edge of society, due to a lack of

property. Therefore, they either had to remain in the service of their creditor or to find an

opportunity elsewhere in Jerusalem or in the military service. The size of the poor population

is hard to estimate, however it seems to have been notable by the end of the 7th century, as

Ezekiel complains about starving and miserable people, though that is not surprising for a

war situation.[350]

The wealthy. Both tangible findings and written sources confirm the existence of a

somewhat wealthier social group in the era. Archaeological surveys revealed numerous

elaborate tombs around Jerusalem and at some locations in the Shephelah from as early as the

8th century.[351] The prophets of the late 8th and 7th century in Judah complain about people

who have power in their hands (יֶשׁ־לְאֵל יָדָם) and "*deprive a man of his home, a person of his*

inheritance" (Micah 2:1–2). He also accuses "leaders of Jacob" who "*issue rulings for a*

bribe (Micah 3:11a)"; officials (שָׂרִים) and the king's sons *(בְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ)* "*who are dressed in*

foreign clothing" (Zeph. 1:8). Isaiah blames similar people: "*Woe to those who rise early in*

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[348]Kessler, *Az ókori Izráel társadalma* (Sozialgeschichte des alten Israel), 126–130.

[349]John H. Walton (edit.), *IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, Ex. 21:2–6. Dept slavery.

[350]Ezekiel 18:16b: "*He gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing.*"

[351]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 245–246.

the morning in pursuit of beer, who linger into the evening, inflamed by wine. At their feasts they have lyre, harp, tambourine, flute, and wine." (Isaiah 5:11–12b). Overall, based on the prophets' outbursts against unjust, unfair, and collating people, the picture presented is of moderate prosperity, rather than great wealth. The only exception may be the merchants in Zeph. 1:11, who are "*loaded with silver*" – here the Hebrew term "Canaanites" (עַם כְּנַעַן) is used for the merchants, which may refer to indigenous merchants (frequently associated with Canaanites[352]) or actual Canaanite merchants.[353] Biblical authors witness moderate wealth accumulation by some people in the society, but no excessive wealth is recorded.

The "people of the land". A distinct social group that is explicitly mentioned in the Hebrew Bible is the *'am hâ'âreṣ* (עַם־הָאָרֶץ, "the people of the land"). The term appears 52 times, out of which 37 is in 2Kings, 2Chronicles, Jeremiah (with parallel records) and Ezekiel. As Shemaryahu Talmon points out, the social group is specifically connected with Judah, and especially linked to the city of Jerusalem and Hebron.[354] The existence of this group is dated between 836 BCE (when the *'am hâ'âreṣ* played a role in the overthrow of Athaliah, 2Kings 11) and the last mention is in 2Kings 25:19, where the Chaldeans execute 60 of them together with King Zedekiah's sons.[355] During its existence, the group played a major role in Judean politics, for example by putting King Josiah on the throne after his father had been murdered by his courtiers (2Kings 21:23–24). For this reason, there is a wide range of interpretation among scholars regarding the *'am hâ'âreṣ* – from "the population of the country in the wider sense of the word" (Klamroth) to a "great national council" (Sulzberger) and merely an upper social class, a sort of landed gentry (Max Weber).[356]

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[352]As Smith *Micah-Malachi*, WBC remarks, Canaanite often means a trader or merchant e.g. in Hos 12:8; Isa 23:8; Ezek. 16:29; 17:4; Prov 31:24; Job 41:6 and perhaps Zech 14:21.

[353]Thus Barker and Bailey, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, New American Commentary vol. 20. at Micah 1:11.

[354]S. Talmon, *The Judean 'Am Ha'ares in historical perspective.* Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Vol. 1. 1967.

[355]2Kings 25:19, Jer. 70:25.

[356]For a detailed summary on the research of the term see Talmon, *The Judean 'Am Haares in Historical Perspective*, 74.

Taking the arguments into consideration, Talmon argues that the term refers to a social group among the citizens of Jerusalem and Hebron, however without a constitutional institution.[357] That is, a group of wealthier people without formal institution but with considerable social influence and power. They also seem to have been key supporters of the Davidic dynasty (e.g. stabilizing the political order with the enthronement King Josiah).[358] They maintained a good relationship with the King and the royal court. The social group was probably on the way to being institutionalized if the system could be developed, but that did not happen because of the wars raging in the first half of the 6th century BCE . Nevertheless, it is significant to my research that the *'am hâ'âreṣ group – in its pre-exilic form, as a group of influential and presumably wealthy people in Jerusalem –*disappeared after the Babylonian Exile. [359]

7.3.3. The Development of the Royal Administration

In contemporary prophetic texts, a number of different official titles are mentioned (mostly in the context of accusations of immoral behavior). Thus, the sources provide some insight into the leading positions of the royal administration.

- The highest rank was "**the king's sons**" (בְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, Zeph. 1:8), which may refer either to the sons of King Josiah, Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim (2Kings 23:31.36), or high ranking officials, considering that the sons of King Josiah were only ten and twelve years old at the time of Josiah's reforms.[360]

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[357]Talmon, *The Judean 'Am Haares in Historical Perspective,* 76.
[358]Ibid.
[359]The *'am hâ'âreṣ* term is used also in the post-exilic literature. Ezra 4:4 uses the term to refer to non-exilic inhabitants of Yehud, presumably including non-Isrealite people; in the rabbinical literature (e.g. bSot 22a) the *'am hâ'âreṣ* are the uneducated ones.
[360]Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.* New International Commentary on the Old Testament. 2nd Edition. Eerdmans, 1990. Also Barker, Kenneth L., and D. Waylon Bailey. *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture.* The New American Commentary Vol. 20. B&H Publishing Group, 1998.

- Albeit Robertson positions the *nāśîʾ*, "**prince**" (נָשִׂיא) rank above the *śārîm* ("chieftains, rulers", see the next point) in the social hierarchy.[361] In fact, this rank appears only in Ezekiel, P and Chronicles, thus in post-exilic literature with two exceptions: in Ex. 22:27, in a commandment, "*shall not curse a ruler of your people*" (וְנָשִׂיא בְעַמְּךָ); and 1Kings 11:34, about Solomon as a ruler (נָשִׂיא) – in both cases singularly. Although it cannot be excluded that the term was in use also before the exile, the fact that the term otherwise was used only in post-exilic texts, suggests editorial work in these two cases, as well (not to mention doubts about the authenticity of the Solomonic tradition). Moreover, both verses refer to the king as *nāśîʾ*, similarly to Ezekiel who refers to Zedekiah as *nāśîʾ* (Ezek. 7:27, 12:10.12, 21:30). Only after the Exile, the term begins to denote community leaders (נְשִׂיאֵי הָעֵדָה, Ezek. 16:22, Jos. 9:15.18) and tribal representatives (נְשִׂיאֵי מַטּוֹת אֲבוֹתָם, Num. 1:16).[362] Therefore, it should not be considered a rank at the court of King Josiah.

- A term used extensively in the pre-exilic literature is *śar* (שַׂר), "**chieftain**", "**ruler**", "**captain**", derived from the akkadian *šarru*, "king". In some cases, it also denotes a king (Num. 21:18, Ju 5:15 etc.), but mostly a "vassal", "noble" of a king (Gen. 22:15 etc.), a leader of a city (Ju 9:30 etc.) or a military captain (Gen. 21:22.32 etc.).[363] In 2Kings, the term mostly means captain, commander (11:10.14.15.19, 24:12, 25:19.23.26) or governor (23:8). The term *śar* thus denotes a military officer of the highest rank in the 7th century BCE.

- A number of further officials are also enumerated in biblical sources from this age. 2Kings 25:18 provides a detailed list of the deported officials: the **chief priest** (כֹּהֵן הָרֹאשׁ), the **second priest** (כֹּהֵן מִשְׁנֶה), the **keepers of the threshold** (שֹׁמְרֵי הַסַּף), the

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[361]Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.* New International Commentary on the Old Testament. 2nd Edition. Eerdmans, 1990.

[362]For further occurrences see Brown–Driver–Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 672.

[363]About a full scale of occurrences see Brown–Driver–Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 978.

commander of the army (סָרִיס),[364] the **king's council** (רֹאֵי פְּנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ), and the

secretary of the commander of the army (סֹפֵר שַׂר הַצָּבָא). Apparently, all officials

belonged either to the temple, directly to the royal court, or to the army.

- A distinct group of officials are "the leaders of Jacob" (רָאשֵׁי יַעֲקֹב) and "the rulers of the

house of Israel" (קְצִינֵי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) who are blamed by Micah for being greedy, unjust

and corrupt (Micah 3:1,9.11a). While the term *qâṣîn* (קָצִין) means military or civilian

"leader",[365] the term *rôš* (רֹאשׁ) refers to **tribal leaders / elders of the clans** in the

Deuteronomic History.[366] This meaning has survived also in post-exilic sources, where it

refers to the elders of extended families.[367] Some commentators think that the term *rôš*

refers to "officials, who functioned as judges in the city gates […] professional judges or

rulers who served to decide legal matters on a local level,"[368] beyond the fact that legal

processes were conducted in the main square of the city, at the city gate.[369] The *râšîm*

were rather the successors of the tribal leaders of the remaining shepherd society. The

co-existence of the functions of the *qâṣîn* and the *râšîm* under the royal administration

shows the smooth transition from the tribal social structure to an agricultural class

society. The clan chieftains were made official and integrated into the royal hierarchy,

indicating hybrid, transitional power structures within Judahite society. The *râšîm* were

the instruments of a direct exercise of power at least within the shepherd society, thus

the common forum for legal judgment. The importance of their role is indicated by

Micah's indictment, who blames *râšîm* in the first place for being corrupt – even before

the priesthood and the prophets:

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[364]The סָרִיס term means "eunuch" in biblical context, but perhaps it is a loan word from the Akkadian *šarêši* (*rîši*), "head, chief", this in 2Kings 25:18 it might mean only "military chief". BDB p. 710.

[365]Josh. 10:24, 11:6, 11:11; Pro. 6:7, 25:15; Isa. 1:10, 3:6.7, 22:3; Dan. 11:18; Mic. 3:1.9.

[366]Deut. 1:13.15, 5:23; 29:10.

[367]In P and Ch, *rôš* denotes "*family heads of the community*" (רָאשֵׁי אֲבוֹת הָעֵדָה, Num. 31:26); "*heads of a family*" (רָאשֵׁי בֵּית, Ex. 6:14, Num. 7:2, 17:18; Jos. 22:14; 1Ch 5:24, 7:7.9). Brown–Driver–Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 910.

[368]Smith, *Micah and Malachi*, WBC, ad loc. Micah 3:1.

[369]See e.g. Ruth 4:1–10.

"Its heads give judgment for a bribe;
its priests teach for a price;
its prophets practice divination for money." (Micah 3:11a)

7.3.4. The Rise of the Priesthood and the Prophets

As the previous quotation indicates, in addition to the *râšîm*, the tribal leaders, the priests and the prophets were the guardians of social security. Throughout the whole process of social development, from the wave of war refugees by the end of the 8th century until King Josiah's reform in 621 BCE, the priesthood – and especially the priesthood of the temple of Jerusalem – could successfully occupy a favorable position in the social order of the 7th century Judah because of two major reasons. These are:

1. Ancient religious beliefs secured a prominent position for the gods and their staff, the priesthood, within all societies in the ancient Near East.[370]

2. The royal monopoly over a centralized cult in Jerusalem – matching centralized economic production, royal administration, and power structures – and the emerging monolatry placed the priesthood of Jerusalem in a leading position.

The fact that our written sources were redacted and largely written by priestly circles must be taken into consideration when assessing the significance of the priesthood. Nevertheless, it is apparent that, next to the *râšîm* and the army, the priesthood was the most prevalent and best institutionalized social group, organized as they were around the royal monopoly of cult and temple in Jerusalem.

The significance of the group is best indicated by the story of the cult reform (2Kings 22–23). In the view of the Book of Kings (2Kings 23:8-10), the key actors are the high priest (כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל), the secretary (סֹפֵר), the servants (עֲבָדִים), and "the servant of the king" (עֶבֶד־הַמֶּלֶךְ);

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[370]Oppenheim, A. Leo. *Ancient Mesopotamia. Portrait of a Dead Civilization.* Chicago: Chicago Press, 1977.

further, for the verification process, the prophetess (נְבִיאָה) Hulda (23:14), the elders (זְקֵנִים),

"all the men in Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם), and again the

priests and prophets in the great assembly (23:1–3). The cleansing of the temple (23:4–8) was

performed by the high priest (כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל), the priests of the second order (כֹּהֲנֵי הַמִּשְׁנֶה), and the

keepers of the threshold (שֹׁמְרֵי הַסַּף). Obviously, the royal administration was represented by

the secretary, the royal servants and keepers of the threshold. No further officers are

mentioned here. The people are introduced as "all the people, small and great" (וְכָל־הָעָם

לְמִקָּטֹן וְעַד־גָּדוֹל) led by the elders (זְקֵנִים). No *śarîm*, *râšîm*, or other official functions are

specifically mentioned throughout the whole story.

As mentioned above, the distinguished role of the priesthood is confirmed by the

complaints of the prophets, who call them altogether corrupt and unfair leaders (Micah 3:11;

Ezek. 22:26). Likewise, confirmation is found in the report on the deportation of the leaders

of Jerusalem (2Kings 25:18), where Seraiah, the high priest, and Zephaniah, the second

priest, are mentioned first in the list of the deported.

Prophets also seem to have had a distinguished role in the court of Josiah. The fact that

Hulda the prophetess plays the verification role in the record of the cult reform indicates that

prophets had a considerable role even in King Josiah's administration.[371] Their social

legitimacy among the people also seems to have been intact, considering that they are listed

together with the priests in the prophets' accusations (Micah 3:11; Ezek. 22:26), not to

mention the personal interaction between Judah's kings and prophets (e.g. Zedekiah and

Jeremiah, Jer. 37:17–21; 38:14–28). According to the stories of Hulda and Jeremiah, it seems

that the prophets had a consultative, divinatory role towards both the king and the people – a

function no longer necessary after the Exile.

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[371] Since Huldah appears only in 2Kings 22:14 and 2Chr. 24:22, we have very little knowledge of her person
and role. One assumption is that she was a court prophet, based on the role she plays in the cult reform story
(Viviano, *Hulda*, in Anchor Bible Dictionary). Another assumption is that she is a member of the
Deuteronomic movement, and appears in the story of 2Kings 23 in order to emphasize the role of the
movement in Josiah's reforms. (Ilan, *Huldah, the Deuteronomic Prophetess of the Book of Kings*, 10.)

7.3.5. Summary

The internal social development of Judah between the Assyrian campaign at the end of the 8th century and the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE shows a smooth transition from the preceding tribal society to an early form of class society. Together with the evolving economy, the first signs of social differences appeared, and poverty and wealth started to evolve – though not affluence comparable to that of contemporary or even preceding economies.[372]

The royal administration and the centralized power structure produced some official ranks such as military commanders, royal treasurers, and secretaries. Nevertheless, the power hierarchy was still in an early phase and not fully elaborated. The previous clan-based power structure was retained and merged with the new centralized royal hierarchy. Beyond some social functions, such as the "elders" and the "prophets", only two social groups from this age are explicitly identified in the Bible: the *'am ha'areṣ*, supposedly a wealthier urban community in Jerusalem with considerable social influence, and the temple priesthood. The latter could successfully leverage the historical situation of the internal social development and the strong royal centralization of the economy, administration, and religion, positioning itself as a fundamental institution and a key legislative authority in the centralized royal administration.

The path to the success, however, was not obvious: after the merger of the southern and northern populations (and priesthood), and the emerging royal monopoly of cult, cultic functions had to be redefined and restructured. The stories of the Pentateuch, primarily those of the Golden Calf (Ex. 32) and the Baʿal worship at Peor (Num. 25), provide insight into the power struggle between the Aaronic and the Mosaic priesthood,[373] which resulted in two priestly castes, the priests and the Levites.

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[372]See Amos 6:4 about rich people "who lie on beds of ivory" etc.
[373]Karasszon, *Az Óizraeli vallás*, 47–55.

The dominant, distinguished position of the Jerusalem priesthood seems to have been already secured in the 7th century BCE. The priesthood acted as the key supporter of the royal cult monopoly. It could also successfully diminish its competition by forming a unified class with a subclass and claiming its temple as singular in the Kingdom, with no other cultic places around (at least officially). Finally, it could secure its prominent position against the class of prophets, who seem to have had some role in King Josiah's court, but were not subsequently institutionalized and had no official role in the centralized royal administration. Having no further considerable competition within the new emerging social classes (like the "people of the land"), the priesthood found itself in a key position in society surrounding the ambitious King Josiah by the end of the 7th century. However, to determine the ultimate winner, the cataclysm of the destruction of Jerusalem, the following exile and restoration was necessary.

7.4. Post-Exilic society in Judah: the Realm of the Sacred and the Profane

The evolving prosperity of the Judean kingdom, which peaked during the reforms of King Josiah in 621 BCE, was ruined suddenly by subsequent events. The revolt of Jehoiakim against Babylonia in 598 BCE and the following retaliation campaign dealt a severe blow to the institutions of this young statehood, and also hampered inner social development, as is shown below. However, the collapse of Jerusalem, the Babylonian exile, and the resulting restoration established priesthood as an ultimate position for a short period of time. Paradoxically, these historical events – together with the pre-exilic social development, including the cult centralization, the royal monopolization of the Holy, and the rise of the unified Jerusalem priesthood – led to the creation of priestly dichotomies, as will be shown in this chapter.

The chain of events that led to the decline of the kingdom of Judah was related to the imperial dynamics of the ANE. In 616 BCE, Egypt decided to ally itself to the declining

Assyria, and sent its army to the north in order to prevent the strengthening of Babylonia. Despite of Egyptian support, the Assyrians lost their capital Niniveh in 612 BCE, and retreated to Haran, which they also lost after two years in 610 BCE against the advancing Babylonian army. In this power vacuum, Egypt came to see the time to capture the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and set off to the north in the following year.

The vassal states of the Neo-Assyrian Empire certainly tried to exploit the collapse of their oppressor. It is not completely clear why the Battle of Megiddo (609 BCE) took place between pharaoh Neko and King Josiah. According to most historians, the subject of conflict was control over the extended territory of Josiah's kingdom.[374] Little is known about either the battle or the circumstances of King Josiah's death, but after the battle of Megiddo the kingdom of Judah could not further exploit the rearrangement of the political setup in the ANE, and quickly started to decline. In 605 BCE, the Babylonian army (allied with Medes, Persians and Scythians) severely defeated the allied army of Assyria and Egypt.[375]

After the fatal battle, the little states of the Mediterranean coast became the vassals of Babel (including, for a short period of time, the kingdom of Judah) until King Jehoiakim revolted against Babel in 598 BCE. This rebellion against Babel did not last long: his son Jehoiachin (598–597 BCE) gave up Jerusalem in 597 and Judah reigned. Subsequently, the Babylonians captured the city and carried out a total of three waves of deportations:

- First, in the same year (597 BCE) they deported the king and his court, and made Zedekiah a king;
- 10 years later, following the last King Zedekiah's revolt, in 586 BCE the Babylonians imprisoned the king and deported the upper classes of Jerusalem, while ransacking the city and the temple (2Kir 25,1–21; Jer. 39:1–10; 52:1-27);

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[374]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 290.
[375]Ibid. 292.

- Finally, in 582 BCE, a third wave of deportation was carried out as retaliation for the murder of governor Gedaliah (Jer. 52:30).

The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, the deportation of the king, and the leading of social groups to Babel ended the sovereignty of Judah, and significantly changed the social landscape of the country. To understand the post-exilic social development in Judah – including the creation of the priestly dichotomies – it is necessary to take a quick look at the internal social development of both Judah and the captive group in Babel.

7.4.1. Society in Judah During the Exile

According to scholarly consensus, in contrast to the Assyrian deportation policy, the Babylonians deported only the leaders and upper classes of the defeated Judah in three waves of deportations (597, 586 and 582 BCE).[376] The biggest devastation happened in 586, when the Babylonian army destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and deported both its priesthood and the *'am hâ'âreṣ* (the rich and influential people of Jerusalem) to Babylonia.

After the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah local governor for a short period of time (2Kings 25:22). He settled in Mizpah, a small settlement in Benjamin, 13 km north from Jerusalem.[377] Due to Babylonian imperial policy the appointed governor was a local Judean. Still, he was not a descendent of the royal family (from the "house of David"); and did not have royal legitimacy and authorization. As a matter of fact, despite being a Judean, Gedaliah was a local representative of the Babylonian imperium, whose task was local government with limited entitlement and the collection of the imperial taxes. The biblical record witnesses his interposing position:

> And Gedaliah swore to them and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid because of the Chaldean officials. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. (2Kings 25:24)

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[376]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 315. estimates the number of captives between a couple thousands but a maximum of 15–20 thousands, that is, the ca. 20–25% of the pre-exilic Judah.

[377]Identified either as Nebi Samwil or more probably Tell en-Naṣbeh. Zorn, Jeffrey. "Mizpah: Newly Discovered Stratum Reveals Judah's Other Capital." BAR 23:05 (Sep/Oct 1997): 28–39.

This little episode also indicates the reduced sovereignty of the country and the end of the autonomous statehood of Judah. At the end, as a result of king Zedekiah's revolt against Babylonia, Judah as a kingdom had come to an end: its capital (and only temple) was demolished; its royal court, administration and influential social groups (the priests and the *'am hâ'âreṣ*) were taken into captivity, and a governor was settled to Mizpah as representative of the Babylonian empire. The situation did not improve much with the murder of the governor Gedaliah and some Babylonians, performed by a member of the royal family, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah in Mizpah (2Kings 25:25). This led to a third wave of deportation, and with this, the fate of the former kingdom of Judah was finally sealed.

Due to the subsequent wars and retaliatory campaigns, after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE the demographical and economical situation of the country was far from stable. By the end of the 6th century BCE, the total population of Judah ("Yehud") is estimated to have been around 30,000 – less than half of the estimated 75,000 of pre-exilic Judah.[378]

Biblical records suggest poor economic conditions for Judah in the Babylonian era. The Babylonian army left behind "some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen" (2Kings 25:12, also Jer. 52:16) and "none remained, except the poorest people of the Land" (2Kings 24:14).[379] They also took away the treasures of the Temple (Jer. 52:17–23), that is, the royal treasury. The Book of Lamentations complains about starvation (Lam. 1:11), water shortage (Lam. 4:4; 5:4a) and expensive firewood (Lam. 5:4b).

However, archaeological surveys show a somewhat different picture of the country. Besides the completely ruined Jerusalem, which was not re-settled during the years of exile, surrounding regions seem to have continued their agricultural activities. The excavations at Mizpah (Tell en-Nasbeh) revealed that the area was not ruined for the Babylonians, but that it

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[378]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 306-308 and 315.

[379]The author of 2Kings 24:14 dates the deportation of "all Jerusalem and all the officials and all the mighty men of valor" to tthe first wave of deportation in 597 BCE; however, it is an anachronism according to Kessler, (*Sozialgeschichte des alten Israel*), 138. and others.

continued flourishing after the campaign – matching Jeremiah's accusation that some Judeans deserted to the Chaldeans (Jer. 37:12–13; 38:19), seeing benefit from the collaboration during exile.[380] Thus, some rural regions continued their agricultural activities, reinforced with a number of new Israelite settlers who moved back from neighboring countries to where they had fled from the Babylonian campaign, as suggested by Jer. 40:11–12.[381] The presence of a pilgrimage in Jer. 41:5 refers to some kind of religious activity in Mizpah.[382]

In conclusion, in 586 BCE the Babylonian Empire made a fatal blow to the heart of Judah: they ruined the capital and its temple (thus abolishing the royal monopolized cult); they looted the royal treasury (of the temple) and also deported the wealthiest and most influential social groups from Jerusalem, including the king and leading officials. The kingdom, as it was developed during the 8th and 7th centuries BCE, was over. What remained was a socially unstructured rural society with sporadic agricultural activities in the countryside and weak local governance that was lacking credibility among the Judahite population. The solution for this social vacuum in a leaderless society came only after the return of the captives from the exile.

7.4.2. Social structures in Captivity

There are relatively few records of the life of captives in Babylonia. It is certain that the Babylonians allowed them to be settled in one group (or a couple groups, but in any case together), a precondition of the survival of the community. The name of one settlement in the

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[380]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 307.

[381]Kessler, *Az ókori Izráel társadalma* (Sozialgeschichte des alten Israel), 139. suggests that Lamentations (e.g. 5:2, Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners") shall be interpreted that also babylonians and other nations from surrounding countries could also get Israelite lands. This possibility cannot be exluded; nevertheless, the standard interpretation of this verse refers to the Babylonians themselves. Duane – House, *Songs of Songs / Lamentations* (WBC), ad loc. Lam. 5:2. Both interpretations are possible.

[382]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 307 conclude to "some sort of cultic activity" based on this verse; others, such as Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT, ad loc. Jer. 41:5 suggest that the custom of pilgrimage was just a remnant from the time of Josiah, practiced also after the destruction of the temple.

diaspora is known: Tel-abib at the Chebar canal (Ezek. 3:15). The captives seem to have

settled down and were prepared for a long residency:

> "Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons
> and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear
> sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease." (Jer. 29:5–6)

What is significant for this research is the internal social structure of the exilees, which can

be characterized as follows:

1. **The King of Judah.** According to Biblical records, Jehoiachin was in prison until
   the 37th year of the exile (2Kings 25:27). That is, he was freed in 562 BCE,
   supposedly in relation to the inauguration of Amel-Marduk that same year.[383] Little
   is known about the role of Jehoiachin in the diaspora community; his name appears
   on Babylonian royal tablets of Nebuchadnezzar as "*Ya'u-kīnu, king of the land of
   Yahudu*".[384] Together with his five sons, Finkelstein assumes some sort of authority
   within the diasporic community.[385] However, considering the Babylonian imperial
   policy (support for local religions, local governors to strengthen loyalty, but no local
   kings or sovereign states), it is hard to imagine that the Babylonians would have left
   a vassal state's former king in position, especially in captivity in the heart of the
   empire. We also see no development of a local leader position within the Babylonian
   diaspora community, making it hard to say whether Babylonian sources mention him
   as a King of Judah only to give honor or as an actual official title.[386] The historicity
   of the Biblical report that Jehoiachin would have been honored by sitting at the table
   of Amel-Marduk "on a seat above the seats of the kings" (2Kings 25:28) is the

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[383]Thus e.g. Hobbs, *2Kings*, WBC, ad loc. 2Kings 25:27.

[384]Thomas, *Documents from Old Testament Times*, 84.

[385]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 298.

[386]Berridge, *Jehoiachin* in ABD, assumes that Amel-Marduk may have intended to restore Jehoiachin or one of
his sons to the throne as a vassal king. Kessler, *Az ókori Izráel társadalma* (Sozialgeschichte des alten Israel),
142. assumes that Johoiachin was still considered as the king of Judah even if living in an exile.

subject of scholarly discussions.[387] The position of the royal house did not improve during the Persian reign, either. The leader of the first captive group returning to the homeland was called "Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah" (הַנָּשִׂיא לִיהוּדָה, Ezra 1:8), a title that might refer to him having been the son of king Jehoiachin. However, his role did not continue later as a local leader – perhaps the Babylonians called him back to prevent the restoration of the local royal house.

2. **The elders.** The only governmental body in the exilee community that we know of from this period was "the elders of Judah" (זִקְנֵי יְהוּדָה, Ezek. 8:1) or "the elders of the exiles" (זִקְנֵי הַגּוֹלָה, Jer. 29:1). The "heads of the families" (רָאשֵׁי הָאָבוֹת, Ezra 2:68) was also in use. The presence of this forum indicates some level of self-governance existed in the Judahite exilee community, and also that the ancient, family-based social structure prevailed during the exile. However, there is a key difference between the pre-exilic and the exilic situation: pre-exilic clan structures had their own land properties: the clan and its inheritance (נַחֲלָה) were overlapping and bound together. In the exile, however, exilees were cut off from their ancient properties, thus following the family relations became more difficult. Therefore, as Kessler argues, genealogy tables were introduced to help map family membership.[388] Ultimately, family bond seems to have been the strongest social organizing factor even during the captivity - when the existence of further internal power positions were not recorded by the available sources.

3. **The priesthood.** There is not much much information in Biblical sources about the activities of the priesthood during the captivity, but the indirect evidences leave no

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[387]House, *1, 2 Kings*, NAC ad loc. 2Kings 25:28.
[388]Kessler, *Az ókori Izráel társadalma* (Sozialgeschichte des alten Israel), 142–143. Although Kessler's argumentation that pre-exilic blood relationships would have been identified by common dwelling place and land property (page 143) is not fully convincing; it is undeniable that the exilees were now separated from their ancient inheritances.

doubts that the priesthood as a social group has successfully preserved both its integrity and its privileged position within the exilees, even without actual cultic activity in Babylonia. First, the number of priests was 10% of the total returnees (a quite considerable total of 4289), according to the official record (Ezra 2:36–39). Although the reference to four families only – in contrast to the 24 families later – and the lack of the reference to "the sons of Aaaron" indicates an early development stage of the priestly hiearchy as compared to the post-exilic priestly tradition,[389] it is obvious from the large size of the group that the priestly families could successfully preserve their identity and maintain their number. Second, Ezra mentions the priests and Levites right after "the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah" (רָאשֵׁי הָאָבוֹת לִיהוּדָה, Ezra 1:5) when describing the return; which indicates a distinguished position within the diaspora society – though this can also be attributed to the author(s) of the Book of Ezra.

4. **Other distinctive groups** are the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers and the temple servants in the written sources (Ezra 2:70). These were all cultic functions. The rest of the Isrealites are mentioned only as "all Israel" (כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל). There is no mention of the members of the former *Am Haaretz* group.

The final conclusion is that the upper classes of the pre-exilic Judahite society were transported and settled down to Babylonia in closed colonies. In exile, however, property or royal hierarchy-based positions lost their relevance by being deprived of their inheritances and the royal administration did not provide legitimacy either. Clans (families) remained the only meaningful social structure, identified by genealogy lists and represented by "elders".

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[389]Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, WBC, ad loc. Ezra 2:36–39.

The only pre-exilic social group that could retain its identity and inner social dominance was the priesthood – in which, of course, played a major role in the fact that they were identical with complete priestly families (rather than being just a function of delegates from different families). Thus, the legitimacy and identity of the priesthood as a social function could be successfully protected by the priestly families and defined by genealogy lists, regardless of the (retrospectively) temporary situation in which the priesthood could not fulfill its original cultic role during the exile at all. As a result, priestly families formed the only real distinctive social group among the returnees – further reinforced by the edict of Cyrus for restoring the temple and the local cult in Jerusalem.

7.4.3. Return and "Restoration": the Realm of the Sacred

Both the chronology of the temple building and the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah are subjects of scholarly discussion. According to the most widely-accepted chronology, the edict of Kyros II (539 BCE) was followed by multiple waves of returnees under Cambyses II (530–522 BCE). The temple was finally finished in 515 BCE. The mission of Nehemiah took place around 445 BCE. Finally, the mission of Ezra took place either around 425 BCE[390] or two decades later, around 398 BCE.[391]

Among others,[392] a low chronology has recently been proposed by Diana Edelman who dates the building of the temple no earlier than the early years of Artaxerxes I. (465–425 BCE). Edelman argues that Ezra 1–6 is historically unreliable, whereas the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 reflect the historical circumstances of the temple's reconstruction. Based on her textual analysis and archaeological surveys conducted in the region of Jerusalem, Edelman believes the time difference between the restoration of the temple and the rebuilding of the city walls of Jerusalem must be artificial in the biblical text, constructed

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[390]Thus e.g. Gerstenberger, *Israel in der Perserzeit*, 56.
[391]Thus Kessler, *Az ókori Izráel társadalma* (Sozialgeschichte des alten Israel), 147.
[392]For a summary of hypotheses see Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 3.

by an editor when weaving together the parallel accounts into a single narrative.[393] In Edelman's view, the temple-building was part of a large-scale construction intended to move the provincial seat from Mizpah to the site of Jerusalem—at that time unsettled— for merely tactical reasons: Jerusalem was located at a major crossroads and on a perennial water source, making it a more suitable military and administrative base than Mizpah.[394] The fortress (בִּירָה, Neh. 2:8), consisting of the governor's residency, barracks among the governmental buildings, and the temple surrounded by a wall,[395] was intended to quarter the local administration, a garrison and the priesthood. In this interpretation, the permission for rebuilding the temple was not merely an act of piety or a result of imperial policy that let local cults flourish in order to strenghten loyalty[396] – but rather a result of conscious planning. On the one hand, Edelman argues, the Jewish soldiers of the garrison needed a local temple. On the other, the temple also traditionally served as a treasury for precious metals and coins, needed to produce military equipments and also to pay the soldiers' wage, which – as evidenced by the Elephantine papyri – was also paid with coins.[397]

The key difference between the consensual chronology and Edelman's approach is that in the former case, the temple of Jerusalem was an imperial concession that permitted the provinces to practice their local cult followings. In Edelman's approach, the temple was an integral unit of the local garrison, and as such, an organic part of the imperial military and administrative system.

In either case, when the captives returned home between 538 and 522 BCE, they found a still-ruined Jerusalem and countryside with a reduced population. Although archaeological surveys indicate a continuous inhabitation both on the southern part of the Jerusalem area,

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[393]Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 332.
[394]Ibid. 344.
[395]Ibid. 346.
[396]Scholarly consensus is usually that the rationale of the edict of Cyrus was the indulgent Persian politics that permitted local cults in order to strenghten loyalty towards the empire. Thus Miller–Hayes, *Az ókori Izrael és Júda története*, 420; Gerstenberger, *Israel in der Perserzeit*, 45.
[397]Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 347–348.

around Betlehem;[398] and also to the north of Jerusalem, around Mizpah (Tell en-Nasbeh) – the country was neither economically or politically more than a small and insignificant Persian province with Mizpah as the local center.

The social setup in the first century of the post-exilic period was a result of social development both in the exile and in the homeland, outlined as follows:

Imperial power structures. The biggest difference between the pre- and post-exilic world in Judah was the discontinuation of the royal house. Although the leader of the first returnee group, Sheshbazzar, is called "the prince of Judah" in the book of Ezra (1:8),[399] the kingdom has never been restored in Yehud province. This not only meant that the governor of Mizpah had even less sovereignty than pre-exilic vassal kings of Judah,[400] but also that the formerly-existing institutions of the kingdom, including the local royal hierarchy, disappeared and were substituted by Persian officials. We know of the governor (פֶּחָה) and "his kinsmen" (אָחָיו, Ezra 2:2); a number of Persian imperial titles such as the commander (בְּעֵל־טְעֵם), the scribe (סָפְרָא), judges (דִּינָיֵא), governors (אֲפַרְסַתְכָי), and officials (טַרְפְּלָי) from Ezra 4:9 – and from later texts about satrap (אֲחַשְׁדַּרְפַּן), prefect (סְגַן), counselor (אֲדַרְגָּזֵר), treasurer (גְּדָבַר), judge (דְּתָבַר), and official (תִּפְתַּי) (Dan 3:3). However, the pre-exilic hierarchical functions of the sovereign kingdom such as the prince (נָשִׂיא), the chieftain (שַׂר), or leaders (קָצִין) do not appear, even if Sheshbazzar is denoted as a נָשִׂיא in Ezra 1:8, a position that does not seem to have survived as a social function in Yehud after the exile. The imperial power was represented by the governor and his local administration in Mizpah. Finally, Yehud became one of the many provinces within the Persian Empire.

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[398]Finkelstein – Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 307.

[399]Note however that the "prince" title does not always refer to a member of the royal family (Gen. 23:6 etc.). H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, WBC 16. (Thomas Nelson, 1985), Ezra 1:8. proposes that Sheshbazzar was labeled as a "prince" only by the late author of Ezra, and not necessarily a descendent of the royal family. Also see here the hypothesis about the identification of Sheshbazzar with Zerubbabel based on Hag. 1:1.

[400] Actually the Bible introduces Gedaliah as a weak figure who appears a representative of the Persian imperial system in Yehud rather than vice versa.

Internal governance. Beyond imperial power structures, it seems that the ancient, family-based leadership functions also prevailed. Nehemiah 2:16 mentions "the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest" (לַיְּהוּדִים וְלַכֹּהֲנִים וְלַחֹרִים וְלַסְּגָנִים וּלְיֶתֶר). The "nobles" (חֹרִים or חֹרֵי יְהוּדָה, Neh. 13:17) must have been identical to the "heads of families" (Ezra 1:5) or "the elders of Judah" (זִקְנֵי יְהוּדָה, Ezek. 8:1), evidence of a revival of the family-based local decision-making forum. In Nehemiah 5, the חֹרִים appear as unjust usurers who lend money and grain to the poor, and then force their sons and daughters through dept into slavery and rob their fields, vineyards, olive orchards and houses. The other function, "officials" (סְגָנִים, see Assyrian *šaknu*, prefect of conquered city or province[401]) was the second position after the governor, who was always enumerated at the bottom of contracts for the sale of a slave in the Samaria Papyri.[402] Ultimately, it seems that the Persian imperial system could successfully integrate traditional, family-based power structures, integrating inhabitants into the local administration.

Social fractions. The fact that the prophets and the Book of Job report terrible poverty, but wealthiness does not appear to exist, indicates a rather poor economic situation in the country. The vast majority of the population was living in rural areas, occupied by tilth, wine, and oil production. Urbanization developed just as slowly: ca. 10% of the population was living in the Jerusalem region, and an increasing number of inhabitants had no land property.[403] Prophets complain of a tremendous amount of impoverishment: both Trito-Isaiah (58:6–8) and Job (24:5–12) write about starving, naked, and homeless people. Nehemiah 5:1-5 reports extraordinary financial burden, due to the building of the walls of Jerusalem: the poor had to mortgage their fields, vineyards, and houses, even forcing their sons and daughters into debt slavery because of construction work. However, despite the complaints of extreme poverty, the subject of wealthiness is still unclear.

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[401] Brown-Driver-Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 688.
[402] Kessler, *Az ókori Izrael társadalma*, 162.
[403] Gerstenberer, *Israel in der Perserzeit*, 94.

Instead, as Kessler points out, there two major social tensions that appear in post-exilic literature:[404]

1. **Conflict between old and new landlords.** Since the Babylonians occupied the upper social classes in 586 BCE, it seems logical that the exilees' descendents could claim their lost property – although within the given historical situation there might have been little chance to enforce a return of possessions, and no reference is made in the Bible of such an official process. Kessler assembles the full picture from sporadic evidences: the captives returned "each to his own town" (Ezra 2:1); Zechariah prophecies about thieves who acquired houses through false oaths (Zech. 5:3). Finally, Kessler believes that the Year of Jubilee in Lev. 25:10 ("It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan.") can also be understood as a law applied to the 50 years between 587 and 537 BCE, that is, as the intended return of properties to the exilees.[405] Although Kessler's evidence is disputable in detail,[406] his observation about the potential conflict between the returning exilees and the home residents is valid.

2. **Conflict between Israelites and foreign settlers.** The other conflict between Israelites and foreign settlers explicitly appears in the subject of intermarriage (Ezra 9–10). The subject of this conflict was – at first sight – that mixing with a foreign population endangered national identity. However, as Kessler points out, this story also reflects the point of view of the returned exiles: in fact, the "sons of the exile" (בְּנֵי גוֹלָה, Ezra 4:1) opposed "the peoples of the land" (עַמֵּי הָאֲרָצוֹת, Ezra 3:3) and also "the people of the land" (עַם־הָאָרֶץ, Ezra 4:4), meaning all who did not return from the

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[404]Kessler, *Az ókori Izrael társadalma*, 156ff.
[405]Ibid. 156–157.
[406]E.g. Zechariah 5:3–4 is usually interpreted as two specific moral crimes, perhaps representing the two tables of the Decalogue, see Klein, *Zechariah: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC, ad loc. Zech. 5:3.

exile, including Isralites and Samarians.[407] That is, in Kessler's argument, both social fractions reflect the conflict between the returnee groups and the residents of Yehud. It is also not impossible, as Kessler assumes,[408] that the returnees – enjoying financially stable conditions – assumed the role of the upper social classes to the improvished rural society of Yehud. Nevertheless, it is likely that the Biblical records represent the point of view of those returning from the captivity – and first of all of their most prominent group, the priesthood.

The Return of the Priesthood and the Rise of the Holy

It is difficult to provide a completely balanced assessment of the real social weight of the post-exilic Jerusalem priesthood, as most of our written sources are authored or heavily influenced by priestly circles, or by prophets who were also focusing on cultic and religious life. Thus, ascertaining the real social weight and role of the Jerusalem priesthood within Yehud province is not entirely possible on the basis of the Bible alone, as biblical texts rather reflect the self-esteem and the inner world of the priesthood. In this research, however, this is exactly what was investigated: how did the priesthood interpreted itself and its role within the society? Why did they feel the need to express their *separation* from the outside world by forming sacred/profane and clean/unclean dichotomies?

The fragments of socio-historical development in Judah along the 8th–5th century, breifly outlined in this chapter, suggest a couple of factors that formed the self-interpretation of the priesthood and led to the creation of priestly dichotomies.

First, over the course of pre-exilic social development in Judah, the priesthood exploited not only a situation evolving so quickly among other social groups that it could barely keep pace with explosive population growth and economic development, but the

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[407]Kessler, *Az ókori Izrael társadalma*, 155.
[408]Ibid. 156–157.

centralization efforts of King Josiah that also favored to the priesthood of Jerusalem, and thus became the guardian of the kingdom's monopolized cult.

Second, paradoxically, the priesthood was further strengthened during the exile in a relative sense: while other social groups (such as the *'am hâ'âreṣ*) could not retain their group identity and coherence, and in captivity the former wealth-based positions also faded away, the priestly families could successfully transfer their influence and position through the decades of the exile and returned to the homeland as the most prominent group within the returnees.

Finally, the priestly families also had to fight for their position within the post-exilic society of Yehud. As discussed above, there was tension from the very beginning between the exilees and the inhabitants of the homeland; the priestly families had to secure their distinct position within the society. Moreover, this had to be done within a competitive situation (in a cultic sense), considering that:

- Apparently, the Samaritans had also wanted to participate in the rebuilding of the temple, and as a consequence, the cult (Ezra 4), contradicting the Deuteronomistic program of staying separated from surrounding nations;

- It is assumed by scholars, based on textual evidence (Jer. 41:5) and archaeological surveys, that there were cultic activities at least in Mizpah.[409] That is, the priestly families returning from the exile must have faced local competition even without a temple.

- Thirdly, as the Elephantine Papyri describe,[410] it was not at all unthinkable to operate concurrent temples of Yahweh. Thus, preserve Josiah's cult monopoly was a primevial goal if the priestly families wanted to secure their leading position in Yehud as well.

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[409]Zorn, *Mizpah: Newly Discovered Stratum Reveals Judah's Other Capital*, 39.
[410]Porten, *The Elephantine papyri in English*, 125.

As we know from the Bible, the priesthood could successfully complete its mission: the temple was built either in 515, or ca. 50 years later together with the imperial fortress in Jerusalem. In either case, the priesthood had to secure its unique position within the society: the guardians of the unique cult of Yahweh, which is *wholly other*. Besides furthering national traditions from a cultic point of view (resulting in P, then H in the Hebrew Bible); they also created the dichotomy system, to establish the millieu of "wholly other", and to symbolize the uniqueness by separation from the rest of the society (the חֹל). Thus, not only with a physical wall but also with the power of words, they could symbolize both their unique position within the society and the singularity of their monopolized God.

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