

A pursuit of concept of “sin/guilt” in history – on a revolutionary theology of Israel

Jiwon Jung*

Abstract

Because theology of Israel has to be reflexed in context of ancient cultures and politics, for example, Egypt and Mesopotamia, it is necessarily that theology of Israel contains their thoughts. During and after the colonial era Israelite had to establish their identity again. If they have failed a competition between neighbouring cultures, their religion would have been disappeared. In this context they left a cultural heritage to the humankind. In spite of colonialism and cultural cleansing they suggested a concept of “linear time”, “world court” and “sin or guilt” in history and theology. While Israelite struggled with colonialism of Egypt and Mesopotamia, they improved a thought of world history combined with world court by God and a new di-

<http://dx.doi.org/10.26590/madang..28.201712.45>

* Ph. D. candidate, Department of Theology Sungkonghoe University, Mag. Theol.

mension of theology which everybody had the responsibility for others in this world. This is a sublime and revolutionary synthesis of theology between Egypt and Mesopotamia. From this a concept of sin is derived and has a significant meaning. All is connected with the justice in front of God and history is a revelation of God.

- Keywords

concept of sin or guilt, world history-world court, Egyptology, colonialism, cultural cleansing.

1. Introduction

Usually, believers confess their sins in a religious rite, and pray for conversion and forgiveness of sin: “If you commit a crime, you feel guilty.” Many Christian churches were suspected of having implanted guilt in people. Of course, this blame on them is vague and not certain. Nevertheless the faith confesses his / her sins in every service. Perhaps the guilty conscience might tie their faith together. Also many unbelievers can ask, if they are manipulated by a dogma and church doctrine.

When and where do people perceive this sense of sin and concept of sin or guilt? At least it is assumed that it began in Israel and was handed over to Christianity. But could it be thought of a sin as an existential meaning of today? Partly right, partly unknown. Israelites have suffered from the colonialism and oppression of other realms. And they were influenced by other high cultures, such as Egypt and Mesopotamia.

In history a real monotheism appeared in Egypt. A true monotheism in the Egyptian religion can not be attributed to Echnaton / Akhenaten (around the middle of the 14th century BC).

In any case, one thing makes him fundamentally different from other religious foundations. While we can be sure that our knowledge of the Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad will never be enriched by new contemporary sources, almost every year new sources and insights bring us to Akhenaten, teaching us new details of his nature and workings. [...] And unlike all other religious founders, Akhenaten is not wrapped in the fog of later legends; everything we have about him is contemporary and goes

back to himself. His doctrine is proclaimed by him alone, without middlemen, and could only be falsified by modern interpretation.¹

For the first time in history, the divine has become one without turning into a syncretism. Re, who revealed himself as Aton, the sun god was so venerated that out of one God “without his kind”, in fine gradation, a god became “without others besides him”.² In this context a new divine concept and faith might have influenced on the divine concept of Israel.

To be honest, this researcher is not a biblical, but a systematic theologian, and tend to agree quite with the theories of Jan Assmann. Thus this researcher can not explain whole and perfect history of theological construction in Israel and it is out of ability. Only this treatise try to give a reasonable theory that it might have common basic theological correlations between ancient realms.³ And this treatise is aimed at finding a trace of the concept of sin or guilt from the neighbouring ancient cultures.

It shows that the concept of sin has been not directly derived from Israel, but Egypt and Mesopotamia. However, the concept of sin in Is-

1 Erik Hornung, *Echnaton: Die Religion des Lichtes* (Zürich: Artemis & Winkler Verlag, 1995), 26.

2 Cf. Ibid., *Der Eine und die Vielen: Ägyptische Gottesvorstellungen* (Darmstadt: WBG, 1971), 240-246.

3 Cf. Erich Zenger, *Einleitung in das alte Testament* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer GmbH, 2015⁹), 136-182. At least some Old Testament backgrounds and theories can be demonstrated:

- i) Final composition of the Pentateuch, not a mere chance product, but planned literary work. The Pentateuch was authorized by the Persian Imperial Commissioner (priest Ezra) around 400 BC as a legal code.
- ii) Every single people in the Persian Empire adheres to Persian imperial law, observes Persian law, if it obeys its own laws authorized by the imperial administration.

rael is somewhat different from that in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Israelites tried a newer dimension of the concept of time and theology than Egypt and Mesopotamia. Great cultural currents converged into Israel's own culture and theology. They focused on a new dimension of theocracy and eschatology after exile.

One of the results is concept of sin and justice of God. What a revolutionary theology it is! On the one hand, under the powerful influences of both empires and cultures, they had to accept such influences. On the other hand, they still had to defend their own thought and tradition.

In this connection Hegel had the idea that world history could be interpreted as the judgment of the world/world court and the intervention of God. But while Hegel explained the origin of world court in the context of Israel, especially Torah of Moses, Jan Assmann went back to the origin in the context of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

This treatise shows that a concept of sin is a result that Israelites have fought or mixed with the cultures of Egyptians and Mesopotamia. And it shows how the justice should be combined with individual level to social level. This researcher believe that Psalmen 51 (David's repentance) is the best example of that kind of justice.

Finally the theologizing of history is developing into a new dimension, especially in Israel, like a Motto "God as *Lord* and the *people* as the subject of history". In the same time history itself is able to be field of divine revelation. Israelites achieved finally a breakthrough in the fight against other cultures, colonialism and manipulation of language in the history of human and God. It is astonishing that Israelites have overcome such colonialism and found a new way of theology.

Before a proper discussion about the origin of concept of sin, it

should be investigated, how the colonialism functions as a means of cultural cleansing, and how (written) language is manipulated or instrumentalised by politics now and then. And then, it is dealt with some essences of time and history.

II. Colonialism as a cultural cleansing

In history, many “cultural cleansings”⁴ occurred. Cultural annihilation occurs regularly through violence. The “Mosaic distinction” is subordinated to this phenomenon. In this sense Assmann notes that the exclusive concept of truth is the language of violence.⁵

Cultural cleansing was used as a means of producing national unity. Such a cleansing means that a kingdom must be dominated by *one and the same* culture, law, and religion. In this realm no distinction was made between religion and law; law also included the prescribed rites and excluded certain forbidden rites.⁶

According to Churchill, this ideology was unconsciously put into the minds of people by the media, for example, the film. Thus colonization seemed justified, but it is really only “Fantasies of the master race”.⁷ During and after colonization, genocide and “ecocide” occur and various organizations of exploitation emerge. So Churchill accuses severe this injustice.

4 Jan Assmann, *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt* (Wien: Picus Verlag, 20095), 43.

5 Cf. *ibid.*, 24.

6 Cf. *ibid.*, 43.

7 Cf. Ward Churchill, *Acts of rebellion: The Ward Churchill reader* (New York/London: Routledge 2003), 185-217.

Genocide is, without doubt, the worst of all crimes against humanity. [...] Genocide is not an “inadvertent” outcome of “progress”, it is genocide, an *always* avoidable crime against humanity; ecocide is not “development”, it is ecocide, the most blatant and irremediable form of environmental destruction.⁸

In Korea, Korean language was banned during the Japanese colonial era. Language is an essential part of culture and spirituality. Even the depiction of one's own history in Korea is still permeated by views of one-sided colonial lords. A rehabilitation of other histories encounters the resistance of scientists and laymen who influenced these views. The same happened in many other colonial territories. There are many countries in Africa and South America, where the English, the French or the Spanish have displaced the native languages.

The colonial rulers imposed their language on the native population. This led not only to depreciation of the existing local mother tongue, but also to negligence and destruction of the associated indigenous traditions, cultural practices and oral traditions.⁹ This unfortunately shows that language is a highly effective tool for all types of colonization. That is why colonialism can lead to a “cultural cleansing” and “iconoclasm”. For this reason Aleida Assmann quoted agreeably Jean-Paul Sartre: “The failure of communication is the beginning of all violence. Where the communication ceases, there is nothing but beating, burning, hanging”.¹⁰

8 Ibid., xii, 140.

9 Cf. Aleida Assmann, *Einführung in die Kulturwissenschaft: Grundbegriffe, Themen, Fragestellungen* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 20113), 53.

10 Ibid., 54.

III. Instrumentalised language

Language can be used as a means of hegemonic discipline and violence and, on the other hand, is the basic means of human civilization. According to human cognitive structure, the distinction between here and there, this and that seems fundamental. Language contributes fundamentally to this logic. Speaking is an activity of man, but what is spoken is different from the act by which something has actually been realized. If, for example, internal and external demarcations institutionalize social, economic, political, religious etc., what happens then?

Kosellek says that the whole story, not just every single story, is structured according to the respective interior and external constellations. Thus, the terms of the enemy are a primary language achievement.¹¹ According to him, the language itself does not produce hostility; it is about psychological dispositions, economic, religious, social, geographical and political presuppositions, which help to create hostility. The language is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition to lead enemies into the field.¹² Thus, real enemies do not exist, but rather they are only psychologically determined, and an imaginary concept of who “we” are is really just a product of consciousness or an imaginary quantity. That is, the enmity and counter-concepts are linguistic concepts. Kosellek confirms this: “Oppositions are capable of not only articulating the self-determination of a unit of action, but also of distinguishing it as a distinguishing feature. Behind it lies the

11 Cf. Reinhart Kosellek, *Begriffsgeschichten: Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010), 275.

12 Cf. *ibid.*

enmity".¹³

A typical counter-concept in history is the exclusion of barbarians from Greeks, thus it constructs the relationship between the strangers and the pejorative peoples. This semantic opposition between the Greeks and the barbarians and the structure of the counter-concepts are transferable, e.g. Christians and non-Christians. But these are everywhere. Therefore the killing of heathen and heretics was justified by God. Kosellek writes that a religious exclusion was not known by prehistoric antiquities.¹⁴ However, the Old Testament knows many exclusions through enemy concepts in the conflict of the Jews with their neighboring peoples.

Kosellek points to many examples of linguistic exclusion and limitation of political action units,¹⁵ and then concludes that, insofar as language requirements remain politically motivated, language is always instrumentalised in politics. In other words, languages are not themselves hostile, but their political instrumentalisation.¹⁶

The problem is that the instrumentalised language is put to ideological disposal as soon as it is really spoken.

This brings us to one of the numerous “-ism-Stamping”, which bring the transcendence of the categorial meanings into the entire political-social vocabulary. I remember *patriotism, liberalism, republicanism, socialism, com-*

¹³ Ibid., 276.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 276-278.

¹⁵ See *ibid.*, 281-282. Kosellek gives some examples, that is, the fall of the Flemish gravestones of Belgian soldiers, the predominance of the Italian inscriptions before the Germans in South Tyrol and the elimination of the names of Jewish victims of all war memorials in Germany after the First World War in 1935.

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 282.

munism and also conservatism, all of which have a common temporal structure. These are always concepts of movement which, in practice, serve to reform the disintegrating society of states in a new social and political way. What is common to these expressions is that they are not based on a given and common experience. Rather, *they compensate for a deficit of experience through a future design, which will only be fulfilled*. The basic pattern, the constitutive difference between experience budget and expectation horizon for the temporalization, characterizes all the action-stimulating motions of motion mentioned.¹⁷

All stereotypes are formulated by the instrumentalised language. Conversely, such stereotypes serve as oppositions. In this way the concept of enemy grows in the spoken speech, for example the higher value of the German people against the inferior neighboring nations, the Aryan against the Jews, its potential reality, which is also realizable. This shows how the language is manipulated, politically instrumentalised and a potential reality is gained.¹⁸

The third world does not exist in reality. Rather, the word “Third World” can only arise through Eurocentrism. However, there is currently the new concept “the Fourth World”.¹⁹ The people who have fallen into oblivion in history and society, such as the Native Americans, indigenous peoples and tribes in South America, Inuit, etc., belong to the Fourth World. Is this a language game? This designation has to do with imperialism. According to the definition of Aleida Assmann, imperialism in the history of Europe and North America is de-

17 Ibid., 282.

18 Cf. *ibid.*, 283.

19 Churchill, *Acts of rebellion*, 263-273.

scribed as a history of the violent expansion of the stronger at the expense of the weaker. In this sense it can be defined as a mixture of colonialization and conquest.²⁰

IV. Superiority of the Greek alphabetic alphabet to other ancient languages?

The writing was later invented as language, because oral communication with one another is more present, local, and immediate than the written one. However, each culture and its system of writing developed into different branches. If European culture is confined to literary culture, this is partly correct, partly false. Can one say that European culture is based solely on the alphabetic alphabet? Culture is the essence of Scripture and there is no pure culture. Rather, cultures are not limited to a realm, but they unite and mix with other cultures or collide. They are like a living thing, which is an open system, or like a chemical compound. Although there were scriptures in Egypt, Mesopotamia, China, India, etc., Greece is regarded as the prototype of a literary culture, which could represent individual linguistics. The alphabet script seems to be a simpler form of the Scriptures than the Scriptures of Hebrew, Chinese, and Egyptian. The Greek alphabet is capable of completely or fluently rewriting verbal speech. Thus, Havellock believes that other writings are less powerful than Greek in the rendering of spoken speech, and the alphabetical language of language is highly appropriate to philosophy.²¹

²⁰ Aleida Assmann, *Einführung in die Kulturwissenschaft*, 163.18; Cf. *ibid.*, 283.

²¹ Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis, Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen*

The Greek alphabetic alphabet has a combination of consonants and vowels, with the help of which the spoken language can be divided into its details. Compared to the alphabet, Oriental writings, such as the Semitic syllable, the Egyptian hieroglyphs, the Mesopotamian cuneiform, and the Chinese writing of a small professionalized elite, were difficult to learn. Nevertheless, the Oriental writings are based on abstraction. Besides the non-writing of the vowels, the principle of consonant writing of ancient Egyptian origin has also been adopted from there into the ancient Canaanite, Phoenician, and Hebrew writings.²²

With regard to the new field of meaning of the images “*Zuwachs an Sein* / increase in being”,²³ the hieroglyphs are able to grasp something as a whole. That is why Jan Assmann tends to pay close attention to the Egyptian hieroglyphs. Although the Egyptian hieroglyphs with their pictorial writings could represent the whole truth, they were only translated by the Greek alphabetical alphabet in more recent times. This is like an irony of history.

The writing is normally a secondary medium in everyday communication. In the ancient societies, For example, in Mesopotamia, it developed from preforms in the context of everyday, not ceremonial communication, from which a lot has been preserved as a fixed text and canon.²⁴ Despite its character as a secondary medium, it plays an even more important role in society and culture: the “*Tafelhaus* / house of table” in Mesopotamia, the “*Lebenshaus* / living house” in

Hochkulturen (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 20076), 259-263.

22 Cf. *ibid.*, 259-264.

23 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik, Gesammelte Werke Band 1* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr(Paul Siebeck), 1999), 145.

24 Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 91.

Egypt and “Klassiker/ classics”.²⁵

Nonetheless the scriptures in Greece are not unchangeable compared to those in Egypt and Israel. For this reason, some characteristic traits of Greek literary culture are pointed out: the opening of orality in other ways, no sacred writings, no need for the written handling of the empowerment.²⁶ The oriental literacy culture has to do with the bureaucracy as an instrument of organizing reality coping and lordly and political representation. On the other hand, the Greek literary culture frees from the laws of the oriental societies. In this sense, it opens up the possibility of developing not only the writing technology, but also an extended written culture and exchanging with other cultures.²⁷ But in Israel, the scriptures were depolitized and the most important “disposition of the power of God”.²⁸ In other words, the scriptures were considered sacred and empowered in the Orient, India, and China, but in Greece, writing led to the liquefaction, the struggling, and the differentiation of the tradition.²⁹

V. Concept of History by Hegel and Assmann

The rediscovery of historicity leads to a deeper understanding of the nature of man:

The distinctive character of ontology in our century (20th c.) is that

²⁵ Ibid., 93.

²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 267.

²⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 268.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 269.

²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 271.

it asks what the most general condition/ principle of man is, and that it holds the fact that man is a historical being as the most fundamental.³⁰

Although Hegel is not a person in 20 century, he presents a new hermeneutic principle with “the thinking mediation of the present life”.³¹ History does not remain in the irreversible past, but presents itself in the present life. Gadamer therefore gains a starting point of the hermeneutic fusion of the horizon.

In any case, Hegel continues to represent history in such a way that it combines the objective and the subjective side in language. Thus Hegel combines history with an event and a narrative, that is, it means the “*historia rerum gestarum*” as the “*res gestasae*”.³² Assmann interprets Hegel’s remarks so that Hegel’s narrative is synonymous with remembrance, which *Mnemosyne*, the goddess of memory is the same, and that is history, which enters the memory, and the memory only changes what changes.³³ Therefore history could only exist where there is something to remember. Hegel anticipates that memory and history can be changed by the next generations or other states: “[...] the state first brings about a content which is not only suitable for the prose of history but also produces it by itself”.³⁴

30 Hans Ineichen, *Philosophische Hermeneutik* (Freiburg-München: Karl Alber Verlag, 1991), 101.

31 Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, GW 1, 174.

32 G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, *Werke* 12, ed. Eva Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), 83.

33 Jan Assmann, “Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte,” In *Die Weltgeschichte – das Weltgericht?*, ed. Rüdiger Bubner and Walter Mesch (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 2001), 297.

34 Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, *Werke* 12, 83.

Hegel first refers to semantic articulation. The articulation of his mind is to take form and structure into something formless and unstructured. It presupposes that one understands the world as a “symbolic world of meaning”, because the world itself is created by discourse.³⁵ Nevertheless, Assmann draws the story, which emanates from Hegel's concept, on the broader meaning of language, on the symbolic world of meaning, the semantic articulation, the colonization and: “Egypt is a good example: here the story seems to start with pictures”.³⁶ That is, in comparison to Hegel, he presents a more comprehensive history. Assmann thereby undertakes an excess of Hegel's concept of history or its complement.

VI. Weltgeschichte, Weltgericht/ World History, World Court

1. Generators of history and time construction "cyclic" and "linear"

As the state is the great achievement of Egypt, religion is the great achievement of Israel.³⁷ Moreover, religion also gave the Jews a “grandiose representation of God”, that is, the “idea of a greater God.”³⁸ Thus, Freud says that whoever believes in this God has a certain share in his greatness and feels himself elevated.³⁹

Hegel believes that without a state there is no history and the state

³⁵ Cf. Jan Assmann, “Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte,” 297.

³⁶ Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Werke 12, 83.

³⁷ Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 196.

³⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion: Schriften über die Religion* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2009), 113.

³⁹ Ibid.

is based on religion.⁴⁰ Assmann formulates the concept of Hegel: “History also emerges with stratified and state-organized societies. At the same time, they form media, which serve the articulation and representation of history”.⁴¹

The Egyptians consider their history quite differently from that which originates in Mesopotamia and in Greece, because history is formed in the East in connection with the formation of the state.⁴² It is true that this development of history coincides with Hegel's concept, but according to Assmann that concept of history is the exclusive achievement of Mesopotamia and, based on this, the biblical history.⁴³ In this context the justice or righteousness emerges as a generator of history in common.

Assmann tries to relate a concept of justice as a history generator in Israel to Hegel's term “world history as a world court”:⁴⁴

It[the biblical history] presupposes a concept of righteousness as a further historical generator, which was alien to Egypt and which, like all other peoples of the ancient world, seem to have learned from Mesopotamia. On the other hand, it is clear from the contrast between Egypt and Mesopotamia, the Hittites, and then, above all, Israel, that the principle of doing connectivity or “connective justice” promotes historical thought by “linearizing” time and structure into which events brings. [...] The right acts as the central historical generator. It is this story, borne out of

40 Cf. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, *Werke* 12, 56ff. 70ff.

41 Jan Assmann, “Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte,” 297.

42 Cf. *ibid.*, 297-298.

43 Cf. *ibid.*, 299.

44 G.W.F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden* 7, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Kark Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), 503.

the spirit of law, which still underlies Hegel's formula of world history as a world judgment.⁴⁵

Assmann examines the reason why the form of historical articulation differs in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Although there were historical consciousness and historiography, there was no summarizing retrospective historiography in Egypt.⁴⁶ This historiography is, in fact, alien to modern times.

First, the “history” in Egypt corresponds to the meaning “event”. Because this event, that is, the happening, the chaos creating the circular order, in which everything is renewed and nothing dies and perishes, connotes a negative meaning. That is why the Egyptians lived in a time, which they imagined to be circular and cyclic, through cultural efforts and formed a circular path so that the world and reality could always renew itself and not run into chaos.⁴⁷

Compared to the cyclic time, there is the linear time in the sense of cultural time construction. Basically, a different feature of both is uniqueness or repeatability. In the historical event, the event presupposes the irreversibility as linear, while in the mystical event the event *Repeatability and availability as a cycle*.⁴⁸ But the two constructions of time are found in every culture, namely, the time of memory and the time of history. That implies the strengthening of the memory by commemoration of the rites and feasts, and this the accountability of the past, to legitimize the present and to establish the future. These time

45 Jan Assmann, “Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte,” 299.

46 Cf. *ibid.*, 299-300.

47 Cf. *ibid.*, 300-301.

48 Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 248.

constructions do not necessarily exclude each other, but are complementary and have a dominant relationship. In Egypt, the cyclical concept of time dominates the cultural memory; in Mesopotamia it is the reverse.⁴⁹

Nevertheless there was in Egypt a place for the historical time: “the grave”. This is the only exception in Egypt that can be read as a retrospective history of individual life. Assmann says that “if there is a nexus somewhere between court and history, then here”.⁵⁰

The Egyptian creates “an imagined end” as a “dead judgment” in his grave. The grave allows him access to the linear time.

The Egyptian settles his grave in his lifetime and composes his biography, while still standing in the middle of life. The end from which he sees it as a linear process is an imagined end. From this end, the events of the linear chaining of a story of which we are reporting can be given an account of the backward-looking gaze. This imagined end is the judgment of the dead. The Egyptian needs the past of his life story to build on this foundation the building of his immortality. Between his earthly life and his eternal life lies the judgment of the dead, before which he justifies himself. The end from which he overlooked his life has a legal, even a tribunal, character.⁵¹

In this sense, the imagined end, i. e. the judgment of the dead, strong as legal and moral, and also the right as a historical generator. This new idea can be compared with eschatology in Christianity, in the

49 Cf. Jan Assmann, “Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte,” 301.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., 300-301.

sense of the anticipation of redemption in this world.

2 Meaning of the event and history

In Egypt the judgment of the dead remains only in the individual dimension. Because the kings are already standing outside this space, they are eternally immortal and need no biographical inscriptions in royal tombs. Conversely, the kings in Mesopotamia need the past to legitimize themselves before the gods. They needed the legitimacy of the royal rule, and the critical evidence on how and why previous dynasties and empires had perished.⁵²

Here is the concept of sin or guilt which “brings meaning in the past, consistency in the sequence of kings and governmental times and coherence in the chain of events”⁵³ and its application plays a very important role. The concept of sin or guilt was interpreted by a dynasty and government as the legitimation of the rule over others and criticism of others. These phenomena appeared in the late Egyptian period, in the Neo-Babylonian dynasty and in China, as the “Mandate of Heaven (天命)”.⁵⁴

The concept of the event has a negative meaning, but its meaning refers to a difference in both realms. The event in Egypt simply connotes the emergence of chaos and contingency. In Mesopotamia there is a theology according to which kings have caused God’s punishment and anger. Common are the negative meaning of the event and the ef-

52 Cf. *ibid.*, 302.

53 *Ibid.*, 303.

54 Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 252-253.

fect of the idea of a court as a generator of meaning and history. As discussed above, the idea of the judgment of the dead in Egypt is directed only to biographical history because it is always about the justification of the individual, but the idea of a divine authority in Mesopotamia seems to be socially prejudicial to the gods temporal through history as an event.⁵⁵

The Egyptians have the idea of a borderless transition from this world to the hereafter. In Mesopotamia this world and the hereafter are strictly separated.

While the Egyptian ideas of judgment of the dead and immortality extend the horizon of meaning of the consequences of actions over the lifetime of the individual addition to the afterlife, the bills have to rise in this life in Mesopotamia. This means that the horizon of the action sequences extends into the succession of generations and dynasties. This is what we call history. What for the Egyptian beyond and immortality, that is for the Mesopotamian history: a horizon of fulfilment.⁵⁶

These ideas and concepts of history are brought to unity in Israel:

In the place of immortality, the Bible continues to live in the generations, and the *historia sacra* takes the place of the judgment of the dead. Thus, Hegel's formula of world history as a world court is already present *in nuce*.⁵⁷

55 Cf. Jan Assmann, "Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte," 303.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

VII. Theologizing of history

The event still remains negative in Egypt, but it becomes history in Mesopotamia. It is about the intervention or the will of the gods in history. The theology of the will of the gods has begun in Mesopotamia.⁵⁸ This model was even accepted in Egypt, that is, from the theology of keeping to the theology of the will of the gods. While the world appears in the cyclical time as the result of divine keeping, the will of the gods is directed to human history, to human action and speaking.⁵⁹

The two phenomena do not yet have a causal meaning, which only appears in Israel. Compared to the mystical event, the historical event is unique in history. In contrast to the cyclic construction of time, the historical event appears as a coincidence. From the nature of the event as irreversibility, it does not imply continuity in cyclic continuity, but discontinuity. It becomes an incentive for memory, historical consciousness, and historiography only when it emerges once more in the future. Therefore, the historical event, which has already been updated, must be published, perpetuated and commemorated. When it is interpreted as a divine intervention and bound to it, such an event is characterized as a charismatic history in Mesopotamia.⁶⁰ According to Assmann's formula: "Egyptian make the rule semiotic, but Mesopotamia the exception".⁶¹

The question of different interpretations of justice - retaliation in the old oriental sphere⁶² - is raised. First, Assmann calls a reason for the

58 Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 234.

59 Cf. Jan Assmann, "Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte," 304.

60 Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 249-250.

61 Ibid., 250.

62 Cf. Jan Assmann, *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt*, 47-48.

state structure. Egypt was a culture of the strong state. Mesopotamia, on the other hand, had a much weaker form of government, but above all a long, cultural phase of polycentric statehood. In Egypt the enforcement of justice is done by the reward of the good and the punishment of the wicked. In Mesopotamia, this is ambiguous, in the domestic and intergovernmental area. There are means of enforcement only in domestic space. Intergovernmentally, the gods must act as guarantors of law and justice. Then they enter the world. This leads to the basic and key concepts of the context “contract”, “oath” and “anger”.⁶³ In other words, to the extent that the foreign policy activities of the participating states submit to the diplomatic order of mutual relations in the space of cuneiform cultures, the gods are necessarily drawn into history more and more.⁶⁴

The problem was that the breach of a contract between states had already occurred. That is why the States needed intergovernmental binding contracts containing curse formulas:⁶⁵ “State contracts extend the horizon of connective justice beyond one's own group to ever larger spatial contexts and raise the awareness of a common world, an “ecumenism”.”⁶⁶

This results in the original model of sin: “In this system, the ruler has the right to be most conscientious in the observance of the contract, and the injustice which breaks a contract. The break of the contract becomes the original model of sin”.⁶⁷

Here, a certain final nexus is presupposed in historiography between

63 Jan Assmann, “Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte,” 304-305.

64 Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 256.

65 Cf. Jan Assmann, “Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte,” 305-307.

66 Ibid., 307.

67 Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 256.

the will of the gods and the destinies between history and man at the same time.⁶⁸ But such a nexus still remains in a retrospective context, not in the context of a world court. Now the theologizing of history is developing into a new dimension, especially in Israel: "God as Lord and the people as the subject of history".⁶⁹

VIII. History as Revelation

In the ancient oriental empires, the king embodies the law, in order to give it a performative validity and to put it into effect. At best, the written right like the "Codex Hammurapi" has only informative relevance. Informative and performative validity of the law is restricted by the kings themselves. But this relationship is being innovatively reversed in Israel. God himself makes the covenant with his people. And the Scripture itself, e.g. the Torah, replaces the performative validity of the law instead of the king.⁷⁰

Not only in writing, but also in historical consciousness the turn unfolds. Assmann explains that Israel is the first society to have reversed the domination of cyclic and linear, mythical and historical, and the time of renewal and responsibility.⁷¹ Here, for the first time, the responsibility period is put in the foreground. History and identity, i.e. the time of the responsibility and the people as the subject of history gain the upper hand over myth and cosmic integration, although Is-

68 Cf. Jan Assmann, "Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte," 303-304.

69 Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 257.

70 Cf. Jan Assmann, *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt*, 47-48.

71 Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 257. This time has to do with the genesis and the end time, that is, eschatology and world court.

rael has long been shaped by Egypt and Mesopotamia.⁷²

Assmann is convinced that the doctrine of accommodation originates from Israel and from there theology, which is the immanent providence of a justice system connected with history, or even, according to Hegel's formula, the "list of reason".⁷³ The list implies the law of Moses and the reason God. This is a bind and union of revelation as the action of God and history. It is the project "to provide a historical explanation for all ritual laws of the Torah".⁷⁴ Over the Mesopotamian theology of the will of the gods, Israel went to universal justice as a generator of history.

As such a generator of history, we have been confronted with the idea of justice and the practice of law, in particular international law, in Mesopotamia, which from that point on prevailed throughout the Near East. It is the idea of a meaningful, rational, and just connection between doing and speaking, to whose watchers the gods are appointed, by being used as swindlers of the treaties of the treaties of righteousness. Thus, history does not originate as such from the will of the gods, but they participate only insofar as they are explicitly included in the history of mankind. This fundamentally changes in ancient Israel, when such a contract is not concluded with another people and sworn by Yahweh, but Yahweh himself is made a partner in such a contract. This gives rise to the idea of the *historia sacra* as the general context of all that arises out of a divine will.⁷⁵

72 Cf. Jan Assmann, "Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte," 307.

73 Cf. *ibid.*, 308.

74 *Ibid.*, 309.

75 *Ibid.*, 310.

It is enough for the Egyptians and Mesopotamians to regard justice as the divine continuance of the relationship to individual life and as a retribution context for action and promulgation for the legitimation of the kings before the gods. Beyond the cyclical and linear times, the intervention of God occurs in Israel, and this seems revolutionary. The historiography of Israel has gradually departed from such retaliation context.

IX. *Iustitia connectiva, iustitia dei* / connective justice, justice of God

The ancient oriental empires lack the causal nexus of doing and speaking. The concept of causality aims at the idea of a natural law. That is why ancient texts are about retaliation, not about causality. The theme of retribution is that the good for man is worthwhile and the evil revenges itself. This principle of retribution is the central concept of justice in the areas of law, religion and morality.⁷⁶

Assmann summarizes the concept of connective justice in the ancient Oriental empires:

1. Justice links people together, creates the basis for social cohesion and solidarity.
2. Justice binds success to action, punishment to crime and thus ensures signification and coherence, for context in the otherwise accidental, incoherent stream of events.⁷⁷

In this sense, Assmann already claims justice as a generator of his-

⁷⁶ Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 232.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 232-233.

tory. Here one can also use the term meaning instead of the concept of history. Here connective justice of which is made up four different ways, for example, universal justice as a retribution of action and pronounce, social justice as a concept of solidarity (not on its own, but only on the basis of a “thinking together” and “for each other-acting”), Political justice (without it no retribution of doing and pronouncing in the States) and religious justice as the presupposition of the theology of the will,⁷⁸ gives meaning and order to the incoherent stream of events. It is the central factor of the connection of the random and scattered events. That is, it is not only “social horizon” but also “time horizon of the validity of legal norms”.⁷⁹

In this context the concept of sin or guilt⁸⁰ is located. The unsaved is due to guilt. In view of the plague and disaster, the question is asked where this catastrophe comes from. That is why one needs the atonement for God and confession of guilt and sacrifice. It follows that “in the sign of guilt the history becomes readable, that means it fulfils itself with meaning, becomes semiotized or de-trivialized”.⁸¹ This connective justice and such a consciousness of history become the punishing will of an angry deity. Therefore, within this horizon, from Mesopotamia to Rome and Israel, suffering is basically interpreted as a punishment and can be healed by reconciling the angry deity and public confession of guilt.⁸²

Compared to the Mesopotamians, the Egyptians have bound the

78 Cf. *ibid.*, 233-234.

79 *Ibid.*, 233.

80 Cf. *ibid.*, 253-254. This concept of guilt develops in the debt history in Israel. It is found in the deuteronomistic historical work and the book of the kings.

81 *Ibid.*, 243.

82 Cf. *ibid.*, 244.

will of the gods to the continuation of the world. Here a theology of the will unfolds and possibly this is also taken over by Israel.⁸³ The Egyptian sustenance or continuation or keeping of the world (In-Gang-Haltung der Welt) means that what is happening is no longer perceived as a break-in of chaos, but as a divine intervention, as an “emanation of the divine creative will” that produces not only time, but also that which is in itself happened.⁸⁴ Such a continuation leads to the salvation of the event. Israel also sustains the tradition of the Passover as cyclical and memorable mandatory, and is thus itself the identity and the subject of history. It has already been explained that in Israel the responsibility period for the first time is placed in the foreground. Israel integrates the idea of the Egyptians and Mesopotamians, and thereby the salvation history develops: “The ‘iustitia connectiva’ becomes the ‘righteousness of God’”.⁸⁵

Compared to the occasionalisation of the historical action of the gods in Mesopotamian theodicy, biblical theodicy, especially in Job, perceives the new categories of connective justice.⁸⁶ While in Mesopotamian history there is still a rhythm of salvation, evil, and anger, the event in the biblical tradition is a world history. The biblical concept of history now gains the universal and unified meaning of the righteousness of God. Nevertheless, a final redemption as the time of responsibility faces the profane history.⁸⁷ The kingdom of God is judgment and end time of responsibility. In the eyes of ancient peoples it appears as an anti-history, because the event no longer recurs.

83 Cf. *ibid.*, 250.

84 Cf. *ibid.*, 251.

85 *Ibid.*, 257.

86 Cf. *ibid.*, see note 42.

87 Cf. *ibid.* 257.

According to Assmann, Hegel formulated this context as follows:

This list [of reason] consists in the fact that God disappears, as it were, in history, which now presupposes in its apparent contingency the secret operation of a Providence. With Hegel's concept of the list of reason, this concept of Providence is radically secularized, and the same can probably be shown for the formula of world history as the judgment of the world.⁸⁸

From Hegel's formula it is hoped that the *iustitia dei* as a faithful truth can be brought together with the truths of experience, the historical and life-giving truths in the world.⁸⁹ Which meaning in history and the “*iustitia connectiva*” can be found? It is valuable to draw attention to the Egyptian connective justice as the concept of solidarity, which must not be considered on its own, but only on the basis of a “thinking together” and “for each other-acting”. This social justice forms the cosmotheism in Egypt. But this justice also can be found in old testament, for example, ex. 20, 20-22,33; Lev 17-26; Dtn 12-26 etc. Without Jan Assmann's premise that monotheism is counter religion or resentment toward polytheism, the connective justice can be found in old testament.⁹⁰ Thus it is able to be shown that theology in Israel has not as a whole given up the connective justice with regard to the Egyptian. This aspect could be missed by Jan Assmann.

88 Jan Assmann, “Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte,” 310-311.

89 Cf. Jan Assmann, *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus* (München/Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2003), 28.

90 Cf. Zenger, *Einleitung in das alte Testament*, 261-262.

X. Resume

One undertakes the reconstruction of the past, on which memory and history are based. But in the reconstruction of history through many different media and archives, historiography is at risk of exposing itself to deliberate deception, manipulation, and ideologisation. In this context, a phenomenon “cultural cleansing” may be thought.

The category “cultural cleansing” can be characterized by the iconoclasm, the conglomeration of the canonization of the texts, the religious constraint, colonialism, imperialism, totalitarianism and all “ism-impressions”. The “cultural cleansing” means uniformity. The language can play a big role in this cultural cleansing.

In fact, the “we-identity” is an imagination that develops language and writing: “The language of violence is abused as a resource in power struggle to build up enemy images and foment anxiety and threat awareness. It is therefore important to historicize these motifs by referring them back to their original situation.”⁹¹ Thus the ideologised and instrumentalised language and writing formulates the concept of the enemy.

This article seeks to show how a concept of sin or guilt in the two realms - Egypt and Mesopotamia - has been initiated into religious consciousness in Israel. Between two realms there are different political system and theology. Israel was a colony of Egypt and Mesopotamia. However, a different kind of the intervention of God occurs in Israel, and this seems revolutionary. This was followed by a new phase of theology. Compared to the Mesopotamians, the Egyptians have bound the will of the gods to the maintenance of the world.

91 Jan Assmann, *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt*, 57.

Here a theology of the will begins and possibly this is taken over by Israel. Such an attitude leads to the salvation of the event. Israel, too, preserves the tradition of Pasha as a cyclical and memorial-obligatory one, and thus becomes the identity and the subject of history.

In Israel, responsibility for the first time is given priority. Israel integrates the idea of the Egyptians and Mesopotamians, and thereby the salvation history develops: The “iustitia connectiva” becomes the “iustitia dei”. Here, justice generates the story. For this reason, Assmann interprets the ruse of Hegel's reason and world history as a world judgment in the context of the historical concept of the Bible.

But is the link between cause and effect always necessary? In my opinion, one strives to find the meaning of history and its ultimate reason. The history of the divine in Egypt and the intervention of gods in Mesopotamia is the search for a secret. Unbroken truth-seeking questioning method and the “absolute emptiness (空虛)” in Buddhism, “Tai-Chi (太極)” in the “Yin-Yang” theory of “I-Ching(易經, the book of conversions)” in Confucianism and “Tao (道)” or “the absolute nothingness (絕對無)” in Taoism are looking for a meaning of life and death.

Also Henrich's claim that “the deviation from the conceptual form of the rationally developed world relation”⁹² can be applied in order to go beyond the question of the link between cause and effect. The indispensable answer to the “iustitia connectiva” lies in the middle of history throughout the West and East. The connection between cause and effect can be there.

It is only from the cultural construction of the “iustitia connectiva”

92 Dieter Henrich, *Bewußtes Leben: Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von Subjektivität und Metaphysik* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1999), 38.

that the commemorative imperative results: "You must remember! Thou shalt not forget!", which in each individual culture is defined in a specific way as a historical sense.⁹³ Therefore the *iustitia connectiva* serves as *iustitia dei* with the new basis of non-violence. The concept of solidarity, which must not be considered on its own, but from "thinking together" and "for each other-acting", must be supported by the principle of "global thinking" and "local action"⁹⁴ ("glocal-Thinking-action").

One can find a religious revolution in history of Israel. Even though the Israelites suffered from Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultural, religious and political – instrumentalised language, colonialism and cultural cleansing - oppression, they could promote their own theology and integrate Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures into their cultures. They found a new concept of sin, time and God. It is very significant that they have continued and expanded such a theology. Israelite learned both realms, but developed a new and revolutionary religion. Thus, one gets a meaning that the Kingdom of God not only connects with the individual, but also with the community through responsibility and justice. This is a very significant contribution to all humanity.

Bibliography

- Assmann, Aleida. *Einführung in die Kulturwissenschaft: Grundbegriffe, Themen, Fragestellungen*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2011.
- Assmann, Jan. *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt*. Wien: Picus Verlag, 2009⁵.
- _____. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis, Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2007.
- _____. *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus*. München/Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2003.
- _____. "Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte", In *Die Weltgeschichte – das Weltgericht?*, edited by Rüdiger Bubner und Walter Mesch, 296-311. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 2001.
- Churchill. Ward, *Acts of rebellion: "The Ward Churchill reader*. New York/London: Routledge, 2003.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion: Schriften über die Religion*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2009.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik, Gesammelte Werke Band 1*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1999.
- Hegel, G.W.F. *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, Werke in zwanzig Bänden 7*. edited by Eva Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970.
- _____. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte, Werke 12*. edited by Eva Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970.

- Henrich, Dieter. *Bewußtes Leben: Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von Subjektivität und Metaphysik*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1999.
- Hornung, Erik. *Echnaton: Die Religion des Lichtes*. Zürich: Artemis & Winkler Verlag, 1995.
- _____. *Der Eine und die Vielen: Ägyptische Gottesvorstellungen*. Darmstadt: WBG, 1971.
- Ineichen, Hans. *Philosophische Hermeneutik*. Freiburg-München: Karl Alber Verlag, 1991.
- Kosellek, Reinhart. *Begriffsgeschichten: Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2010.
- Zenger, Erich. *Einleitung in das alte Testament*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer GmbH, 2015.

Received 2017. 11. 15.	Revised 2017. 12. 12.	Accepted 2017. 12. 13.
------------------------	-----------------------	------------------------