

Class 4c/5a

A Fundamental Sign: Exodus & the Passover Ritual



The Telling

Producing Cultural Memory

- Artists tap popular cultural memory by
 - Localizing the story
 - Identifying the characters
 - Characterizing their motives
 - Page layout or scene design

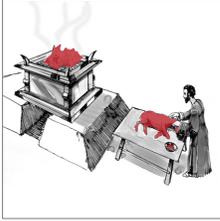


Exodus: Gods and Kings
(Dir. Ridley Scott, 2014)

The Telling

Ritual as Multimodal Site of Reconstruction

Passover was reconstructed in the temple ritual



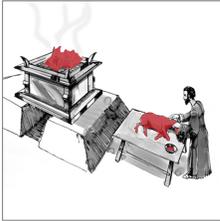
Passover is reconstructed in the canon (Exodus)



The Telling

Ritual as Multimodal Site of Reconstruction

How Passover was reconstructed in the temple



How Passover is reconstructed in Jewish ritual now



The Telling

Temple Ritual as Multimodal Site of Reconstruction

- Prayer and liturgies (more elaborate, common rituals)
- Sacrifices and related meals
- Instruction
- Prophecy
- Music
- Festivals and special celebrations
- Almsgiving and donations
- Taking and releasing of vows
- Reading of sacred lots (Urim and Thummim)

The Telling

Fixing Cultural Memory through ritual

- Freud's view of religious ritual
 - Obsessive acts of neurotic people intent on avoiding disaster through their actions

- Knight & Levine's view of what ritual does for people
 - hallows time and space
 - draws them closer to the divine
 - In a sacred space
 - By bringing the sacred into their daily lives
 - solidifies communal bonds
 - through a shared story
 - by resisting assimilation
 - by inviting participation
 - sanctifies their bodies

The Telling

Temple Ritual as Multimodal Site of Reconstruction



Babylonian World Map, British Museum



The Psalter Map, c. 1260, British Library
Additional Ms 28681, f3 recto

The Telling

Temple Ritual as Multimodal Site of Reconstruction



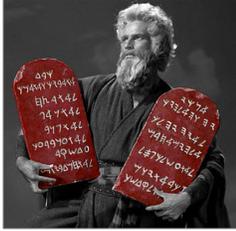
Hanns Rust, Mappa Mundi, 1480



Heinrich Bunting, 1501

Class 5a/b

A Second Sign: The Covenant



Outline

- Torah and *mikra* in modern Judaism
 - Definitions
 - Branches of Judaism and stance toward the "text"
 - Reform Judaism: Martin Buber on the Bible
- Exodus 19–20
 - Cultural context: Law codes in the ANE
 - Literary seams in Exodus: multiple authors
 - Other versions of the Ten Commandments
- Filming the Exodus and Covenant

Torah & *Mikra* in Modern Judaism

Definitions

- Torah
 - first five books of Bible (= Pentateuch in LXX)
 - teaching (practice as well as "doctrine")
 - written, but also oral
 - Rabbinic Judaism holds that Moses received more than Torah on Mount Sinai
 - He also "received" every future debate and discussion about Torah
 - a call more than a book
- *Mikra* – reading, seeking, calling out

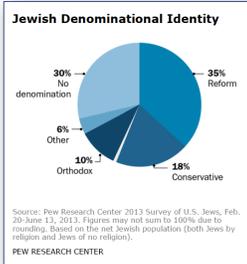
Torah & Mikra in Modern Judaism

Branches of Judaism & Stance toward the "Text"

- **Orthodox**
 - Torah from heaven
 - not literalist, though: oral Torah allows space for interpretation
 - reject biblical criticism

- **Conservative**
 - shares features of both reform and orthodox
 - eventually accepted biblical criticism

- **Reform**
 - accept biblical criticism
 - emphasize prophets rather than Torah



Pew Research Center, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans: Findings from a Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews," 1 October 2013, online, <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2013/10/jewish-americans-full-report-for-web.pdf>, accessed 17 October 2015.

Torah & Mikra in Modern Judaism

Martin Buber on the Bible

Do we mean a book? We mean the voice. Do we mean that people should learn to read it? We mean that people should learn to hear it. There is no other going back but the turning around that turns us about our own axis until we reach, not an earlier stretch of our path, but the path on which we can hear the voice! We want to go straight through the spoken-ness, to the being-spoken, of the word.



Martin Buber
1878-1965

Martin Buber, "People Today and the Jewish Bible," in Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation* (trans. L. Rosenzweig with E. Fox; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994; essay originally written 1926) 21.

Cultural Context of Exodus 19–20

Law Codes in the Ancient Near East

- 2100 BCE Ur-Nammu
- c. 1934-1924 BCE Lipit-Ishtar
- c. 1850 BCE Eshnunna
- c. 1792-1750 BCE Hammurabi
- 1650 BCE Hittite Laws
- <1100 BCE Middle Assyrian Laws
- c. 700 BCE Neo-Babylonian Laws



Exodus 19–20

Literary Seams in Exodus: Multiple Authors

¹⁶On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled. ¹⁷Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

¹⁸Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the LORD had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently. ¹⁹As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder. ²⁰When the LORD descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, the LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

What natural events accompany God's presence?

Are there any repetitions or contradictions?

What names are used for God?

Exodus 19–20

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ELOHIST
922-722 BCE
Scribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel

They use Elohim (אֱלֹהִים)—literally "the gods," but usually translated "God"

YAHWIST
1000-700 BCE
Scribes of the United, then the Southern, Kingdom of Judah

They use Yahweh (יהוה), translated "LORD" in most Bibles
