

RITUAL THEORY, RITUAL TEXTS, AND THE PRIESTLY-HOLINESS WRITINGS OF THE PENTATEUCH

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Biblical studies thrives on the application of models and methods developed outside the discipline, especially those from the social sciences. This is particularly true in the study of ritual. The application of socio-theoretical approaches and perspectives has enhanced our understanding of this phenomenon or feature in biblical texts and will no doubt continue to do so.¹ Nevertheless, certain problems stand in the way of a straightforward application of socio-theoretical approaches to biblical texts that manifest ritual concerns and especially the *cultic* ritual material in the Priestly-Holiness corpus (PH) of the Pentateuch, the body of biblical literature

1. The literature is too vast to summarize here given the scope of biblical literature and the breadth of ritual phenomena (see the next note). Some recent books on biblical ritual, mainly cultic ritual and more specifically sacrifice, that have featured socio-theoretical perspectives to a greater or lesser extent include Roy Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005); William Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Ithamar Gruenwald, *Rituals and Ritual Theory in Ancient Israel* (Brill Reference Library of Judaism 10; Leiden: Brill, 2003); Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Gerald Klingbeil, *Bridging the Gap: Ritual and Ritual Texts in the Bible* (BBRSup 1; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007); Jay Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005). For an example of applying ritual and social theory beyond the sacrificial cult, see Nathaniel B. Levtow, *Images of Others: Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel* (Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego, 11; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008). These works provide bibliography to earlier studies. See also other literature cited in this essay.

to which scholars gravitate for the study of biblical ritual.² In this essay I specifically explore the difficulty of applying theoretical approaches and perspectives to *texts*. I first look at a basic phenomenological dilemma, that our object of study is texts, not actual ritual practices. I then move to examine how the genre of PH may impede the application of theoretical approaches. Finally, I consider how analysis can deal with the multiple voices within PH itself.³

2. “PH” here refers to what scholars label as the P source or stratum of the Pentateuch. The composite appellation makes explicit the major distinctive strata within this collective corpus, a priestly base with augmentation by the holiness school (see later in this essay). While the PH corpus is paradigmatic for the study of ritual in the Bible and ancient Israel, ritual features pervade all genres of biblical literature, if a broad definition of ritual is allowed (see n. 9). For such a definition, which includes religious and secular ritual and allows for degrees of ritualization, see David Wright, “The Study of Ritual in the Hebrew Bible,” in *Jewish Studies in the 21st Century* (ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn; New York: New York University Press, 2008), 120–38, esp. 120–22; idem, “Deciphering a Definition: The Syntagmatic Structural Analysis of Ritual in the Hebrew Bible,” *JHS* 7 (http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/Articles/article_89.pdf); idem, *Ritual in Narrative: The Dynamics of Feasting, Mourning, and Retaliation Rites in the Ugaritic Tale of Aqhat* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 8–13. The broad definition is based on Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); see her convenient description of ritualization on p. 74; see also n. 20 below). It should be kept in mind that cultic ritual (as found in PH) is a subcategory of ritual. The cult includes practices and phenomena associated with temples or sanctuaries, such as sacrifice, holiness, purity, priesthood, and festivals. A student interested in ritual in the Bible broadly should look beyond the cult and beyond PH.

3. My preoccupation with the issues in this paper began in the early 1990s when I reviewed Rolf Knierim, *Text and Concept in Leviticus 1:1–9* (FAT 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992; the review is in *JBL* 113 [1994]: 123–24). He questioned the validity of applying ritual theory (particularly that of Victor Turner) to the biblical text. For example, he noted (19): “Turner’s interpretations are the result of field studies of actually observed ritual performances. His text describes and interprets those performances. But while a prescriptive text about a ritual [i.e., like a PH text] will probably also reveal its hermeneutical system to a certain extent, it must not *e silentio* be presumed to be descriptive of actual performance, not only because there is—as in our biblical texts—no evidence for it but also because even such description represents an interpretive distancing vis-à-vis the performance.” He says further (19–20): “the prescription of a ritual in a text is not identical with the description of an observed ritual, let alone with a performed ritual itself.”

TEXTS AS THE OBJECT OF RITUAL ANALYSIS

I start with a philosophical-phenomenological difficulty, that the data source that biblical scholars use is a *text*. The theoretical problem here can be partly perceived by recognizing the equivocal use of the term *ritual* in relation to this source. It is common to call any description or prescription of a performance, such as the Day of Atonement legislation in Lev 16, a “ritual.” But it is clear that the written text is not a ritual *as a performance*. It is a written artifact that describes or, more particularly, prescribes a performance. Such a text contrasts with what most social scientists work with when they do ritual analysis. Generally or ideally they look at the performances of live subjects. It is true that they necessarily *write up* their data along the way, and we their audience ultimately *read* their analyses. But this textualization is secondary.⁴

Calling a text that describes or prescribes ritual performance a “ritual” is akin to calling a piece of paper with staves, black dots, and tails “music,” or a booklet with character names and what they are to say along with stage instruction a “play,” or a verbal description of events of an earlier age a “history.”⁵ More accurately music and plays are what is performed before audiences, and history is the actual events that transpired in time. Written music, scripts, and histories are thus phenomenologically different from the actual performances or events. Our use of the terms for the notated versions is the result of the tropological operation of language, applying a term to something that is associated with it.⁶

4. While ethnographers and sociologists study directly the activity of groups, they at times extend their analysis to data as found in texts, and this includes the Bible. One thinks of Mary Douglas’s *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966), and Edmund Leach’s analysis of Lev 8–9 in his *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols Are Connected, an Introduction to the Use of Structuralist Analysis in Social Anthropology* (Themes in the Social Sciences; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 81–93.

5. To some degree “history” stands apart from “play” and “music” in that one does not perform history from the written product—it is not a script or set of directions. But written “history” relates to written ritual insofar as the latter is a description of ritual as opposed to a prescription.

6. “Ritual” as a text operates as a metonym of “ritual” as performance. With this said, I am not trying to make a historical-linguistic statement about the development of the meaning of the term *ritual*.

The gap between written formulation and actual event can be seen in the creativity necessary for actualizing performance, to the extent that a text is viewed as prescriptive. Written music and a play's script, which are essentially of this genre, tell how a performance should proceed in some way. But they hardly provide enough information for full performance, especially in exceedingly truncated forms such as a jazz head chart, which generally gives only the melody and chord changes. Players, actors, conductors, and directors add interpretation and detail to create the actual performance, and this may involve intentional modifications or unintended infelicities. Similarly, written history is selective and constructed, so much so that theorists have likened it to the writing of fiction.⁷ Similar considerations apply to written ritual, especially in PH and other biblical prescriptions. These texts, even the most detailed of them, do not contain enough information for a reconstruction of performances.⁸

Accordingly, the distance of text, phenomenologically and practically, from actual performance is almost enough to thwart sociological analysis. Keeping this in mind, I suggest that as study brings theory to bear on texts it be forthright about how a textual database limits and skews analysis. Often the application of theory, because of its imperfect fit to the data source, must be tentative and be applied only incompletely and heuristically, to *suggest* how the text and its described phenomena may be understood. Sometimes the application of these methods to text will necessarily turn toward or blend with literary analysis. Along these lines, study can look for intersections between theory and what is otherwise garnered through the study of a text's structure, *Leitwörter*, gaps, tensions, contrasts, skewing of conventional ideas, plot development, description of characters, use of dialogue versus description, word choice, and so forth.

7. See Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); idem, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

8. The lack of detail that we find in PH may relate to the nature of its genre; i.e., as idealized prescription set in the past, it did not seek to fill in all particulars (see below). Nonetheless, prescriptions for actual ritual performances (e.g., Hittite, Akkadian, or Ugaritic ritual texts) often assume and depend on the background knowledge of performers. They prescribe only enough detail to activate this background knowledge. But this is exactly the problem with *real* prescriptive texts. The more they seek to prescribe actual practice, the less detail they may contain, rendering them almost impenetrable in terms of sociological analysis.

The loose fit between theory and what a text happens to tell us also means that only part of a theoretical approach or construct might be applicable. For example, it is possible to study the phenomenon or idea of ritually induced liminality as a feature or motif isolated from the more complex ritual phenomenon of *rites de passage*. This extracted motif may then be studied in different sorts of ritual texts in the Bible, even those that do not strictly feature transition rites, such as the sacrifice of Cain and Abel in Gen 4, the festivals of Deut 16, individual laments in the Psalms, or the descriptions of socially integrating and ostracizing behaviors in Job 29–30.⁹ This allows for the application of theoretical perspectives to diverse biblical texts even though we lack a sufficient database or complete descriptions for certain ritual types.¹⁰ In these cases, extracting or modulating aspects of theoretical approaches and application to biblical ritual texts becomes more the study of a literary motif in the text than of real world social phenomena. The application of theory in this way requires and allows for a certain amount of intellectual play to see how theory might be applied to text.¹¹ In any case, as noted before, the approach is heuristic and speculative, seeking elucidation rather than definitive sociological analysis.

GENRE AND THE PRIESTLY-HOLINESS WRITINGS

A further complicating factor in using biblical texts for ritual analysis is the diverse range of genres in which ritual phenomena are featured and

9. The last example is an indication of the breadth of activity that may be analyzed as ritual. See n. 2 above. The ritual features in Job 29–30 include Job's sitting with people around him, their acting in a deferential manner by keeping silent or praising him (29:2, 5, 7–11, 13, 21, 25), and the reversal of Job's status to the bottom of the social order, pursued, and not allowed to sit among the people he once counseled (30:1, 10, 12).

10. While we have some notable examples of transition rites, such as the priestly consecration in Lev 8–9, the Bible generally describes only in passing ritual activities performed at the primary events in life. For example, nowhere in the Bible is a marriage described in enough detail for sociological analysis, even in the rather elaborate but folkloric stories about Jacob's marriages in Gen 29.

11. In my course on ritual I have students write four short papers, each of which involves taking a particular theory or theoretical motif found in Bell's two books (*Ritual Theory*, cited in n. 2 above, and her *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997]) and applying it to a biblical or Near Eastern text. This exercise seeks to cultivate analytic dexterity.

the different ideologies associated with these genres. As noted already, while modern sociological and anthropological analysis at times involves textualization of data, it tries to represent data accurately and objectively for the purpose of analysis.¹² The Bible's various genres by and large pursue goals that color or skew the portrayal of reality. Just as historians have difficulty in reconstructing biblical and Israelite history on the basis of so-called historiographic texts in the Bible, so those who study ritual should expect difficulty in applying social theory to or constructing it from ritual texts in the Bible.¹³ Historians have learned to read between textual lines for their reconstructions; so too analysts must read ritual texts with critical sophistication. This complicates a social-theoretical analysis of those texts, which additionally has to concern itself with manifest and latent meanings of ritual performances apart from the obstacles of genre.¹⁴

As for the Priestly-Holiness writings in particular, the corpus has generally been understood to encode actual cultic practice at some particular point in Israelite or Jewish history or directly prescribe practice that is to be performed. This may misapprehend the genre. There are a number of indications that the portrayals of ritual in PH are academic abstractions or idealizations that significantly transcend practice.

The clearest mark of the artificial nature of PH's representation of ritual is the work's formulation as a piece of pseudography or perhaps, better, *pseudoarchaeography*.¹⁵ Written much later than the events described,

12. I immediately stipulate here that even the most objective sociological data are colored, if only unintentionally, by the perspectives and choices that come into play in creating instruments of data gathering and otherwise describing data for analysis.

13. For biblical historiography, see Marc Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (London: Routledge, 1995), and the discussion and references there.

14. Manifest, explicit, or surface meaning is that which performers (or writers) give to ritual action; latent, implicit, or submerged meaning is that determined through scholarly analysis. See David Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* (SBLDS 101; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 3; Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings* (London: Routledge, 1975).

15. *Pseudography* or *pseudonymy* are not the best descriptions for PH because the text does not directly represent Moses as the writer and speaker of the whole. The speakers are an omniscient and anonymous narrator and incidentally the deity. The material represented as divine speech may be labeled *theonymy*. See Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 34 n. 22 and pp. 47–48; idem, "The Hermeneutics of Innovation: The Impact of Centralization upon the Structure, Sequence, and Reformulation of Legal Material in Deuteronomy" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1991), 157–61;

PH constructed an embroidered history by hermeneutically transforming sources, creatively filling in gaps, and inventing events and details. In doing this, the writers no doubt built on the customs prevailing at the time of their writing. But any such encoding of practice required adaptation to the simpler social world of the conceited past. In other words, the ritual performances are not directly those of seventh-, sixth-, or fifth-century Judah or Yehud (on the date of PH, see below). Yet the representation of ritual in PH likely goes beyond such a simple compositional operation of adapting the present to the past. Writing about the past would have been an adroit strategy for reforming ritual practice. The description of archetypical practice set down through divine revelation at the beginning of the nation's history could be used to contest contemporary customs that the writers perceived to be imperfect and compromised. This literary tactic, of course, had a shortcoming: the prescriptions given to the people in the wilderness could not simply be put into practice in the time and context of the writers. They would need to be adapted to the current social and institutional conditions of the time. This no doubt would have been a task that the PH writers and their heirs would have gladly taken on.¹⁶

The extent of pseudoarchaeographic contextualization of ritual in PH can be partly gauged by going through any given text and highlighting the elements that situate ritual performance in the wilderness context. These include architectural features of the sanctuary (its rooms, court, furniture) as well as the cast of ancient players (Aaron, his sons, or the

David Wright, *Inventing God's Law: How the Covenant Code of the Bible Used and Revised the Laws of Hammurabi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 472 n. 7, 292, 350.

16. In any case the prescriptions lack the details necessary for performance (see the first section of this paper). Some scholars have argued that the lack of prescription (or description) of a particular practice means that it was not performed, e.g., the recitation of prayer in sacrifice (Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995], 148–52), or that a lack of explanation in the prescriptions means that the rituals do not carry substantial symbolic meaning (see, e.g., William Gilders, “Blood as Purificant in Priestly Torah: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?” in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible* [ed. Baruch Schwartz et al.; New York: T&T Clark, 2008], 77–83; idem, *Blood Ritual*. Gilders's orientation stands in distinction to that of, for example, Klavans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple*). See n. 37 below. (For *analogical* meaning in ritual, see David Wright, “Blown Away Like a Bramble: The Dynamics of Analogy in Psalm 58,” *RB* 102 [1996]: 213–36, and the earlier papers cited there on p. 214 n. 1.)

general offices of priest as the main player in the sacrificial, purity, and festival rules without mention of a more complex and developed temple hierarchy).¹⁷ These features pervade the prescriptions and descriptions and cannot be removed or translated into later analogues to render what might be confidently imagined as real ritual performances of the times of the writers. In fact, these elements are indications that the prescriptions have been expressly written for the narrative. In other words, they may not be based, for example, on preexisting individual temple instruction documents (*tôrôt*) that prescribed or described actual practice.¹⁸

In addition to these general historiographic and contextual considerations, several specific ritual and related legal passages in PH lay out highly idealized, utopian, and impractical practices. These include, for example, H's seventh-year and Jubilee laws in Lev 25 and the Levitical city and homicide-asylum laws of Num 35. That these laws are rather theoretical is underscored by the fact that they *rewrite* earlier seventh-year, debt-slave, and homicide legislation from the Covenant Code and Deuteronomy. As such they are academic scribal productions.¹⁹ As H reconceived these laws, it filtered them through its interests in sabbatical observance and maintenance of the purity of the land. This gave H's versions of these laws a more pronounced ritualized character than the counterparts in its sources.²⁰ The seventh-year and Jubilee laws were formulated into a

17. On the materials about the Levites as an addition by H, see later in this essay.

18. The study of the Ugaritic corpus, for example, shows that description of ritual in narrative deviates substantially from ritual of actual performance (see Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 223–29). A narrative context allows authors to modify practice and custom to serve the larger goals of story. Ritual description in PH may therefore be markedly different from actual practice owing to the requirements of telling a story.

19. See Wright, “‘She Shall Not Go Free as Male Slaves Do’: Developing Views About Slavery and Gender in the Laws of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Beyond Slavery: Overcoming Its Religious and Sexual Legacies* (ed. Bernadette Brooten and Jill Hazelton; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 125–42; Bernard Levinson, “The Manumission of Hermeneutics: The Slave Laws of the Pentateuch as a Challenge to Contemporary Pentateuchal Theory,” in *Congress Volume Leiden 2004* (ed. André Lemaire; VTSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 281–324; Jeffrey Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah* (FAT 52; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 282–302.

20. The various source laws in the Covenant Code and Deuteronomy do have ritualized features. For example, the seven-year pattern of debt and slave release reflects a sacral rhythm (see Wright *Inventing*, 127–28). The adjudication of homicide in the Covenant Code takes place at a sanctuary (Wright, *Inventing*, 158). But H imbues the various laws with a national-geographical theology. Therefore, Bell's theoretical per-

system of embedded or concentric cycles of seventh-period rest (seventh day, seventh year, seven groups of seven years), based on a cosmic pattern of divine rest set down in the preface to PH (Gen 1:1–2:4a). The homicide-asylum law, more than its sources, worked out a system of how the killing of humans polluted the land. This was implicitly connected to history's primordium (cf. Gen 9:3–6 and bloodshed as the reason for the flood indicated by P's keyword *hāmās*, 6:11, 13; see also Lev 17) as well as to the national cultus, whose high priest provided a mechanism for expiation through his death. Both laws are ultimately concerned with the people living in the land. Ignoring these rules becomes the basis, implicitly if not explicitly, for expulsion from it (Lev 26:34–35, 43; Num 35:33–34; and see Lev 18:24–30; 20:22–24).

Idealization also appears in the sacrificial laws, which primarily belong to P with some updating by H.²¹ These laws appear to have expanded and systematized a simpler sacrificial system that obtained toward the end of the First Temple period.²² If basic prescriptions in P were created not

spective, which sees degrees of ritualization along a spectrum of related action rather than a simple dichotomy between ritual and nonritual action (see n. 2), helps to clarify how H has intensified the ritual aspects of the laws that it took over. The death of the high priest in Num 35 as a mechanism of atonement shows just how far H is willing to go in its ritualization of previous legal practice. For Deuteronomy's ritualization of homicide law in other respects, see Deut 21 (and David Wright, "Deuteronomy 21:1–9 as a Rite of Elimination," *CBQ* 49 [1987]: 387–403). For H's interest in Sabbath issues, see Knohl, *Sanctuary*, 8–45.

21. For example, H is responsible for the *ḥaṭṭā't* prescriptions in Num 15:17–31 (see Knohl, *Sanctuary*, 53, 105), which expands P's basic legislation in Lev 4 and 16.

22. A number of scholars have come to a similar conclusion. For a recent discussion, see James Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric in Leviticus: From Sacrifice to Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 66–67. Watts argues that the rhetoric of P's sacrificial laws is such as to mark the *ḥaṭṭā't* as a particular innovation. For other works on the history of sacrifice, see Rolf Rendtorff, *Studien zur Geschichte des Opfers im alten Israel* (WMANT 24; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1967); Baruch A. Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord* (SJLA 5; Leiden: Brill, 1974); Bernd Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen: Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschrift und der Wurzel KPR im alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (WMANT 55; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1982); Gary Anderson, *Sacrifices and Offerings in Ancient Israel: Studies in their Social and Political Importance* (HSM 41; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); Wolfgang Zwickel, *Räucher kult und Räuchergeräte: Exegetische und archäologische Studien zu Räucheropfer im Alten Testament* (OBO 97; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990); Ina Willi-Plein, *Opfer und Kult im alttestamentlichen Israel: Textbefragungen und Zwischenergebnisse* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 153;

long after Deuteronomy's basic laws, as I will later suggest, it is therefore remarkable that P's sacrificial laws are significantly different from those in Deuteronomy. P gives extensive prescriptions about two sacrifices not mentioned at all in Deuteronomy: the *ḥaṭṭā't* ("sin" or "purgation" offering) and the *'āšām* ("guilt" or "reparation" offering). The omission of these in Deuteronomy does not seem to be merely a matter of divergent interests or emphases. Deuteronomy in various other passages is interested in sin, purification, purity in sacrificial practice, and even *kippûr*. It is also interested in sacrifices that individuals bring to the central sanctuary. P's *ḥaṭṭā't* would be a preeminent example of such. We would expect a mention of this sacrifice if it were a standard performance.²³

What P has apparently done in developing its system is to have blended various rites of purification in which animals and their blood were used for purification with an earlier more limited system of sacrifice consisting mainly of the *zebah* (P's *zebah šēlāmîm*) and *'ōlā*. This created the *ḥaṭṭā't* proper, as prescribed in Lev 4 and 16, where an animal is slaughtered as a sacrifice and its blood is daubed or sprinkled to purify various sancta. P's assimilation of other animal-blood purification rites, however, was only partial. The rites of the red cow in Num 19 and the dispatch of the (live) scapegoat on the Day of Atonement are both labeled with the term *ḥaṭṭā't* (Num 19:9; Lev 16:5), but they are not performed like the "standard" slaughtered version.²⁴ A blood purification rite that P brought into

Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1993); Ulrike Dahm, *Opferkult und Priestertum in Alt-Israel: Ein kultur- und religionswissenschaftlicher Beitrag* (BZAW 327; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003). For a collection of essays with helpful bibliography, see Adrian Schenker, ed., *Studien zu Opfer und Kult im Alten Testament (mit einer Bibliographie 1969–1991 zum Opfer in der Bibel)* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992). See also the works mentioned in n. 1 above.

23. Deuteronomy would further be interested in the *ḥaṭṭā't* as found in P because it purifies the sanctuary, and the sanctuary is at the heart of Deuteronomy's laws. Deuteronomy is elsewhere interested in the issue of *kippûr* (Deut 21:8), though in a non-sacrificial context. Hosea 4:8 sounds like Lev 10:17 and may attest to a sacrifice with proto-*ḥaṭṭā't* characteristics. But the Hosea verse is cryptic and may not refer to the *ḥaṭṭā't* as it is found in PH. Moreover, the Hosea passage refers to a northern (not Jerusalemite) practice. The alternative to this reconstruction would be to argue that the *ḥaṭṭā't* was in place in the Jerusalem temple in the seventh century, and that Deuteronomy expunged it. In that case, Deuteronomy represents a radical reformulation of sacrificial custom.

24. The Day of Atonement rite blends two distinct aspects of *ḥaṭṭā't* performances: animals sacrificed for purification blood and an animal on which sins are placed and

its system of purification but not into the *ḥaṭṭā't* system was the bird used for purifying from the impurity of *šāra'at* (Lev 14:4–7, 49–53; interestingly this achieves *kippûr* outside the context of sacrifice according to 14:53).²⁵ In short, P may not be giving us a transcript of practices of the First Temple period, but instituting substantial innovations.²⁶

In addition to content, legal abstraction is visible in the literary *structure* of the legislation in PH. While the corpus includes laws that are, relatively speaking, briefly formulated (such as in the miscellany of Lev 19), it more often presents detailed legislation on a particular topic, which lists a series of subcases arising from variables. The corpus formulates such groups of laws in a coherent fashion, such as cases of descending or ascending weightiness (as in the *ḥaṭṭā't* legislation of Lev 4 or the Jubilee legislation of Lev 25) or chiasmic formulation (as in the sexual impurities laws of Lev 15). This detail and rationality reflect a preoccupation with legislation that appears to go beyond reproducing everyday practice. It may arise from an abstract process of thinking about and intellectualizing matters of law and ritual, and systematically working out implications and the expansion toward a fuller system.²⁷

A final and important matter to consider is how PH operates as ideological literature—how it responds to events and ideas—in its local social and international context. This certainly is not easy to describe because of the difficulty in dating the corpus and its individual components. Different datings will lead to different assessments in this regard. For me, the network of innerbiblical textual relationships (including those of Ezekiel, Deuteronomy, the Covenant Code, and pentateuchal narratives) indicates

which is dispatched alive. The former facilitated the assimilation of the scapegoat to the *ḥaṭṭā't* system, to provide phenomenological symmetry in the people's offering, including the reference to *kippûr* in 14:53.

25. The introduction to the pericope on the leprous house (Lev 14:33–53) manifests H phraseology (cf. Knohl, *Sanctuary*, 95 n. 119). This raises suspicion that the whole pericope is an H composition.

26. Idealization is evident in other P prescriptions. For example, while the symptomatology of *šāra'at* appears to be based in some pathological reality, some of the features of the disease(s) appear to be abstractions, particularly a conflation of symptoms from different discrete conditions. See David Wright and Richard Jones, "Leprosy," *ABD* 4:277–82.

27. For the issue of system in the legislation of PH, see David P. Wright, Baruch Schwartz, Jeffrey Stackert, and Naphtali S. Meshel, "Introduction," in Schwartz et al., *Perspectives on Purity*, 1–5.

PH began to be formulated during Neo-Babylonian domination of Judah, at the very end of the seventh century on into the exile of the sixth century, with continued expansion into the exilic and postexilic periods. Thus the beginnings of the PH corpus—and I am trying to be quite open-ended here—may respond to Neo-Babylonian oppression generally and not specifically the loss of temple and kingship, though the catastrophe of 586 B.C.E. must have been a significant catalyst in the development of the corpus.²⁸

In this context PH can be viewed as articulating a theology of divine presence in the cult and specifically prescribing the mechanics as to how to maintain that divine presence.²⁹ Babylonian practices and ideas may have been influential.³⁰ P's picture of history that moves from creation to the establishment of the cult (the P material from Gen 1 to Lev 16) fits the pattern and rationale of creation in Mesopotamian texts such as *Enuma Elish* and *Atrahasis*.³¹ The system of *kippûr* in the cult has similarities with Babylonian *kuppuru* rites.³² "Freedom" (*dêrôr*) granted in the Jubilee Year echoes the freedom (*andurâru*) instituted by Mesopotamian kings. That PH would take motifs from the imperial culture and use them to its own ends is consistent with what we find in earlier biblical legal texts. Deuteronomy transforms Assyrian treaty to create obligations of loyalty to Yhwh

28. For a discussion of the chronology, see the appendix at the end of this essay.

29. Benjamin Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), discusses how three different theologies competed with one another around 600 B.C.E. (Deuteronomistic name theology, Zion-Sabaoth theology, and Priestly theology of divine presence). I would stress the international factor in the development of these theologies. They did not simply grow up in a closed world of local competition, but each is an ideological reaction whose goal was the security of the Judean state in the face of imperial pressure.

30. Postcolonial perspectives can be used with caution to elucidate the development of pentateuchal and other biblical literature under the influence of foreign hegemony in the Assyrian and Babylonian periods. See William Morrow, "Resistance and Hybridity in Late Bronze Age Canaan," *RB* 115 (2008): 321–39; idem, "'To Set the Name' in the Deuteronomistic Centralization Formula," *JSS* 55 (2010): 365–83. On Babylonian influence, see Kenton Sparks, "*Enûma Elish* and Priestly Mimesis: Elite Emulation in Nascent Judaism," *JBL* 126 (2007): 625–48.

31. See Wright, *Inventing*, 358–59, 509 n. 31.

32. See Wright, *Disposal*, 291–99; and for a recent discussion of *kippûr* in the Bible, see Jay Sklar, "Sin and Impurity: Atoned or Purified? Yes!" in Schwartz et al., *Perspectives*, 18–31 (see also his *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement*). *Kippûr* in PH is not simply a borrowing from Mesopotamian practice, but its semantic complexity may indicate a convergence of meanings from a native lexeme impacted by foreign idiom.

and to partly construct curses for violation (Deut 13 and 28).³³ The Covenant Code, according to my analysis, used the Laws of Hammurabi as a source and model for its laws with the notable replacement of the Israelite deity for the Mesopotamian lawgiver.³⁴

The larger point that I seek to make here is that the sociocultural world in which PH was created, whatever that may have been, has to be considered as a factor in its formulation. The corpus has been written in dialogue with that environment and in reaction to it. As such it is probably not merely descriptive but prescriptive in the larger ideological sense in that it seeks to shape opinion and motivate response. As a programmatic text, therefore, whatever material it took up from authentic custom it repackaged and expanded in the service of present exigencies.

The foregoing considerations demonstrate in various ways how distant PH's ritual descriptions are from actual practice. Theoretical approaches brought in from anthropology and sociology must be adjusted accordingly to account for this particular and even peculiar object of study. I mention a few possible directions for research here. One modification is to adapt approaches to literary analysis, already recommended earlier. In terms of the issues raised in the present section of the paper, one may go beyond the study of individual pericopae and examine *ritual in the narrative context of PH*.³⁵ This would examine the dynamic relationship of the various pericopae to one another, how they operate in the formulation of the plot development, and how one passage affects the meaning and interpretation of another. A specific point of analysis could be to examine the interplay and concatenation of prescriptions and descriptions of felicitous ritual—cases where ritual is portrayed as proceeding properly—versus cases of infelicitous ritual.³⁶ The latter include stories about the unauthorized fire offered by Aaron's sons (Lev 10), blasphemy (Lev 24), gathering wood on the Sabbath (Num 15), and Korah's incense offering (Num 16–17). One could scrutinize how ritual is portrayed across the whole of PH, from creation that anticipates the Sabbath (which becomes a focus of H in particular), through the primeval and patriarchal history

33. See Wright, *Inventing*, 103–4, 397 n. 116 (with bibliography).

34. Wright, *Inventing*, 287–300, 346–52.

35. See Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, esp. the summary in 223–29.

36. See Ronald Grimes, "Infelicitous Performances and Ritual Criticism," in *Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 191–209; Wright, *Ritual in Narrative*, 98–138.

where only noncultic ritual prevails (the prohibition against blood ingestion and command to circumcise), to the eventual inauguration of cultic worship under Moses, the fulfillment of creation. This would throw light on the meaning of any given ritual phenomenon by contextualizing it in the whole. For example, the meaning of sacrifice, even its core symbolic import, may be visible only by considering when and how it appears in PH's larger story of human history.³⁷

Another approach would be to look at PH in terms of models and theories of *ritual change*.³⁸ The foregoing discussion has given examples of such in PH's rewriting of laws on debt release and homicide and its expansion of the scope of sacrificial practice. Sociological and anthropological study demonstrates that ritual adapts to fit the needs and the world of its practitioners. This is especially to be expected when it is recognized that ritual is a means of forming relationships between groups and individuals.³⁹ As those relationships and conditions evolve, so does ritual. Even though a ritual performance may be studied synchronically, a clearer view of its rationale and logic may be gained by studying the diachronic dimension, much as when studying the historical development of a language. Models of ritual change from sociology and anthropology can help to constructively complicate a more straightforward historical analysis of the practices and institutions described in these texts. They can advantageously draw attention to how events, such as domination by foreign powers, the loss of temple and kingship, and battles between local groups seeking power, led to modifications in ritual practice.

37. This would provide added dimension to the current debate about whether ritual has meaning, symbolic or otherwise (see n. 16; note the resistance to finding meaning in ritual by Fritz Staal, *Rules without Meaning: Ritual, Mantras and the Human Sciences* [New York: Lang, 1989], 115–40; idem, “The Meaninglessness of Ritual,” *Numen* 26 [1975]: 2–22; see also Gane, *Cult and Character*, 4–6). If ritual has meaning in its narrative, then it is governed by methods of literary study as much as by methods of strict sociological or ritual theory. Of course, one could say that ritual has meaning in its narrative, but lacks meaning when it is actually performed, a compromise that would interestingly complicate the reading of ritual in PH.

38. See Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 210–52, a chapter entitled “Ritual Change” (also see pp. 172, 263–64). See also Clifford Geertz, “Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 142–69.

39. This is a fundamental feature of ritual in Bell's theoretical model (*Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*).

Still another approach, which combines literary and diachronic outlooks, is to study *ritual literature as ritual*. For example, the priestly consecration rite in Lev 8–9 can be examined as a rite of transition in terms of how social hierarchy and relationships are reflected, how binary schemes are deployed, how bodies experience ritual, the employment of action versus speech, practice theory, semiotic analysis, the use and meaning of cultural symbols, the linking together of ritual elements to form a “syntactic” whole, and the degree of ritualization of such elements. These modes of inquiry can be complemented by what the legislation seeks to achieve in its generative historical context. The rite from this perspective does not just speak about the installation of individual priests in antiquity, but seeks to elevate the whole category of priesthood to a new status in society in the age when the text was written.⁴⁰ The synchronic individual-social function of the rite as a rite is thus nested in the operation of a larger contextual diachronic national-political function of the narrative context. Though this priestly consecration never occurred in actual history, as far as critical scholarship is concerned, the story presented as real history imbues the recipient groups with all of the powers and privileges as if the rite was actually performed. It creates and defines power relationships between groups and individuals. Thus the report of a ritual performed can be as effective as actually performing or witnessing the ritual, even if the report is a fiction. This is the particular sociological impact of ritual description or prescription in pseudepigraphic literature broadly.

REDACTIONAL STRATA IN THE PRIESTLY-HOLINESS WRITINGS

While in the foregoing discussion at times I pointed out differences between P and H, I proceeded in large part in view of PH as a whole over against other books and corpora in the Bible. The application of social-theoretical approaches to PH, however, must on a more detailed level take

40. I stress that this is not necessarily a reflection of a postexilic institutional reality (see the appendix, point 9, below). The priestly power play as reflected in PH is relative to the institutions of the period in which P and H were created, even in an age with a puppet king under Neo-Babylonian power or soon thereafter, even as there might have been hope for a reestablished Davidic dynasty. Sight should never be lost of the pseudoarchaeographic context for PH, where a king did not exist and primary leadership would naturally have fallen to priests, servitors in the cultus that symbolized and concretized the nation's relationship to its deity.

into consideration the differences between P and H as well as subdivisions of these literary strata, as a particular critical analysis may suggest. Even though H is an addition to a basic P narrative, includes legislation about sacrifice and purity, and is sympathetic to that source, it develops it in new directions and introduces new concerns.⁴¹ While it is possible for certain analytic purposes to approach the text as a conceptual unity, to rigidly hold to a holistic approach ignores a chief feature of the text and may even skew analysis. The text contains multiple voices that must be considered. Successive contributors to the corpus probably did not simply assent to everything in their sources, but sought to revise them, either by expansion or rewriting. This would have been a reason why later writers would have taken up the pen in the first place.

For example, an analysis of the Day of Atonement ritual must distinguish between the rite as prescribed in P in Lev 16:1–28 and the addendum of H in 16:29–34, as well as recognize the additions made by H to the Day of Atonement regulations in a basic P calendar in Lev 23:26–32.⁴² As Knohl has shown, H has taken an ad hoc sanctuary purification rite and merged it with an annual fast observance on the tenth day of the seventh month to produce the Day of Atonement performance as we know it in the final form of the text. The blending of these two performances thus gave each a new meaning. The sanctuary purification, which sought quite mechanically through priestly performance to remove the impurity of a variety of sins and impure situations, was now accompanied by ritual behavior on the part of the nation as a whole that sought to obtain the notice and sympathetic response of the deity.⁴³ The purification of the

41. One of the difficulties in examining H over against P is that H will often speak of matters untouched by P. The temptation is to argue that an idea or ritual performance in H, unmentioned in P, is novel. Knohl's analysis of the distinctiveness of H's theology over against P has been criticized along these lines. On the fallacy of a negative proof (or argument from silence), see David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper, 1970), 47–48. He notes that "a simple statement that 'there is no evidence of X' means precisely what it says—no evidence." Then he adds: "The only correct empirical procedure is to find affirmative evidence of not-X—which is often difficult, but never in my experience impossible" (emphasis added). See n. 43 below.

42. See Knohl, *Sanctuary*, 13–14, 27–34. He sees three strata in Lev 23:26–32: P in vv. 26–28a⁺, early HS in vv. 28a^β–31, and later HS in v. 32.

43. For contextualization of H's prescription of abstention on the Day of Atonement as a feature of petitionary mourning, see Saul M. Olyan, *Biblical Mourning: Ritual*

sanctuary with *hattā't* blood and the dispatch of sins to the wilderness were matched by a performance that signaled and sought to generate a penitential spirit in community at large. The shift in the rite's demographic dimensionality from P to H is clearly an adaptation ripe for detailed socio-theoretical evaluation.

Another case of difference between P and H is in their cultic cadres. The Levites as auxiliary cultic functionaries, whose duties include guarding the sanctuary and transporting it when dismantled, is the major concern and contribution of H to the PH corpus.⁴⁴ The Levites appear in this capacity only in Numbers and, quite remarkably, outside P's primary cultic legislation in Exodus and Leviticus.⁴⁵ Because the procedures for the consecration of the priests and dedication of the Levites, in Lev 8 and Num 8, respectively, display some similar features, the latter may have been created in part to resonate with the former.⁴⁶ At the same time there are nota-

and Social Dimensions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 65–68. He notes that the motivation for such rites is “to convince Yhwh to reverse his negative judgment against them [i.e., the people] and restore their fortunes” (65). One of the difficulties with H's prescription is that it does not say explicitly whether self-denial is observed at home or at the sanctuary. (Joel 1:14, which Olyan discusses, places fasting at the sanctuary.) This is one of the points of silence in H (see n. 41) that may be of significance. Indirect *positive* evidence that the people are at home includes the requirement to practice self-denial overnight (Lev 23:32) and to avoid work “in all your settlements” (v. 31) which is comparable to the requirement of Sabbath rest, presumably observed at home (v. 3; note also that H uses the special term for sabbatical rest, *šabbātôn*, for the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement, vv. 3, 24, 32).

44. On the Levitical texts in Numbers belonging possibly to a late stratum in H, see n. 28 above. For some recent studies about the Levites and the priesthood, see Dahm, *Opferkult*; Deborah Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (Oxford Theological Monographs; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Risto Nurmela, *The Levites: Their Emergence as a Second-Class Priesthood* (South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 193; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); Richard Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993).

45. The Levites appear specifically in Numbers in the census of ch. 1 in the appendix there (vv. 47–54), the camp layout in ch. 2, the Levitical census in ch. 3, the Levitical duties in ch. 4, the setting apart of the Levites in ch. 8, the march of the camp in ch. 10, the rebellion of Korah and Levites and its aftermath in chs. 16–17, and Levitical dues in ch. 18. Within P, the Levites offer ad hoc cultic aid in Lev 10:4 (see n. 49 below), and in H¹ (see the appendix, below) Levitical cities appear in Lev 25:32–33.

46. Both groups are “taken” (*lāqah*; Lev 8:2; Num 8:6); both are “brought near” the sanctuary or specifically its door (*hiqrib*; Lev 8:6, 13, Aaron and sons distinguished;

ble differences in the two rites, which divulge their distinct goals.⁴⁷ The main difference is in the resulting status of the two groups. The priests are consecrated, made holy. This is achieved by a combination of rites, including investiture in priestly robes, anointing with oil, and application of consecration offering blood to their bodies. The Levites, by contrast, are not described as being sanctified. Even though the Levites are a replacement for the firstborn of the Israelites, whom God, as the text says, *consecrated* to himself upon the exodus, and even though their dedication rite is the metaphorical extension of sacrificial procedure, they are never called holy in H (or PH).⁴⁸

Num 8:9); the congregation (*‘ēdā*) is gathered (*hiqhīl*) to witness or participate (Lev 8:3–4; Num 8:9–10); both groups are purified, though in different ways (laver washing versus sprinkling, shaving, laundering; Lev 8:6; Num 8:6–7); both undergo a procedure through which they are ritually set apart (Lev 8:5–9, 12, 22–25, 30: investiture, application of oil, application of oil and blood to extremities; Num 8:10, 11, 15: being offered metaphorically with sacrificial gestures; see n. 48); both rites include elevation (*tēnūpā*) performances (though performed on different ritual patients); sacrifices are offered on both occasions (Lev 8:2, 13–17, 18–21, 22–29: a *ḥaṭṭā’t*, *‘ōlá*, and *millū’im*; Num 8:8, 12: an *‘ōlá* and *ḥaṭṭā’t*).

47. The Levites’ dedication is much less complex than the priestly consecration in respect to the sacrifices offered and the rites performed to achieve dedication. Part of the complexity in the priestly consecration is the separate treatment of Aaron versus his sons. In other words, the priestly rite gives attention to priestly hierarchy, whereas the Levites’ rite does not distinguish, for example, between the Levitical ancestral houses (see the implicit hierarchy in Num 3–4). The priestly rite also continues for a week, and the dedication rite is apparently repeated every day over the course of this week (Lev 8:34). It actually concludes with the eighth-day ceremony described in Lev 9. This includes the people’s participation in the sacrificial activity and culminates in their being blessed and the issue of divine fire that consumes the sacrifices.

48. The Levites receive hand placement like sacrifices, and they are elevated like sacrificial materials. The rite performed on them, however, only “separates” them (*hibdīl*; Num 8:14) and they are “given,” and even labeled as *nētūnīm* “those dedicated/given” (8:16, 19). They are further characterized as subservient to Aaron and his sons in their being stood before Aaron and his sons (8:13), by their being given by God to Aaron and his sons to do their labor (8:19), and by Aaron himself performing an elevation rite on them (8:11, 21; I am leaving aside here the possibility that the description of Aaron’s elevation rite and associated verses are an addition). The Levites’ subordination to the priests is otherwise found in the wilderness camp arrangement and in the duties of the Levites to guard the outer borders of the sanctuary, while the priests officiate inside the sanctuary precincts.

While various anthropological and sociological perspectives can be used to elucidate the inner logic of the priestly consecration and Levitical dedication as self-contained entities, the ideological and historical dimension must also be considered. The book of Ezekiel attests to a power struggle between Levites in general and the specific priestly class, the Zadokites (Ezek 44:9–17). Only the latter were to function as priests, while the Levites were to become subordinate servants. The rites for the two classes in P augmented with H recast this distinction as being set down at the nation's birth. The procedures are described as events that occurred in the past. What for Ezekiel was a matter of ad hoc ritual change due to recent circumstances was re-presented as a distinction based on foundational revelation of ritual procedure.⁴⁹ Again, this is an example of ritual literature as ritual operating in a context of ritual change.

CONCLUSION

In this essay I have not charted a definitive path for the application of socio-theoretical approaches and perspectives to the Priestly-Holiness writings or to other ritual texts in the Bible. Rather, I have highlighted the imperfect fit that exists between theory and the biblical text and have therefore suggested that a certain amount of creativity and artistry is required to bring the two together. Indeed, as an art the theoretical study of ritual texts will naturally be combined with techniques of literary analysis rather than proceed on strict socio-analytical lines. At the same time, an analysis should also consider a text's genre and history, including its relationship to other texts and the relationship of its internal strata. While these matters may be disputed by scholars, staking out a position or at least identifying possible positions in an analysis provides a real-world

49. It is not that P did not imagine a functional distinction between priests and Levites. That the Levites broadly are not a sanctified class is implied by the general silence of P about their status over against that of the priests. P also provides positive evidence of the distinction of the classes when it calls on Aaron's cousins—i.e., Levites—to remove the corpses of Aaron's sons on the culminating day of priestly consecration (Lev 10:4). They are chosen for the task because they have no cultic obligations as priests and may therefore become impure from handling corpses. The silence of H about any special Levitical obligations of purity, as it gives for priests in Lev 21–22, reinforces the picture of the nonholy status of the Levites. In addition, H's narrative about Korah and the Levite rebellion emphasizes the holiness of priests and the lack of that status for Levites (Num 16–17; see Knohl, *Sanctuary*, 73–85).

anchor, especially through points of contrast, to the study of the otherwise self-contained and ideal world presented by the text. All in all, what is recommended here is the pursuit of complex analysis where a variety of approaches are brought to bear simultaneously and where the approaches mutually inform one another.

APPENDIX: THE DATING OF PH

This is hardly the place to fully justify this chronology. In brief, however, the following considerations are starting points for me:

1. H supplements and expands—hence is *later than*—a foundational P text consisting of narrative with embedded legislation (Knohl, *Sanctuary*; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22* [AB 3A; New York: Doubleday, 2000], 1319–67; Stackert, *Rewriting*; Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch* [FAT 2/25; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007]).

2. P together with essentially all of H constituted an independent source prior to incorporation into the Pentateuch, which means that P and/or H are not tied to the later date of the Pentateuch's creation in the Persian period (see Baruch Schwartz, "The Priestly Account of the Theophany and Lawgiving at Sinai," in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran* [ed. Michael Fox et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996], 103–34; Ernest Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1998], 196–221; Jeffrey Stackert, "Review of Nihan, *From Priestly Torah*," *RBL* [September 2008]).

3. The general historical horizon of the redacted book of Ezekiel appears to be the second half of the sixth century during the era of return and rebuilding of the temple, and several core passages in the book (apart from chs. 40–48, which are clearly late in the book's redactional history) reflect knowledge not only of Holiness Code texts as many have recognized (see the convenient list and discussion in Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1* [trans. Ronald E. Clements; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 48–52), but also some P texts and ideas, including narrative elements (e.g., Ezek 14:13 reflects the *ʾāšām* legislation of Lev 5:21; Ezek 18:4 and 20 reflect P's use of the noun *nepes̄* with the verb *ʾsh* in Lev 4:2; 5:1, 17, 21; cf. 4:27; 5:15; Ezek 18:11 reflects P's use of the verb *ʾsh* plus the preposition *min* with reference to sin in Lev 4:2; cf. 4:22 and vv. 13, 27; 5:17, 22; the term "crimes" [*pēšā'im*] in Ezek 14:11; 18:22, 28, 30, 31; 21:29; 33:10, 12; 37:23, 24 [cf. 20:38] is a central term in P's Day of Atonement *ḥaṭṭā't* ritual

[Lev 16:16, 21]; the historical and highly idealized “narrative” in Ezek 20 reflects motifs of P in Exod 6). This evidence points to the existence of a version of PH by around the mid-sixth century. If the relevant passages in Ezekiel were created or largely revised in the second half of the sixth century, and not primarily the product of the persona Ezekiel in the first half of the century, then P may be dated to just after 586 and be a response to the events of that year, with H expansion beginning at the end of the exilic period. For attribution of Ezekiel’s contents to scribes working in the middle and latter half of the sixth century, see Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century b.c.e.* (SBLStBl 3; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 345–76. For Ezekiel’s correlations with PH, see Risa Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah* (JSOTSup 358; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Michael Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel’s Use of the Holiness Code* (LHBOTS 507; London: T&T Clark, 2009). Note the caution of David Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 301 n. 101.

4. H depends on the Covenant Code and hence postdates it (see point 7 and Wright, *Inventing*, 506–7 n. 19; Stackert, *Rewriting*).

5. H reflects dependence on the basic laws of Deuteronomy (datable to ± 620 B.C.E.) and hence postdates that corpus (see Stackert, *Rewriting*).

6. P’s narrative appears to build on the *narratives* of E and J (though it uses these more as *templates* than sources that are revised; see Wright, *Inventing*, 358–59; see also points 7 and 8; very provisionally, see Sean McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* [AnBib 50; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971]); also Michaela Bauks, “La signification de l’espace et du temps dans l’Historiographie Sacerdotale,” in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. Römer; BETL 147; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 30–31.

7. E (an independent documentary source) is the narrative in which the Covenant Code was written or at least expands a more limited narrative in which the code was situated (see Wright, *Inventing*, 332–45; Joel Baden, “Review of Wright, *Inventing God’s Law*,” *RBL* [July 2009]; I theoretically allow a broad window of 740–640 for the Covenant Code, but the date appears close to 700).

8. J (also an independent source) reacts to E’s narrative, yet has to be prior to Deuteronomy’s introductory materials (see Joel Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch* [FAT 68; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009]) and prior to P’s narrative (see point 6).

9. The sociological picture in PH (e.g., the ascendancy of priests), because of the document's pseudoarchaeographic contextualization, cannot be taken as decisive or straightforward evidence for the dating of PH, despite what I have said about PH's connection to its sociocultural world (see similar considerations with regard to the Covenant Code, Wright, *Inventing*, 97–98, 389 n. 36).

10. P's ritual prescriptions were created in connection with a larger narrative that gave them context.

Less clear to me at this point is how PH developed. I am working presently with a theoretical model of three main stages: (I) P, a narrative with embedded legislation, consisting of the material assigned in general analyses to P from Gen 1 through (approximately) Lev 16, including basic sacrificial, purity, and festival laws. This is a story of the nation's founding that begins with creation and runs through the erection of the sanctuary (see Wright, *Inventing*, 358–59, 509 n. 31; see also Nihan, *From Priestly Torah*). (II) An H legislative supplement (H¹) in Lev 17–26* (the “Holiness Code”). This provided a new conclusion to P, ending in blessings and curses (Lev 26). These chapters were roughly modeled on the pattern of Deut 12–28. (III) A further H supplement (H²) of some narrative and legislative materials, mainly in Lev 24 and 27, and the material of Numbers normally assigned to P and/or H, especially the passages on the Levites (see Knohl, *Sanctuary*, 71–85). Isolated H¹ and H² additions may be identified in the sections prior to their main contributions, and some P materials are identifiable (having been relocated?) in the H² section. It is also possible that some narrative elements in Numbers belong to P. In this very provisional outline of three main stages of PH, the P materials (especially some law passages, not yet contextualized in narrative) could have begun to arise in the Neo-Babylonian period before 586, but jelled as a narrative with contextualized law soon after the catastrophe of that year; the H¹ materials arose later in the exile (the book of Ezekiel would have been at home in this “school”; H¹ could be partly responsible for “finishing” P; cf. Exod 12:1–20, which is largely H in character but necessary for the P narrative to make sense); the H² materials were added in the second half of the sixth century B.C.E. or later (note, e.g., that the explanation of the cultic subordination of the Levites in Numbers [H²] appears to postdate that in Ezek 44, one of the latest chapters of the book of Ezekiel).