Demarcation between Sacred Space and Profane Space: The Temple of Herod Model

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To illustrate the pure condition of the temple of Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem, and the land of Israel, ancient Jewish midrashim tended to exaggerate with the intent of showing the antithetical relationship between sacred and profane space. For instance, *Sifre on Deuteronomy Pisqa 37* states that “the refuse of the land of Israel, is superior to the best place in Egypt.”¹ Other accounts produced by the same author(s) relate that four kingdoms of the world argued for possession of the least significant mountains of Israel because even the most inferior areas of the land of Israel were superior to the remaining parts of the world.² Why is the land of Israel superior to neighboring Egypt, and why are the least significant areas of Israel superior to the remaining parts of the world? The answer to this question lies in the fact that the temple of the Lord existed in the land of Israel, causing all parts of Israel to possess a degree of holiness.

The fact that a temple existed in the land of Israel forced the Jewish rabbinic authorities to develop an interesting and unique theology concerning sacred space. According to several rabbinic documents, the land of Israel was divided.
into ten concentric zones of holiness. The premier rabbinic record that identifies the various gradations of holiness is M Kelim 1:6–9. It states:

There are ten degrees of holiness:
The land of Israel is holier than all the [other] lands. . . .
The cities that are surrounded with walls are holier than it. . . .
Within the wall of Jerusalem is holier than they [the foregoing]. . . .
The Temple Mount is holier than it. . . .
The rampart is holier than it. . . .
The Court of the Women is holier than it. . . .
The Court of Israel is holier than it. . . .
The Court of the Priests is holier than it. . . .
[The space] between the porch and the altar is holier than it. . . .
The sanctuary is holier than it. . . .
The Holy of Holies is holier than them all. 3

While each of the zones possessed a certain degree of holiness, the outer zone (the land of Israel) possessed a lesser degree of holiness than the innermost zone (the Holy of Holies), which possessed the greatest degree of holiness.

In what manner did the rabbis demarcate between the various zones of holiness? How, for example, did the rabbis delimit between the holiness of the Court of the Priests and the Court of Israel, which possessed a lesser degree of holiness? The purpose of this paper is to examine the demarcations found within the Temple of Herod system, especially with regard to the careful separation of sacred from profane space. The investigation will first review the antithetical relationship that exists between sacred and profane space. This review will be followed by a detailed discussion of the rabbinic method of demarcating between sacred and profane space. Furthermore, the sacral/nonsacral constitution
of the subterranean areas below the temple and aerial space above the temple will be considered. We will limit our discussion to the period of the Temple of Herod (18 B.C.–A.D. 70).

The Noncontiguous Nature of Sacred and Profane Space

Definition of Sacred Space: In order to better understand the essence of sacred space, one must juxtapose the concepts of the sacred and profane and provide a comparison of the two. Although the two concepts are contradictory and “mutually exclusive,” one cannot be defined completely without the other, for one gains definition from the other.

Otto’s definition of holiness summarily describes the nature of the sacred, for holiness is something “wholly other” than the profane world. In terms of categorization, sacred space belongs to a category far removed from the profane. The sacred contains elements of mystery, the supernatural, and inviolability. It is an item of the intellect and is said to exist perceptually. Only those who perceive that sacred space exists will acknowledge its existence. Brevard Childs’ work on the holy explains the manner in which sacred space is viewed perceptually or emotionally. He calls one’s relationship with sacred space an emotional “experience” that “fills that particular space with its unique character.” Those who experience sacral space and its corresponding sacral architecture generate a unique religious response, a response far different from one’s reaction to empirical space. That is not to say that empirical space and secular architecture do not create their own emotional content, but religious geography with its religious architecture has at its very foundation a set of beliefs that points to the
origins or primary fundamentals of a particular religious system. Hans J. Klimkeit's language is not unlike that of Childs. He refers to sacral space as having a "value of its own" due to "an emotional accent" held by those who perceive it to be sacred space.10

Sacred space is intimately connected with temple space—they are often one and the same. The very meaning of the term temple in the Hebrew language demonstrates this idea. In the Hebrew Bible11 one of the principal roots from which the English words sanctuary and temple originate is *QDS, which has the basic meaning of "separation" or "withdrawal" of sacred entities from profane things.12 Specifically, the Qal verbal form of *QDS denotes something that is "holy" or "withheld from profane use." The Niphal form of the same root refers to showing or proving "oneself holy." The Piel verbal form speaks of placing a thing or person "into the state of holiness" or declaring something holy. In the Hiphil verbal form, the root letters *QDS have reference to the dedication or sanctification of a person or thing to sacredness.13 In all instances, the meaning of the Hebrew root *QDS pertains to separation from the profane.

Definition of Profane Space: Sacred and profane are not conterminous but represent "two antithetical entities."14 Sacred space is temple space, and profane space is chaos. However, as mentioned above, we can appreciate sacred space fully only when we understand its relationship to the profane. The Latin word profanum (English "profane") literally means "before" or "outside" the temple, formed from pro (meaning "outside") and fanum (meaning "temple").15 The equivalent Hebrew word is hōl, which, according to Marcus Jastrow, has the meaning of "outside of the sanctuary, foreign, profane, common."16 If the temple is the consecrated place created "by marking it out, by cutting it off
from the profane space around it," then the profane space represents unconsecrated space, the peripheral area that remains after the sacred has been removed.

In his work *Images and Symbols*, Mircea Eliade speaks of profane space as being "objective," "abstract," and "non-essential." Human beings gather upon profane space and celebrate human actions. It is temporal, nonreligious geography, which is centered around the mundane events of humanity. Profane space deals with physical geography, or "empirical geography," and its field is "empirical space." Caillois's studies in *Man and the Sacred* have aptly shown that the two concepts—sacred and profane—can never be united, but must be separated, lest confusion come.

The Jews that belonged to the Second Temple period were well aware that sacred space was set amidst profane space. In what manner could the rabbinic authorities develop well-defined borders that would serve to delimit the two antithetical entities—sacred and profane space? How could the Jews create a dividing line between the orderliness of sacral space and the anomalous condition of profane space? The authorities were well aware of the rigid lines needed to separate the sacred from the profane. We will now deal with those rigid lines.

*The Careful Delimitation between Sacred and Profane Space according to the Rabbis*

This section deals with sacred space and sacral architecture as ordered, well-defined, and nonhomogeneous topos. We will look at the preciseness with which the Jews of the Second Temple era carefully delimited the temple's various zones and created borders between the sacred and the profane. Walls and gateways created borders and divided sacred from profane space. Both the subterranean areas of
the temple and the aerial space above the sanctuary were momentous considerations for the Jewish sages. The demarcation of zones of holiness outside of the immediate temple area, such as the city of Jerusalem and the land of Israel, were also the subjects of rabbinic deliberations.

The architectural boundaries of the sacred precinct needed to be well defined, visible, and obstructive. Borders had to be established that identified grades of space, and regulations had to exist that enforced the segregation. Architecturally, the borders of the temple (speaking of the Israelite temple paradigms) were most easily represented by the wall. The same wall that retained the sacred aura inside also barred the profane to the outside. At the same time a breach in the wall needed to exist that would allow the profane to be transcended, or would offer an opening into the sacred. Such breaches in the walls were represented by the temple doors, gates, and veils. The Jews during the Second Temple period were well aware of the various chal-
Challenges involved in delimiting a precise area of space that would be called holy and segregating that area from secular space. To carry the challenge a step further, the Jews needed to demarcate every zone of sanctity in relation to other zones of the temple precinct.

With regard to the many gates that existed in the temple precinct, the sages determined with great care and deliberation precisely what fraction of the gates belonged to the interior, as opposed to the exterior, of a given zone. According to Ḥalakah 7:12, the interior parts of the door stop (or jamb) were considered to belong to the interior of the enclosure, while the outside parts of the door stop belonged to the exterior: “From the stop of the door inwards counts as inside, and from the stop of the door outwards counts as outside.”

The earliest known commentary on Ḥalakah 7:12 adds additional information. Specifically speaking of the gates belonging to the court of the Priests, the Gemara states that the door jamb should be considered part of the interior of that court. Nothing is said about the other gates that belong to the other courtyards. With regard to the gates of the city of Jerusalem, however, the door jamb belongs to the outside of the wall. We learn from this that the sages considered that the exact point of separation between two juxtaposed temple zones existed at the door jamb. In most instances the door jamb was considered to be part of the interior, but in one interpretation the door jamb belonged to the exterior. It is possible, and the texts are unclear in this regard, that the determining factor of inner or outer door jamb was whether the gate swung inward or outward.

Another related discussion centered upon the actual moveable gate itself. Did it contain the quality of holiness that belonged to the inner territory, or did it possess the
sanctity of the outer zone? The answer to the question had relevance to at least one gate within the temple precinct, as well as to the gates of the city of Jerusalem. It is written in the Talmud that the gates of Jerusalem were not sanctified because the lepers sheltered themselves near the gates from the atmospheric elements, e.g., from the winter rains and the summer sun. In other words, the presence of ritually impure lepers caused the gates to lose any sanctity that may have once been attached to them. Similarly, the Nicanor Gate, which existed between the court of the Women and the court of Israel, did not possess the sanctity of the court of Israel. "Why was the gate of Nicanor not sanctified? Because lepers stand there and insert the thumbs of their hands [into the Court]." The extension of the leper's thumbs into the court of Israel has reference to the leper who has completed the days of purification. According to rabbinic law, the leper presented himself at the Nicanor Gate, extended his thumb and big toe into the sanctuary, where the priest then applied sacrificial blood.

For practical purposes the architects built cells or chambers into the great thick outer wall of the temple precinct. At times, the cells were designed so that persons could pass back and forth through the building between the rampart and the court. This type of construction raised several questions concerning the exact demarcation between sacred and profane space. What about chambers built into a wall that had a door opening outward into the rampart—is the area sacred within the chamber? To this question the sages responded with a negative answer. However, if the chamber's roof is level with the pavement of the court, then the roof is considered to be holy. As is the case in many instances, an exception to the ruling existed. The exception to this concept is cited by the sages—if the doors open into
the courtyard, the rooms of the chamber are deemed to possess sanctity, but the roofs are not sacred. The cellars of the temple provide an exception to this, however, for they are not sanctified at any time.24

What about a chamber that had a door on each end of the building, one opening onto holy ground and the other onto unholy ground? Where is the dividing line that separates sacred from profane space? Talmudic sources make reference to two chambers that fit this description—the Chamber of Hewn Stone and the Chamber of the Fireplace. The Chamber of Hewn Stone, built into the great temple wall, was located on the border between the court of the Priests and the rampart. The sages determined that the building itself was situated half on holy ground and half on nonholy ground. It had two doors, one opened to holy ground (the court of the Priests) and the other to unholy ground (the rampart).25 The Chamber of Hewn Stone served as the gathering place for the Sanhedrin. Maimonides writes that the Sanhedrin would sit in the half of the Chamber of Hewn Stone that stood upon nonholy ground.26

The Chamber of the Fireplace was situated within the same wall as the Chamber of Hewn Stone but lay westward several cubits. Although larger than the Chamber of Hewn Stone, the Chamber of the Fireplace possessed similar architectural features. It was divided into four rooms; two were located on holy ground and two on profane ground. Flagstones were set into the ground to mark the division between the two.27 "There were four cells in the Chamber of the Hearth, like small rooms opening into a hall, two within holy space and two outside of holy space, and the ends of marked pavement separated between the holy and the profane."28

While no flagstones are mentioned with reference to the
Chamber of Hewn Stone, it is possible that they were utilized in demarcating space in this chamber, given their usefulness in demarcating space. Flagstones were also used to separate the Court of the Priests from the Court of Israel, and in the chamber above the tripartite temple building, flagstones separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place.

Another architectural component, which is mentioned in connection with Solomon's Temple, was found in the Temple of Herod. A two-part cedar partition was used in Solomon's Temple to divide the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (see 1 Kings 6:16). During the period of the Second Temple, two curtains were employed between the two zones rather than the wooden partition. Between the two curtains was a space that measured one cubit. The veils were designed so that the outer curtain was fastened to the northern wall and the inner curtain was fastened to the southern wall. As the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he would enter from the south, travel northward between the two veils until he reached the entrance of the inner veil at the north end, and then enter the sanctum. Evidently, the purpose of the two veils was to protect the sanctity of the Holy of Holies from the view, either accidental or purposeful, of proximal ministering priests. Given the sages' preoccupation with determining exact spatial borders throughout the temple precinct, the question naturally arose whether the cubit of space between the two veils held the sanctity of the sanctum or the Holy Place. While the text of TB Yoma 51b-52b presents the discussion of the rabbis with regard to this issue, the text does not reveal a clear-cut decision.

Preliminarily, one may guess that the walls of the temple were simple demarcating lines that acted as visual
and physical barriers between gradational zones. In a sense they were just that, with the side of the wall representing the sanctity of the zone that it faced. But the rabbis, desiring to be more precise in their demarcations, addressed the matter of the thickness of the walls. In a mishnaic statement in M Pesahim 7:12, it was declared that the thickness of the walls counted as the inside of that respective zone. Maimonides, commenting on that statement, adds that the thickness of the walls was considered part of the interior with regard to both uncleanness and the consumption of offerings. Windows also, which were set in various walls, were to be considered as part of and possessing the sanctity of the interior. Practical situations of cultic life required rabbinic response. Jewish law dictated that the paschal lamb was to be eaten within the walls of Jerusalem, and if removed, then the food was declared unclean for consumption. It was possible that, while preparing the passover offering, one of its limbs would accidentally project outside of the wall of Jerusalem. If this situation were to occur, then special prescriptions provided for the removal of that defective limb from the remainder of the passover lamb. This was accomplished by first scraping the flesh of the limb off the bone up to the first joint. After this exercise the limb might be cut off at the joint. All the while the person performing this activity had to take care not to break the bone of the limb (see Exodus 12:46).

Another Talmudic illustration demonstrates that the walls of the court of Priests represented a border between two temple zones. Rabbi Ammi, speaking in Rabbi Eleazar’s name, presented the illustration. What is the ritual status of an animal whose legs are unintentionally extended outside of the court? Is the animal still fit for the altar? Rabbi Ammi’s response to this situation was, “If he
[the priest] cut off its legs and then slaughtered it, it is fit; if he slaughtered and then cut off [the legs] it is unfit.”

Yet another Talmudic example lists a concern for spatial demarcation. Rabbi Abba b. Mammel noted that the gateway of the wall of the Court of the Priests carefully divided the purity of certain priesthood officiants. He stated that if certain temple workers carry the flesh of the Passover sacrifice to another company and the front bearers go “outside the walls of the temple court while the rear ones had not yet gone out, those in front defile their garments while those behind do not defile their garments.”

A similar case study deals with the level of purity of a member of the priesthood who causes a portion of his body to leave the court of Priests while the remainder remains within the court. The rabbis ruled that if the priest’s hands only were projected out of the court of the Priests, the person would yet be considered cultically pure. Similarly, if the person extended both his hands and his feet outside of the court, but his torso remained within the court, the person would yet retain his sanctity. The response toward the entire body or person was different. The authorities concluded that if a temple officiant left the court’s premises with the intention of tarrying outside of the court, he would then be required to immerse himself in the cleansing pool. If it was his intention, however, to briefly leave the premises and shortly return, he would then be required to wash his hands and feet only. The text raises the issue of one who leaves the court due to “nature’s call.” It states that “he who eases himself needs immersion, and he who answers nature’s call requires sanctification of hands and feet.”

The Temple Mount was known to have a number of tunnels that aided members of the priesthood in their cultic duties. According to Maimonides, entrances of tunnels
opening into the courts are holy, while those opening up outside of the courts are profane. Tunnels opening outward into the Temple Mount (Har ha-Bayit) that originate outside of the courtyards are not as holy as the Temple Mount, but if the tunnel begins in the court and opens outside of the court into the Temple Mount, it is equal in holiness to the Temple Mount.

Aerial and Subterranean Space

To this point we have seen the manner in which the Jewish sages, using architectural components, determined precisely where profane space ended and sacred space began. Two other dimensions of sacred space should be treated here—aerial and subterranean space.

Aerial Space: The rabbinic sources build a case for the sanctity of the airspace above the temple precinct. A simple statement attested in TB Zevahim 26a provides a summary on the matter—”the airspace of within is as within.” That is to say, the sanctity of the airspace within a defined area is to be considered equal to the sanctity of that area. A modern commentator has paraphrased this statement by writing that “the airspace of a place is as the place itself.” Hence, the airspace that exists within the walls of a given zone of the temple carries the same sanctity as the area’s surface and its appurtenances. By way of extension, the airspace of a court is governed by the same regulations as the zone itself.

Having established these facts, the sages were able to treat various circumstances that had relevancy to sanctuary airspace. For instance, when a priest projected his hands into the court of Priests, but his body remained outside of the court, it was as if full entry had been made by that person. This ruling produced grave results for the unclean
person who projected his hand into the court. According to Maimonides, if a ritually impure person stretched forth his hand into the sanctuary, he would be flogged.\textsuperscript{43}

Outside of the tripartite temple building itself, the most sacred area of the temple precinct was north of the sacrificial altar. Lesser sacrifices may be slaughtered in any part of the court, but the sacrifices of a higher sanctity must be offered on the north side.\textsuperscript{44} If, however, a priest stood in the southern portion of the court, extended his hands into the northern area, and in this manner slaughtered the sacrifice, then "his slaughtering is valid." Apparently the sanctity of the area did not magically draw its powers from the pavement, but the very airspace of the north territory was seen to be equal to the pavement itself. The Talmud continues by explaining that if the greater portion of a priest’s upper body, including his head, is extended into the northern portion of the court, then it is as if his entire person had entered that zone.\textsuperscript{45}

Under the same regulations that stated "the airspace of within is as within," the sages ruled that the airspace above the altar was equal in sanctity to the altar itself.\textsuperscript{46} The point is significant, for the altar was a prominent focal point of the entire precinct, second only to the Holy of Holies. Similarly, the airspace above the altar’s ramp, ledge, and foundation possessed the same degree of sanctity as the airspace above the altar.\textsuperscript{47} For evidence of this, the rabbis refer to Leviticus 1. According to verse 15, when the sacrificial bird is offered, its head must be pinched in a prescribed manner while upon the altar. The body of the bird rests upon the altar, while its head is found in the airspace above the altar. Can the head of the bird lose its sanctity because it does not touch the altar? According to the sages, the answer is no.
The sages are in agreement that the holiness of the airspace above the altar is equal to the holiness of the altar itself.

The question was raised concerning the vessels of the temple—when a utensil or vessel is suspended in the air between the altar and a sacrificial offering, does it not act as a barrier between the altar and sacrifice, thereby blocking the sanctity of the airspace? The rabbis ruled that the vessel does not create a barrier, for it too is holy. In fact, the concept dealing with the pavement’s airspace and the altar’s airspace is identical to the airspace of the utensil. The airspace of the utensil is equal to the sanctity of the utensil itself. It is necessary for the operations of the temple cult that this be the case. It has been ruled by the sages that both the vessel and the blood of the sacrificial animal are equally holy. When the priest pours the blood of the jugular veins straight into the vessel, the blood remains sanctified as it travels through the air. From the cultically clean animal, through cultically clean airspace, to the cultically pure vessel, the blood remains unblemished. Hence, the holiness of the airspace above a vessel is equal to the holiness of the vessel itself.

According to the scheme found in M Kelim 1:6–9 and elsewhere, Jerusalem was also considered a zone of holiness. Therefore, similar to the courtyard zones of the temple precinct, the airspace of the city of Jerusalem, too, was equal in sanctity to the city itself. Encyclopedia Talmudica cites the example of a person standing in a tree, that “as a person stands upon the branches of a tree, he is regarded as standing in the airspace above the ground.” The Mishnah equates Jerusalem’s airspace with its pavement: “If a man says to his children, ‘Behold, I slaughter the Passover-offering on behalf of whichever of you goes up first to Jerusalem,’ as soon as the first has inserted his head and the
greater part of his body [in Jerusalem] he has acquired his portion (M Pesahim 8:3).”

Moving outward beyond all the zones of holiness as listed in M Kelim 1:6–9, we discover that the aerial space belonging to heathen lands is equal to the soil of the area. Maimonides' tutelage concerning the airspace of heathen lands is instructive. He compares the soil of heathen lands to an area where graves are found. Similarly the airspace of heathen lands is unclean. If a Jew walks upon heathen land, or even thrusts his head or the greater portion of his body into heathen airspace, that person will become unclean. In this regard there existed a metonymical relationship—part of the body represented the entire person. Sacred vessels, also, if extended into heathen airspace would become unclean.

Although both heathen soil and airspace is unclean, the uncleanness of the heathen soil is greater than the uncleanness of the airspace, says Maimonides. The reason for this is direct contact of heathen soil conveys uncleanness, but not so much uncleanness is conveyed by overshadowing. Hence, one who becomes unclean by virtue of heathen soil is required to be cleansed the third and seventh days, while one who becomes unclean by virtue of the airspace above heathen soil has need of immersion only. Furthermore, if one travels through heathen land, he will incur seven-day uncleanness, but if he travels by sea through heathen countries, it is as if he had become unclean because of heathen airspace, and not its soil. Syria stands as an exception to this ruling: its soil is unclean like any other heathen country, but its airspace is clean like the land of Israel. A second exception concerns a person who walks along an area over which the ocean may swell during a storm, for the person remains clean in such a place. T. Ahilot 18:5 adds the following con-
cepts: If a person enters heathen lands in a box, the person is clean. If, however, a person enters heathen land in a carriage or boat, he is unclean. Finally, if more than one-half of a chair is extended into a heathen land, then it is unclean.

Subterranean Space: We have addressed the issue of the sanctity of aerial space; now we must look at the subterranean areas of the temple. It was understood by the sages that the surface of the courts and buildings located within the temple precinct was sacred. It was taught by the School of Ishmael that "the pavement sanctifies." For this reason, nothing must exist upon the ground which would "interpose" between the priest and the pavement. Questionable, however, was the area below the paved surface—the depths. Two contradictory views existed. The first considered the soil and area below the surface to be sacred. According to this view the ground was first sanctified by David "to the nethermost soil." A note in the Epstein version of the Talmud states that the expression "nethermost soil" should read literally "the soil of the deep." 59

A second and more popular view of the temple's subterrane held the area to be profane. According to M Tamid 1:1, a priest who suffered an accident, such as a seminal issue, would descend below the surface of the temple through a passageway until he reached the ritual baths. The unclean priest would immerse himself, dry himself by the fire, and take his place by other priests who awaited the opening of the gates. Jewish law prevented the priests from returning to the sacred ground of the temple, for those who immersed themselves in the ritual baths were required to wait for sunset. 60 Rather, at the opening of the gates of the temple, the priests would depart. The Gemara cites M Tamid 1:1 as evidence that the temple's subterrane was profane. In a statement attributed to Rabbi Johanan, the Talmud states
"[M Tamid 1:1] supports the view . . . that the subterranean passage possessed no sanctity." 61

Although it is clear that the subterranean areas of the temple became a location for unclean priests, the temple depths were also unclean by virtue of a second reason. A natural but profane act 62 was conducted under the surface area of the temple, for it was there that a privy was located. 63 A door was found on the privy, and a locked door signaled to a potential occupant that the privy was occupied; an unlocked door allowed a person entrance.

The rabbis held other concerns about the subterranean. M Parah relates the preventive measures that the authorities took to ensure that a corpse would not desecrate any area of the Temple Mount. One prescription dealt with the rabbinic ruling with regard to the "tent" (or shadowing). According to the law, the tent of a corpse was able to defile in three separate but similar ways: (1) If the corpse is found above or overshadows a person or utensil, that person or utensil becomes unclean. (2) If the corpse is found under the same covering as a person or utensil, that person or utensil becomes unclean. (3) If the corpse is found beneath a person or utensil, that person becomes unclean. 64 In the context of the depths below the ground surface of the temple, the third case has the greatest relevance. The Jews needed assurance that no graves existed below the surface of the temple, so they hollowed out the depths. 65 A further measure added additional confidence to the temple community when a causeway was constructed extending from the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives "for fear of any grave in the depths below." 66 This causeway may have shared a purpose similar to the bridge connecting the upper city with the Temple Mount. The bridge was constructed to
allow the high priest and other temple workers to reach the
temple without passing through the lower marketplace. 67

The Demarcation of Space outside of the
Temple Precinct

A broader picture regarding the demarcation of space
should be examined here. Rabbinic literature illustrates the
sages’ attempts to carefully delimit space outside of the
temple area, including the city of Jerusalem, the land of
Israel, and the lands of the Gentiles.

The city of Jerusalem metonymically was an extension
of the temple and its holiness. The three camps or gra­
tations that existed at the time of the Israelites’ sojourn in the
wilderness were, during the period of the Second Temple,
superimposed upon Jerusalem and the temple. “The
Temple and Jerusalem were the direct continuation of the
camp and Tabernacle of the wilderness. The rabbis . . .
divided Jerusalem into three sections: the priestly camp
(temple), the Levitic camp (the Temple Mount), and the
Israelite camp (the city).” 68 The Tabernacle was replaced
with the temple, the camp of Levites became equated with
the Temple Mount, and Jerusalem replaced what was
known as the camp of Israel. 69 Numbers Rabbah 7:8 grades
persons within the three camps. The city of Jerusalem, like
the temple, possessed precise boundaries. Within the city a
high degree of sanctity was found; without the city existed
a lesser degree. Space outside of the city was called the
“border,” 70 having the connotation of peripherality or mar­
ginality.

The walls of Jerusalem were vital in separating the
sacred from the profane. They became physical verticalities,
retaining inside themselves the mystical power of holiness.
The walls represented border configurations par excellence,
symbolizing linear divisions between zones. "Space, however, consists not only of localities, but is determined as well by directions, and finally by its borders, or boundaries." J. G. Davies believes that sacred space has a distinct identity and must have "pronounced borders." Standing in antithesis to sacred space is profane space, which has no borders and is largely unidentifiable.

Jerusalem's walls served as precise borders that defined and demarcated space. Many examples from the Second Temple period can be cited. A practical problem existed within the borders of Israel concerning the ownership of trees. Throughout the land of Israel, with the exception of the cities of refuge and the city of Jerusalem, when disputes arose affecting the ownership of trees, the location of the roots became the factor of determination. The tract of land that possessed the tree's roots (or, at least, the majority of the roots), also possessed the tree. In this matter, though, Jerusalem and the cities of refuge were exceptions. The tree's roots were not a factor in determining ownership, but the tree's branches were. If the roots of the tree were located outside of the walls, but its branches extended over the wall into the city, then the branches (i.e., its fruits) belonged to the city.

The term wall is frequently used by the Talmudic authors who demonstrated particular interest in the sacred tithes and offerings. Jerusalem's wall played a role in the complex laws governing the second tithe. The second tithes were to be eaten within the walls of Jerusalem; if they were eaten outside of the walls, the offender would incur stripes and flogging. Similarly, whoever encouraged others to eat consecrated animals outside of the walls was subject to excommunication. According to the Mishnah, if a person unintentionally removed sacred flesh outside of
Jerusalem’s walls, he was given two options: If he had already passed beyond Mount Scopus (the hill northeast of Jerusalem, which is the last elevated area from which Jerusalem is visible), then he was instructed to burn the flesh on the spot. If, however, the person could yet see the city, he was to return to the temple and burn the flesh there.77

Conclusion

We first viewed the manner in which physical geography and hiero-geography are not conterminous but represent antithetical situations. Sacred space and sacral architecture are carefully delimited and possess precise borders that serve to separate the holy from the profane. Several examples from rabbinic literature demonstrated the manner in which the Jews utilized the walls and gateways to divide and demarcate various planes of holiness, both within and without the temple precinct. With regard to spatial delimitation, both the subterranean areas of the temple and the aerial space above the sanctuary received due consideration by the Jewish sages—the subterrane was considered to be profane; aerial space was seen to be holy.

What was the significance of meticulous demarcations between sacred and profane space? Sacred space, of course, was holy because of its connection to God—his divine appearance to a particular site or his selection of the site. R. D. Martienssen explains that the very first step towards “arranged and controlled space”78 is the selection of the site. Site designation promptly suggests a delimitation between a sacred “inside” centered area and a chaotic homogeneous “outside” area, or a perceptible division between holy and profane space. Hence, sacred space is divided from the profane in order to protect the interests of the temple commu-
nity, whose desire it is to approach God within the boundaries of the temple.

Notes


2. See ibid. In a related set of circumstances, the rabbinic authorities demonstrate that the Israelites themselves desired to have the temple located within their territory (cf. *Genesis Rabbah* 22:8 and 26:3). *Genesis Rabbah* 99:1 contradicts a statement listed in TB *Megillah* 16b that states that the temple was built in the territory of Benjamin. The rabbis deal with this problem by dividing the temple into different parts. The portion of temple located in the territory of Benjamin included the vestibule, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies; and the section of the temple that belonged to the territory of Judah included the chambers of the priest, the courts, and the Temple Mount (see TB *Megillah* 26a; cf. *Sifre on Deuteronomy* Pisqa 62).

TB *Yoma* 12a presents a slightly different picture. “What lay in the lot of Judah? The Temple Mount, the cells, the courts. And what lay in the lot of Benjamin? The Hall, the Temple, and the Holy of Holies. And a strip of land went forth from Judah’s lot and went into Benjamin’s territory, and on this the temple was built.” *Sifre on Deuteronomy* Pisqa 352 explains that the sanctuary was built in the “portion of Benjamin, and a triangular section extended from that portion to that of Judah” (quoted in Hammer, *Sifre*, 366). This text continues by quoting Genesis 49:10, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah,” and explains, “That refers to the Hall of Hewn Stones which was situated in the portion of Judah, as it is said”; then Psalms 78:67–68 is quoted (Hammer, *Sifre*, 366). Here we are not interested in attempting to solve the apparent contradictions that exist in the literature. The sources are pointed out because they demonstrate the careful interest held by the rabbis in producing tribal borders, especially with regard to the temple.

3. All translations are the author’s unless otherwise indicated.


sacred and the profane cannot “approach one another without losing their proper nature: either the sacred will consume the profane or the profane will contaminate and enfeeble the sacred” (384).


7. This helps explain why so many foreign invaders have, at different periods in the history of the Israelites, chosen to tread unauthorized within the sacred precincts of the temple. Perhaps the sanctity of the area had very little religious impact upon them.


9. “By attaching his experience to certain limited areas, he makes the qualitative distinctions within space of sacred and profane, each bearing its emotional character. This scheme is extended beyond the individual experience as cosmic events are also given spatial qualities” (ibid).


11. See Yehoshua M. Grintz, “Bêt ha-Miqdâš” (in Hebrew), *Encyclopaedia Hebraica*, ed. B. Natanyahu, 20 vols. (Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Printing, 1957), 8:555, where the different names of the temple as they appear in the Hebrew Bible are listed: bêt Yhwh, bêt E'lôhîm, hêkâl qôdeš (Jonah 2:5[4]); hêkâl Yhwh (2 Kings 24:13); and miqdâš. The usual name in the Mishnah and related literature, i.e., the Tosephta, is Bêt ha-Miqdâš. Of this name the encyclopedia states, “this name is found only one time in the Bible” (555). The *Targum of Jeremiah* calls the temple the “house of the Shekinah” (2:7; 3:17; 7:15; 14:10; 15:1).


19. Here it is helpful to note Klimkeit’s definition of empirical
space: "Empirical space . . . is in practice the particular space we see and record photographically. . . . It is always filled with objects meeting our eye. We can here draw a parallel with empirical time. Just as early man could not conceive of abstract and empty time as such in his 'historical' thinking, but only time filled by events—'gefullte Zeit,' as Gerhard von Rad says—his concept of space is seldom purely abstract and vacuous" ("Spatial Orientation in Mythical Thinking," 274).

20. Caillois recognizes the "reciprocal relationships" that exist between the sacred and profane and therefore suggests that they "have to be strictly regulated" (Man and the Sacred, 23).
21. TB Pesahim 85b.
22. Ibid.
23. Compare n. 16 of the Soncino edition of the Talmud, TB Yevamot 7b; see also TB Nazir 45a.
26. See Maimonides, Yad VIII, 1, 5, 17.
27. See M Middot 1:6; TB Yoma 15b-16a.
29. See ibid. 2:6.
30. See ibid. 4:5.
31. See Yad VIII, 1, 6, 9.
32. See M Pesahim 7:12.
33. Ibid.
34. TB Zevahim 25a-26a.
35. TB Pesahim 85b.
36. TB Zevahim 20b.
37. Ibid. For a treatment of tunnels opening into holy or unholy ground, see A. Kimelman, "The Area of the Temple Mount and the Helel (Rampart), and the Laws Pertaining Thereto" (in Hebrew), Ha-Maayan 8, no. 3 (1968): 10.
39. Was the airspace intrinsically holy? ET, 1:336–37, comments on the topic of intrinsic airspace. For the airspace above an individual's courtyard, or the airspace of a mikveh (ritual pool of immersion), a field, and other areas, see ET, 1:332–35.
40. Ibid., 336.
41. See ibid., 338.
42. See TB Zevahim 32a; cf. Zevahim 20b.
43. See Maimonides, Yad VIII, 3, 3, 18.
44. See TB Menahot 3a; TB Zevahim 55a.
45. See TB Zevahim 26a.

46. The author of TB Shevuot 17a speaks concerning an unclean person who is suspended in the airspace of the temple, but concludes that no rules are made with regard to that person. The text, while difficult, demonstrates that the creators of the Talmud were giving consideration to the problem of temple airspace.

47. See TB Zevahim 87b; ET, 1:337.

48. See ET, 1:337.

49. See TB Zevahim 25b; cf. Zevahim 97b.

50. ET, 1:339.


52. The Jewish doctrine that depicts heathen soil as unclean probably predates the reign of Herod, perhaps to the early period of the Second Temple (Gedalyahu Alon, "The Levitical Uncleanliness of Gentiles," in Alon, Jews, Judaism and the Classical World, trans. Israel Abrahams [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1977], 187). Alon rejects the idea that political maneuvers and situations extant at the time of the Second Temple period resulted in the Jewish doctrine (see ibid). Rather, the space is unclean because the gentiles worshiped idols, and their houses were unclean because abortions possibly took place within them (see ibid., 186, n. 75).


54. See Maimonides, Yad X, 1, 11, 1–6.

55. See ibid.

56. See M Oholoth 2:3; cf. T Ahilot 18:1, 5.

57. See Maimonides, Yad X, 1, 11, 1–6. Why the land of Syria stands as an exception in this instance is unknown. Perhaps Maimonides had in mind M Oholoth 18:7, which states that fields lying adjacent to the land of Israel are clean and are subject to the laws of tithes. Unfortunately, the connection between clean fields and clean airspace is not direct.


59. TB Zevahim 24a.

60. On the laws pertaining to the ritual baths, see M Tevul Yom, passim.

61. TB Tamid 27b.


Milgrom, citing 11QTemple col. 46:13–16, points out that lavatories were not found in the Temple City ("Further Studies in the Temple Scroll," 97).

64. For a discussion of various aspects of the tent, see ET, 1:288–91.
65. See M Parah 3:2–3.
69. See TB Zevahim 55a. On the tripartite division of Jerusalem, see further the remarks of Maimonides in Yad VIII, 1, 7, 11; and in his Commentary on M Kelim 1:8.
70. TB Kiddushin 80a.
73. See M Ma'serot 3:10; TB Makkot 12a.
74. See M Kelim 1:8; TB Yevamot 86b; TB Makkot 12a.
75. See TB Makkot 18a-18b; TB Menahot 70b.
76. See TB Bezah 23a.
77. See M Pesahim 3:8.
78. R. D. Martienssen, The Idea of Space in Greek Architecture (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1956), 1. Site selection is an essential aspect of having ordered space. As Martienssen has written, "the notion of architecture . . . implies a pre-determined end, a conceptual origin, of which the material expression is only the completing process" (ibid., 2).