

TEL DAN IN ITS NORTHERN CULTIC CONTEXT



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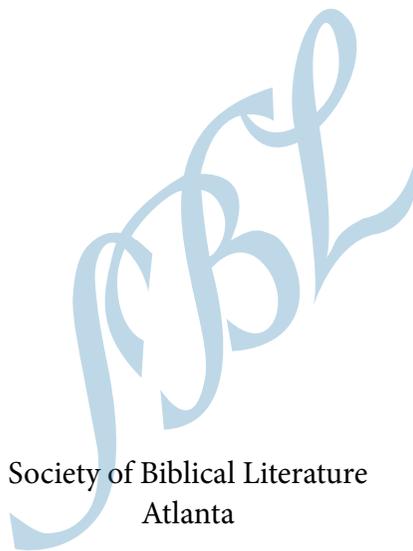
Archaeology and Biblical Studies

Tammi J. Schneider, Editor

SBL
Number 20

TEL DAN IN ITS NORTHERN CULTIC CONTEXT

Andrew R. Davis



Society of Biblical Literature
Atlanta

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Davis, Andrew R., 1978—

Tel Dan in its northern cultic context / Andrew R. Davis.

p. cm. — (Society of Biblical Literature archaeology and biblical studies ; number 20)

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-58983-928-1 (paper binding : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-58983-929-8 (electronic format) — ISBN 978-1-58983-930-4 (hardcover binding : alk. paper)

1. Dan (Extinct city) 2. Excavations (Archaeology)—Israel—Dan (Extinct city) 3. Cults—Israel—Dan (Extinct city) 4. Bible. Old Testament—Antiquities. 5. Bible. Old Testament—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 6. Israel—Antiquities. I. Society of Biblical Literature. II. Title.

DS110.D33D38 2013
933'.45—dc23

2013035353

Printed on acid-free, recycled paper conforming to
ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (R1997) and ISO 9706:1994
standards for paper permanence.



For Emily

JBL

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a pleasure to thank here the colleagues, teachers, institutions, and family who have supported my work on this book, which is a revision of the dissertation I completed at Johns Hopkins University in 2010. Let me begin by thanking Billie Jean Collins and Tammi Schneider for accepting this study for publication in the SBL Archaeology and Biblical Studies series. At Johns Hopkins I had the privilege to work with exceptional professors and classmates, and I am especially grateful for the mentorship of my advisor Theodore Lewis. At every stage of my graduate studies, I have benefited from his wisdom, insight, and encouragement. P. Kyle McCarter and Glenn Schwartz also counseled me on various aspects of my research, and in every instance their advice improved my approach and sharpened my focus. Together these mentors have saved me from numerous errors and lapses in judgment. Needless to say, those that remain are my responsibility alone. I also want to thank Barry Gittlen and Matthew Roller for their thoughtful questions and comments during my oral examination. Finally, I would like to recognize Richard Clifford, S.J., and John Kselman, S.S., who introduced me to biblical studies at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology and who remain treasured mentors.

I am grateful to the institutions that have sponsored my graduate work. First, the present project would not have been possible without the generous support of David Ilan, who, as director of the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology at the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, invited me to work with the material from Area T at Tel Dan. The academic year I spent working in Jerusalem became the foundation of this study, and I would like to thank Gila Cook, Rachel Ben-Dov, Dalia Pakman, Levana Tsfania, Yifat Thareani, and Malka HersHKovitz for their support and instruction. I am especially indebted to Ross Voss, the longtime supervisor of Area T, who generously shared his vast knowledge of the temple complex with me. I would also like to acknowledge the significant support of the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological

Research, where I was the recipient of a Samuel H. Kress Fellowship. The hospitality and collegiality of the Albright Institute and its director, Seymour Gitin, provided a first-rate environment for research. At Johns Hopkins I received financial support from several sponsors. In addition to a generous fellowship from the Department of Near Eastern Studies, I am grateful to have received the department's Iwry Fellowship and the Schaefer Research Award in Near Eastern Studies. My research was also sponsored by the Leonard and Helen R. Stulman Jewish Studies Research Grant and the J. Brien Key Graduate Student Assistance Fund, and I was honored to have received the Catholic Biblical Association Memorial Stipend for multiple years. Finally, I am grateful for the support of my colleagues at the Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry.

Throughout my life I have been blessed to have the love and support of a wonderful family. My parents, Peter and Mary Davis, were my first teachers and remain models of hard work and learning. The value they placed on education was formative in shaping my career goals, and their love and encouragement have made those goals seem achievable. I was also blessed to grow up with Catherine, Brendan, and Nicholas, whose care and humor continue to remind me that family is first. Throughout all of this process my wife, Emily, has been a constant source of love and friendship. Our life together with our sons Michael and Peter is my greatest joy and gives meaning to all other endeavors, including the present work. With immense love and gratitude I dedicate this book to her.



ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. Edited by D. N. Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABSA	<i>The Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
ÄgAbh	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJBA	<i>Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology</i>
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
ANEP	<i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954.
ANESS	Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AS	Assyriological Studies
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBSup	Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BKAT	Biblicher Kommentar, Altes Testament
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

CANE	<i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East</i> . Edited by J. Sasson. 4 vols. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004.
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
COS	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . Edited by W. W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002.
CSR	Contributions to the Study of Religion
EAEHL	<i>Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . Edited by M. Avi-Yonah. 4 vols. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1975–1978.
EI	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
EncJud	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> . 16 vols. Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1972.
EncRel	<i>The Encyclopaedia of Religion</i> . Edited by Mircea Eliade. 16 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1987.
ESI	<i>Excavations and Surveys in Israel</i>
ExAud	<i>Ex auditu</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FO	<i>Folia orientalia</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2nd. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910.
HACL	History, Archaeology, and Culture of the Levant
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999.
HS	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IBHS	<i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>

JANESCU	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
Joüon	Joüon, P. <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> . Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. 2 vols. <i>Subsidia biblica</i> 14/1–2. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991.
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSTO	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSTOSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
KAANT	Kleine Arbeiten zum Alten und Neuen Testament
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KTU	<i>Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i> . Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. AOAT 24/1. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1976. 2nd enlarged ed. of <i>KTU: The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places</i> . Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995 (= <i>CTU</i>).
LHB/OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSAWS	Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia lovaniensia analecta
OLP	Orientalia lovaniensia periodica
OTL	Old Testament Library
OtSt	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RDAC	<i>Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus</i>
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations
SBAB	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände

SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and Its Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SHANE	Studies in the History (and Culture) of the Ancient Near East
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SOTSMS	Society for Old Testament Studies Monograph Series
SR	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, and H.-J. Fabry. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006.
TTZ	<i>Trierer theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
<i>Ugaritica V</i>	J. Nougayrol et al. <i>Ugaritica V</i> . Mission de Ras Shamra 16. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale/Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1968.
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WO	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der deutschen Orientalengesellschaft
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>

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INTRODUCTION: CULT PLACES AND SACRED SPACES

In his review article of R. Albertz's important history of Israelite religion, W. Dever applauds the overall scope and depth of the work, especially its attention to "unofficial cults," but at one point he expresses surprise that Albertz makes no mention of the cultic precinct at Tel Dan, not even in his discussion of northern cult.¹ Unfortunately, Albertz's omission is not exceptional, for although Tel Dan has been excavated for over thirty seasons and has yielded an impressive array of cultic artifacts and monumental architecture, in most studies of ancient Israelite religion the site remains marginal at best. Part of this neglect is due to the limited publication of the site's Iron Age strata, though numerous articles and essays have been published over the years by the site's excavators, Avraham Biran and later David Ilan, and by others. Taken together, these works constitute a sturdy base for further study, and with the final reports of these strata forthcoming, Tel Dan will hopefully take its rightful place at the center of discussions of Israelite religion.²

This monograph addresses this lacuna by offering an interpretation of the cultic remains that were excavated in Area T at the site of Tel Dan in northern Israel. Its approach is twofold: first, I will study the remains of the site's Iron II strata. This part of the book will present archaeological portraits of Strata III and II, which will describe each stratum's defining architecture and artifacts. These portraits are based on published articles and also on unpublished season reports, field notes, and diaries that were made available to me at the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, which

1. W. Dever, review of R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, *BASOR* 301 (1996): 86; see also T. Lewis, review of R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, *Int* 51 (1997): 77.

2. See p. 21 below.

has conducted excavations at the site for over four decades.³ Then, using the spatial theory of Henri Lefebvre—namely, his conceptual triad of spatial practice, representation of space, and spaces of representation—I will discuss what these remains might tell us about the construction of sacred space at Area T. The archaeological portraits themselves will detail the spatial practices of each stratum, and Lefebvre's representation of space will provide an opportunity to consider the conceptual significance of these spatial practices.

In the second part of this study, I will again use Lefebvre's conceptual triad, this time to analyze literary representations of space in the Hebrew Bible. The biblical texts under examination in these chapters are the story of Elijah on Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 18:20–40) and selected passages from the book of Amos (e.g., 3:14; 4:4–5; 5:21–27; 7:10–17; 8:14; 9:1), which were chosen because their depictions of sacred space correspond most closely to the time and place of Strata III and II at Tel Dan. Alternatively, I could have chosen all texts that mention Dan in some way, but this approach seemed less promising. Besides the fact that three recent studies have already collected and analyzed such references,⁴ these works highlight the methodological problems that make biblical references to Dan ill-suited for illuminating the site's archaeology. The principal obstacle is that so many of these biblical references date well after Strata III–II, and even those texts that depict earlier periods come to us only after substantial editing. Thus even though Judg 17–18 and 1 Kgs 12:25–33 seem like indispensable witnesses to cultic life at Dan, their Deuteronomistic editing takes us further from the archaeological realia of Strata III–II than texts that show less redaction. This is not to say that 1 Kgs 18 and the book of Amos are themselves free of later editing, which complicates attempts to connect their depictions of sacred space to particular strata at Tel Dan, but as I will discuss more fully in the introduction to the textual part of this

3. In particular, I would like to thank Ross Voss, the longtime supervisor of Area T, and Gila Cook, the chief surveyor of Tel Dan. Both were exceedingly generous in sharing their vast knowledge of Area T.

4. See M. Bartusch, *Understanding Dan: An Exegetical Study of a Biblical City, Tribe and Ancestor* (JSOTSup 379; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003); J. Bray, *Sacred Dan: Religious Tradition and Cultic Practice in Judges 17–18* (LHB/OTS 449; New York: T&T Clark, 2006); and H. Niemann, *Die Daniten: Studien zur Geschichte eines altisraelitischen Stammes* (FRLANT 135; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985).

monograph, these texts do offer a better opportunity for comparison with the sacred precinct at Tel Dan in Strata III–II.

A final goal of this study is to contribute to the growing body of literature dedicated to the integration of textual and archaeological data. Although I have been trained primarily in textual studies and cannot claim expertise in the field of archaeology, I agree with those scholars who have argued that both fields are necessary to investigate Israelite religion.⁵ This work represents my attempt at combining these two sets of data. However, before turning to these data, it will be worthwhile to expand on the theoretical framework within which this study will proceed, especially the concept of sacred space and Lefebvre's spatial theory.

1.1. SACRED SPACES AND CULTIC PLACES

1.1.1. SACRED SPACE

In recent years the concept of “sacred space” has enjoyed a wide-ranging currency in the study of ancient Israelite religion,⁶ but Tel Dan has been

5. See T. Lewis, “How Far Can Texts Take Us? Evaluating Textual Sources for Reconstructing Ancient Israelite Beliefs about the Dead,” in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (ed. B. Gittlen; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 169–217; idem, “Family, Household, and Local Religion at Late Bronze Age Ugarit,” in *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity* (ed. J. Bodel and S. Olyan; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2008), 62–63.

6. This interest has resulted in edited volumes and journal issues dedicated to the topic (e.g., P. Dorman and B. Bryan, eds., *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes* [SAOC 61; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2007]; B. Gittlen, ed., *Sacred Time, Sacred Place*; vol. 14.2 of *Journal for Semitics* [2005]; and vol. 67.1 of *Near Eastern Archaeology* [2004]) as well as many individual studies, such as S. Kang, “Creation, Eden, Temple and Mountain: Textual Presentations of Sacred Space in the Hebrew Bible” (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2008); W. Kort, “Sacred/Profane and Adequate Theory of Human Place-Relations,” in *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative* (ed. J. Berquist and C. Camp; New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 32–50; S. Kunin, *God's Place in the World: Sacred Space and Sacred Place in Judaism* (London: Cassell, 1998); S. Japhet, “Some Biblical Concepts of Sacred Space,” in *Sacred Space: Shrine, City, Land: Proceedings of the International Conference in Memory of Joshua Praver* (ed. B. Kedar and R. Werblowsky; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1998), 55–72; B. Levine, “Mythic and Ritual Projections of Sacred Space in Biblical Literature,” *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 6 (1997): 59–70; J. Branham, “Sacred Space in Ancient Jewish and Early

largely absent from this scholarly trend.⁷ Although the site's excavator Avraham Biran has invoked the phrase in some publications,⁸ he does not in these works articulate a precise definition of "sacred space"; it seems that for Biran Area T at Tel Dan was self-evidently such a space, and the best definition of sacred space was found in a presentation of the site's cultic artifacts. Modern visitors to Tel Dan and anyone who has studied its cultic assemblages will have a hard time arguing against Biran on this point, but it is also true that Tel Dan's contribution to the study of ancient religion can be greatly enhanced by engaging the concept of "sacred space" from a theoretical perspective. For embedded in this short phrase are two fundamental questions—namely, What is meant by "sacred," and, What is meant by "space"?—that have received considerable attention from historians of religion. A survey of this literature will not only present potential avenues of interpretation but also, hopefully, reveal opportunities for Tel Dan to contribute to the state of these theoretical questions.

The first question—What is meant by "sacred"?—brings us to an enduring division in the study of religion that has been summarized by D. Pals:

some theorists strongly prefer *substantive* definitions, which closely resemble the commonsense approach. They define religion in terms of the beliefs or the ideas that religious people commit to and find important. Other theorists think this approach just too restrictive and offer instead a more *functional* definition. They leave the content or the ideas of religion off to the side and define it solely in terms of how it operates in human life. They want to know what a religion does for an individual person psychologically or for a group socially. Less concerned with the actual substance of people's beliefs or practices, they are inclined to describe religion, *whatever its specific content*, as that which provides support for a group or brings a sense of comfort or well-being to an individual.⁹

Medieval Christian Architecture" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1993); B. Bokser, "Approaching Sacred Space," *HTR* 78 (1985): 279–99. For an introduction to the topic, one should consult J. Brereton, "Sacred Space," *EncRel* 12:7978–86.

7. See, however, B. Nakhai, "What's a 'Bamah'? How Sacred Space Functioned in Ancient Israel," *BAR* 20.3 (1994): 18–29, 77–79.

8. E.g., A. Biran, "Sacred Spaces: Of Standing Stones, High Places and Cult Objects at Tel Dan," *BAR* 24.5 (1998): 38–45, 70.

9. D. Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion* (2nd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 13 (*italics original*). Alternatively, these two modes of inquiry have been termed "substantial" and "situational" (see D. Chidester and E. Linenthal, "Introduction," in

The locus classicus for a substantive explanation of sacred space is M. Eliade's essay titled "Sacred Places: Temple, Palace, 'Centre of the World,'" in which he defines sacred space as the result of a hierophany that "transforms the place where it occurs; hitherto profane, it is thenceforward a sacred area."¹⁰ For Eliade, human agency is involved in this process only insofar as "the sacred place in some way or another reveals itself to [a person]."¹¹ Such revelations were "hierophanies," which he defines as "an irruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different."¹² As these statements show, Eliade's approach emphasizes "the autonomy of hierophanies" and tends to disregard the social and political aspects of sacred space.

American Sacred Space [ed. D. Chidester and E. Linenthal; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995], 5–6). A classic exhibition of these contrasting modes may be found in R. Otto's reaction against the functional approach of É. Durkheim. The latter in his important 1912 book examined the experience of believers and concluded that "this reality, which mythologies have represented under so many different forms, but which is the universal and eternal objective cause of these sensations sui generis out of which religious experience is made, is society. ... Then it is action which dominates religious life, because of the mere fact that it is society which is its source" (*The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* [trans. J. Swain; Mineola, N.Y.: Dover, 2008], 418). By contrast, Otto's own seminal work just five years later focused in the "numinous," which he defined as the irreducible *mysterium* that evokes awe and fascination in a person. For Otto, the substance of religion consists of principles that "must be *a priori* ones, not to be derived from 'experience' or 'history'" (*The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational* [trans. J. Harvey; London: Oxford University Press, 1958], 175).

10. M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (trans. R. Sheed; London: Sheed & Ward, 1958), 367.

11. *Ibid.*, 369. Similarly, G. van der Leeuw wrote: "The place thus selected, because it has shown itself to be sacred, is at first merely a position: man adds nothing at all to Nature; the mysterious situation of a locality, its awe-inspiring character, suffice" (*Religion in Essence and Manifestation: A Study in Phenomenology* [trans. J. Turner; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1938], 394). As this statement suggests, van der Leeuw anticipated Eliade's substantive approach, but D. Chidester has recently shown that a close reading of the van der Leeuw shows that he was more attuned to "the politics of sacred space" than is often recognized ("The Poetics and Politics of Sacred Space: Towards a Critical Phenomenology of Religion," *Analecta Husserliana* 43 [1994]: 211–31).

12. M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (trans. W. Trask; San Diego: Harcourt, 1987), 26.

As I will show below, this inattention has been the basis for subsequent criticism of Eliade's theories, but first I would note that his concept of sacred space remains a useful heuristic model for the study of Area T at Tel Dan.¹³ Indeed, several of his points are applicable to the cultic situation at the site, and it will be worthwhile to mention them here. First, Eliade's emphasis on springs as a "manifestation of a sacred presence" is certainly consistent with Tel Dan, whose springs are a source of the Jordan River.¹⁴ Although we cannot be certain, the site's cultic foundations are probably related to these springs: Area T itself was built less than a hundred meters from them, and the sound of their output is unmistakable as one stands on the mound.¹⁵ The springs' importance at Tel Dan is confirmed

13. Several important studies of Israelite religion have taken Eliade as their starting point; see Kang, "Creation, Eden, Temple and Mountain: Textual Presentations of Sacred Space in the Hebrew Bible"; D. Clines, "Sacred Space, Holy Places and Suchlike," in *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays, 1967–1998* (JSOTSup 293; 2 vols.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 2:542–54; repr. from *Trinity Occasional Papers* 12/2 (1993); J. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 102–42; and R. Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space: Four Biblical Studies* (SR 23; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 63–79.

14. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 199. Cf. W. F. Albright, "The Mouth of the Rivers" (*AJSL* 35 [1919]: 161–95), in which he investigates the Akkadian phrase *pī nārāti* in the Gilgamesh Epic and, in doing so, demonstrates the religious significance of rivers' sources throughout the ancient Near East. This significance is consistent with the recognition of P. Taçon that "junctions or points of change between geology, hydrology, and vegetation" tend to be regarded as sacred places ("Identifying Ancient Sacred Landscapes in Australia: From Physical to Social," in *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives* [ed. W. Ashmore and A. Knapp; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1999], 36–42).

15. See A. Biran, D. Ilan, and R. Greenberg, *Dan I: A Chronicle of the Excavations, the Pottery Neolithic, the Early Bronze Age and the Middle Bronze Age Tombs* (Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, 1996), Plan 1. The uncertain correlation between the springs and the sanctuary is due to the fact that Tel Dan was not just a cult site but also a city, where we might expect to find religious architecture whether there are springs nearby or not. On the one hand, the discovery of a large (3–4 m thick) stone wall from the Early Bronze Age indicate that Area T was part of Tel Dan's earliest building activity (see *ibid.*, 51–53; A. Biran and R. Ben-Dov, *Dan II: A Chronicle of the Excavations and the Late Bronze Age "Mycenaean" Tomb* [Jerusalem: Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, 2002], 30–32), and the constructions of the Middle Bronze and Iron Age gates precisely opposite the spring suggest a design that insulated Area T and the springs from the rest of the city. On the other hand, most large communities tend

by certain artifacts and architecture that attest to the ritual use of water.¹⁶ Moreover, this abundant water has resulted in lush vegetation all over the mound, which lends the site an Edenic quality. Indeed, the region around Mt. Hermon was regarded in antiquity as a veritable utopia, according to the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Judg 18:7–10) as well as numerous ancient Near Eastern mythological texts.¹⁷ In light of this depiction, it would be tempting to connect Tel Dan's utopian qualities to Eliade's theory that humans' attraction to sacred space is rooted in their "nostalgia for Paradise" and that their actions are attempts to realize the archetypes represented by this "paradise."¹⁸ However, this theory has little to contribute to our study of Tel Dan. While the site's natural features probably played no small role in its foundation as a cult center, Eliade's emphasis on nostalgia overlooks the important political and social realities that attend every sacred space, as will be discussed below.¹⁹ In fact, one of the central questions I hope to answer in this work is how these realities played out at Tel Dan.

to have religious architecture, and the buildings in Area T during the Iron II period may simply reflect the religious needs of the local population.

16. The most significant in this regard is the so-called Pool Room in the southern part of Area T, which featured a thick layer of plaster that sealed a flagstone pavement and evidence of a channel through one of the walls. Its identification as a "pool room" was bolstered when the high-water level prevented further excavation of the room; here the spring was most likely incorporated in the room itself. Outside the entrance to the room was a large terracotta tub. Both the room and the tub belong to Stratum IVA (see A. Biran, *Biblical Dan* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society/Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, 1994], 174–75).

17. See E. Lipiński, "El's Abode: Mythological Traditions Related to Mount Hermon and to the Mountains of Armenia," *OLP* 2 (1971): 13–69; M. Smith, *Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.1–1.2* (vol. 1 of *The Ugaritic Baal Narrative*; VTSup 55; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 225–35. P. K. McCarter has even suggested that this long-standing religious tradition underlies the creation account in Genesis 2–3 ("The Garden of Eden: Geographical and Etymological Ruminations on the Garden of God in the Bible and the Ancient Near East" [paper presented at the Colloquium for Biblical Research, Duke University, 19 August 2001]; I am grateful to Professor McCarter for sharing this unpublished paper with me).

18. According to Eliade rituals are "meaningless" unless they involve "the abolition of time through the imitation of archetypes and the repetition of paradigmatic gestures" (*The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History* (trans. W. Trask; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 34–35). This repetition also applied to cultic structures that were "indefinitely copied and copied again" based on a primeval archetype (idem, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 371–72).

19. Cf. the remark by J.-C. Margueron that "car si l'on pense avec Mircéa Eliade

Before discussing these social dimensions of sacred space, however, I must mention another point stressed by Eliade, namely, his argument that once a sacred space has been established, it remains so permanently. Moreover, he argues that this continuity of sacred space is especially true at springs, which “have a certain autonomy, and their worship persists in spite of other epiphanies and other religious revolutions.”²⁰ Tel Dan undoubtedly bears out this point; as I will show in the next chapter, the site served as a cult center from at least the Middle Bronze Age through the Hellenistic period.²¹ Over these centuries, as the site was inhabited by various peoples worshiping various deities, Tel Dan remained a cult center, and this longevity shows that its status as sacred space persisted irrespective of which cult was practiced there. However much we emphasize the social and political processes at Tel Dan, we must also acknowledge that its sanctity was not merely a function of these processes but, to some extent, transcended them. Thus Eliade’s study remains a valid starting point for exploring the concept of sacred space. In particular, his attention to natural phenomena as manifestations of the sacred and to the continuity of sacred space has provided some valuable perspective for understanding the cultic area at Tel Dan.

1.1.2. CULTIC PLACE

In the decades since Eliade’s seminal work, his theories of religion have been subjected to considerable criticism, much of it from those who take a more “functional” view of religion (as defined in the quotation above).²²

qu’une hiérophanie est à l’origine de la sacralisation d’un espace, il faut encore comprendre comment on a pu donner une dimension en superficie (territoire), voire en volume (édifice construit) à ce qui, au départ, n’était qu’une manifestation purement ponctuelle. Ce transfert ne me paraît nullement évident *a priori*” (“Prolégomènes a une étude portant sur l’organisation de l’espace sacré en Orient,” in *Temples et sanctuaires: séminaire de recherche 1981–1983* [ed. G. Roux; Travaux de la Maison de l’Orient 7; Lyon: GIS/Maison de l’Orient; Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1984], 24).

20. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 200.

21. See below, pp. 22–28.

22. See R. Brown, “Eliade on Archaic Religions: Some Old and New Criticisms,” *SR* 10 (1981): 429–49; Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*, 222–26. Indeed, some archaeologists have questioned whether Eliade’s basic dichotomy of the “sacred” and the “profane” is meaningful for ancient societies; see T. Insoll, *Archaeology, Ritual, Religion* (London: Routledge, 2004), 1–32, 88–90; J. Brück, “Ritual and Rationality: Some

With regard to his theory of sacred space, one of Eliade's most thorough critics has been J. Z. Smith, who introduces a new dichotomy of "locative" and "utopian" visions of the world.²³ The difference between these two orientations has been summarized by D. Chidester and E. Linenthal, who write that "locative space is a fixed, bounded, sacred cosmos, reinforced by the imperative of maintaining one's place, and the place of others, in a larger scheme of things. By contrast, utopian space is unbounded, unfixed to any particular location, a place that can only be reached by breaking out of, or liberated from, the bonds of the prevailing social order."²⁴ Whereas Eliade's theory of sacred space tended to neglect its social dimensions, Smith's locative vision recognizes that the way a society perceives the cosmos (and humans' place in it) is strictly ordered and that this order reflects the social structures of that society.²⁵ Furthermore, in his theory of "emplacement" Smith has argued that it is precisely this social orientation that distinguishes a space from a place; whereas the former refers to the undifferentiated "out there," the latter denotes "a social position within a hierarchical system."²⁶ This distinction is relevant to the present study

Problems of Interpretation in European Archaeology," *European Journal of Archaeology* 2 (1999): 313–44.

23. J. Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 101.

24. Chidester and Linenthal, "Introduction," 15.

25. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, 137–38.

26. J. Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 45; see also 26–28, 110. See also K. Knott, *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis* (London: Equinox, 2005), 29–34; Y. Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 6; M. Parker Pearson and C. Richards, "Ordering the World: Perceptions of Architecture, Space and Time," in *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), 4.

The distinction between space and place has also been addressed within the field of archaeology (e.g., C. Orser Jr., *A Historical Archaeology of the Modern World* [New York: Plenum, 1996], 131–58; R. Preucel and L. Meskell, "Places," in *A Companion to Social Archaeology* [ed. L. Meskell and R. Preucel; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007], 215–29; and E. Blake, "Space, Spatiality, and Archaeology," in *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, 233–36). The subject has been part of a larger discussion of landscape archaeology, i.e., how human societies transform and are transformed by their physical environment. See A. Smith, *The Political Landscape: Constellations of Authority in Early Complex Polities* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003); W. Ashmore, "Social Archaeologies of Landscape," in *A Companion to Social*

because Smith goes on to state that the sacrality of a *space* depends on the rituals that take *place* there. Eliade had defined sacred space as an autonomous reality found in nature, but Smith emphasizes that the sacred and the profane “are not substantive categories, but rather situational ones. Sacrality is, above all, a category of emplacement.”²⁷ A space is sacralized by the rituals that are performed there,²⁸ and in this sense we cannot talk about sacred space without talking about the cultic activity that is practiced in that space. Or to put it another way, every sacred space implies a cult place.

This emphasis on the role of ritual in sacralizing space gives the concept of sacred space a distinctly social orientation. As Smith himself notes, “ritual is systemic hierarchy par excellence.”²⁹ Moreover, it introduces the possibility that a cult place (i.e., sacred-space-in-action) can become the site of competing interests. Chidester and Linenthal, recognizing the theme of cult places as contested space, write that “sacred spaces are always highly charged sites for contested negotiations over the ownership of the symbolic capital (or symbolic real estate) that signifies power relations.”³⁰ On this same theme, Chidester has elsewhere emphasized the role that “the politics of exclusion” play in the demarcation of a sacred space; unlike Eliade, for whom the line between the sacred and the profane was fixed and ontological,³¹ Chidester focuses on the social context in which religious boundaries are constructed and maintained.³² This approach reso-

Archaeology (ed. L. Meskell and R. Preucel; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007), 255–71; A. Knapp and W. Ashmore, “Archaeological Landscapes: Constructed, Conceptualized, Ideational,” in *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives* (ed. W. Ashmore and A. Knapp; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1999), 1–30; S. Steadman, “Reliquaries on the Landscape: Mounds as Matrices of Human Cognition,” in *Archaeologies of the Middle East: Critical Perspectives* (ed. S. Pollock and R. Bernbeck; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2005), 286–307; A. Mack, “One Landscape, Many Experiences: Differing Perspectives of the Temple Districts of Vijayanagara,” *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 11 (2004): 59–81; and J. Moore, “The Social Basis of Sacred Spaces in the Prehispanic Andes: Ritual Landscapes of the Dead in Chimú and Inka Societies,” *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 11 (2004): 83–124.

27. Smith, *To Take Place*, 104.

28. Smith notes that this is the etymology of the Latin *sacrificium*, from the combination of *sacer*, “sacred,” and *facio*, “to make” (ibid., 105).

29. Ibid., 110.

30. Chidester and Linenthal, “Introduction,” 16.

31. See Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 23, 63.

32. Chidester, “The Poetics and Politics of Sacred Space,” 217–22; cf. Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 11–12.

nates with the religious situation in ancient—and modern—Israel. Indeed, numerous texts from the Hebrew Bible depict cult sites as places where competition and disagreement abound,³³ and in modern times the Temple Mount/*al-haram al-sharif* in Jerusalem remains a classic example of contested sacred space.³⁴ Moreover, the prevalence of this theme throughout the Hebrew Bible invites us to consider how this aspect of sacred space may have been operative at Israelite cult places in general, and at Tel Dan in particular.

1.2. THE SPATIAL THEORY OF HENRI LEFEBVRE

For a spatial theory that addresses the issue of contested space I turn to Henri Lefebvre, who also emphasized this theme in his work *The Production of Space*.³⁵ At the center of Lefebvre's theory is his understanding of space as a conceptual triad consisting of (1) *spatial practice*, which is the lived space that “structures all aspects of daily life and ... is experienced through practical perception, through commonsense, and is taken for granted”; (2) *representation of space*, or “conceptual space,” which refers to “those dominant, theoretical, often technical, representations of lived space that are conceived and constructed by planners, architects, engineers, and scientists of all kinds”; and (3) *spaces of representation*, or “symbolic space,” which are lived spaces that are “imbued with distinctively local knowledge [and] often run counter to spaces generated by formal technical knowledge.”³⁶ In this way these spaces of representation may

33. Some examples include Gen 4:3–8; 32:24–32; Exod 32:1–35; Lev 10:1–20; Josh 22:10–34; Judg 6:28–35; 9:46–49; 18:14–25; 1 Sam 5:1–5; 13:8–14; 1 Kgs 13:1–10; 18:20–40; 2 Kgs 10:18–27; 23:4–15; Ezra 4–6; Jer 36:1–19; Ezek 8:3–18; Amos 7:10–17; Hag 1–2.

34. See R. Friedland and R. Hecht, “The Politics of Sacred Place: Jerusalem's Temple Mount/*al-haram al-sharif*,” in *Sacred Places and Profane Spaces: Essays in the Geographics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (ed. J. Scott and P. Simpson-Housley; CSR 30; New York: Greenwood, 1991), 21–61.

35. H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (trans. D. Nicholson-Smith; Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991). As the title may suggest, Lefebvre himself was working out of a Marxist background, but subsequent developments of his theory have shown that its application does not require engagement with dialectical materialism (see Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 11–58; J. Flanagan, “Ancient Perceptions of Space/Perceptions of Ancient Space,” *Semeia* 87 [1999]: 15–43).

36. See Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 33, 38–40; however, the definitions quoted

constitute a resistance to the ideologies that constitute the second aspect. According to Lefebvre, all three aspects are dialectically connected and are present in every space, though not always equally. Because this conceptual triad will be the theoretical basis for the present study, it is important to look more closely at each of its parts.

1.2.1. SPATIAL PRACTICE

Spatial practice refers to the physical realities of a space. Such realities include the dimensions of the space, the architectural features that divide the space into its constituent parts, and the material objects that are found in the space. At an archaeological site, spatial practice consists of all the data one is likely to find in a site report: its size and topography; its architectural features, such as walls, floors, thresholds, passageways, stairs, benches, altars, podiums, columns, and so on; its building materials, such as travertine blocks, fieldstones, plaster, bronze, iron; artifacts, such as pottery, metals, small finds, seal impressions, bowls, and so on. Thus Lefebvre's spatial practice attends to the material realities of a particular space, which, in the case of Area T at Tel Dan, means the archaeological remains that have been excavated and recorded over the last few decades.³⁷

However, spatial practice is not simply a catalog of these material realities but also questions how these realities create a coherent and distinctive space. As we will see, many of the remains found at Area T have parallels elsewhere, but at no other site will one find the particular assemblage of artifacts that has been discovered at Tel Dan. Assessing the spatial practice of Area T, then, is a question of understanding the unique space that is cre-

here have been taken from Knott, *Location of Religion*, 36–39. See also R. Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London: Routledge, 1999), 160–70; M. George, *Israel's Tabernacle as Social Space* (SBL Ancient Israel and Its Literature 2; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 20–44. Following George's example, I will refer to "representation of space" and "spaces of representation" as "conceptual space" and "symbolic space," respectively (*ibid.*, 22).

37. One problem in trying to apply Lefebvre's theory to an archaeological site is that, unlike the modern spaces that interested Lefebvre, ancient cities are observable only in the results of archaeological excavation, which represents a small fraction of the spatial practices that existed at the site. At Tel Dan this limitation pertains to Area T in particular, since certain parts of the temple complex remain unexcavated. Despite this limitation, however, I hope to show that his theory is still a valuable tool for understanding (sacred) space in antiquity.

ated by its unique assemblage of material remains. Moreover, spatial practice also refers to the social practices that are suggested by the remains. Pathways, doors, walls, and stairs are all indications of how people moved through the site. In a sacred precinct like Area T, an altar may mark the locus of cultic activity and give clues about the kind of rituals that took place. In this way, spatial practice at Area T is a question of how the sacred space reflects the cultic practices that took place there and determined the organization of the space. But beyond simply reflecting such practices, it is also a question of how the organization of space in turn shaped the worship that took place at the temple. Thus spatial practice is a consideration of the ways in which the physical realities of a space and its social practices are mutually transformative.³⁸

1.2.2. CONCEPTUAL SPACE

Unlike spatial practice, which attends to physical realities, conceptual space is abstract, referring to the mental blueprint that maps out how a particular space is to be organized. This blueprint is the mental product of architects and others who have the power to determine the purpose of the space and the spatial practices that will achieve that purpose. The impact of such a blueprint is considerable: because spatial practices shape social practices and relations, the conceptual space that orders those spatial practices also effectively orders social relations. As such, the space comes to reflect the values and ideologies of those empowered to conceptualize the space. For example, Mark George has argued that the biblical description of the tabernacle reflects the Priestly writers' concerns over genealogy, heredity succession, and the importance of the "congregation" (Heb. *'ēdā*),³⁹ while others have regarded holiness as the primary concern that organizes the tabernacle space.⁴⁰ These analyses demonstrate how one space can express multiple concerns or ideologies. Conceptual space is not

38. See George, *Israel's Tabernacle as Social Space*, 47–48.

39. *Ibid.*, 89–135.

40. See P. Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* (JSOTSup 106; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992); M. Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cultic Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978); F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* (JSOTSup 91; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).

produced in a vacuum but in the midst of different, perhaps competing, interests, such that one space may reflect more than one set of social and political values.

Textual sources are often the best opportunity to discern the conceptual space that has determined the order and organization of a physical space,⁴¹ but I hope to show that a close reading of Area T's architecture and material culture does permit some tentative remarks on the priorities and concerns that produced the cultic space we find in Strata III–II. Furthermore, the textual analysis of part 2 of this monograph is intended fill out the conceptual space that emerges from the archaeological data. Besides the “House of David” inscription, our best written sources for assessing the cultic space at Tel Dan come from the Hebrew Bible, which for all its editorial layers may still shed important light on how sacred space was conceived in the northern kingdom during the Iron Age. These literary representations of sacred space, which correspond most closely to Strata III–II at Tel Dan, will expand our perspective on the conceptual space that underlies the spatial organization of Area T.

1.2.3. SYMBOLIC SPACE

If it is difficult to determine the conceptual space of Area T at Tel Dan, it is virtually impossible to discern its symbolic space. This is because symbolic space refers to the various social meanings that a space represents for a particular society. George contrasts it with conceptual space in this way: “Conceptual space ... is mental space, those logical, conceptual systems a society develops to organize, arrange, and classify space. Conceptual space is rational space, rather than symbolic, emotional space. By contrast, symbolic space is the space of emotion, affectation, and aesthetics, which gives such space social meaning.”⁴² Thus symbolic space concerns how people actually experience a space and the meaning that they ascribe to that space, and because such meaning can be as various as the people themselves, symbolic space is a kind of spatial palimpsest. Often the symbolic meanings of a space are rooted in the history and mythology, as in the description of the biblical tabernacle, which, according to George's analysis, drew

41. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 39; George, *Israel's Tabernacle as Social Space*, 90.

42. *Ibid.*, 141–42.

on the social significance of ancient Near Eastern building deposits, royal building projects, and the Priestly cosmology presented in Gen 1.⁴³

The obstacles involved in trying to assess the symbolic space of an archaeological site like Tel Dan should be obvious. First, we have no access to the emotional and aesthetic responses of those who worshiped at Tel Dan. Here our limited written sources, such as the “House of David” inscription and the Hebrew Bible, offer no help, since they represent the perspective of authority and power. It is this perspective that makes them important for understanding conceptual space, but less capable of conveying the numerous symbolic meanings that are produced in a sacred precinct like Area T. In fact, Lefebvre thought that symbolic space offered the best opportunity for people to resist the ideologies that are embedded in conceptual space.⁴⁴ Second, the symbolic meanings of a space are fluid and often hidden from the very people who use the space, so that access to the experience of worshipers at Tel Dan would not necessarily bring us any closer to understanding its symbolic space. For these reasons, I will not speculate on the symbolic space of the sacred precinct at Tel Dan but will restrict my discussion to its spatial practice and conceptual space and how those two spatial fields resonate with the sacred space that is depicted in 1 Kgs 18 and the book of Amos.

I would like to conclude this introduction with a quote from K. Knott, whose work demonstrates what Lefebvre’s theory might contribute to the field of religious studies.

Religion, then, which is inherently social, must also exist and express itself in and through space, and must play its part in the constitution of spaces. The spatial underpinnings of religion is witnessed at all levels, from the expression of hierarchical relations ... to the local, national and global extension of religious structures and institutions. ... That spaces themselves may be constituted by socio-religious relations is illustrated not only in the development of places of worship and other sacralised sites, but also by such things as ritual transformations of the human body and the religious production of distinctive narrative and doctrinal spaces (capable of winning the support of individuals and communities and thus engaging in ideological struggles in the public arena).⁴⁵

43. Ibid., 137–90.

44. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 230–33.

45. Knott, *Location of Religion*, 21.

In line with this statement, my study of Area T proposes to show how the arrangement of its cultic space reflects some of the socioreligious relations that existed at Tel Dan, including how the development of its physical space represents certain hierarchical relations that were operative at the site. The second step of my analysis concerns what Knott calls “the religious production of distinctive narrative spaces.” The biblical texts that constitute the second part of this study are examined as “narrative spaces,” which offer another perspective on how sacred space functioned in ancient Israel, especially in the northern kingdom. As literary representations of social space, they expand our knowledge of the religious ideologies that may have been prevalent at a site like Tel Dan.

These are some of the issues I will address in our study of Area T at Tel Dan, but this emphasis on the social processes that constituted the cultic life at Tel Dan does not mean to discount the substantive aspects of the site’s religious tradition. I purposely began this chapter with Eliade’s theory of sacred space because parts of it remain viable and applicable to Tel Dan. Yet even as we acknowledge that the site’s verdant natural setting and longevity constitute a sacred space in the Eliadian sense,⁴⁶ the primary interest of this work concerns how sacred space at Tel Dan was socially constructed, with special attention given to the spatial practice and conceptual space of Area T.

46. Even Lefebvre, in his discussion of “absolute space,” acknowledges the “intrinsic qualities” of certain natural settings, such as caves, mountaintops, springs, and rivers, which are recognized as sacred sites (*Production of Space*, 48). For a recent treatment and critique of “absolute space”—a term apparently coined by Isaac Newton—see A. Smith, *Political Landscape*, 30–57.