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Temple, Covenant, and Law in the Ancient Near East and in the Old Testament

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The following is an attempt to extend our understanding of the role of covenant and law in ancient Israel and to show their intimate relationship to the temple. To begin, I will review the historical process of temple restoration. A victorious king (or a prophet) builds or restores a temple. The building or restoration of the temple legitimizes the state or the society (in cases that do not deal with the political state in the formal sense). The act of legitimization is ritually celebrated in and through the covenant process. The content of the covenant ceremony is law. Thus it is my contention that the building or restoration of temples served as the impetus in the ancient Near East for the “codification” of customary law. Let me put it more succinctly: The temple founds (legitimizes) the state; covenant binds the foundation; law underlies the covenant. Just as this ideological/ritual complex flourished—and in its ideal form was supported by Israel’s prophets—so in prophetic constructions of restoration, the same complex is found to be central.

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Definitions

Temple

Let me first define the main terms of the argument. By *temple* I mean an association of symbols and practices that we find connected in the ancient world with both natural mountains/high places¹ (the *temple* par excellence) and edifices. The set of symbols and practices include, but are not exhausted by, the following: the cosmic mountain, the primordial mound, waters of life, the tree of life, sacral space, and the celestial prototype of the earthly. These emphasize spatial orientation and the ritual calendar; the height of the mountain/building; revelation of the divine prototype to the king or prophet by deity; the concept of "center," according to which the temple is the ideological, and in many cases the physical, center of the community; the dependency of the well-being of society on the proper attention to the temple and to its rituals; initiation, including dramatic portrayal of the cosmogonic myth; extensive concern for death and the afterlife, including the practice of burial within the temple precincts; sacral (covenant-associated) meals; revelation in the Holy of Holies through the means of the tablets of destiny; formal covenant ceremonies in connection with the promulgation of law; animal sacrifice; secrecy; and the extensive economic and political impact of the temple in society.²

State

By *state* I mean a highly centralized and socially stratified polity that exercises a monopoly of force, has the power to enforce its own laws, and possesses an ideology that legitimizes a ruling hierarchy around a temple/covenant religious system. At its most succinct, as far as the ancient

Near East is concerned, the state, I believe, can be defined as a king (invested with kingship by the gods in a temple) plus a capital city.³ I am here distinguishing between the formal state and the nonstate polities in the ancient Near East. I firmly believe that the previously outlined "temple ideology"⁴ is found, with appropriate and predictable exceptions, in each stage of the social/evolutionary process—tribe, chiefdom, and state⁵—and throughout Israelite history. What I call the "primordial" ancient Near Eastern conception of the temple, and what is called the "chaos-cosmos ideology" by Folker Willesen,⁶ is in fact present both at the Sinai experience, as recorded in Exodus 19–25, and in the Solomonic temple construction. In terms of biblical scholarship, we may say that a pre-deuteronomistic temple ideology influences both Sinai and Jerusalem. For our purposes, let us distinguish between the temple as the dwelling place of deity (see Isaiah 6) and as a house of prayer (see Isaiah 56).⁷ But note that both an exilic prophet, Ezekiel, and a post-exilic prophet, Zechariah, reflect the older, common ancient Near Eastern temple ideology.⁸

The central difference between Mosaic and Solomonic Israel is that the former was not a state polity, while the latter was. To use George E. Mendenhall's terminology, we are dealing with the difference between a "community" and a "political monopoly of force."⁹ Even though the common ancient Near Eastern temple symbolism underlaid both societies, the "political" element was missing in the Mosaic, while it was central in the Solomonic. The temple experience legitimized both societies through a covenant ceremony: at the mountain in the Mosaic, and at the temple of Solomon in the Solomonic. As I have written elsewhere, "the ideology of kingship in the archaic state is indelibly and incontrovertibly connected with temple building and

with temple ideology."¹⁰ "The ideology of kingship" is present at both Sinai and Jerusalem. In Sinai, YHWH is the king; in Jerusalem, Solomon is the king. This kind of formal distinction, I feel, is very important in understanding the central differences and similarities in ancient Israel at various stages of her development.

Covenant

By the term *covenant* I mean a formal, ritually enacted ceremony mediated by a prophet or king in (more exactly "in front of," or "on," in the case of a mountain) the temple, a ceremony in which the community is founded through the people's "indexical" acceptance of the revealed law. The term *indexical* comes from Roy Rappaport and refers to both verbal and physical responses during a ritual ceremony in which a participant signals to a coparticipant "that he accepts whatever is encoded in the canons of the liturgical order in which he is participating." Rappaport further writes, "Physical acts (such as kneeling, raising the hands, etc.) carry indexical messages more convincingly than does language."¹¹ For evidence of indexicality in biblical covenant ceremonies, see Exodus 19:8; Joshua 24:16; 1 Kings 8:22; 2 Chronicles 6:13; 2 Kings 23:3; Nehemiah 8:5-6.

Mendenhall's definition of the covenant process at Sinai bears an interesting resemblance to my definition: "The covenant at Sinai was the formal means by which the seminomadic clans, recently emerged from state slavery in Egypt, were bound together in a religious and political community. The text of that covenant is the Decalogue. Since a covenant is essentially a promissory oath, it is only in this way that a social group could be made responsible to new obligation."¹²

Law

By *law* I mean the existing body of customary judicial precedents—the so-called “just laws” in the Mesopotamian tradition—that reflect “what might be called the sense of justice in a community,”¹³ along with the community’s traditions of law court procedures that state that the ideals of justice enshrined by the community are actually applied in specific situations. This latter, Mendenhall calls “techniques.”¹⁴ I am speaking, in other words, of the combination of the “constitution” and the “case law.” By *codification* I mean the promulgation by a king or prophet of the “policy and techniques”—the laws—of restoring and building temples as part of a covenant ceremony.¹⁵

State Formations and Law Code Origins

In each ancient tradition a first promulgation typically occurs early in the history of that particular society. Subsequent “state renewal” covenant ceremonies at the temple will promulgate new laws but will also repromulgate the old, hallowed, canonical tradition. This is brought out most clearly in the Israelite tradition through a consideration of the first promulgation at the mountain through Moses, with subsequent renewals recorded under Joshua, Solomon, and Josiah, and during the time of Ezra. We are dealing in these instances with very different polities, in the technical sense, and can thus see that the temple ideology persists over time at different stages of political development/evolution.

The central position of temple building/rebuilding/restoring in the royal inscriptions of the kings of ancient Western Asia is well known. In general, the pattern for these kingdoms would seem to be similar, a pattern that would also fit the Israelite state under Solomon:

the state is not necessarily fully formed immediately upon the accession to kingship of a given charismatic figure. As with Israel in the time of David, state formation began in that time, but it was not finalized until the reign of his successor. Further, the process of temple building/rebuilding/restoring does not necessarily take up the king's main attention in the first year or two of his reign. If we may take the Babylonian year names as an example of this, in most cases the first few years were taken up with building/rebuilding walls, defeating remaining enemies, and in general solidifying control over the kingdom. Then, in the case of Sumuabum, the first king of the First Dynasty of Babylon, for example, it is the fourth year that bears a name connected with temple building; in the case of his successor, Sumulael, it is the seventh; in the case of his successor Sabium, the eighth; in the case of Hammurapi, it is the third.¹⁶

Law Codes and Temples

In connecting the promulgation of the law codes with the building of temples, we should consider the ancient Near Eastern king's or prophet's role as a "righter of wrongs." The core of social legislation in the ancient Near East is expressed by Hammurapi in the Epilogue: help the widow, right wrongs, etc. Indeed, this pattern goes back in attested form to Urukagina, who gives us "our first evidence of the king's right, at the beginning of his reign, to issue a set of decrees—often abrogating existing traditional law—aimed at righting social wrongs."¹⁷ It was this that the king (or the prophet, in the case of Moses, but recall that "Moses is to a great extent depicted in royal categories"¹⁸) decreed in the temple, or it was this that he received as a result of incubation, visitation, revelation, etc.¹⁹ The "law codes" are an elaboration of this motif.

The true nature of the codes is spelled out at the

moment of revelatory expression following the exit of the king/prophet from the temple: do justice, protect the widow and orphan. It would be after this that royal scribes would elaborate the revelatory utterances, along with the central core of the received tradition, into a full-fledged code. The king's essential role can be understood by the phrase "righter of wrongs." Law, or the "royal judgments," as F. R. Kraus characterizes the Code of Hammurapi, is a natural extension of this essential role;²⁰ law comes into being at its implementation.

I suggest the following as the succession of events early in the history of a society that gives us what we commonly designate *law*. The king/prophet ascends to leadership over a community that is at one of the well-defined stages of political development; he issues a decree (the *mišarum* in Babylonia, the *yāšar* in Israel), an interim legislation showing him to be a "king of justice," having "done justice in the eyes of YHWH." Of course, in the meantime society continues much as before on the basis of law already decreed by earlier kings and on the basis of the jurisprudence built on common law. Next, the king builds, renovates, or rededicates the main temple of his city, at which time the fuller version of the laws is decreed and elaborated into a stele by royal scribes. In the case of Hammurapi's code, we must distinguish between the prologue and epilogue and the laws themselves, both of which might have been constructed by different sets of scribes, working under different stylistic and religious/political directives.²¹ Again, the issuance of the *mišarum* decree (usually in the first full year of the Babylonian king)²² and the building of the temple do not occur in the same year. But, as I have stated, we are dealing with a process that sees the gradual development

of the community into a full-fledged formation during the first several years of its existence.

Even though it is not possible to associate explicitly the promulgation of law with the building of a temple, the two are definitely closely associated in the Gudea Cylinders, the Code of Urukagina, and the Code of Hammurapi.²³ The origin of law and of legal traditions must be sought in a ritual setting. More importantly, *law is introduced and mediated ritually* in a temple setting. Failure to understand the full implications of this fact has led occidental scholarship into the trap of animosity toward the temple.²⁴ A glance at the scene illustrating the stele on which the Code of Hammurapi is inscribed, and at statements in its prologue, clearly illustrates this point. Certainly, this association of law and temple is the message the majority of the ancient Near Eastern community that actually saw the stele would have received. According to J. Klima, because the majority of the population were illiterate, what they would have taken away from a view of the stele could have been the scene showing Hammurapi receiving the sceptre of authority from Šamaš.²⁵

Of course, it is also necessary to point out here another important fact learned from the stele of the Code of Hammurapi: the temple legitimizes authority. This is also the case with Moses and with other Israelite leaders, such as Solomon and Josiah. As Mendenhall has expressed it, the temple is "the ritual functioning system that establishes the connection between deity and king."²⁶

The Sinai Experience

The primary example of what I am trying to demonstrate comes from the Sinai experience (see Exodus 19–25). Even though there is no political state at Sinai, we

nevertheless find that what I call the temple ideology is central to that society's functioning. While I will not go into the problem of dating per se, I will focus on seven motifs found in the Sinai narratives, motifs that I think can justifiably be shown to be early, probably dating back to the time of Moses himself and to the Sinai experience.²⁷ It does not matter that the Sinai covenant lacks treaty curses, or even that it possibly lacks the historical prologue.²⁸ We are not dealing here with the treaty covenant at all, but with the temple covenant system that founds and legitimizes the state.²⁹

I would even predict that the treaty-covenant form is secondary to and derived from the temple covenant system. The motifs are the mountain, law, covenant, pillars, sacrifice, covenant meal, and cosmic sanctuary. The evidence produced here from the ritual/belief systems of Israel's neighbors is not introduced to "prove" that any one of such customs or their totality provides us with an "origin" of a similar practice in the Sinai narratives or elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. I have attempted elsewhere to delineate a common ancient Near Eastern temple ideology³⁰ and here simply attempt to further demonstrate ancient Israel's participation in that ideology.

Mountains

To begin with, natural mountains serve as symbols of, and in fact are, sacred places to which kings and prophets go to receive instruction from deities. According to Kurt Bittel, "Mountains . . . were considered, from early Hittite times onwards, to be the place where the deities were believed to be present, and where special ceremonies devoted to their worship were performed."³¹ It did not particularly matter whether there were actual structures built on the mountains. In some cases the Hittite inscriptions

specifically state that once the king arrived at the location, a tent was constructed in which the king would carry out a ritual in front of a *luwaši*-stone.³² Thus the king or prophet ascends the mountain to carry out ritual obligations and, in the thesis developed here, to commune with deity. What is the content of the communication? It is law.

That the content of the revelation received on the mountain is law is shown in several sources. The clearest expression of this concept appears in the Code of Hammurapi. The prologue to the Code is virtually one continuous litany of Hammurapi's temple-related bequests, cleansings, rebuildings, and rededications. The Hammurapi stele depicts Hammurapi standing before Šamaš in a clearly ritual setting, receiving the tokens of authority; this indicates that the Babylonian scribes compiled the laws of the Code, as well as the prologue and epilogue, in the chief temple complex of Babylon, Esagila.

Law and Sacred Mountains

The chief evidence for the proposition that law originates in the temple or on the sacred mountain is the Sinai account itself. Moses ascends the mountain amid extensive ritual preparations by the people waiting below. The content of the revelation received by Moses on the mountain is law. These laws serve as the foundation pattern by which the society will live for many generations. Even though that society undergoes political transformations, the original promulgation of revealed law in the temple serves as the basis for future developments. Let us consider four well-attested instances of recovenanting in a temple setting in Israelite society: Joshua 24, Solomon's prayer of dedication of the Jerusalem temple, Josiah's covenant at the conclusion of the reform, and the recovenanting of Jews returned from

Babylonian exile in the time of Ezra. In each of these cases, the people were recovenanted in a temple setting, but no new law was promulgated. Why? Because the code of Sinai, which had been revealed by deity in a temple setting, was still the religious and social basis of the society.

As part of the system I call state renewal, covenant ceremonies were carried out yearly at the New Year's festival when the temple was cleansed and rededicated. The state would be renewed during this time, and a new covenant would be enacted. The king would go into the temple, but a new set of laws would not be revealed; the old set would be repromulgated. The juristic content of each covenant ceremony is generally evident, but in some cases, as in 1 Kings 8:55–66, the legal content is very ambiguous.

Codification and the Temple

Codification, by which I mean the promulgation of the ideals of justice of a given society within the context of temple building, refurbishing, or dedication, cannot be properly understood outside of this ritual setting. Law itself, of course, encompassing customary law, simply exists, with no identifiable origin in historical times. But the ancient community's concept of justice is formally enthroned within that community through a temple covenant ceremony. It is in this sense that law cannot be said to exist outside of an ordered, cosmic community. A community is made cosmic through the foundation of the temple. The elaborate ritual, architectural, and building traditions that lie behind temple construction and dedication are what allow the authoritative, validating transformation of a set of customary laws into a code.³³

The temple creates law and makes law possible. It allows for the transformation of a chaotic universe into a

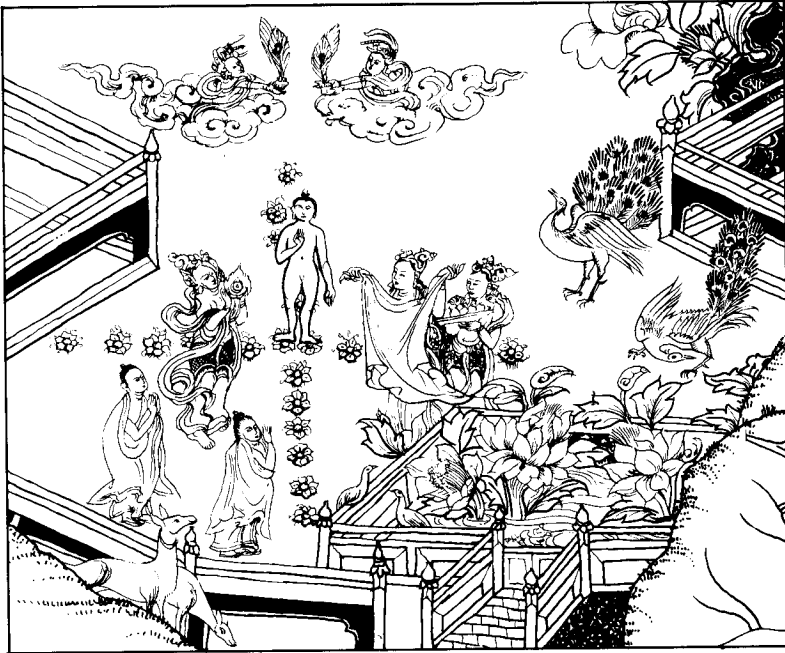


Figure 37. In this detail of an eighteenth-century Tibetan painting of the birth of the Buddha, he is shown, after having emerged from his mother's side, pointing to heaven above and the earth beneath. The small lotus flowers at his feet indicate his first footsteps to the four cardinal directions, confirming that he is the sacred center and that his influence extends everywhere. The gods Indra and Brahma wait to wash, anoint, and wrap him in white cloth.

cosmos. It is the very capstone of universal order and by logic and definition creates the conditions under which law is possible. This connection is brought out most dramatically in a tradition that may turn out to be not far removed from that of the ancient Near Eastern states, namely Hinduism.³⁴ According to Hindu traditions, the most important ritual action performed at the temple building site just before the metaphysical plan is laid out on the ground is the levelling of the ground. The process of levelling the ground by the king—repeated by each new temple

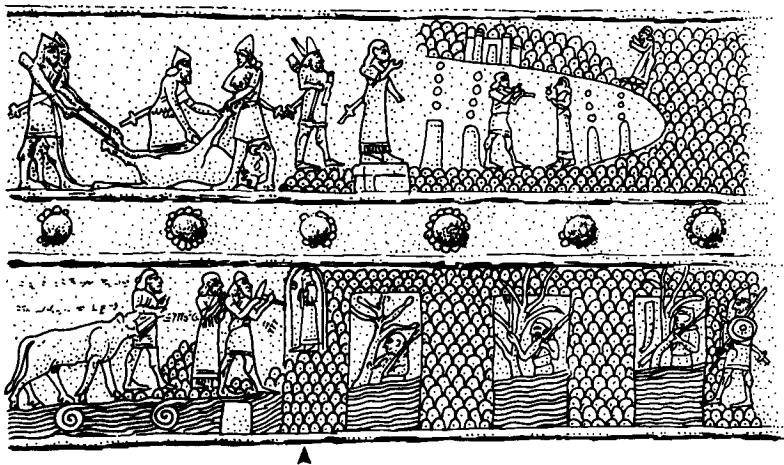


Figure 38. A bronze relief from the Balawat gates shows Shalmaneser III making a pilgrimage to the source of the Tigris in the midst of the mountains and erecting a stele to commemorate his accomplishment.

builder—is seen as establishing order itself in the world. According to one tradition, the Buddha, “as soon as born, stepped forth upon the earth and beneath his steps [seen as achieving the process of levelling], the earth lay smooth and even, for by his footfalls the Law (*dharma*) was carried throughout the world and became universal. The leveled earth became its substratum.”³⁵ In this instance, the ritual preparation of the temple site is seen as the means of cosmicizing the world, at which point law immediately comes into existence.

Covenant and Pillars

The concept of covenant, as it exists in the Sinai narratives and in many other ancient settings, must be expanded to include the pillar. Covenant ceremonies are carried out at

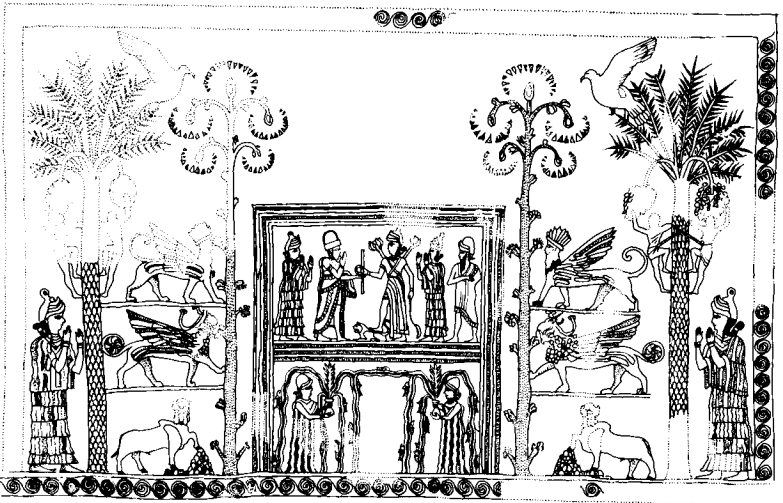


Figure 39. In this mural from Mari, Ishtar-of-the-Palace gives the rod and ring to King Zimri-Lin in the innermost Holy of Holies, below which is depicted the outer chamber with water goddesses purifying the participants. These rooms are flanked by sacred trees and cherubim.

temples in front of stone or wooden pillars. “Covenants are sealed in temples or near pillars standing near temples, and thus they derive their binding efficacy on the ancient society from the temple’s authoritative, legitimizing position within the society.”³⁶

One important type of pillar, the previously mentioned *huwaši*-stone, played a significant role in Hittite religion. One instance, for example, records that after arriving at the mountain and setting up his tent the king, “attended by his servants,” performed “a ritual in an ordinary way, culminating in a libation in front of a *huwaši*-stone.”³⁷ According to O. R. Gurney, “In most cult-centers the deity had a stela or *huwaši*-stone set up not only in his temple but also in a locality outside the town, in the open country, usually by a grove or a spring, or on a mountain.”³⁸ Numerous texts

depict the sacrifice of animals and the sharing of a communal meal at these stones.³⁹

Pillars are known to have been associated with temples in Mesopotamia and Palestine since at least Chalcolithic times.⁴⁰ It is probable that the practice of erecting bronze pillars, as in Jerusalem, developed from the practice of erecting wooden pillars that were sheathed with bronze. We have examples of this practice in the Gudea inscriptions and at Khorsabad.⁴¹ The bronze pillars thus represent the ubiquitous trees of life that flank temple entrances and that border scenes of temple ritual (Khorsabad in the former case, Mari in the latter).⁴² Like the *djed* pillar in Egyptian architecture,⁴³ the pillar symbolizes strength, solidity, binding efficacy, endurance, continuity, and cosmic order.

The pillar must play the same legitimizing role that I have described for the temple itself. The process of state renewal in Israel, which is, after all, what the covenant-making process is in the period of the Monarchy, derived its power from the temple. The pillar symbolizes the sanctity within which the state envelops itself. The king or the prophet enters the temple (or ascends the mountain); the law is revealed to him there; he is given the tablets of the law (or the "tablets of the decrees" in Mesopotamia—see the expositions of this point, as it relates to Mesopotamian and Israelite traditions, by Widengren and Jacobsen⁴⁴); he then returns to a ritually prepared community and writes the law in some form. In the case of historical temples, the pillars would already stand as part of the temple construction. In the case of the "primordial" experience at Sinai, Moses erected pillars in front of which he brought the people under covenant.⁴⁵

Animal Sacrifice

The next point that is central to the Sinai experience (Exodus 24:5–8), and to temple ritual in general, is animal sacrifice. Animals are as ubiquitous a feature of temple symbolism as trees of life and waters of life.⁴⁶ Animals flank the trees of life not only in the famous Mari temple reliefs but also on the facades of the Khorsabad temples. The bloody sacrifice of animals in connection with temples/shrines is so ancient and so widespread that it requires little further documentation here. In the great inner Asian hiero-centric states, people would come from all over the empire to the great yearly rites, driving herds of tribute animals before them.⁴⁷ A visit to a temple, as the facades on the Khorsabad temples imply, means bringing, or having supplied, animals for sacrifice. The purpose of the sacrifice is to seal and to sanctify the covenant. Gurney translates a most interesting Hittite text, roughly contemporary with the historically attested aspects of the Sinai narratives, in which the themes of blood sacrifice, covenant, and covenant meal are conjoined:

They lead in a goat and the master of the house consecrates the goat in front of the table to Sanda with wine. Then he holds out a bronze axe and says: "Come, Sanda, and let the Violent Gods come with you, who are clothed in blood-stained garments and girt with the cords (?) of Lulahhi men, who have a dagger in the belt, draw bows and hold arrows. Come and eat! And we will take the oath." When he has finished speaking he puts the bronze axe down on the table and they slaughter the goat. He takes the blood and smears the drinking tube which is inserted into the tankard with the blood. They bring the raw liver and the heart and the master of the house offers them to the god and takes a bite. They do an imitation (?).

Then he puts his lip to the tube and sips and says: "Behold, Sanda and Violent Gods, we have taken oath. Since we have bitten the raw liver and drunk from one (?) tube, therefore Sanda and Violent Ones, do not again approach my gate." Then they cook the liver and the heart with fire and cut up all the rest of the goat. . . . He takes the shoulder and breast. . . . Then they surround the table and eat up the shoulder and breast. Then [just as they wish (?)] to eat and drink, so he brings, and they eat [up (?) . . .] and they drink [. . .] the tankard.⁴⁸

Gurney states that this text "is the clearest expression of the belief in the efficacy of this solemn rite" (that is, "killing an animal to sanctify a covenant or treaty").⁴⁹ The conjunction of animal sacrifice and temple for the Akkad period is found at the north Syrian site of Tel Chuera and, in strikingly similar pictorial fashion, on the White Obelisk of Assurnasirpal I. In the former case, the excavations uncovered, from in front of the Akkad period Nord-Tempel, evidence of an offertory stairway at the east entrance. Found near the stairway were what appear to be an offering table and an adjacent *Wanne*, which would have received the blood of the offerings.⁵⁰ The White Obelisk, from a time period much closer to that of Moses, shows an elaborate cult installation in front of a pillared temple before which a lowing bovine is being led to the slaughter. This latter sacrifice was performed by Assurbanipal at the *bīt Nathi* of the temple of Ishtar in Niniveh.⁵¹

It has sometimes been the practice among scholars to look at recent Bedouin customs to explain the origins and meaning of animal sacrifice in connection with covenant making in the Hebrew Bible. However, the practice of sacrificing animals in front of temples as part of covenant ceremonies is extremely ancient, as my examples show.

The Covenant Meal

The covenant meal of Exodus 24:9–11, seen by many scholars as an alternative and editorially distinct mode of covenant sealing, is seen by E. W. Nicholson as an integral part of the entire ceremony of Exodus 24:3–8.⁵² And indeed, as the previously quoted Hittite text shows, communal meals are an integral part of temple-related covenant ceremonies, being the final installment in the whole process. Again, one need not look to recent Bedouin customs for an explanation of this practice. It is extremely ancient and widespread. The temple ritual described in the Gudea Cylinders ends with a festive meal and the fixing of the destinies for the coming year. The *Akītu* festival in Babylon was concluded by an extraordinary sacrificial meal attended by both gods and people. The annual temple rededictory festival in Egypt during the Greco-Roman period was concluded by a communal meal, as was the dedicatory festival at the New Year in Jerusalem in the time of Solomon.

Given the inherent aspect of secrecy in the ancient world in relation to temple ceremony, the covenant meal was the one instance, in many cases, in which common people could be present and actually partake of the blessings of renewal that the temple ceremonies promised.⁵³ In the context of Exodus 24, we have a people, formerly unsanctified (Exodus 19) and unqualified to enter the presence of deity, now ritually sanctified and covenanted on the basis of the revealed law and permitted to attend a sacral meal in the deity's presence.

The Cosmic Sanctuary

Finally, the concept of the cosmic sanctuary, of which the earthly sanctuary is but a patterning (Exodus 25:8), is central to the thesis presented here. Only such a sanctuary,

built after the cosmic model, can properly serve as the locus of a legitimizing covenant system. Central to temple covenant systems all over the ancient Near East is the idea that the temple plan is revealed to the king or the prophet by deity. Again, many examples could be enumerated. Gudea of Lagash was visited in a dream in a temple of Lagash and shown the plan of the temple by a goddess, who gave him a lapis lazuli tablet on which the plan of the temple was written. Perhaps the best example of this aspect of temple building is the Sinai episode itself, in which, according to D. N. Freedman, "this heavenly temple or sanctuary with its throne room or holy of holies where the deity was seated on his cherubim throne constituted the *tabnīt* or structure seen by Moses during his sojourn on the same mountain, cf. Exodus 25:8."⁵⁴ Likewise at Ras Shamra, where, according to F. M. Cross, "Baʿl founded his temple on Mount Ṣapon in order to make manifest his establishment of order, especially kingship among the gods. The earthly temple of Baʿl manifested not only Baʿl's creation of order, but at the same time established the rule of the earthly king."⁵⁵

Thus order cannot exist, the earth cannot be made cosmic, society cannot function properly, law cannot be decreed, except in a temple established on earth that is the authentic and divinely revealed counterpart of a heavenly prototype. As J. Z. Smith has written so cogently for the *Enuma Elish*, it is "not so much a cosmogony as it is a myth of the creation of a temple."⁵⁶ It is the creation of the temple, with its cosmic overtones, that founds and legitimizes the state or the society, which, in turn, makes possible the formal promulgation of law. Once promulgated in the ritual manner described, the law serves as the text of a covenant process carried out in front of the temple's pillars, accom-

panied by animal sacrifice and a communal meal. All these features, so characteristic of ancient Near Eastern temple practice from earliest times, are embedded within the earliest traditions of Late Bronze Age community formation in biblical Israel.

The Temple and the Prophetic Future

Given the sanctity and the authority of the temple and its legal system, which were revealed by YHWH to Moses on Sinai, we should not be surprised to find that the temple system is an integral part of prophetic Israel's view of the future. This is revealed most clearly in Ezekiel's temple vision of Ezekiel 40–48. Moshe Greenberg, in his recent study of this section of Ezekiel, sees the importance of its temple centeredness in, among other things, his "lofty conception of a prophet's responsibility in an age of ruin."⁵⁷ At the moment of greatest ruin, of deepest despair, "the hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me in divine visions to the land of Israel, where he sat me down on a very high mountain" (Ezekiel 40:1–2, New American Bible). And thus we enter again the realm of the temple ideology that I have attempted to explicate.

Similarly, Qumran, a community that viewed itself as authoritative Israel, held at its communal heart a divinely revealed, temple-centered legal system, complete with the plan of an idealized future temple.⁵⁸

Notes

1. See David Noel Freedman, "Temple without Hands," in *THPBT*, 21–30.

2. See my articles "The Legitimizing Role of the Temple in the Origin of State," in this volume, *Temples of the Ancient World*, 151–206; "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," in this volume, 76–97; and "The Common Temple Ideology of the Ancient Near East," in Truman G. Madsen, ed., *The Temple in Antiquity* (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1984), 53–76.

3. See Lundquist, "Legitimizing Role of the Temple," 153–55.

4. See Lundquist, "What Is a Temple?" 76-97.
5. Kent V. Flannery, "The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations," *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 3 (1972): 399-426.
6. Folker Willesen, "The Cultic Situation of Psalm LXXIV," *Vetus Testamentum* 2 (1952): 289-306.
7. See Jon D. Levenson, "From Temple to Synagogue: I Kings 8," in *Traditions in Transformation, Turning Points in Biblical Faith*, ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 146-66.
8. See Baruch Halpern, "The Ritual Background of Zechariah's Temple Song," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40 (1978): 167-90.
9. George E. Mendenhall, "The Monarchy," *Interpretation* 29 (1975): 159.
10. Lundquist, "Legitimizing Role of the Temple," 153.
11. Roy Rappaport, "The Obvious Aspects of Ritual," in *Ecology, Meaning and Religion* (Richmond, Virginia: North Atlantic Books, 1979), 193, 199.
12. George E. Mendenhall, "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law," *Biblical Archaeologist* 17, no. 2 (May 1954): 28.
13. See F. R. Kraus, "Ein zentrales Problem des altmesopotamischen Rechtes: Was ist der Codex Hammu-rabi?" *Genava* 8 (1960): 283-96.
14. Mendenhall, "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law," 26.
15. See *ibid.*, 32-38; Kraus, "Ein zentrales Problem des altmesopotamischen Rechtes," 283-96; J. Klima, "Gesetze," *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 3 (1966): 243-55; Jorgen Laessoe, "On the Fragments of the Hammurapi Code," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 4 (1950): 173-87; J. J. Finkelstein, "Ammisaduqa's Edict and the Babylonian Law Codes," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 15 (1961): 91-104.
16. Lundquist, "Legitimizing Role of the Temple," 175-76.
17. Thorkild Jacobsen, *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture*, ed. William L. Moran (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 150-51.
18. Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (Uppsala: 1943), 174, as quoted in Arvid S. Kapelrud, "Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings," *Orientalia* 32 (1963): 61.
19. Note Gudea in Cylinder A.XII-XIII, following the revelation to him in a dream; Hammurapi in Esagila, as expressed in the prologue and the epilogue to the Code of Hammurapi; Moses on Sinai; Solomon in his dedicatory prayer. In Gudea Cylinder B.XVIII, we read that his work was carried out "according to the decrees of Nana and Ningirsu."

20. Kraus, "Ein zentrales Problem des altmesopotamischen Rechtes."

21. See D. J. Wiseman, "The Laws of Hammurapi Again," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 7 (1962): 162, 168; Klima, "Gesetze"; Jacobsen, *Toward the Image of Tammuz*.

22. See Finkelstein, "Ammissaduqa's Edict and the Babylonian Law Codes," 91–104.

23. See Lundquist, "What Is a Temple?" 87–88; Samuel N. Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture and Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963); *ANET*, 165, 178.

24. See Mendenhall, "Monarchy," 155–70; Hugh W. Nibley, "Christian Envy of the Temple," *Jewish Quarterly Reviews* 50 (1959–60): 97–123, 229–40, reprinted in *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, in *CWHN*, 4:391–434.

25. See Klima, "Gesetze," 244.

26. Quoted in Lundquist, "Legitimizing Role of the Temple," 160.

27. See E. W. Nicholson, "Covenant Ritual in Exodus 24:3–8," *Vetus Testamentum* 32 (1982): 74–86; Frank Moore Cross, "The Priestly Tabernacle in the Light of Recent Research," in *THPBT*, 169–80; James P. Hyatt, *Exodus, New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980); Mendenhall, "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law."

28. See George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *Biblical Archaeologist* 17, no. 3 (September 1954): 59–61; Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, rev. ed. (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978), 248–50.

29. See Moshe Weinfeld, "Berîth," in G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–), 2:266.

30. See Lundquist, "Common Temple Ideology," 53–76.

31. "Hittite Temples and High Places," in *THPBT*, 66.

32. See *ibid.*

33. See Lundquist, "Legitimizing Role of the Temple," 151–206.

34. See Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Der Tempel im alten Mesopotamien und seine Parallelen in Indien* (Leiden: Brill, 1983).

35. Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), 1:16–17.

36. See Lundquist, "Legitimizing Role of the Temple," 190–91.

37. Bittel, "Hittite Temples and High Places," 66.

38. *Some Aspects of Hittite Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 27.

39. See *ibid.*, 27–28, 36–38.

40. See Claire Epstein, "Aspects of Symbolism in Chalcolithic Palestine," in Roger Moorey and Peter Parr, eds., *Archaeology in the Levant, Essays for Kathleen Kenyon* (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1978), 29.

41. See Lundquist, "Legitimizing Role of the Temple," 31 n. 112, 32 n. 139, 32 n. 144; H. York, "Heiliger Baum," *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 4 (1975): 274.

42. See Lundquist, "Common Temple Ideology"; Yasin M. Al-Khalesi, *The Court of the Palms: A Functional Interpretation of the Mari Palace*, ed. Giorgio Buccellati (Malibu, California: Undena, 1978); York, "Heiliger Baum," 274.

43. See William F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 5th ed. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968), 143.

44. See AAHB, 7-21; Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 178-79.

45. See Carol L. Meyers, "Jachin and Boaz in Religious and Political Perspective," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1983): 167-78.

46. See Lundquist, "What Is a Temple?" 88; Lundquist, "Common Temple Ideology."

47. See Hugh Nibley, "The Hierocentric State," *Western Political Quarterly* 4 (1951): 226-53, reprinted in *The Ancient State*, in CWHN, 10:99-147.

48. As quoted in Gurney, *Some Aspects of Hittite Religion*, 29-30.

49. *Ibid.*, 30.

50. See Anton Moortgat, *Tell Chuera in Nordost Syrien* (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1962).

51. See J. E. Reade, "Assurnasirpal I and the White Obelisk," *Iraq* 37 (1975): 129-50.

52. See "Covenant Ritual in Exodus 24:3-8," 85.

53. See Lundquist, "What Is a Temple?" 86.

54. Freedman, "Temple without Hands," 174.

55. Cross, "Priestly Tabernacle in the Light of Recent Research," 174.

56. J. Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 99.

57. Moshe Greenberg, "The Design and Themes of Ezekiel's Program of Restoration," *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 208.

58. See Ben Zion Wacholder, "The Dawn of Qumran: 11Q Temple and the Teacher of Righteousness," *Society of Biblical Literature 1980 Abstracts*, ed. Charles E. Winquist and Paul J. Achtemeier (Chico, California: Scholars, 1980), #S111; Daniel R. Schwartz, "The Three Temples of 4Q Florilegium," *Revue de Qumran* 37 (1979): 83-91.