

University of
St Andrews

St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology

Sacrifice and the Old Testament

Roy E. Gane

First published: 17 August 2022

https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/SacrificeandtheOldTestament

Citation

Gane, Roy E. 2022. 'Sacrifice and the Old Testament', *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*. Edited by Brendan N. Wolfe et al. https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/SacrificeandtheOldTestament Accessed: 29 October 2024

Copyright information

Copyright © Roy E. Gane CC BY-NC

ISSN 2753-3492

Sacrifice and the Old Testament

Roy E. Gane

This article introduces the reader to ancient sacrificial rituals that the biblical authors regarded as acceptable to their God, as they are portrayed in Old Testament Hebrew texts. These texts, especially instructions in the Pentateuch regarding the system of Israelite sacrifices to be performed at the wilderness sanctuary, indicate the nature of such ritual worship, differentiate between several kinds of sacrifice and their functions, and reveal profound theological concepts. There are various scholarly approaches to the study of sacrifice and to texts concerning this practice, and scientific knowledge can enhance comprehension of some features of sacrifice. Investigation of sacrifice can yield spiritual insights that are beneficial both for the individual believer and for the community of faith. An appendix to the article considers Old Testament attestations of sacrifice apart from the pentateuchal texts concerning the Israelite ritual system.

Keywords: Sacrifice, Ancient Israel, Israelite worship, Sin, Purification, Atonement

Table of contents

1 Introduction

2 The nature of sacrifice

2.1 Offering to a deity in a ritualized manner

2.2 Main characteristics of a sacrifice

2.3 Approaches to the study of sacrifice

3 Texts regarding sacrifices

3.1 Questions of tradition, date, and development

4 The Israelite sacrificial system in the Pentateuch

4.1 Establishment of the Israelite sanctuary system

4.2 Differences between Israelite sacrifices

4.2.1 Materials

4.2.2 Voluntary or required

4.2.3 Combinations

4.3 Theology of Israelite sacrifices

4.3.1 Burnt offering

4.3.2 Well-being offering

4.3.3 Purification offering, including on the Day of Atonement

4.3.4 Reparation offering

4.3.5 Non-animal sacrifices

5 Sacrifice and science

6 Sacrifice and the believer

7 Sacrifice and the community

8 Appendix: Sacrifices outside Pentateuchal texts concerning the sanctuary system

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Historical narratives

8.2.1 Before the establishment of the Israelite sanctuary

8.2.2 After the establishment of the Israelite sanctuary

8.3 Prophetic writings

8.4 Wisdom literature

8.5 Human sacrifice

1 Introduction

Imagine coming to the ancient Israelite sanctuary early in the morning. You enter the courtyard by passing through a screen made of linen embroidered with blue, purple, and red yarns. In front of you is a bronze altar with 'horns' projecting from the tops of its four corners. Smoke is rising from the altar as the remaining fat of the previous evening's sacrifice continues to burn. Ashes have been removed from the altar and the fire is stoked with wood.

A priest wearing a tunic, a sash around his waist, and a headband comes into the courtyard, leading a young sheep. He holds the animal in place near the altar and another priest hands him a knife. He quickly slits the throat of the sheep, so that blood gushes out into a basin held by the other priest. The sheep bleats, but soon loses consciousness and becomes still. The second priest takes the basin and tosses the blood onto the sides of the altar. Then the priests cut up the sheep and place most pieces of the animal on the altar fire. However, they wash the entrails and lower legs with water to remove any dung and then add these parts to the fire. This is a reconstructed description of the regular morning burnt offering, the smoke of which ascends to God as a 'pleasing aroma' on behalf of the entire nation of Israel. It serves as a token food gift to God, along with its accompanying grain offering and drink offering (Num 28:1–8; cf. Lev 1:10–13).

According to the Old Testament, sacrifice was a key way to access, worship, and interact with God – the deity whose personal name was YHWH (perhaps pronounced 'Yahweh'), which is usually translated as 'the Lord'. In this context, a 'sacrifice' was an offering that was given over to a deity in a ritualized manner, that is, through an activity system that was designed in such a way that it acknowledged belief in transcendent power, such as a divine being. God was seen to have instituted sacrifice as a powerfully evocative multi-purpose means for faulty human beings to demonstrate faith in him, draw near to him, receive his covenant to become his holy people, maintain his presence with them, be freed from guilt, regain purity, and celebrate his salvific actions on their behalf (see Reconciliation). It is impossible to comprehend Old Testament religion without understanding the crucial role of sacrifice.

The scope of this article is restricted to sacrifices that were legitimate, or possibly legitimate, according to the Hebrew Bible; it does not deal with sacrifices to deities other than YHWH, idolatrous sacrifice to YHWH, or syncretistic worship that blended Yahwistic and pagan elements. The article does not analyse combinations of several kinds of sacrifices (e.g. Lev 8–9, 14, 16) in detail. It does not cover the reception history of the biblical sacrificial texts, such as in the Septuagint translation, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the writings of Philo, the New Testament and subsequent Christian literature, and rabbinic writings; nor

does it fully engage the plethora of scholarly debates over diachronic issues concerning the authorship and dating of the biblical texts.

2 The nature of sacrifice

2.1 Offering to a deity in a ritualized manner

In modern secular usage, ‘sacrifice’ involves giving up something, often for a good cause. However, religious sacrifices recorded or referred to in the Bible were offerings that were given over to a deity in a ritualized manner. This sense of ‘sacrifice’ evokes mystery and awe that is uncommon in modern Western experience.

‘Sacrifice’ is a subset of ‘ritual’, so definition of ‘sacrifice’ partly depends on definition of ‘ritual’, regarding which there is a wide variety of perspectives (e.g. Klingbeil 2007: 14–18; Snoek 2008; Watts 2013: 58–64). Catherine Bell has convincingly contended that ‘ritual’ does not exist as an isolated category of behavioural phenomena, so she prefers to speak of ‘ritualization’. For her, ritualized activity is ‘a situational and strategic activity that can only be recognized and understood precisely *in relation* to other activities’ (Aslan, ‘Foreword’ to Bell 2009: vii). Bell defines a ritualized version of an activity as:

> a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities. As such, ritualization is a matter of various culturally specific strategies for setting some activities off from others, for creating and privileging a qualitative distinction between the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane,’ and for ascribing such distinctions to realities thought to transcend the powers of human actors. (Bell 2009: 74)

Ritualization in the Old Testament can be seen in the comparison between Abraham’s ordinary (although exemplary) hospitality and the sacrificial rituals, i.e. ritualizations, at the Israelite sanctuary. Abraham provided three strangers with a meal of meat, bread, and drink, such as he would give to other people in a similar social situation. It turned out that his guests were YHWH and two angels. They appeared and consumed food and drink as human beings, so Abraham’s hospitable actions were ordinary and therefore non-ritual and non-sacrificial in form (Gen 18; cf. 19:1), even though his guests were very special (cf. Heb 13:2 NRSV, NASB 1995: he ‘entertained angels without knowing it’).

By contrast, the processes of offering meat, grain, and drink items to YHWH at the Israelite sanctuary were ritualized – i.e. set apart from ordinary analogous activities – although they utilized commonplace elements (cf. Smith 2003: 330). Several factors showed ritualization: YHWH required performance at a certain place (his sacred altar at his sacred sanctuary space), by certain persons (elite cultic personnel, i.e. consecrated priests), and in a certain manner, whereby he received his ‘meals’ in the form of smoke ascending toward his celestial abode in heaven (Lev 1–3; Num 15:1–16; cf. Ps 11:4 NJPS, CEB, ‘His throne

is in heaven'). These were sacrifices, in which activities were carefully controlled and choreographed in dynamic models of ideal forms of meaningful and successful interaction with the deity, which would influence human attitudes and behaviours in everyday life (cf. Smith 1982: 63).

The meaning of a word is defined by the way in which it is used in various contexts. However, the term 'sacrifice' is employed with so many different value-laden connotations that it might be tempting to give up on finding a definition that identifies and describes a certain sub-category of ritual (Watts 2011: 3–16). Nevertheless, Hebrew terminology provides guidance for understanding what the Old Testament means by 'sacrifice'.

In the Old Testament, the essence of what made an activity system a sacrifice was the element of approaching the transcendent deity, when he was not in human form, to offer something to him through ritualized activity. This kind of approach, which is like a heightened form of approach to a human ruler (cf. Wellhausen 1885: 61), is expressed in Hebrew by terms from the root *q-r-b* or – less frequently – from *n-g-š* (both in Mal 1:8; cf. Judg 3:17; 1 Kgs 5:1 [Eng. 4:21]). Verbal forms of *q-r-b* in sacrificial contexts include the *qal* form that means 'draw near/approach', as when a priest approaches the altar to offer a sacrifice there (Exod 40:32; Lev 9:7–8; 21:17–18); and the much more frequent *hiphil* (in this case causative) form that means 'bring near/offer/present', as when a non-priest brings a victim or grain item to the sanctuary and a priest offers it on the altar (e.g. Lev 1:2–3, 5, 10, 13–15; 2:1, 4, 8 [with synonymous *hiphil* of *n-g-š*]; *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* 7:304–5; 308–11). The noun from the same root is *qorbān* (e.g. 1:2, 3, 10, 14; 2:1, 4–5, 7), which can be rendered 'offering/gift/sacrifice' (*DCH* 7:316). This is the broadest Hebrew term for 'sacrifice' in pentateuchal ritual law, under which specific categories of sacrifices can be subsumed (e.g. Lev 1:3, 'if his *qorbān* is an *ōlâ*, "burnt offering"'; cf. 2:1; 3:1; 4:32; Fabry 2004: 155–6; cf. Eberhart 2011b: 22–29 on this and other key terms for sacrifice).

The function of *qorbān* as the overall biblical Hebrew term for 'sacrifice' is reinforced by appearance of this noun and verbs from the same root at strategic points of introduction: in Lev 1:2; at the beginning of the sacrificial instructions in Leviticus 1–7; and in Lev 9:7–8 for the first officiation of the newly consecrated high priest. The sacrificial nature of actions and objects indicated by the *hiphil* of *q-r-b* and the noun *qorbān* is shown by the use of these terms in Leviticus 27 only for sacrifices (vv. 9, 11); they are not used to refer to gifts to God that are transferred to his ownership in a non-ritual manner. However, in Numbers 7 and 31:50, these terms are employed in a broader, less technical sense for special non-sacrificial gifts to YHWH consisting of valuable objects (cf. Mark 7:11).

A person or group can donate something to a deity without a ritual by simple transfer facilitated by the priest(s) of that deity (e.g. Lev 27). This kind of offering gives up

something for a good cause, but it is not a religious sacrifice per se. A religious sacrifice emphasizes the transcendence of the divine recipient through performance of the process of sanctification – that is, making the offering holy in a special way that sets the transfer apart from ordinary activity.

While sacrifices are special, they are not isolated from non-sacrificial activities. A ritual complex may include both sacrificial and non-sacrificial rituals. For example, the consecration of the sanctuary and its priests involved applications of anointing oil and several kinds of sacrifices (Lev 8). The Day of Atonement service (Lev 16) featured special purification offerings and also the non-sacrificial ritual of Azazel's goat (vv. 20–22).

A prerequisite or postrequisite activity, i.e. an activity that is required before or after a particular ritual or combination of rituals, may itself be ritual but non-sacrificial in nature. For example, the high priest is required to bathe before he officiates the Day of Atonement service (16:4b). On the other hand, assistants who release Azazel's live goat in the wilderness and incinerate sacrificial carcasses outside the Israelite camp must subsequently undergo ritual purification by washing their clothes and bathing before re-entering the camp (vv. 26, 28).

Sacrifices are dependent on non-ritual prerequisite activities, such as choosing (including inspecting), gathering, and preparing offering materials and moving them to the location of sacrifice (e.g. Lev 1:3; 2:4–8). There may also be non-ritual postrequisite activities, such as removing ashes from an altar (Lev 6:3–4 [Eng. vv. 10–11]), or cleansing or disposing of a vessel in which sacrificial flesh has been boiled (v. 21 [Eng. v. 28]).

Sacrifices officiated by authorized cultic personnel at regional or national shrines are supported by many non-sacrificial activities. These can include constructing, supplying, protecting, and otherwise sustaining the shrine's infrastructure and performing some regular non-sacrificial rituals there (e.g. Exod 30:7–8, tending and lighting lamps) to maintain sacred space.

2.2 Main characteristics of a sacrifice

Building on and supplementing the discussion thus far, salient characteristics of a 'sacrifice' are as follows:

(1) A sacrifice is a kind of ritual – that is, an activity system that is 'designed and orchestrated' (Bell 2009: 74; see above) in such a way that it acknowledges belief in transcendent power, such as a deity. An activity system is defined and bounded by its goal, and the goal of a ritual activity system involves interaction with, or signification of, something beyond the mundane sphere (Gane 2004b: 30, 52–53, 58–61, 68–70; Gane 2005: 12–18). In the case of Israelite ritual (including

sacrifice), the designer and orchestrator who established the fixed, formulaic procedures was, according to the biblical narrative, the deity YHWH himself.

(2) The distinctive, privileged characteristics of sacrificial activities acknowledge the transcendence of the divine recipient. However, the deity simultaneously indicates his (or, in cases of ancient Near Eastern goddesses, her) immanence by accepting offerings from human beings. Non-Israelite cults signified divine immanence through images/idols or symbols, but YHWH's presence at his sanctuary in a glory cloud among his people needed no such material representation (e.g. Exod 25:8; Exod 40:34–Lev 1:1; Lev 16:2; Num 7:89; Deut 4:7, 'a god so near').

(3) Because a ritual is an activity system, it is hierarchical in that one or more activities are embedded in an individual ritual. In turn, an individual ritual can be embedded in one or more stages of higher-level activity systems, which can be termed 'ritual complexes' (Gane 2004b: 75–77). For example, in Num 28:11–14 a corporate Israelite sacrifice at the beginning of every month is called an *'ōlâ*, 'burnt offering' (singular, collective). This overall burnt offering, a higher-level activity system, includes ten individual burnt offerings, each of which is combined in a lower level activity system with an accompanying grain and drink offering.

(4) Inherent in sacrifice is the social concept of reciprocity (Burkert 2004: 326): a human being offers (or vows to offer) something to a deity in hope of receiving some kind of relational or material benefit (e.g. Judg 11:30-31; 2 Sam 15:8). However, the benefits a divine being can bestow far outweigh the value of a sacrifice, so the sacrifice really amounts to a mere token expression of devotion, loyalty, and thanks to the deity.

(5) A sacrifice is a transaction (i.e. a transfer of something of value) from a human being to a deity, but such an offering is not necessarily a voluntary gift. It can be mandatory 'homage/tribute' (Lev 6:13–16 [Eng. vv. 20–23], high priest's *minḥâ*), or a required expiatory remedy for a moral offence (Lev 4–5 [Eng. 4:1–6:7]) or a severe physical ritual impurity (12:6–8; 14:10–32; 15:14–15, 29–30; Num 19). The *ḥaṭṭā't* sacrifice, which can be rendered 'purification offering' (so-called 'sin offering'; see Milgrom 1991: 253–254), is never called an *'iššeh*, '(food) gift' (Milgrom 1991: 161–162), reflecting its function as a token debt payment, rather than as a gift.

(6) Interpreted meanings and symbolic functions are not inherent in ritual activities, but are attached to them by some kind of authority. Such authority can be, for example, social/cultural convention or tradition; or, in the case of religious rituals (such as sacrifices), the religious authority of a deity or priests. According to the biblical narrative, the authority behind all aspects of the Israelite ritual system – including its infrastructure, rules, procedures, and meanings/functions – was YHWH, who conveyed his instructions through Moses.

(7) Meanings are not inherent in activities, although some kinds of activities naturally lend themselves to association with certain kinds of meanings (Hundley 2011: 33–34). Therefore, a given activity can carry different meanings in different contexts. According to Leviticus 16, within the same Day of Atonement ritual, a sevenfold sprinkling of blood purges (the verb is the *piel* of *k-p-r*) the inner sanctum of the Israelite sanctuary (Lev 16:14–16), but another sevenfold sprinkling of blood on the outer altar (re)consecrates (*piel* of *q-d-š*) this sacred object (v. 19). Conversely, different activities can carry the same meaning, as in Leviticus 1, where burnt offerings of herd and flock animals and that of a bird achieve the same goal – that is, 'a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord' (vv. 9, 13, 17 ESV), even though the procedure with a bird (vv. 15-17) significantly differs from the set of activities that process a quadruped animal, due to the different physical nature of the creature.

(8) Sacrificial materials most often consist of food and drink, which are utilized in table fellowship that initiates, maintains, or renews social bonds (e.g. Gen 31:54). Such a 'meal' is representative of the offerer's best fare, which could be placed before an honoured guest. If the food consists of or includes meat, an expensive luxury food, it is from a domestic animal (cf. Smith 2003: 332) that the offerer would own and keep for special meals. Meat from domestic animals is appropriate for the additional reason that reciprocity (see above) calls for humans to give the deity something of value from among their possessions (cf. 2 Sam 24:24 ESV, 'I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing').

(9) Meat necessitates the slaughter of one or more animals. However, in Israelite contexts slaughter is not the climax of a sacrifice or its sanctity (Gane 2004b: 341; against Hubert and Mauss 1964: 32–33, 44-45). Rather, it is the means to an end: to obtain meat, and/or blood in some sacrifices around the Mediterranean (including Israel). As mentioned above, killing an animal is not an essential element of sacrifice.

(10) A sacrifice often involves the destruction of the offering material, as when animal parts or a grain item are burned on an altar so that the smoke goes upward, signifying transfer to the deity. However, presentation offerings, which were common in ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Anatolia, were simply placed on a table or stand before a deity. In the ancient Near East (ANE), such offerings were part of the care and feeding of the gods, who were viewed as dependent on human food (Hundley 2013: 44–45, 99, 281–283). By contrast, the exceptional 'bread of the Presence' presentation offering of twelve loaves on the golden table in the outer sanctum of the Israelite sanctuary (Exod 25:30; Lev 24:5–9) was to be eaten by the priests once per week when it was renewed on the Sabbath (Lev 24:9), which served as a reminder of the creation story (cf. Exod 31:12–17). Only the frankincense placed on it served as a 'memorial portion' (*'azkārâ*), implying

that it would be burned for YHWH (Lev 24:7; cf. 2:2, 9, 16). By having only the incense utilized for himself, YHWH showed that he did not need human food (Ps 50:13). To the contrary, he was the resident Creator-Provider of the Israelites who provided their food (Gane 1992).

2.3 Approaches to the study of sacrifice

Sacrifice is a multi-faceted phenomenon, involving performance with theological significance. It also communicates social meaning – involving the worldview and moral system of a group – to its participants (analysed by Janzen 2004). Therefore, interpreters have approached sacrifice from several angles. The following are examples of some helpful current approaches to sacrifice.

Gerald A. Klingbeil identifies several 'dimensions' of ritual (including sacrifice): (1) the *interactive* dimension in which ritual serves as a social facilitator; (2) the *collective* dimension in which ritual can presuppose, facilitate, or disrupt community; (3) the *traditionalizing innovation* dimension in which ritual action can involve some change and innovation while retaining core elements, and the innovations can become normative; (4) the *communicative* dimension in which ritual communicates various kinds of messages; (5) the *symbolic* dimension in which symbolic actions are used for communication/expression; (6) the *multimedia* dimension that employs visible, polyvalent symbols involving elements such as particular body language, dress, ornaments, and design of sacred space to produce powerful communication; (7) the *performance* dimension of play-acting according to recognized conventions, (8) the *aesthetic* dimension that conveys a pleasing quality to the senses, which can affect the emotions; (9) the *strategic* dimension that maintains or establishes social power structures; and (10) the *integrative* dimension, resulting from a number of the other dimensions, in which ritual facilitates the formation of new social relationships that create community (Klingbeil 2007: 208–225).

Roy E. Gane has introduced analysis of rituals as human activity systems defined by their interpreted goals, and as performance units structured by 'ritual syntax' that consists of rule-governed (including hierarchical) logical relationships in patterns of activity (Gane 2004b). Naphtali S. Meshel has developed the concept that ritual is rule-governed activity into what he calls a 'grammar' of the idealized sacrificial system presented in the Priestly instructions of the Pentateuch. This non-linguistic 'grammar' involves the categories of *zoemics*, the kinds of animals used as victims; *jugation*, or rules for combinations of animal and non-animal sacrificial materials; *hierarchics*, or the tiered structuring of sacrificial processes; and *praxemics*, the physical activities of sacrifices (Meshel 2014; 2015).

Saul M. Olyan has explored ways in which the Israelite cultic system and related settings served as environments for creating distinctions between individuals and groups that produced a hierarchical social order. His study focuses on four such distinctions: binary

oppositions between holy versus common, unclean versus clean, native versus alien, and whole versus blemished (Olyan 2000).

William K. Gilders has observed the paucity of explicit explanation in biblical ritual texts and has turned to Nancy Jay's approach to the analysis of ritual activities as 'indexes' in order to discover additional significance in sacrificial performances involving blood manipulation (Gilders 2004: 5–8; citing Jay 1992: 6–7). Whereas a 'symbol' is a sign to which meaning is only attached, an 'index' is a sign that is inherently linked to its referent. For example, in the covenant-making ritual complex recounted in Exod 24:3–8, Moses sent some young men to offer sacrifices, but only Moses manipulated the blood, thereby implicitly 'indexing'/signifying his superior cultic status. Moses applied the blood both to an altar for YHWH and to the Israelite people, thereby establishing an existential relationship between the deity and the people that was 'indexed' by the blood applications (Gilders 2004: 38, 41, 58–59).

Frank Gorman has differentiated between three categories of rituals, including sacrifices, in terms of their overall functions. First, rituals of founding (such as the consecration and inauguration rituals described in Lev 8–9) put the ritual system into proper running order. Second, cyclical rituals of maintenance keep the ritual system working properly, as in the regular (*tāmîd*) daily rituals with incense, lamps, burnt offerings, and bread that constitute usual service by the priests for YHWH at his sanctuary (Exod 29:38–42; 30:7–8; Lev 24:2–4; Num 28:1–8). Third, rituals of restoration – such as expiatory sacrifices throughout the year (e.g. Num 4:1–5:2 [Eng. 4:1–6:7]) and the Day of Atonement ritual complex that purges sins and impurities from the sanctuary and camp (Lev 16) – return the ritual system (with the relationship between YHWH and his people) to the normative state (Gorman 1993).

We can add a fourth category: non-cyclical rituals of enhancement contribute to the health of relationships between individuals and the deity, such as through the voluntary homage (*minḥâ*) of a grain offering (Lev 2) or through a tangible expression of praise and/or trust by means of a well-being offering motivated by thanksgiving, a vow, or an unspecified 'freewill' desire (Lev 7:12–16; cf. Anderson 1991).

The biblical textual evidence for the nature of 'sacrifice' can be compared with anthropological perspectives regarding the nature of sacrifice in general (cf. Eberhart 2002: 187–221 for critiques of traditional theories concerning the meaning of Old Testament sacrifice). Here are three examples of important anthropological theories of sacrifice by Girard, van Baal, and Turner. René Girard sought for the origin of sacrifice in the cultural evolution of the human species and proposed that sacrifice originated as a mechanism to transfer the violence of a human social group to a substitute animal victim

that was eliminated from the community by killing it (Girard 1977: 1–38; introduced and reprinted in Carter 2003: 239–275).

Jan van Baal developed a ‘communication theory’ of sacrifice, according to which sacrifice is a special kind of offering, i.e. gift-giving, that enables humans to communicate with the divine realm of the universe by killing a sacrificial victim and putting an end to its material presence (Baal 1976: 161–178; introduced and reprinted in Carter 2003: 276–291).

Victor Turner was inspired by Arnold van Gennep’s analysis of ‘rites of passage’, a category of rituals that effect transformation for individuals by taking them to new social identities and statuses through phases of separation, transition, and incorporation (Gennep 1960: 10–11; cf. Carter 2003: 292–293). Turner extended Gennep’s approach by arguing that entire communities undergo such transformations: ‘Sacrifice, by virtue of the radical change it inflicts upon a victim, namely its death or destruction, adds an additional level of symbolic efficacy in the effort to alter the moral condition of the social order. Ultimately, Turner presents what could be called a ‘“transformation theory” of sacrifice’ (Turner 1977: 208–215, introduced and reprinted in Carter 2003: 292–300).

The theories just summarized are not mutually exclusive. Old Testament sacrifices included a kind of substitution (see further below), communicative/interactive gift-giving to the deity, and transformations of various kinds. However, just as the meaning of a given word should be sought in its usage rather than its etymology, the nature of a developed system of sacrifice does not depend on its origin (cf. Smith 2003: 330). Moreover, killing is not essential to sacrifice because legitimate sacrificial materials can consist of non-animal items, such as grain (e.g. Lev 2; 5:11–13; 24:5–9). When sacrificial slaughter does occur, it is not necessarily more violent than ordinary slaughter of an animal for meat (see below).

3 Texts regarding sacrifices

Sacrifices are activity systems, which texts are not (cf. Rappaport 1999: 37). Texts, including biblical texts, tend to provide selective, incomplete information concerning sacrificial activities and their functions. In many cases it would be difficult to perform and understand a sacrifice correctly and thoroughly in all respects by relying on textual data alone. Nevertheless, it appears that Jacob Milgrom has closed one important gap in our knowledge by showing that while the Old Testament does not explicitly define the verb *š-ḥ-ṭ*, ‘slaughter/kill’ (e.g. Lev 1:5, 11; 3:2, 8, etc.), it is most likely a technical term meaning ‘slit the throat’ (Milgrom 1991: 154-155; cf. 2 Kgs 10:7).

Theoretically, a text’s interpretation of a ritual, including a sacrifice, can differ from that of those who actually performed the ritual (cf. Gilders 2004: 6). However, when a text provides our only record of a particular ritual, the basis of our understanding is necessarily restricted to any indications or clues regarding the ritual that the text has to offer. The Old

Testament provides most of our data specifically attesting the components of the Israelite ritual system, although archaeological discoveries shed light on some material aspects and provide general background information (see sections 3.1 and 5 below). Therefore, we must rely mainly on the biblical interpretations regarding sacrificial functions, which, according to the narrative, were assigned by YHWH from the inception of the system. Whatever the personal beliefs of the interpreter may be, methodological integrity requires that modern analysis take into account the religious worldview within which the biblical sacrifices are said to operate according to the primary extant source: the Bible.

The Old Testament has no unique literary genre for ritual texts. Information concerning sacrifices is conveyed through two genres: law, which is prescriptive; and narrative, which is descriptive. The instructions for sacrifices in Leviticus 1–7 are presented as divine law, mostly in conditional casuistic (case law) formulations (e.g. Lev 1:2 ESV, 'When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD…') that outline patterns/paradigms of procedures to be followed in an indefinite number of future ritual performances. Some rules regarding sacrifices are in unconditional (non-casuistic) format as straightforward commands (e.g. Lev 2:11 ESV: 'No grain offering that you bring to the LORD shall be made with leaven'). By contrast, Leviticus 8–10 is descriptive narrative, recounting the one-time consecration of the sanctuary and priests, followed by the inaugural first officiation of the priests and its tragic aftermath.

The prescriptions for sacrifices contain two basic kinds of information: specifications of activities, such as, 'He shall lean his hand on the head of the burnt offering', and some interpretations of activities, such as the following words: 'and it will be accepted for him to expiate on his behalf' (Lev 1:4, author's translation). 'Expiate' renders the *piel* of *k-p-r*, the basic meaning of which is 'effect removal' (Gilders 2004: 29).

The interpretations regarding this burnt offering of a herd animal and other sacrifices are sparse. In the case of the burnt offering, several actions do not need separate interpretations because they are simply necessary for the process of preparing food, which in this case is meat, to be burned on the altar for YHWH (Lev 1:5a, 6-9a). The hand-leaning is not necessary for this process, so its function is explained: the gesture affirms the identity of the person who is offering his or her animal to God so that this individual will gain the benefit of expiation (v. 4; Wright 1986). The activity that brings the burnt offering to completion is accompanied by a statement of the goal/purpose of the ritual, which is crucial for understanding it as a whole: 'And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD' (Lev 1:9b ESV).

The textual interpretations illustrated thus far tell us what sacrifices do, such as to offer a food gift (to the deity) or to remove sin or impurity. This kind of information can be called 'instrumental meaning' (Gilders 2004: 5). However, such explanations do not directly tell

us what particular ritual elements symbolize. Explicit indications of ‘symbolic meaning’ are rare in Old Testament ritual texts. The only symbolic interpretation of sacrificial blood is found in Lev 17:11, where ‘the life of the flesh is in the blood’ (NJPS; see further below).

The order in which the core sacrificial prescriptions appear in Leviticus 1–16 is logical, and therefore effective for teaching the procedures (on such logic, see Gane 2015). The book begins in chapters 1–3 with previously known categories of sacrifices that individual Israelites could voluntarily offer. Leviticus 4–5 (Eng. 4:1–6:7) introduce two new kinds of mandatory expiatory sacrifices that were instituted with the establishment of the sanctuary: purification offerings and reparation offerings. It makes sense in terms of didactic effectiveness that Leviticus 1–5 (Eng. 1:1–6:7) introduce the five basic categories of sacrifices – burnt, grain, well-being, purification, and reparation offerings – one at a time, before supplementary instructions in Leviticus 6–7 that are primarily for the priests. This avoids excessive complexity of presentation (Eng. 6:8–7:38; Gane 2015: 211).

The instructions in Leviticus 1–7 concerning the basic kinds of sacrifices are placed before the narrative of the consecration and inauguration services in Leviticus 8–10, which combine several kinds of sacrifices in higher level ritual complexes. These elaborate services to initiate the ritual system necessarily took place before the priests could officiate the sacrifices of individuals in Leviticus 1–7, but the text moves from the simple to the more complex so that the reader/hearer can understand what is going on without being overwhelmed at the outset by the details of complicated procedures (Gane 2015: 202-203).

Leviticus 11–15 give instructions regarding physical ritual impurities. This section logically precedes Leviticus 16, regarding the Day of Atonement, when physical impurities are purged from the sanctuary along with moral faults (vv. 16, 19; Gane 2015: 203).

In addition to didactic logic, the sacrificial prescriptions in Leviticus 1–16 show evidence of persuasive rhetoric (Watts 2007: 2011). Most significantly, these instructions are presented as divine speeches to Moses, who was to communicate the messages to his people (e.g. Lev 1:1–2; 4:1–2; 5:14). Additionally, for example, in Leviticus 1–7 ‘the frequent mention of “you/your” in these chapters seems intended to reinforce in the intended audience the sense of authoritative instructions directed at them’ (Watts 2007: 47).

Following Leviticus 1–16, which lay out the core of the sacrificial system (see above and further below), Leviticus 17–26 provide what is commonly known as the ‘Holiness Code’ (with Lev 27 often viewed as an appendix). Some of these chapters supply reminders and additional information regarding sacrifice. For example, Leviticus 17 reinforces the requirement to sacrifice only at the sanctuary (during Israel’s wilderness wanderings) and the prohibition of eating meat with its blood (cf. 3:17; 7:26). Additionally, sacrificeable species of animals may be slaughtered for food only as well-being offerings.

Leviticus 23 gives directions for the observance of festivals, and 24:5–9 provides instructions for making the ‘bread of the Presence’ and placing it on the table in the sanctuary.

Pentateuchal books before and after Leviticus also contribute to our knowledge of sacrifices. The narratives of Genesis and Exodus recount occasions of sacrificial worship by patriarchs from early times and continuing into the worship culture of the Israelite nation (see Appendix), to which additional sacrificial procedures were added (e.g. Exod 12; Lev 4–9, 16).

Several passages in the book of Numbers provide instructions regarding sacrifices. These include, for example, supplementary information concerning restitution preceding reparation offerings (Num 5:6–8); directions for sacrifices by Nazirites (6:10–12, 14–21); specification of grain and drink offerings to accompany some kinds of sacrifices (15:3–16); reiteration of the provision for purification offerings in cases of inadvertent sin, with revision of the sacrifice for the community (vv. 22-29); the prescription for the red cow ritual to provide ashes for purification from corpse impurity (Num 19); and a liturgical calendar outlining corporate sacrifices (Num 28–29).

In Deuteronomy, when the Israelites are safely settled in the land of Canaan, they must offer sacrifices and celebrate their festivals only at the central place of worship that God will choose (Deut 12, 16). However, if they live too far from there (unlike in Lev 17), they will be allowed to slaughter their sacrificeable domestic animals for meat where they dwell, provided that they drain out the blood (Deut 12:15–16, 20–25). In Deuteronomy 21, an elimination ritual to free the community from responsibility for an unsolved murder involves breaking the neck of a heifer (vv. 1–9), but this is not a sacrifice because nothing is offered to the deity and the mode of slaughter is non-sacrificial (Wright 1987a).

3.1 Questions of tradition, date, and development

Through many centuries, pre-modern Jewish and Christian expositors of biblical sacrificial texts primarily sought aspects of relevance to their religious communities. They did this by applying literal or various kinds of spiritual (including allegorical, etc.) modes of interpretation (Gane 1999: 54–56; Elliott 2012). Modern interpreters generally reject spiritualizing methodologies, focusing rather on plain sense exegesis informed by ritual theory, cultural anthropology and social science, comparisons with other ANE cultic practices (see Gane 2009 for many such comparisons), and investigation of ways in which Old Testament ritual texts have been received in Jewish and Christian traditions. One reception history approach investigates New Testament typological interpretations that view Old Testament sacrifices as fulfilled by the superior, once-for-all truly efficacious sacrifice of Jesus Christ when he died on the cross (e.g. John 1:29; Heb 9–10; on typology

see, for example, Davidson 1981). On the New Testament view of sacrifice, see the article on that topic by Christian Eberhart in this encyclopaedia.

Critical scholars who mostly reject the biblical narrative maintain that the detailed prescriptions concerning the Israelite ritual system in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers were developed by priests during the first millennium BC as part of a priestly ('P') documentary source for the Pentateuch (more or less following Wellhausen 1885: 404–405; for a summary of critical views, see Gane 1999: 56–58). Support for priestly authorship is found in the observations that the cultic subject matter most closely concerns priests, and the ritual laws benefitted the priests by giving them exclusive control over the cult and portions of sacrificial and non-sacrificial offerings to YHWH (e.g. Lev 7:7–10, 31–36; Num 18; see Blenkinsopp 1995: 67; Watts 2007: 143–150).

Scholars agree that the Israelites performed sacrifices from early times, as did other ANE peoples (see Selman 1995 on ANE sacrifices). There is archaeological evidence for pre-exilic ritual activities at various sites in ancient Israel (see, for example, Zevit 2001; Gitin 2002; Greer 2013; Faust 2019). However, biblical texts outside the Pentateuch dating to historical periods before the exile contain little confirmation that distinctive elements of ritual according to the pentateuchal 'priestly' instructions, such as purification and reparation offerings, were actually carried out (e.g. Wellhausen 1885: 61–75).

There are plenty of pre-exilic attestations to burnt offerings and *zebaḥ* sacrifices, including well-being offerings, outside the pentateuchal 'priestly' texts (e.g. Josh 8:31; Judg 20:26, 21:24; 1 Sam 6:15; 10:8). However, the purification offering (spelled *ḥaṭā'â*) is found only in verse 7 [Eng. v. 6] of Ps 40, which is attributed to David (v. 1 [Eng. v. 0]), and silver/money from purification and reparation offerings appears only in 2 Kgs 12:17 (Eng. v. 16). Aside from these passages, the earliest explicit references outside the Pentateuch to purification and reparation offerings are in the context of instructions regarding a future ideal temple in the exilic book of Ezekiel (40:39; 42:13; 43:19, 21-22, 25, 44:27, 29; cf. Wellhausen 1885: 73–74). It is only in post-exilic texts dating from the Second Temple period that we see more evidence for implementation of the pentateuchal cultic legislation. For example, see 2 Chronicles 29 regarding the pre-exilic restoration of temple worship under Hezekiah; and see Ezra 6:17; 8:35; 10:19 and Neh 10:33 concerning sacrifices at the second temple during the Persian period.

On the basis of such data and lack thereof, as well as other factors that are beyond the scope of the present article, many critical scholars have maintained that the 'priestly' instructions of the Pentateuch pertain to the Second Temple period, having originated around the period of the exile (following Wellhausen 1885: 59–60, 63–64, 72–82). James W. Watts essentially agrees, but provides more nuance as he concludes a brief survey of priestly history:

> Leviticus' portrayal of the preeminence of the high priest and the Aaronides' monopoly over the priesthood corresponds historically to the situation of Jewish and Samaritan priests in the Persian and Hellenistic periods. A hierocracy even developed in Second Temple Judaism […] It was in this same period that the Pentateuch, with the priestly rhetoric of Aaronide legitimacy at its center, began to function as authoritative scripture in Judaism […] It is therefore to this period and this hierocracy that P's rhetoric applies, either by preceding the hierocracy and laying the ideological basis for it (if P dates to the exilic period or earlier) or by reflecting and legitimizing an existing institution as it began to accumulate religious and civil authority (if P dates from the early Second Temple period; Watts 2007: 149–150; cf. Nihan 2007: 383–394).

Notice that Watts leaves the dating of the 'priestly' texts open, thereby avoiding the methodological fallacy of assuming that a text was most likely composed during a time period to which the ideas in the text seem especially relevant (Sommer 2011: 85–94). Some critical scholars have argued for an earlier pre-exilic composition of 'P' (e.g. Milgrom 1991: 3–35), allowing for the possibility of some final exilic editing by 'H,' the 'Holiness Source', the redactor of 'P' (cf. Knohl 1995).

Some factors that tend to support the pre-exilic origin of the 'priestly' sacrificial texts are as follows:

First, the assertion that the pentateuchal ritual instructions were not implemented before the exile is largely based on lack of evidence, rather than solid contrary evidence. Such 'arguments from silence' are intrinsically weak.

Second, the evidence for purification and reparation offerings in 2 Kings 12 may be more significant than it appears at first glance. This passage reports that silver was collected to repair the temple during the reign of King Jehoash, but the silver of a reparation offering and of purification offerings was not brought into the temple for repairs because it belonged to the priests (v. 17 [Eng. v. 16]). The function of silver in relation to these sacrifices seems to assume the rule in Lev 5:15, where the value of a ram for a reparation offering is 'calculated in silver shekels according to the sanctuary's shekel' (CEB). This indicates that an Israelite could bring to the sanctuary/temple the equivalent value of the required animal 'in silver shekels, and the priests would provide the required animal' (Milgrom 1991: 287).

Third, there are narrative passages indicating that a priestly cultic monopoly, along with some 'priestly' instructions regarding sacrifices other than purification and reparation offerings, were already known in pre-exilic times. For instance, 1 Sam 2:12–17 reports that Eli's sons, who were priests, were breaking ritual regulations found in Leviticus. They stole meat of *zebaḥ* sacrifices that belonged to the offerers (cf. Lev 7:15–16) by taking more than their priestly portions (1 Sam 2:13–14; cf. Lev 7:31–36), and their assistant demanded their priestly portions from the offerers before the fat was separated out and

burned on the altar for YHWH (1 Sam 2:15–16; cf. Lev 3:3–5, 9–11; 7:31). Thus, the priests were not free to make their own ritual rules to benefit themselves; they were subject to higher divine authority. This agrees with the pentateuchal portrayal of the prophet Moses – rather than the priests – as the human founder of the Israelite cultic system, to whom the priests were accountable (Gane 2015: 219–221).

Fourth, before the exile, Jeremiah wrote that the sin (*ḥaṭṭā't*) of the people of Judah was engraved 'on the horns of their altars' (Jer 17:1). In this way, he profoundly alluded to the dynamics involved in purification offerings (see above), the blood of which was applied to the horns of an altar (e.g. Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 30; Gane 2012: 687).

Fifth, the biblical narratives themselves indicate a reason for the lack of more attestation of at least some ritual practices: the Israelites did not faithfully observe them throughout their history (e.g. 2 Kgs 21:45, 7; 23:4, 6–7, 12, 22).

Sixth, even when the Israelite cult was properly functioning, the pre-exilic historians and prophets who wrote biblical texts were outsiders in relation to the temple. Therefore, they were concerned with matters other than the inner workings of the ritual system, which was the domain of the priests (cf. Averbeck 2003: 730).

Seventh, purification and reparation offerings for individuals remedied limited problems (see above) that would not likely merit attention in historical records.

Eighth, the rarity of pre-exilic Israelite temples (Arad, Dan, and Moza) contrasts with the large number of temples in earlier and contemporaneous non-Israelite settlements. Perhaps this reflects a more egalitarian Israelite ideology that facilitated acceptance of a central sanctuary (Faust 2019), but it may also attest the influence of pentateuchal legislation that mandated a central sanctuary (e.g. Lev 17; Deut 12).

4 The Israelite sacrificial system in the Pentateuch

A few passages in Genesis record early instances of sacrifices on isolated altars by patriarchs. However, the bulk of Old Testament information regarding sacrifices is found in pentateuchal texts that present the complex system of rituals at the Israelite sanctuary in the wilderness. Therefore, this section of the present article is the most extensive. Other biblical books, including historical, prophetic, and wisdom literature, attest to sacrificial practices throughout the rest of the Old Testament period, but without the relatively comprehensive (although not exhaustive) details provided by the Pentateuch.

4.1 Establishment of the Israelite sanctuary system

In the book of Exodus, instructions for the establishment of the Israelite sanctuary include some prescriptions for sacrifices to be performed there. These include sacrifices for the

consecration/ordination of the priests and initial purification of the outer altar (29:1–37; cf. Lev 8) and the regular morning and evening burnt offering (Exod 29:38–42; cf. 40:29). The regular burnt offering was to be performed every day of the year, so all other sacrifices were in addition to it (Num 28–29). Thus, it served as the foundation of the Israelite sacrificial system.

The institution of the Israelite sanctuary made it necessary to adapt existing kinds of sacrifices (Lev 1–3) and the addition of some other kinds (Lev 4:1–5:26 [Eng. 6:7]). Whereas patriarchs officiated their own sacrifices at solitary altars (e.g. Gen 8:20; 22:9, 13), offerers at the Israelite sanctuary were permitted to perform only activities that did not directly involve the altar. Only the consecrated priests were authorized to apply blood and offering materials to the most holy altar, thereby 'indexing' their superior cultic status (cf. Gilders 2004: 79–83).

YHWH compensated the priests for their officiating services by assigning them portions from his offerings as their 'agents' commissions' (Lev 2:2–3, 9–10; 6:19, 22 [Eng. vv. 26, 29]; 7:7–10, 30-36; cf. Num 18). However, when a priest himself was the offerer, rather than officiating for someone else, he did not receive an 'agent's commission' because the benefit of the sacrifice was for him (Lev 6:16 [Eng. v. 23], regarding the grain offering).

4.2 Differences between Israelite sacrifices

Legitimate Old Testament sacrifices differed from one another according to factors such as their offering materials, whether they were voluntary or required, and their combinations with other rituals. This section describes these aspects. Section 4.3 includes discussion of another major differentiating factor: variation in ritual activities performed by offerers or officiants.

4.2.1 Materials

The most basic distinction was between slaughtered domestic animal victims and vegetarian sacrifices. Animals could be bulls, cows, male or female sheep or goats, doves, or pigeons. Some sacrifices required male or female victims in particular, but others could be either gender.

Non-animal solid materials included choice wheat flour (semolina), to which addition of oil or a combination of oil and frankincense could be required. In the case of Lev 5:15, the flour offered is barley, but without oil or frankincense. Salt was required with all Israelite sacrifices (Lev 2:13).

Drink offerings were usually wine (*yayin*). In Num 28:7, an exceptional twice-daily libation inside the Israelite tabernacle consisted of *šēkār*, which is generally interpreted as 'strong drink' (e.g. NRSV, ESV, NET Bible), i.e. fermented drink (NJPS) such as wine or beer

(CEB: ‘brandy’). However, in the context of Numbers 28, it is possible that *šēkār* may have been an unfermented beverage, just as *yayin*, ‘wine’, could be unfermented (Gane 2004a: 750–51).

4.2.2 Voluntary or required

A burnt, grain, or well-being offering of an individual could be voluntary, but a burnt offering could be required with a mandatory purification offering (e.g. Lev 5:7–10; 12:6–8), and a grain offering could be required in a case of suspected adultery (Num 5:15, 18, 25–26) or with a burnt offering. According to Numbers 15, all burnt and well-being offerings required accompanying grain and drink offerings. Purification and reparation offerings were obligatory when people sinned or, in the case of the purification offering, incurred serious physical ritual impurities (see further below). Calendric sacrifices of various kinds were required on certain days of the calendar (Num 28–29).

4.2.3 Combinations

A sacrifice could be independent/self-standing, or it could be combined with one or more sacrifices. Examples include the consecration and inauguration ceremonies, the Day of Atonement service (Lev 16), and the groups of sacrifices performed on festival occasions (Num 28–29). Such cases involved combinations of the functions of the various kinds of sacrifices (on which see below). In some of these instances, a primary sacrifice was supplemented by one or more accompanying sacrifices of secondary importance (e.g. Num 15).

4.3 Theology of Israelite sacrifices

Each kind of sacrifice had a unique procedural element that correlated with its distinctive significance. Except for the reparation offering, the unique elements involved treatment of the flesh or blood. The flesh of the burnt offering was completely burned; the offerer(s) ate meat from the well-being offering; the blood of a purification offering almost always went on the horns of an altar; the reparation offering required prior non-sacrificial reparation; and the non-animal grain, drink, and incense offerings had no blood or flesh at all.

4.3.1 Burnt offering

The importance of the burnt offering is shown by its position as the first sacrifice in Leviticus, the designation of the outer altar as ‘the altar of burnt offering’ (e.g. Exod 30:28; 40:7), and the role of the burnt offering as the regular morning and evening sacrifice (29:38–42; Num 28:1–7) that was to be continually burning on the altar.

The Hebrew label translated ‘burnt offering’ is *ʿōlâ*, from the root *ʿ-l-h*, the verb of which means ‘go up’. When the victim was a herd or flock animal sacrificed at the Israelite sanctuary, the officiating priest tossed the blood against the outer altar in the courtyard

(Lev 1:5, 11) and burned the entire victim on the altar so that it went up in smoke (1:9, 13) – except for the hide, which belonged to the priest (7:8). In patriarchal sacrifices, the hide was likely burned up as well. Parts of other kinds of sacrifices were burned on the altar, but the *ʿōlâ* was the quintessential 'ascending sacrifice' in which all meat portions were burned up for the deity. As such, it is can be characterized as the 'burned up' or 'burnt' offering.

The word for burning the burnt offering and portions of other sacrifices on the altar is the *hiphil* of *q-ṭ-r*, which means 'make smoke' (e.g. Lev 1:9, 13; 2:2, 9; 3:5, 11), related to the noun *qeṭōret*, 'incense' (e.g. Exod 30:7, 35, 37; 40:27). So the smoke of Israelite sacrifices, especially the burnt offering that would have produced the most smoke, ascended like incense as a 'pleasing aroma' (e.g. Lev 1:9, 13; 2:2, 9; 3:5, 16) to God in heaven (cf. Gen 8:21). The direction of the smoke – towards the sky/heaven – 'indexed' the recipient of the transaction as a celestial being. This, combined with the multi-functionality of the burnt offering already exhibited during the patriarchal period (see above), suggests that the burnt offering served as a powerful 'invocation' of the deity (Levine 1989: 5–6; 2002: 134). A burnt offering could invoke YHWH to demonstrate gratitude to him, expiate for sin, call for divine aid at a time of danger (1 Sam 7:9), fulfil a vow, or serve as a freewill sacrifice (Lev 22:18).

The goal of a burnt offering was to serve as a token *ʾiššeh*, 'food offering' (Lev 1:9, 13, 17 ESV; cf. *leḥem*, 'food', in Lev 21:6, 21; Num 28:2). As such, it comprises a social analogy that explains how this one category of sacrifice could carry more than one function: a meal provides a setting in which various kinds of interpersonal interactions can take place (e.g. Gen 18). Notice that in Leviticus 1, the goal of the burnt offering is accomplished by the entire ritual process that culminates in burning the victim; in other words, it is not accomplished only through the slaughter and application of blood to the altar (cf. Eberhart 2002: 303–308; 2011b: 29; Gane 2004b: 79–82, 90, 341). Accordingly, the efficacy of expiation is mentioned in verse 4 with regard to the burnt offering as a whole, rather than in verse 5, which prescribes the slaughter and blood application.

The nature of the sin that requires expiation is left unspecified in Lev 1:4. Therefore, the expiatory scope of the burnt offering remains open, which correlates with its wide range of functions during its earlier history (see Appendix). This answers an important question. The purification and reparation offerings remedied a limited range of sins: inadvertent and other minor sins in the case of the purification offering, and sins of sacrilege in the case of the reparation offering (see below). What was the remedy for all the other deliberate sins that presumably were expiable because they were not 'high-handed' (i.e. defiant; cf. Num 15:30–31)? The most plausible answer is the burnt offering, which was performed long before the purification and reparation offerings were introduced for special kinds of cases (cf. Appendix).

Even a bird could serve as a burnt offering, achieving the same goal as a more expensive sacrifice (Lev 1:14–17; cf. vv. 9, 13). Thus, the ritual system made it possible for everyone, including the poor, to interact with YHWH and receive the resulting benefits (cf. Lev 5:7–13; Deut 16:17). Notice that there is no biblical evidence for hand-leaning (see section 3) when the offering material consisted of a bird or grain item, because the offerer would hand such sacrifices directly to the priest, allowing for no possible ambiguity regarding the identity of the offerer.

4.3.2 Well-being offering

The well-being offering is a kind of *zebaḥ*, 'sacrifice'. This noun is derived from the root *z-b-ḥ*, of which the verb carries the basic meaning 'slaughter', including for meat (e.g. Deut 12:15, 21). In a *zebaḥ* sacrifice at the sanctuary, a priest tossed the blood against the altar and burned only the fat (suet) on the altar for the Lord (Lev 3). The priest raised the breast in a ritual gesture of dedication to YHWH that transferred it to his ownership; nevertheless, YHWH assigned the meat of the sacrifice to his priests, and the right thigh was a contribution that belonged to the officiating priest (Lev 7:30–36; cf. Milgrom 1991: 461–478). The offerer received the rest of the meat to eat (Lev 7:15–21) and could share it with others in a communal meal (Gen 31:54; 1 Sam 9:13). This accords with the opinion of Baruch A. Levine that the term *zebaḥ* is cognate with Akkadian *zibū*, 'meal' (Levine 2002: 127). Portions of the same animal went both to God and to the offerer(s), thereby 'indexing' a connection between them. However, there is no biblical evidence that this constituted a shared meal with the deity (Milgrom 1991: 221).

The Passover is labelled a *zebaḥ* in Exod 12:27, even though the Israelites consumed all of their Passover lambs in a communal meal (vv. 4, 8–10) without offering any part of them to YHWH on an altar, or even performing a blood manipulation gesture in the direction of a place that was sacred to the Lord (cf. Num 19:4). In this sense, it appears that the ritual was not really a sacrifice at that time (Eberhart 2011b: 20, 30) but became a sacrifice later when it was offered at the sanctuary (Deut 16:2, 5–6; implicit in Lev 17:3–9).

Exodus 20:24 speaks of an altar on which to sacrifice burnt offerings and *šelāmîm* offerings. English versions commonly render *šelāmîm* as 'peace offerings' because this plural (apparently abstract) term is derived from the same root (*š-l-m*) as the well-known noun *šālôm*, 'peace'. However, the meaning of *šālôm* encompasses the idea of 'well-being/welfare', which is broader than 'peace' in the sense of absence of conflict. Compare the verb from the same root, which means 'be complete/whole'. Milgrom has rendered *šelāmîm* as 'well-being offering' (Milgrom 1991: 217–222).

The *šelāmîm* sacrifice was consumed by the offerer(s), so it was closely associated with the *zebaḥ* sacrifice. In Exod 24:5, the two terms are in apposition: 'they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed bulls as *zebaḥ* sacrifices [plural of *zebaḥ*], well-being offerings

[*šelāmîm*] to YHWH' (author's translation). However, in Lev 7:11, *zebaḥ* is in construct with *šelāmîm* – '*zebaḥ* sacrifice of well-being' – with 'well-being' specifying a kind of *zebaḥ* sacrifice. Verse 11 introduces the unit that contains instructions regarding thank offerings, votive offerings, and freewill offerings (vv. 12–16), implying that they are sub-categories of '*zebaḥ* sacrifice of well-being'.

Whatever the precisely correct interpretation of the term *šelāmîm* may be, the well-being offering is associated with positive concepts, as indicated by several factors: (1) positive meanings of words from the root *š-l-m*; (2) motivations of thanksgiving, the need to make and fulfil a vow, or the simple freewill desire to offer such a sacrifice; (3) lack of expiation for a particular wrong as a motivation for a well-being offering; and (4) mention of votive and freewill offerings with rejoicing before YHWH in Deut 12:17–18; 16:10–11.

Those who offered well-being offerings related to the deity as a person with whom they were in a basically healthy relationship. This does not mean that such sacrifices were necessarily restricted to joyful contexts. In Judg 20:26 and 21:4, the Israelites sacrificed burnt and well-being offerings when they were distressed and in need of divine aid during and in the aftermath of their war with the tribe of Benjamin. In these instances, their well-being offerings presumably would have affirmed their existing connection to YHWH as a basis for seeking his assistance.

The well-being offering was not an expiatory sacrifice in Leviticus 3 and 7. However, in 1 Sam 3:14, YHWH told Samuel that the iniquity/culpability of Eli's household (referring to Eli's sons) could never be expiated by *zebaḥ* sacrifice or *minḥâ* forever. The combination of these terms here can be understood as 'a synecdoche referring to all sacrifices (for *minḥâ* as a blood offering, see 1 Sam 2:17, 29)' (Milgrom 1991: 222). This seems to attribute expiatory efficacy to *zebaḥ* sacrifices that they lack in Leviticus (cf. Ps 51:18 [Eng. v. 16]), but the point is that no sacrifice at all could remedy the egregious crimes of Hophni and Phinehas.

Leviticus 17:11 does indicate that the blood of well-being offerings (cf. vv. 5–6, 8) applied to the altar, like the blood of other sacrifices, accomplishes something that is expressed by the *piel* of *k-p-r*, which often denotes expiation (see above). However, here the indirect object of the verb is the lives (plural of *nepeš*) of the offerers. This expression refers to ransoming life, as shown by comparison with Exod 30:12, 15–16. Ransom for life in Lev 17:11 involves substitution of the life of an animal for the offerer's life. Ransom for life is related to expiation, which is the removal/purification of evil (cf. Sklar 2005: 2008), but it is not the same. In Lev 17:11, ransom for life is effected by blood manipulation alone, rather than comprising the goal of a sacrifice as a whole. Thus, a person needs blood ransom even to offer happy, non-expiatory well-being offerings of thanks or praise (cf. Gilders 2004: 175–176). The offerer is not guilty of an offence that is punishable by death under

Israelite law, but Lev 17:11 points to the larger reality that the ultimate penalty for any sin is death (cf. Gen 2:17; Rom 6:23).

Leviticus 17:11 supplies the rationale for the prohibition of eating meat from which the blood has not been drained out at the time of slaughter (vv. 10, 12). Milgrom has argued that this verse applies only to the well-being offering, the only kind of sacrifice from which the offerer is permitted to eat. According to Milgrom, the blood on the altar ransoms the life of the offerer, who is otherwise guilty of murder for slaughtering an animal (cf. vv. 3–4; Milgrom 1971). However, Leviticus 17 is not only concerned with well-being offerings; it also mentions the burnt offering, which similarly must be performed at the sanctuary (v. 8). Although nobody is permitted to eat a burnt offering, YHWH has assigned its blood on the altar too (1:5, 11). This explains why, like the well-being offering, the burnt offering must be presented at the sanctuary. The function of sacrificial blood is divinely designated as ransom for life, supplying a rationale that has broader application than the well-being offering. The connection between blood and life, which underlies the function of blood on the altar (17:11), carries still broader implications beyond sacrifice (cf. Gen 9:4). Therefore, the principle of blood ransom articulated in Lev 17:11 would also operate in purification and reparation offerings, as well as burnt offerings (cf. Rendtorff 1995: 27, 'referring to the relevance of sacrificial animal blood in general').

William Gilders maintains that because Lev 17:11 is in the 'Holiness' (H) portion of Leviticus (which he and other scholars now regard as later than the 'Priestly' [P] section of the book), the rationale expressed in this verse does not necessarily apply in 'P' texts such as Leviticus 1–16 (Gilders 2004: 13, 25; cf. Knohl 1995 on 'H' as the redactor of 'P'). It is true that meanings of ritual actions can change over time, but in this instance Lev 17:11 may explicitly bring into the foreground a function of sacrificial blood that was previously only in the background, implied by the common association of blood with life (e.g. Gen 4:10; 9:4–5) and the paradigmatic substitutionary ransom of Isaac's life by that of a ram (Gen 22:13).

4.3.3 Purification offering, including on the Day of Atonement

The Pentateuch provides more information regarding the functions of the expiatory purification (*ḥaṭṭā't*) and reparation (*'āšām*) offerings, introduced with the founding of the Israelite ritual system, than it does concerning the older kinds of sacrifices discussed above. Purification and reparation offerings related to the sanctuary in two different and unique ways. Purification offerings expiated two categories of problems: (1) relatively minor violations of divine commands, including inadvertent sins, sins of forgetfulness, and failure to identify oneself as a witness to a crime (Lev 4:1–5:13); and (2) severe physical ritual impurities that could not be removed by ablutions alone (Lev 12; Lev 14–15; Num 19). The purification offering was the only kind of sacrifice that dealt with such impurities. Reparation offerings remedied sins of sacrilege involving loss of material things that had

to be restored (Lev 5:14–16, 20–26 [Eng. 6:1–7]) and unknown sins that possibly could be cases of sacrilege (5:17–19).

The purification offering was the most complex category of Israelite sacrifice, having the greatest variety of offering materials and ritual activities (especially blood applications). Its unique dynamics enacted more aspects of theology than the other kinds of sacrifices. Materials for purification offerings could be male or female herd or flock animals, and poor people could offer birds or even grain (Lev 4:1–5:13; Num 19:1–10).

If a priest officiated a purification offering on behalf of an individual other than the high priest, the priest would daub blood on the horns of the outer altar, burn the fat on the altar, and eat the meat (Lev 4:22–35; 6:19, 22 [Eng. vv. 26, 29]). However, a purification offering to expiate the sin of the high priest or the entire Israelite community required the high priest to apply blood in the outer room of the tabernacle – sprinkling blood seven times in the area in front of the inner veil and putting blood on the horns of the incense altar. Then the high priest was to burn the fat on the outer altar, but he was not allowed to eat the meat because he was the offerer or part of the community that comprised the offerer. Thus, the rest of the animal was incinerated outside the Israelite camp (Lev 4:3–21; cf. 6:23 [Eng. v. 30]).

Special purification offerings on behalf of the priestly household and the non-priestly community on the Day of Atonement included blood applications in the inner and outer sanctums, as well as on the outer altar, in order to purify the whole sanctuary (Lev 16:14–16, 18–19). The red cow purification offering, unlike other sacrifices in the ritual system centred at the Israelite sanctuary, was performed outside the camp to produce ashes that would be mixed with water in order to remedy problems that had not yet occurred: future ritual impurities caused by corpses (Num 19; cf. 8:7 ‘water of the purification offering’ [author’s translation], supported by Milgrom 1990: 61).

The term *ḥaṭṭā’t*, ‘purification offering’, is the same as a noun for ‘sin’. This noun is derived from the same root *ḥ-ṭ-’* as the *qal* verb ‘(to) sin’, as in Lev 4:3: ‘If it is the anointed priest who has sinned [*qal* verb from the root *ḥ-ṭ-’*], making the people guilty of sin, he must present to the LORD a flawless bull from the herd as a purification offering [*ḥaṭṭā’t*] for the sin [*ḥaṭṭā’t*] he has committed [*qal* verb from the root *ḥ-ṭ-’*]’ (CEB, words in brackets supplied; cf. v. 14; 5:6, 11). Thus, ancient and modern translations have rendered the *ḥaṭṭā’t* sacrifice as ‘concerning sin’ or ‘sin offering’ (Septuagint, Vulgate, KJV, NKJV, NJPS, NRSV, NIV 2011, ESV, NET Bible, etc.; NJB, ‘sacrifice for sin’).

It is true that this kind of sacrifice remedied sins, i.e. moral faults/commandment violations, in Lev 4–5:13 and Num 15:22–29. However, other expiatory sacrifices also dealt with sins. Moreover, the *ḥaṭṭā’t* sacrifice also expiated physical ritual impurities, which were not moral faults – as shown by passages in which offerers of such sacrifices received

purification, not forgiveness (Lev 12:6–8; 14:19–20, 30–31; 15:14–15, 19–30; cf. Num 19). The rendering ‘sin offering’ in these instances wrongly conveys the impression that physical impurities are sins. As such, a better translation is needed.

Some occurrences of the *piel* verb of the root *ḥ-ṭ-’* suggest another possible rendering of *ḥaṭṭā’t*. When the direct object of this verb is the beneficiary of a *ḥaṭṭā’t* sacrifice, the verb refers to removal of some kind of impurity. Thus, in Num 19:19, a ritually pure person sprinkles water mixed with some ashes of the red cow (a *ḥaṭṭā’t* sacrifice; v. 9) on a person undergoing purification for coming into contact with a corpse, and in so doing purifies (*piel* of *ḥ-ṭ-’*) him. In Lev 8:15, Moses’ application of the blood of a *ḥaṭṭā’t* sacrifice to the horns of the altar purifies (*piel* of *ḥ-ṭ-’*) it (cf. Ezek 43:20, 22, 23; 45:18). This indicates that the function of a *ḥaṭṭā’t* sacrifice is to purify, so it can be translated ‘purification offering’ (Milgrom 1991: 253–254).

Nevertheless, the evidence that the same kind of sacrifice could expiate either sins or physical impurities indicates a close connection between these evils. Physical ritual impurities resulting from contact with carcasses of some impure animals (Lev 11:24–40), skin disease (Lev 13–14), genital flows (Lev 15), or corpse impurity (Num 19) were symptoms of the birth-to-death cycle of mortality (Maccoby 1999: 60) that results from sinful action (Gen 3; Rom 6:23). In this sense, physical impurity represented the state of sin, which a *ḥaṭṭā’t* sacrifice could ‘unsin’ (Gray 1903: 81; cf. Hieke 2014: 88–92, translating *ḥaṭṭā’t* as *Entsündigungsopfer*).

Milgrom argued that the purification offering never purified its offerer; it only purified parts of the sanctuary, such as the outer altar, to which the priest applied the blood of the sacrifice. This blood functioned as a ‘detergent’ to remove pollution resulting from a sin or serious physical ritual impurity that had already contaminated the sanctuary from a distance when it was committed or incurred, as in Lev 20:3 and Num 19:13, 20 (Milgrom 1991: 254–258). Certainly, the blood of special purification offerings on the Day of Atonement purged the parts of the sanctuary from sins and physical impurities (Lev 16:16, 18–19), thereby restoring its initial purity (cf. 8:15). However, there is clear evidence that purification offerings throughout the year removed sins or serious physical impurities from those who offered these sacrifices (Gane 2005: 106–143; Gane 2008).

First, the concluding formulas of several instructions for purification offerings contain the privative preposition *min*, which explicitly indicates removal of sin or impurity from the offerer (Lev 4:26; 5:6, 10; 12:7; 14:9; 15:15, 30). Second, some such formulas concerning expiation for sin explicitly state that it is the sin committed by the offerer that is removed (4:35; 5:10, 13), not the resultant contamination of the altar (cf. Maccoby 1999: 178–179). Third, an assistant who incinerates the carcasses of the purification offerings that purge the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement must undergo ablutions before re-entering the

camp (16:28), indicating that the carcasses bear defilement removed from the sanctuary, which contaminates the assistant. By contrast, an assistant who incinerates purification offering carcasses on other days of the year needs no such purification (4:12, 21).

Fourth, the applications of blood from the purification offering that purge the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement move progressively outward: from the cover on the ark in the holy of holies to sprinkling blood seven times in front of it (16:14–16a) and afterwards to applications on the outer altar (vv. 18–19). Therefore, the abbreviation in 16:16b – 'and he shall do the same for the Tent of Meeting' (NJPS) – means that in the outer sanctum the high priest must first put blood on the horns of the altar of incense (cf. Exod 30:10) and then sprinkle blood seven times in front of it. This reverses the order, and therefore the direction, of blood manipulations in the outer sanctum when purification offerings expiate sins of the high priest or the entire community on other days. First the high priest sprinkles blood seven times in front of (*'et-penê*) the (inner) curtain (Lev 4:6, 17) – that is, in the area of the outer sanctum that is bounded by the curtain. Then the high priest daubs blood on the horns of the incense altar (Lev 4:7, 18), closer to the ark. It appears that this reversal – into the sanctuary toward the ark in Leviticus 4 and out of the sanctuary away from the ark in Leviticus 16 – indexes a reversal of function: sins move into the sanctuary and then they are brought out of it on the Day of Atonement.

Leviticus 6:20–21 (Eng. vv. 27–28) support the idea that purification offerings throughout the year carried a residue of sins and physical impurities into the sanctuary as a side-effect (not the purpose) of expiating (*piel* of *k-p-r*) these evils from the offerers (Gane 2005: 165–180). If some blood from a purification offering splashed on a garment, the bloodstain was to be washed off (v. 20 [Eng. v. 27]). A pottery container in which the flesh of a purification offering was boiled so that the officiating priest could eat it (v. 19 [Eng. v. 26]) was to be broken, but if the container was (non-absorbent) bronze, it could be reused after it was scrubbed and rinsed in water (v. 21 [Eng. v. 28]). Such washing, breaking, and scrubbing would remove defilement (cf. Lev 11:32–33, 35; Num 31:23–24) that had been transferred from the offerer to the animal and from there to the garment or vessel. So when the priest applied some blood from the same animal to part of the sanctuary (such as the outer altar; Lev 4:25, 30, 34) and placed its fat on the altar (vv. 26, 31, 35), the altar similarly would receive some defilement that originated with the offerer. In this way, pollution would accumulate at the sanctuary throughout the year until it, including 'all' of the *ḥaṭṭā't* sins, would be purged from the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement (16:16).

Defilement that came to one part of the sanctuary affected all parts of it, which included the inner and outer sanctums and the outer altar (cf. Lev 16:20, 33). Thus, for example, physical impurities had to be removed from the inner sanctum on the Day of Atonement (v. 16), even though nobody was permitted to even enter there on other days (v. 2) and the blood of purification offerings for physical impurities of individuals was only ever applied to

the horns of the outer altar (e.g. implied in 12:6, following the procedure for birds in 5:9). Conversely, application of purification offering blood at one point in a certain part of the sanctuary purified that whole part. For instance, daubing blood on the horns of the incense altar on the Day of Atonement purged the entire altar (Exod 30:10).

Some scholars have objected to the idea that purification offerings could transfer defilements to the sanctuary. Such a sacrifice was most holy (Lev 6:18, 22 [Eng. vv. 25, 29]) and whatever touched its flesh became holy (v. 20 [Eng. v. 27]), so only the consecrated priests were allowed to eat it in a 'holy place' (v. 19 [Eng. v. 26]; i.e. in the sanctuary courtyard). Elsewhere in the Israelite ritual system, something holy – that is, associated with God, the source of life (Gen 1–2) – was not to come into contact with something impure (e.g. Lev 7:20–21; 15:31), which was associated with mortality (cf. above). Therefore, some interpret the washing of part of a garment in Lev 6:20 [Eng. v. 27]) as removal of contagious holiness from the clothing (e.g. Nihan 2015: 115–118).

The theory of removing holiness fails for two reasons. First, the text does not specify the offerer's garment, and if it is the garment of a priest, why should holiness on it be a problem? Furthermore, why would the cooking vessels in v. 21 (Eng. v. 28) be broken or cleaned to remove holiness, given that their function is in the sanctuary? Second, the rules for washing garments and breaking or cleansing vessels only apply to the purification offering, the function of which is to remove sins or physical impurities. If these rules concerned removal of holiness, they would also apply to other most holy sacrifices (Milgrom 1991: 405; Wright 1987b: 96, note 8; 130–131), which also touched the most holy altar that consecrated everything that touched it (Exod 29:37).

We are left with a paradox. Purification offerings must carry defilement in order to remove the defilement from offerers throughout the year and then from the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement, even though the sacrifice is most holy (Gane 2019: 116–122). Defilement from each purification offering that affects the sanctuary is slight because the causes, such as inadvertent commandment violations (Lev 4), are minor and contact with the sanctuary is secondary (through the victim). Such pollutions do not make the sanctuary unholy, but they must be purged out once a year so that they do not excessively accumulate and cause YHWH to leave (cf. Ezek 8–11; Milgrom 1991: 258–261).

The theological point of all this was a ritual enactment of theodicy (Gane 2005: 305–333). The sanctuary was YHWH's residence and earthly headquarters where his identity, involving his authority, character, and reputation/name, was located (cf. Deut 12:5, 11, 21; Ezek 36:20–23). An individual who had violated one of his commandments was freed from culpability (*'āwôn*, usually rendered 'iniquity') by expiation through a purification offering (e.g. Lev 5:1, 6), which was the remedy that YHWH had established. Thus, YHWH forgave that person (4:26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13) as Israel's judge (cf. Deut 17:12).

Justice requires that a judge acquit/vindicate the innocent or condemn the guilty (Deut 25:1; 1 Kgs 8:32), not absolve the guilty. By mercifully freeing guilty people from condemnation, YHWH overstepped the bounds of pure justice. Therefore, he bore judicial responsibility as an Israelite king who, acting as judge, would bear culpability (*ʿāwôn*) if he failed to punish a guilty person (cf. 2 Sam 14:9; cf. 1 Kgs 2:31). YHWH's liability for absolving the guilty was ritually represented by the defilement of his sanctuary (cf. 2 Sam 14:9, 'the king and his throne'). It was also represented by the culpability (*ʿāwôn*) borne by priests who ate the meat of purification offerings that they officiated for others, which was their portion (Lev 10:17; cf. 6:19 [Eng. v. 26]), reflecting YHWH's bearing of *ʿāwôn* when he forgives sins (Exod 34:7).

YHWH's liability could be removed by a judgment that vindicated his justice by demonstrating that he was right to pardon those who subsequently showed their continuing loyalty to him. This judgment was ritually enacted on the Day of Atonement, when those who showed loyalty by practicing self-denial and abstaining from work received moral purification at a second stage of expiation (Lev 16:29–31), beyond the earlier expiation that was necessary for forgiveness (4:26, 31, etc.). Their loyalty did not earn moral purification. Rather, it was the means by which they received moral purification as a gift that resulted from the purgation of the sanctuary (16:30; cf. Milgrom 1991: 1056; Gane 2005: 310–316). On the other hand, those who disloyally failed to practice self-denial or abstain from work on the Day of Atonement were condemned to the divine penalties of 'cutting off' or destruction (23:29–30). Purgation of physical impurities from the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:16, 19) also taught about God: another outcome of Israel's judgment day was to remove the burden of the accumulated effects of the mortality of YHWH's people, which surrounded and affected his sanctuary (v. 16b).

The sins expiated by Israelite sacrifices and then purged from the sanctuary are called *ḥaṭṭāʾt* (e.g. Lev 4:3; 16:16). However, another kind of sin called *peša*ʿ, 'rebellion' (cf. verbs from the same root in 2 Kgs 1:1; 3:5, etc.), was also purged from the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement (16:16). How did such sins defile the sanctuary? This can be explained by Lev 20:3 and Num 19:13, 20, where some very serious sins automatically defile the sanctuary when they are committed. Milgrom generalized this automatic dynamic, which he called 'aerial', to also include all sins expiated by purification offerings throughout the year (Milgrom 1991: 257–258). However, in Lev 20:3 and Num 19:13, 20 the sinners are condemned to the terminal penalty of 'cutting off' (verb *k-r-t*), from which they cannot be freed by subsequent sacrificial expiation (cf. Num 15:30–31, contrasted with vv. 22–29). Such sins affect YHWH's sanctuary, representing his reputation, because they are committed by members of his community. Therefore, the defilement must be removed from the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement, but the sinners themselves receive no benefit from this removal; they remain condemned (Gane 2005: 154–7).

Another component of the Day of Atonement is the ritual of Azazel's goat (so-called 'scapegoat'). The high priest confesses the sins of Israel over the goat while leaning both of his hands on its head, thereby symbolically loading them onto the animal, and then banishes the goat, bearing the sins, into the wilderness (Lev 16:10, 20–22). Lev 16:5 places this ritual under the heading of a *ḥaṭṭā't*, but in this case it is a 'purification ritual' rather than a 'purification offering' because it is not a sacrifice: it is not offered to YHWH or to Azazel (Gane 2005: 250–261).

4.3.4 Reparation offering

The reparation offering (*'āšām*) was to be performed like the purification offering for individuals other than the high priest, with the blood applied to the outer altar. Unlike the purification offering, the priest did not put the blood on the horns of the outer altar but rather tossed the blood around the sides of it, as in the burnt and well-being offerings (Lev 7:1–7).

Almost all English versions of the Bible render the term *'āšām* as 'guilt offering'. This may appear logical because the same word can refer to consequential liability for sin, which can be understood as 'guilt' (e.g. Gen 26:10; Jer 51:5). However, the translation 'guilt offering' is inadequate because it does not specify a single kind of sacrifice; other expiatory sacrifices also remove guilt (see above).

Two factors made the *'āšām* sacrifice unique. First, it expiated a sin of sacrilege (verb and noun from the root *m-'-l*; Lev 5:14, 21 [Eng. 6:2]; Num 5:6). A sin of sacrilege was committed by desecrating YHWH's property or desecrating his name by misusing it in a false oath to defraud a human being (Milgrom 1991: 320, 345–61, 363–73). Second, because property was involved in either case, the sinner was obliged to make material reparation (restitution of the value of the property, plus one-fifth of its value) to the wronged party (5:16, 24 [Eng. 6:5]; Num 5:7–8, restitution called *'āšām*) before bringing the sacrifice as further compensation (*'āšām*) to the Lord at the sanctuary (Lev 5:15–16, 25 [Eng. 6:6]; Num 5:8). Thus, *'āšām* as a designation for a kind of sacrifice can be translated more precisely as 'reparation offering' (Milgrom 1991: 327–330, 339, 342, 345) or 'compensation offering' (CEB).

Elsewhere, the term *'āšām* can refer to other things that make reparation/compensation to YHWH, including golden images of tumours and mice that the Philistines sent with the ark when they returned it to Israel (1 Sam 6:3–5, 8, 11), as well as purification offerings (Lev 5:6–7). The function of purification offerings in making reparation has confused some interpreters, who have supposed that Lev 5:1–13, the unit containing vv. 6–7, introduces the *'āšām* sacrifice (e.g. Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, *HALOT*, I: 96, 'guilt-offering

Lev 5:6–25’). However, in this pericope the required sacrifices are clearly labelled as purification (*ḥaṭṭā’t*) offerings (vv. 6–9, 11–12).

Leviticus 5:17 presents a case in which someone sins by violating one of the Lord’s commandments but does not know what he or she has done wrong. Nevertheless, the person experiences guilt (verb from the root *’-š-m*) and is culpable. Consequently, the person must sacrifice a reparation offering (vv. 18–19), but there is no requirement for prior reparation to a wronged party. There can be no such requirement because the precise sin remains unknown, although the experience of guilt that is recognized from some kind of negative circumstance, indicating divine disfavour, has implied that a sin has occurred (Wells 2004: 67–69).

4.3.5 Non-animal sacrifices

Aside from sacrifices of animals, which involved blood and flesh, the Israelite ritual system included sacrifices of grain and drink, as well as offerings of incense. The label for the ‘grain offering’ is *minḥâ*, which refers to a gift for a superior, such as a homage or tribute (cf. Gen 4:3–5). In Leviticus 2, this is a voluntary, standalone sacrifice. Elsewhere it can be mandatory and/or accompany an animal sacrifice (e.g. Lev 14:10, 20–21, 31; 23:13; Num 15:4, 6, 9). However, sometimes grain items that are presented with special animal sacrifices are not called *minḥâ* (Exod 29:2–3, 23–25, 32–34; Lev 7:12–14; 8:2, 26–28, 31–32; Num 6:15–17, 19–20). Lev 6:13–16 (Eng. vv. 20–23) requires the high priest to offer a regular daily grain offering to YHWH through which the high priest would ritually acknowledge his subordination to the deity every day. The ‘bread of the Presence’ presentation offering of bread loaves on the golden table in the outer sanctum was to be renewed regularly every Sabbath (Lev 24:5–9).

Directions for grain offerings in Leviticus 2 allow them to be either raw choice wheat flour (semolina) with oil and frankincense (v. 1) or baked/cooked in various ways with oil, but without leaven and with no requirement for frankincense (vv. 4–7, 11). Thus, an Israelite who could not afford frankincense could bring a baked/cooked grain offering. However, the grain offering brought by a husband for his wife whom he suspected of adultery consisted only of barley (Num 5:15), a less valuable grain than wheat (2 Kgs 7:1, 16, 18), and did not include oil or frankincense because it was ‘a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of remembrance, bringing iniquity to remembrance’ (Num 5:15 ESV). Just as oil and frankincense were to be excluded in this unhappy circumstance of suspected sin, these items were also omitted in a purification offering of grain to expiate for sin, which is not called a *minḥâ* (Lev 5:11). The implication is that oil (including for anointing human heads) and frankincense were associated with positive occasions, as expressed in Prov 27:9: ‘Oil and incense make the heart glad’ (CEB).

When the offerer handed his or her grain offering to a priest, he burned a portion of it on the altar for YHWH; the rest of the grain item belonged to the priests (Lev 2). However, if a priest officiated a grain offering on behalf of himself, all of it had to be burned on the altar (6:16 [Eng. v. 23]). There is no mention of expiation in Leviticus 2, so here the *minḥâ* is a voluntary gift to YHWH to solemnly but cheerfully acknowledge his lordship. As with the burnt offering, the possible motivations for the *minḥâ* grain offering remain open and unspecified, thus inviting Israelites to bring grain offerings in a wide range of circumstances. The relatively inexpensive nature of the offering by comparison with animal sacrifices would make it easy for God's people to approach him in this way.

A drink offering to accompany an offering of food for the deity (e.g. Num 15:5, 7, 10, 24) would be poured out on/at the altar in the courtyard (cf. 2 Kgs 16:12–13) or in the outer room/sanctum of the sanctuary (Num 28:7).

An offering of incense was to be burned on the altar of incense in the outer sanctum every morning and evening (Exod 30:1, 7–8), presumably to sweeten the atmosphere of YHWH's 'palace' at his twice-daily 'mealtime'. The high priest was to burn incense, apparently with a smoke-producing substance, on a portable censer for the apotropaic purpose of shielding himself from God's lethal glory when he entered the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:12–13). Aaron used incense on a portable censer to make expiation and/or propitiation for the Israelite community in order to stop a divinely inflicted plague (Num 17:11–12 [Eng. 16:46–47]). An independent offering of incense was not explicitly called or included in a *qorbān* ('sacrifice'); but frankincense placed on the 'bread of the Presence' served as a memorial portion (presumably to be burned) of that *'iššeh*, 'food offering', which was a type of sacrifice (Lev 24:7).

5 Sacrifice and science

Interpretation of Old Testament sacrifice can benefit from scientific study in several ways. As noted above, sacrifice can be analysed from the perspectives of social science (e.g. Olyan 2000) and systems theory (Gane 2004b), and archaeology can shed light on cultic locations and practices (e.g. Zevit 2001; cf. above).

The present-day science of archaeology draws on several scientific disciplines, such as stratigraphy (a branch of geology), ceramic analysis for dating loci (e.g. soil layers, ash pockets, and architectural features), zoological analysis of animal bones (including of sacrificial victims), radiometric (including carbon-14) dating, and digital imaging. Such technological advances, with tools such as GPS location instruments, high-resolution digital cameras, microscopes, and computers, make it possible to extract far more information from archaeological sites than in the past. This is transforming the level and value of scrutiny brought to bear on objects and materials discovered by archaeologists.

Now even minute amounts of material, such as residues on bowls, incense stands, and other cultic objects, can be analysed to reveal the composition of incense and the contents of sacrificial bowls, thereby supplementing and filling gaps in the information that we gain from texts (e.g. on archaeological methodology, see Renfrew and Bahn 2016; on archaeology of ritual and religion, see Insoll 2011).

Comprehension of some sacrificial instructions requires knowledge of the physiology of sacrificial herd and flock animals and birds. For instance, the burnt offering of a bird includes the following procedure: 'Then the priest must remove its entrails by cutting off its tail feathers' (Lev 1:16 NET Bible). The word translated 'entrails' here is *mur'â*, a hapax legomenon that other versions commonly render as 'crop' (e.g. NRSV, NJPS, NASB 1995, NIV 2011) referring to a pouchlike part of a bird's gullet. However, it makes better sense that the *mur'â* would refer to the part of a bird that contains the excrement, which should be cleaned out before burning the creature on the altar as a food offering to YHWH. Compare the need to wash the entrails and lower legs of a herd or flock animal, in/on which there would be excrement, before the priest places them on the altar fire (v. 9). The part of a bird containing excrement is the crissum, 'the area around the cloacal (anal) opening, lying beneath the bird's tail' (Milgrom 1991: 170).

Milgrom reports:

> Logic is corroborated by zoology. My student S. Pfann informs me that the crissum consists of loose, fatty material, which can be removed from the bird by cutting through its tail wing. 'The anus is removed along with the tail. However, the anus separates from the intestines when it is removed. This leaves a portion of the intestines exposed. By pulling on these, the rest of the intestines can be pulled from the abdomen like a string attached to the gizzard' (Milgrom 1991: 171).

A further example is found in Lev 3:9–10, where the fat/suet portions of a sheep that the offerer removes and the priest burns on the altar (as the *'iššeh*, 'food offering' of a well-being offering to YHWH) includes the following: 'He must remove all the fatty tail [*'alyâ*] up to the end of the spine, the fat covering the entrails, and all the fat on the entrails, the two kidneys with the fat on their sinews, and the protruding lobe on the liver [which he is to remove along with the kidneys]' (NET Bible; word in brackets supplied). The prescriptions in this chapter regarding fat portions of herd animals (vv. 3–4) and goats (vv. 14–15) do not mention the 'fat tail', which is unique to sheep.

The tail of a sheep seems out of place among fat portions until investigation reveals that sheep in the land of Israel into modern times have remarkably large and broad tails, with the broad part consisting of an outgrowth of fat, from which the tail proper hangs (Milgrom 1991: 211–212; for physiological identifications of the other fat portions, see Milgrom 1991: 205–208). In a well-being offering, the whole fat tail is to be severed at 'the end of the

spine', i.e. at the sacrum/coccyx (*'āṣeh*; v. 9): 'the lowest bone of the spine, closest to the broad tail' (Milgrom 1991: 213).

6 Sacrifice and the believer

The biblical texts regarding the Israelite sacrificial system implicitly or explicitly address the personal spiritual experience of God's people in several ways, which can be instructive for modern believers. Leviticus shows the importance of a personal relationship with God by commencing with instructions for sacrifices of individuals (Lev 1–7). These begin with voluntary offerings (Lev 1–3), indicating that Leviticus prioritizes the value of devotion to YHWH from the heart (cf. Deut 6:5).

Through sacrifice, anyone could approach the deity, invoking him to seek expiation or to express homage, thanks, or praise. Thus, sacrifices were like acted out prayers, and there was a close connection between sacrifice and prayer (Ps 141:2), which could be offered at or directed toward the place of sacrifice (e.g. 1 Sam 1:9–16; 1 Kings 8:22–54). Like one who prays, the offerer of a sacrifice depended on faith that God exists and that humans can communicate and interact with him as he has promised.

Sacrifices taught the Israelites vital information concerning their nature in relationship to that of God, and his way of relating to them as faulty human beings. Purity rules taught the difference between the inherently holy, immortal deity and mortal, impure people. By condescending to dwell among them and by allowing his house to be affected by their impurities, he showed his grace and concern for them. Deaths of sacrificial animals taught that God can justly redeem sinful, mortal humans only through sacrifice. The system of purification offerings, culminating on the Day of Atonement, further taught God's justice as he acknowledged and dealt with judicial responsibility and differentiated between loyal and disloyal people.

Only descendants of Aaron could officiate sacrifices as priests, a status that is non-existent in New Testament Christianity aside from the priesthood of Christ (e.g. Heb 7) and the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet 2:9). However, among non-priestly Israelites, worship opportunities for offerers were quite egalitarian. Sacrifices, like prayers, could be offered by anyone, including women (e.g. Lev 2:1; 4:27, etc., generic *nepeš*, 'person'; 12:6–8; 15:29–30; Gruber 1987), the poor (Lev 1:14–17; 5:7–13; 12:8; 14:21–32), and non-Israelite resident aliens (Exod 12:48–49; Lev 17:8; 22:18; Num 15:14–16). Both men and women could enter the temporary status of high holiness by taking the Nazirite vow, which called for a special group of concluding sacrifices (Num 6:1–21).

Spiritual exercises in the form of sacrifices could be associated or combined with other forms of devotion to God. Thus, before offering sacrifices, a Nazirite was to demonstrate separation to YHWH by separating (i.e. abstaining) from alcoholic beverages and even any

other grape products, by leaving his or her hair unshaven, and by not incurring corpse impurity (Num 6:2–8). Also, on the Day of Atonement, while the high priest was performing sacrifices to purge the sanctuary on behalf of his people, they were individually required to show loyalty to YHWH and ongoing repentance by practicing self-denial and abstaining from work (Lev 16, esp. vv. 29, 31; cf. 23:26–32).

The concept that worship is not isolated from other aspects of personal relationship with the deity (cf. 1 Sam 15:22) is shown, for example, by the need to pay economic reparation to a wronged party before bringing a reparation offering (Lev 5:15–16, 21–26 [Eng. 6:2–7]; Num 5:6–8, with confession; cf. Matt 5:23–24). This exemplifies a strong connection between sacrifice and ethics (cf. Klawans 2006: 84–89, regarding proper ownership of sacrifices). An expression of spirituality by sacrifice is invalid and unacceptable if the offerer ignores God's principles that govern relationships with himself and with other human beings (e.g. Isa 1:10–17; cf. Ps 66:18 regarding prayer).

A priest who officiated a sacrifice mediated the approach of an Israelite to YHWH. Nevertheless, the sacrificial transaction was between the offerer and the Lord, who alone and directly granted forgiveness (e.g. Lev 4:26, 31, 35). A sinner could be required to make a verbal confession before bringing a sacrifice (Lev 5:5; Num 5:7), but the person never confessed to a priest, another human being who could err (Lev 4:3–12).

7 Sacrifice and the community

Biblical sacrificial texts also address the spiritual relationship between the Lord and his community of faith, with implications for groups of modern believers. Various dimensions of sacrifice 'ultimately result in the creation of community among the participants and later audience of a particular ritual. Many rituals function as great integrators. This integration can affect the reality of a particular society, as is often the case in state-sponsored ritual actions' (Klingbeil 2007: 222).

Israelite individuals who remained loyal to YHWH received the benefits of belonging to the nation with which he had made a covenant through sacrifice (Exod 19:5–6; 24:5–8). Together they enjoyed the blessing and protection of God's presence among them (e.g. 25:8), which was maintained by regular worship, including the morning and evening burnt offerings on every day of the year (Num 28:1–8). There were additional sacrifices on behalf of the entire community on weekly Sabbaths, at the beginning of every month, and at yearly festivals (Num 28–29, including expiatory purification offerings; see 28:22, 30; 29:5). The timing of these rituals demonstrated the need for frequent, including daily, interaction with the Lord (cf. Ps 34:2 [Eng. v. 1]; 105:4; 145:2).

Together the Israelites witnessed the consecration and inauguration of the Lord's earthly residence and his servants who ministered for them there (Lev 8–9). They saw YHWH's

fire consume sacrifices on the altar (9:24) and light the continuous altar fire that later consumed their corporate and individual sacrifices. Thus, they received evidence for faith in divine acceptance of their worship and of those who ministered on their behalf, with whom they participated in their individual sacrifices.

The provision for a purification offering on behalf of all Israelites (Lev 4:13–21) acknowledged the possibility of corporate sin requiring penitence by an entire community to receive divine forgiveness. Just because a wrong is committed by everyone does not mean that it is the responsibility of no-one.

Sacrifices such as burnt offerings and thank offerings could be accompanied by other forms of corporate praise of God, such as music (e.g. 2 Chr 29:27–31; on praise associated with cult, see Anderson 1991). This kind of integrative, multi-sensory worship experience would express and affirm the profound significance of effective praise, which is only possible within the context of divine redemption through sacrifice.

Israelites shared *zebaḥ* sacrifices, such as the Passover sacrifice and some well-being offerings, among members of groups, including families (Exod 12:3–4) and also with invited guests (Deut 16:10–11; 1 Sam 9:13). By enjoying worship fellowship with meals, they would have strengthened the social bonds between them. Group sacrifices were especially frequent during the national annual festivals (e.g. Deut 16:10–11), which began with Passover. Just before the Israelites departed from Egypt, YHWH instituted Passover as a new kind of sacrificial occasion. This was accompanied by the seven-day observance of eating Unleavened Bread (Exod 12:1–27, 43–49; 13:2–16). Unlike sacrifices at solitary altars, this was a distinctively national event.

The first Passover *zebaḥ*, with a lamb per household, was performed at the homes of the Israelites in Egypt and the blood of the lambs served an apotropaic (warding off evil) purpose. The people applied it to the entrances of their houses so that YHWH would see it, pass over those doorways, and not allow the ‘destroyer’ to enter and kill their firstborn (12:7, 12–13, 22–23, 27, 29). This application of blood ‘indexed’ the significance of the doorways, implying the need to avert lethal intrusion by marking the spaces inside those entrances as safe zones (cf. Gilders 2004: 49). They were to roast and eat their lambs with unleavened bread and bitter herbs on the night of the fourteenth day of the first month in the spring (vv. 8–9). They were to eat it in haste (v. 11) because they were about to hurry out of Egypt when God would deliver them by striking dead all the firstborn of Egypt (vv. 12, 29–39; 13:15).

The unique night-time observance of Passover, with Unleavened Bread, was to become an ongoing, yearly commemoration of the momentous event of divine deliverance by which the nation of Israel was born as an independent entity (Exod 12:43–49; 13:3–10). We can assume that Leviticus 17 included the Passover sacrifice in the requirement

that all sacrificial slaughter, without exception, be performed at the sanctuary, where the blood was to be applied to the altar, rather than at individual homes. This accords with the command in Deuteronomy 12 that all sacrifices must be carried out at the central sanctuary/temple that God would choose. Exodus 12 does not include wine as part of the service, but inclusion of this element in the Passover tradition could have been introduced by the Numbers 15 stipulation that every *zebaḥ* sacrifice (or burnt offering) must be accompanied by a drink offering of wine (vv. 5, 7, 10).

Even before the sanctuary was constructed, YHWH stipulated the observance of Unleavened Bread, which occurred at the beginning of the grain harvest (i.e. of barley; see Lev 23:10–14), as the first of three annual pilgrim festivals. The second and third of these were also harvest festivals later in the spring and in the autumn: the festivals of Harvest/ Weeks and of Ingathering, which came to be called the festival of 'Booths' (Exod 23:14–17; 34:18, 22–24; cf. Deut 16:16).

Israelite males were commanded to appear before YHWH at these times, and they were not to come 'empty-handed', meaning they were to bring offerings (Exod 23:15, 17; cf. 34:23; Deut 16:16–17). This was in line with the ANE obligation of a vassal ruler (who represented his people) to periodically visit the court of his superior/suzerain with an obligatory payment of tribute (Berman 2008: 41–42). The requirement for all Israelite males to come in such a manner before YHWH, the covenant suzerain, implied their high status as representatives of their people who were directly responsible to the divine Lord. Members of no other nation enjoyed this kind of covenant relationship with a deity.

The Day of Atonement was not a pilgrim festival. Rather, all of the people were to practice self-denial at their homes and abstain from work, in order to receive the benefit of the purgation of impurities and sins from the sanctuary that the high priest was accomplishing on behalf of all members of the nation. Their faults as individuals had affected the sanctuary of their deity and his entire community, which received a corporate remedy through one complex sacrificial process.

Attributions

Copyright Roy E. Gane (CC BY-NC)

8 Appendix: Sacrifices outside Pentateuchal texts concerning the sanctuary system

8.1 Introduction

According to Old Testament historical narratives, sacrificial worship was introduced at an early pre-Israelite period. This form of worship progressed from simple ritual offerings by patriarchs on solitary altars to the elaborate system of sacrifices at the Israelite sanctuary that has been reviewed above. Sacrifice was central to normative Israelite worship of

YHWH and united the community of his chosen people. It continued at the permanent temple in Jerusalem, but prophets rigorously critiqued some unacceptable approaches to sacrificial worship there. Some wisdom writings of the Old Testament, as well as Psalms, provide additional perspectives regarding sacrifice, which continued into the post-exilic era of the Second Temple.

The following sections discuss references to sacrifices in historical narratives, prophetic writings, and wisdom literature apart from the pentateuchal texts regarding the ritual system at the Israelite sanctuary. This appendix also addresses the question of whether YHWH sometimes accepted human sacrifice.

8.2 Historical narratives

8.2.1 Before the establishment of the Israelite sanctuary

According to the canonical biblical narrative, sacrifice originated soon after the fall of Adam and Eve into sin (Gen 3). It seems clear that sacrifice, which is an indirect form of interaction with a transcendent being, was not needed before the fall, when human beings enjoyed direct access to God (Gen 1–3). The first recorded sacrifices were Cain's offering of agricultural produce and Abel's offering of some firstborn animals from his flock and their fat portions (Gen 4:3–5). Both of these offerings are termed *minḥâ*, which in general usage refers to a gift of homage or respect to a superior (e.g. Exod 43:11, 15, 25–26; Judg 3:15, 17–18). Genesis does not say why the Lord accepted Abel's homage but not that of Cain. Perhaps Cain failed to follow instructions that are not recorded in the Bible, or perhaps Abel appropriately offered the best of what he had to give. Later in the Israelite sacrificial system, *minḥâ* became a technical term for a 'grain offering' (Lev 2). The acceptability of such a sacrifice suggests the possibility that the unacceptability of Cain's offering was not simply because it was not an animal sacrifice.

Following the great flood, the first sacrifice was an *'ōlâ* ('burnt offering') ritual complex: 'Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking of every clean animal and of every clean bird, he offered burnt offerings on the altar' (Gen 8:20 NJPS). The text does not identify his motivation for such worship, which could have included thanks and praise to God for deliverance from the Flood and, perhaps more important, the need for divine favour towards the still faulty post-Flood human race (Wenham 1995a: 94–95). Genesis indicates that the Lord accepted the sacrifice: he anthropomorphically 'smelled the pleasing aroma' (v. 21), resolved not to destroy the earth again as he had done (vv. 21–22), blessed and instructed Noah and his children (9:1–7), and established a covenant with them and all other living creatures (vv. 8–17). Ultimately, Noah's offering of thanks also served as a covenant sacrifice.

Within the diachronic flow of the overall biblical narrative (apart from source-critical literary reconstructions), Noah's sacrifice introduced several important paradigmatic aspects that

would appear later in the Israelite sacrificial system. These include the use of an altar; the category ‘burnt offering’ as an instrument of basic worship interaction with the deity that could carry more than one function; restriction of sacrificial victims to clean/pure creatures; and the effect of sacrificial smoke as a ‘pleasing aroma’.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob built altars in various places (Gen 12:7–8; 13:18; 26:25; 33:20; 35:7). The text states regarding several of these places that the patriarchs ‘called upon the name of the Lord’ there (12:8; 13:4; 26:25), referring to worship that included spoken invocation of the deity (first mentioned in 4:26). These passages do not say that the patriarchs used the altars to offer sacrifices, but it is likely that they did. In any case, Jacob named his altars, thereby indicating that they served as memorials, including of divine deliverance (33:20; 35:7).

The ritual by which YHWH made a covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:7–18) was not a sacrifice because nothing from it was offered to the deity, so it is not discussed here. However, in one instance, Genesis explicitly states that Abraham offered a burnt offering: a ram that he found providentially provided and that he sacrificed on Mount Moriah ‘in place of his son’ (22:1 NJPS) after Abraham passed the divine test of obeying God’s command to sacrifice Isaac (vv. 1–12). The word *taḥat*, ‘in place of’, is explicit language of substitution. This does not mean that the Lord actually desired a human sacrifice and settled for an animal instead (see further below in section 8.5). Rather, it appears that he wanted Abraham to demonstrate his willingness to totally submit to the divine will (vv. 12, 16), and when that was accomplished, the ram substituted for the human test victim.

Gen 31:54 and 46:1 introduce another kind of sacrifice, which Jacob performed: the *zebaḥ*, commonly translated simply as ‘sacrifice’, which denotes a particular kind of sacrifice from which the offerer(s) would eat. Thus, ‘Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and invited his relatives to eat the meal’ (31:54 NET Bible). Later instances of this kind of ritual were the Passover *zebaḥ* (Exod 12:27) and the well-being *zebaḥ* (Lev 3), which included thank, votive, and freewill sacrifices (7:11–36).

The overview of early sacrifices just presented has shown that key features were already in place long before the Israelite sacrificial system was instituted. After the Israelites left Egypt, Moses continued the practice of building a solitary altar and naming it as a memorial (Exod 17:15), and YHWH gave instructions for the Israelites to construct solitary altars of earth or stones to sacrifice burnt and well-being offerings (20:24–26). Moses also built an altar on which he directed young men to sacrifice burnt and well-being offerings for the covenant-making ceremony in front of Mount Sinai (24:4–5). These kinds of sacrifices were also known to some non-Israelites during this period. Jethro, Moses’ Midianite father-in-law, ‘brought a burnt offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to partake of the meal before God with Moses’ father-in-law’ (18:1 NJPS; cf. 3:1).

8.2.2 After the establishment of the Israelite sanctuary

Joshua 22 recounts an inter-tribal crisis that occurred soon after the conquest of Canaan. The Transjordanian tribes built a large altar by the Jordan River, which gave the other Israelite tribes the impression that they were rebelling against YHWH by establishing an alternative place of sacrifice, aside from the authorized 'altar of the Lord our God' (v. 19). The crisis was resolved when the Transjordanians explained that they intended for their altar to serve only as a witness to their fidelity to the Lord, not as a place for actually performing sacrifices. This narrative shows knowledge of a rule that legitimate sacrifices could only be performed at the central altar, i.e. at the sanctuary, in agreement with the commands recorded in Leviticus 17 and Deuteronomy 12. Interestingly, Josh 22:23, 29 speak of burnt, grain, and well-being offerings in the same order as in Leviticus 1–3, with *minḥâ* used in the technical sense of a particular kind of sacrifice: the 'grain offering'.

On the level of ordinary Israelite individuals, Gideon brought the meat of a young goat with its broth and unleavened bread to the theophanic 'angel of YHWH' as a *minḥâ*, here in the non-technical and non-sacrificial sense of a 'present' of food. The angel used his staff to ignite a fire from the rock under the offering materials that consumed them (Judg 6:18–21), as in a burnt offering. Judges 13:15–20 reports a somewhat similar phenomenon. Manoah followed the direction of the 'angel of YHWH' by offering a burnt offering to YHWH consisting of a young goat, along with a *minḥâ*, in this case a 'grain offering'. Manoah lit the fire, and the 'angel of YHWH' ascended in the flame of the 'altar', which was a rock. In each of these instances, the 'angel of YHWH' performed a miracle to participate in a sacrifice at a makeshift altar consisting of a rock. This involvement of the 'angel' affirmed the ongoing role of sacrifice in divine-human interaction during the dark period of the 'judges' (as recorded in the book of Judges).

These sacrifices were not at the central sanctuary altar, but they were legitimated by the ways in which the 'angel' took offers of hospitality and turned them into occasions for sacrifice. Some later sacrifices away from the central altar were legitimate because they were offered by or commanded by prophets who were presumably following divine guidance (1 Sam 7:9–10; 2 Sam 24:18–25; 1 Kgs 18:33–38).

When the sanctuary was located at Shiloh, Elkanah went there every year with his family to worship and sacrifice (1 Sam 1:3–7), apparently in harmony with the pentateuchal requirement for celebrating pilgrim festivals (Exod 23:14–17; 34:18, 22–24). On one of these occasions, he offered to YHWH a votive sacrifice (1 Sam 1:21; cf. Lev 7:16). Later, when his wife Hannah brought their young son Samuel to Shiloh, she brought an animal sacrifice along with a grain offering and a drink offering of wine (1 Sam 1:24–25; cf. Num 15).

Concerning priests, 1 Sam 2:12–17 characterizes the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, as wicked priests who abused their cultic control by taking some meat of *zebaḥ* sacrifices that rightfully belonged to the offerers (vv. 13–14) according to Lev 7:15–16. They also demanded portions of such sacrifices before the fat was separated out and burned on the altar for YHWH (2 Sam 2:15–16). The text indicates in three ways that Hophni and Phinehas were violating existing rules that were known in pre-exilic times. First, the anonymous narrator condemns them (2 Sam 2:12, 17). Second, common Israelites are represented as knowing and requesting in vain that the fat should be burned first (v. 16; cf. Lev 7:31). Third, an anonymous prophet affirmed the longstanding, divinely ordained cultic leadership of the Aaronic priests, but condemned Hophni and Phinehas for treating YHWH's sacrifices with contempt (2 Sam 2:27–36).

Solomon built the first temple 'in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where [the LORD] had appeared to his father David, at the place which David had designated, at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite' (2 Chr 3:1 NJPS). Thus, the temple was permanently linked to two paradigmatic occasions of sacrificial substitution for human life: the life of Isaac (see above); and the life of David, when he took the blame for ordering a military census that resulted in a deadly divine plague (2 Sam 24:17; cf. vv. 1–16). After David prayed, 'Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house' (v. 17 ESV), the prophet Gad came with the divine command to 'Go up, raise an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite' (v. 18 ESV). David built the altar and offered sacrifices there, and YHWH spared him, along with his people (vv. 19–25). Thus, God provided the remedy of sacrifice in place of David's death, which David deserved. Consequently, animal sacrifices at the temple, located where the events involving Isaac and David had occurred, were not simply about killing animals to supply token food gifts for God; they reminded Israelites that these sacrifices ransomed their lives (cf. Lev 17:11).

During the period of the united monarchy, the Israelites were sacrificing at various 'high places' before the first temple was constructed as the centralized location for worship. As such, Solomon sacrificed many burnt offerings on the altar at the great high place at Gibeon (1 Kgs 3:2–4). When the temple in Jerusalem was dedicated, Solomon and his people offered 22,000 herd animals and 120,000 flock animals as well-being offerings (1 Kgs 8:62–63). The meat of all these animals was not wasted, but rather eaten by the populace in a massive feast occasion to celebrate the new temple with God. Solomon also sacrificed a burnt offering and a grain offering, which were burned for YHWH along with all the fat portions of the well-being offerings (v. 64). As in Josh 22, this verse (1 Kgs 8:64) refers to burnt, grain, and well-being offerings in the same order as in Leviticus 1–3.

Apostate King Ahaz replaced the authorized bronze altar at the Jerusalem temple with another altar patterned after an altar that he saw in Damascus (2 Kgs 16:10–11, 14). However, even his own sacrifices, which he illicitly officiated as though he were a priest,

showed continuity with the procedures specified in the Pentateuch: he ‘burned his burnt offering and his grain offering and poured his drink offering and threw the blood of his peace [or ‘well-being’] offerings on the altar’ (v. 13 ESV; words in brackets supplied). This is in harmony with Numbers 15, where burnt offerings were to be accompanied by grain and drink offerings. Then the king’s command to Uriah the priest began with the words: ‘On the great altar burn the morning burnt offering and the evening grain offering’ (2 Kgs 16:15 ESV). This shows the need for morning and evening sacrifices, as in Exod 29:38–42 and Num 28:1–8.

According to 2 Chronicles 29 (a post-exilic text), Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, initiated a religious reform in which the temple was purified and reconsecrated. Then, with the officials of Jerusalem, Hezekiah offered a ‘purification offering’ (*ḥaṭṭā’t*) ritual complex of seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for the nation and the temple (v. 21). However, in verses 23–24 only the goats were subjected to the purification offering procedure; the other animals were sacrificed as a burnt offering complex. This explains why the priests tossed the blood of the bulls, rams, and lambs against the altar, as specified in Lev 1:5, 11 for burnt offerings.

The king and (representatives of) the assembly leaned their hands on the goats, and when the priests had slaughtered them, they applied their blood to the altar in the manner of a purification offering (*piel* verb of the root *ḥ-ṭ-’*) in order to expiate for all Israel (v.24). Thus, the text implies that the priests daubed the blood on the horns of the altar, as in Lev 4:25, etc. Here abbreviation with the verb (*ḥ-ṭ-’*) referring to the procedure of a purification offering (*ḥaṭṭā’t*) indicates that the priests were following a known procedure. An antecedent for the combination of a burnt offering with a purification offering, with the function of a large-scale purification offering to expiate for sin of the entire community, is found in Num 15:24 (cf. v. 27 – only a female goat for a purification offering on behalf of an individual).

Another connection with pentateuchal ritual law appears in 2 Chr 29:31, where Hezekiah instructs his people to offer thank offerings (cf. Lev 7:12–15). Later in the account of Hezekiah, 2 Chr 31:3 speaks of the king’s contribution ‘for the burnt offerings – the morning and evening burnt offering, and the burnt offerings for sabbaths, and new moons, and festivals, as prescribed in the Teaching of the LORD’ (NJPS; cf. Num 28–29). In the following verses, the people give firstfruits offerings, tithes, and other contributions to support the priests and Levites (vv. 4–12; cf. Num 18).

According to 2 Chronicles 30, Hezekiah invited the people of Judah and also people from northern Israel to celebrate Passover and Unleavened Bread in Jerusalem. These observances had not been practised widely as prescribed (v. 5). It was not possible to keep Passover on the prescribed date – the fourteenth day of the first month (Exod 12:6,

18; Lev 23:5; Num 9:1–5; 28:16) – because the priests had not consecrated (purified) themselves, and the people had not yet assembled (2 Chr 30:3). So the festival was held on the fourteenth day of the second month (vv. 2, 13, 15), a backup option provided by Num 9:10–11, and even then many of the people were not ritually pure (2 Chr 30:17–20). The festival observance, including Unleavened Bread, resulted in great joy because nothing like this had happened in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon (2 Chr 30:26).

Near the end of the Judahite monarchy, King Josiah commanded his people:

> ‘Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant.’ For no such Passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah. But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was kept to the LORD in Jerusalem. (2 Kgs 23:21–23 ESV)

Second Chronicles 35 provides further details regarding this celebration of Passover, which was kept on the fourteenth day of the first month (v. 1), along with the festival of Unleavened Bread (v. 17). Verse 18 affirms: ‘No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem’ (ESV). This Passover of Josiah was greater than the one observed during the reign of Hezekiah because the people were ready for it, so that it could be kept on the originally specified date, and more northern Israelites came to participate in it (v. 18, ‘all […] Israel’; contrast 30:10–11).

Ezra refers to several kinds of sacrifices that the Jews offered after the Babylonian exile. They built the altar before the foundation of the temple was laid and sacrificed on it regular morning and evening burnt offerings, burnt offerings at new moons and festivals, including the festival of Booths, and also freewill offerings (Ezra 3:2–6; cf. Lev 7:16; Num 28–29). Among other sacrifices for the dedication of the rebuilt temple, they offered twelve male goats as a purification offering (Ezra 6:17; cf. 8:35). Some of the priestly line who had married foreign women, thereby committing sacrilege by violating their holiness, offered reparation offerings of rams when they put away their wives (Ezra 10:19; cf. Lev 5:15–19).

According to Nehemiah, the people pledged themselves to provide for a number of offerings: the ‘bread of the array’, that is, the ‘bread of the Presence’; the regular grain and burnt offerings; sacrifices for the Sabbaths, new moons, and festivals; purification offerings to expiate for Israel; and wood to burn on the altar (Neh 10:33–4; cf. 13:31; Lev 1:7; 24:5–9; Num 28–29). They also promised to bring their firstfruits, tithes, and firstborn (Neh 10:35–39; cf. Exod 13:2, 11–15; Num 18). Nehemiah 13:5, 9 also mention frankincense among other items stored in a large chamber of the temple (cf. esp. Lev 24:7).

8.3 Prophetic writings

Israelite prophets related to sacrifice in several ways. Some prophetic references to sacrifice are positive. Jeremiah and Ezekiel were members of priestly families (Jer 1:1; Ezek 1:3). They were well acquainted with various kinds of sacrifices, which they viewed favourably (e.g. Jer 17:26; 33:11, 18; Ezek 43:27; cf. Lev 1–7). Jonah's vow to offer a sacrifice (2:10 [Eng. v. 9]) expressed his faith in YHWH. In response to Daniel's prayer of confession and intercession, the angel Gabriel flew to him around the time of the evening offering (*minḥâ*; Dan 9:21; cf. Exod 29:38–42; Num 28:1–8).

Several prophets looked forward to restoration of sacrificial worship after the Babylonian exile (e.g. Isa 60:7; Jer 33:11, 18; Zeph 3:10). Most prominent in this regard are Ezekiel's instructions for an array of sacrifices to be performed at an ideal, but never built, temple in Jerusalem (42:13; 43:18–27; 44:11, 15, 17, 29–30; 45:13–25; 46:4–7, 11–15, 20, 24), where worship would be purer than before the exile and God's presence would remain (cf. Kasher 1998: 192–208). Isaiah even saw future sacrificial worship of YHWH by non-Israelites (Isa 19:19–22; 56:6–8; cf. Mal 1:11).

After the exile, Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the rebuilding of the temple (Hag 1–2; Zech 1:16; 4:9–10; 6:11–15; 8:3, 9; cf. Ezra 5:1–2; 6:14). Zechariah envisioned a better time when all cooking vessels in Jerusalem and Judah would be holy, and consequently, they would be fit for boiling sacrificial meat (Zech 14:21; cf. Lev 7:15–16).

Other references to sacrifice in prophetic writings are negative. Hosea and Amos had nothing but condemnation for sacrificial worship in the northern kingdom of Israel, where there was no temple or altar that was authorized by YHWH, worship was syncretistic and idolatrous, and the people had forsaken justice and acting rightly (Hos 4:15–5:4; 8:5–6, 11–13; Amos 5:4–7, 10–15, 21–24; cf. 1 Kings 12–13).

Amos asks if the Israelites brought sacrifices (plural of *zebaḥ*) and offerings (*minḥâ*) to YHWH during their forty years in the wilderness (5:25). According to the Pentateuch, they did offer such sacrifices (e.g. Exod 24:5–6; 40:29; Lev 9). The point of Amos seems to be that in the wilderness, the Israelites brought not only sacrifices and offerings, but also justice and righteousness (cf. Amos 5:24; cf. Gane 2012: 687–688).

Given that the northern kingdom's ritual system was unauthorized, it is not surprising that YHWH's prophets would reject northern Israelite sacrifices outright; but the prophets also had strong messages against sacrificial practices at the authorized temple in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, in this case the problem was not the divinely instituted worship system itself, but misuse of it by disloyal people.

In Hos 6:6, the Lord addresses Judah as follows: 'For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than [comparative preposition *min*] burnt offerings' (NKJV; words in brackets supplied). The comparative preposition *min* in this parallel construction

indicates that the verse weighs relative values, rather than invalidating all sacrifice. The basic idea seems to be the same as in Samuel's words to King Saul: 'Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to the LORD's command? Surely, obedience is better than sacrifice, compliance than the fat of rams' (1 Sam 15:22 NJPS).

Isaiah 1 expresses divine rejection of sacrifices by Judahites, along with their sacred occasions and even their prayers (v. 15) because they were rebelliously continuing to do evil (vv. 2–4, 10–23; cf. 66:3–4). Jeremiah concurred (Jer 6:19–20; 7:21–31; 11:3–17; 14:10–12). An acceptable religious activity for YHWH can only be performed from a heart that desires to be faithful. Isaiah and Jeremiah did not annul the efficacy of sacrifice by sincere, loyal individuals any more than they cancelled prayer as a valid avenue of human-divine communication (cf. Isa 56:6). Compare Isa 43:22–25, where God is unhappy with people who have not brought him sacrifices: he has not burdened them by demanding such rituals, but instead they have burdened him with their sins.

In Jer 7:22–23, God says that at the time when he brought the Israelites out of Egypt, he did not command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices (*zebaḥ*); rather he commanded them to obey him. At first glance, this statement flatly contradicts the Pentateuch (Exod 12; 20:24; 23:18; 29:28, 38–42; Lev 1, 3, 6–7; Num 28:6). However, it could be a hyperbolic way to convey a comparison, as in Hos 6:6 and Amos 5:24–25; indeed, 'prophets were prone to hyperbole' (Klawans 2006: 81). An alternative but complementary interpretation observes the following:

> […] God's first proclamations at Sinai called Israel to covenant obedience (Ex 19:3–6; 20:1–17 [the Decalogue]) but did not specify requirements for the cultic system, which were presented in detail (e.g. Ex 25–31) only after ratification of the covenant (Ex 24). This order implies that obedience was more important than ritual practices. (Gane 2012: 688, referring to Thompson 1980: 287–288)

We can add that just after the Israelites left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea (also known as the Sea of Reeds), YHWH commanded them to 'diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes' (Exod 15:26 ESV). It was only after the tabernacle was set up at the beginning of the second year after they departed from Egypt (Exod 40:17) that Moses received divine instructions for the Israelite people concerning procedures of sacrifices offered by individuals, beginning with the burnt offering (Lev 1–5).

During the Second Temple period, Malachi rebuked people who brought animals that were defective or stolen as sacrificial victims, thereby insulting God (Mal 1:6–14; cf. Lev 22:17–25). According to Malachi 2, YHWH rejects a *minḥâ*, in the broad sense of 'offering', from a man who unjustly divorces his wife (vv. 13–16; cf. vv. 11–12).

To conclude this section, there is no solid evidence that the prophets were opposed to the authorized Israelite ritual system per se. Their opposition only targeted illicit sacrifices and abuse of ritual worship at the temple in Jerusalem (Milgrom 1991: 482; Klawans 2006: 93, 98; Eidevall 2012: 215–219; Gane 2012: 686–691; Glaim 2017; against Hendel 1995: 190, 196 and Barton 2005: 120–121). The prophets agreed with the Pentateuch that loyal obedience to YHWH and his principles of justice are crucial for maintaining a healthy relationship with him, so rituals cannot replace them (e.g. Mic 6:8; cf. Lev 19; 26; Deut 6). They also recognized that God can directly remove sin without animal sacrifice (e.g. Isa 6:6–7; 27:9; Jer 33:8; cf. Exod 34:7). According to Dan 9:27, sacrificial worship at the Second Temple would be brought to an end at a future time. However, Daniel himself was not opposed to the temple, as shown by his practice of praying toward Jerusalem (6:1 [Eng. v. 10]), to which he referred as God's 'holy mountain' (9:16) – that is, where the temple, the place of sacrifice, was located (cf. Isa 56:7).

8.4 Wisdom literature

Job offered burnt offerings on behalf of his children just in case they had sinned by cursing God in their hearts (Job 1:5). At the end of the book, the Lord ordered Job's friends to offer burnt offerings and have Job pray for them because they had not spoken rightly about God and he was angry with them (42:7–9). Clearly these burnt offerings were expiatory, although the passages do not use the piel of *k-p-r*, 'expiate'. Here is further demonstration of the multi-functionality of the burnt offering.

The Psalms contain a variety of references to sacrifices that shed light on their functions in contexts of personal experiences with God (cf. Courtman 1995). David's wish for YHWH to help someone else is associated with desire for the Lord's remembrance and favorable acceptance of that person's grain and burnt offerings (20:2–4 [Eng. vv. 1–3]). In Psalm 54, the Psalmist promises to sacrifice a freewill offering and give thanks for YHWH's deliverance (vv. 8–9 [Eng. vv. 6–7]), and in Psalm 66, he promises to sacrifice burnt offerings to fulfil vows that he took when he was in trouble (vv. 13–15). Elsewhere, thank offerings are accompanied by joyful recounting of God's works (Ps 107:22) and fulfilment of vows (116:17–18).

David responds to divine protection by saying that he will offer sacrifices with joyful shouting and with singing (Ps 27:5–6). However, David's praise and thanks to YHWH for deliverance will please the Lord more than an ox or bull (an expensive sacrificial victim; 69:30–33 [Eng. vv. 29–31]). In Psalm 40, David expresses willingness and desire to hear/obey God, whose law is in his heart. Here the Lord desires this rather than sacrifices, including *zebaḥ* sacrifice, grain offering, burnt offering, or purification offering (vv. 7–9 [Eng. vv. 6–8]). Notice the thematic connection to the prophetic view of sacrifice (see above).

In Psalm 50, a psalm of Asaph, God calls those who have made a covenant with him by a *zebaḥ* sacrifice (v. 5; cf. Exod 24:5–8); he calls them in order to judge them (Ps 50:4, 6–7), but not regarding their sacrifices and burnt offerings, which he does not need for his sustenance (vv. 8–13). He encourages his people to sacrifice thank offerings and to fulfil their vows to him, and he will deliver them when they are in trouble and call upon him (vv. 14–15, 23). However, he rejects those who forget him and do evil (vv. 16–22). This message agrees with that of prophets who rebuked disloyal hypocrites, who supposed that the Lord would accept them merely because of their sacrifices (see above).

Some Psalms speak metaphorically of non-sacrificial activities or attitudes as though they are sacrificial (compare the metaphorization of fasting in Isa 58:5–7). In Psalm 141, David petitions YHWH to let his prayer and the uplifting of his hands (in prayer) be established as incense and as an evening *minḥâ*, 'grain offering'/'sacrifice', before him (v. 2). In Psalm 51, repentant David further metaphorizes sacrifice by referring to attitudes, which are not even outward actions. The king recognizes that in his present case, the Lord does not desire a *zebaḥ* sacrifice or a burnt offering (v. 18 [Eng. v. 16]), presumably because David's crimes are too great (cf. 2 Sam 11–12; cf. 1 Sam 3:14). Rather, the sacrifices which remedy his current sins are a broken spirit and heart (v. 19 [Eng. v. 17]; cf. Mic 6:6–8). David ends by praying that God will treat Zion favourably in the future, at which time he will desire *zebaḥ* sacrifices of rightness/righteousness and burnt offerings (Ps 51:20–21 [Eng. vv. 18–19]).

According to Prov 21:3, YHWH prefers right and just action more than sacrifice (cf. 1 Sam 15:22 and above concerning the prophets). Proverbs 15:8a and 21:27 go further to state that the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination. Meanwhile, Prov 15:8b affirms that the prayers of the (morally) upright are acceptable to God. This contrast correlates with Ps 141:2 by referring to prayer as a functional equivalent for sacrifice. Somewhat along the same line, Eccl 4:17 (Eng. 5:1) warns against foolishly offering a sacrifice at the temple without realizing that one is doing wrong (NET Bible). It is better to go to the temple to listen and obey.

Proverbs 7:14 depicts a married woman who entices a young man to commit adultery with her by informing him that today she has fulfiled her vows by sacrificing well-being offerings, which means that she has plenty of fresh meat at home (cf. NET Bible; Lev 7:16). This provides a specific illustration of illegitimate dichotomizing between cultic and moral/ethical obligations (cf. above). Here the adulteress proposes a sacrilegious combination of holy food with unholy activity.

8.5 Human sacrifice

Clear archaeological or textual evidence for human sacrifice in the ANE is rare (e.g. Green 1975: 34–46, 154–155, 157, 190–191; Selman 1995: 99–100). It appears that such sacrifices, especially of children, were mainly reserved for situations of extreme need

when an offering of the highest value was thought necessary to petition a deity (2 Kgs 3:26–27). Unlike most other sacrifices, these were not offerings of food. References to human sacrifice are found in several parts of the Old Testament. Saul M. Olyan notes some biblical polemics against child sacrifice (e.g. Lev 20:2–5; 21:6), but continues: 'Nonetheless, some texts suggest that child sacrifices in Israel were made to YHWH himself and that the practice was legitimate in at least some Israelite circles (e.g. Gen. 22; Exod. 13.2; Judg. 11; Jer. 7.31; Ezek. 20.25–26, 30–31; Mic. 6.6–8, which all suggest that YHWH was the recipient of child sacrifices)' (Olyan 2004: 335).

However, aside from one Old Testament passage (see below), there is no clear evidence that Israel's deity actually wanted to receive a human being as a sacrifice to himself. Deut 12:31 and 18:10 expressly prohibit such offerings, which would be abominable to YHWH. In the process of reviewing provocations perpetrated against YHWH by the Israelites in the past, Ps 106:37–38 recollects that they sacrificed their children to demons, and to idols/ false gods of Canaan.

It is true that in Genesis 22, God tested Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice his son Isaac (the firstborn of Sarah). However, the angel of YHWH stopped him before he killed the young man (see above). After the Lord killed the firstborn of Egypt, he claimed the Israelite firstborn (of their mothers, in this sense like Isaac) as his own, but directed that they be redeemed (Exod 13:2, 12–15; 34:20; Num 18:15; cf. Exod 22:28 [Eng. v. 29]; Neh 10:37 [Eng. v. 36]). The firstborn humans were not sacrificeable victims appropriate for his altar (cf. redemption of a non-sacrificeable donkey by a sacrificeable lamb; Exod 13:13). The closest that the normative Israelite sacrificial system came to human sacrifice was the burning of a Nazirite's hair on the altar (Num 6:18; cf. in Num 35:25, 28, 32, the natural death of the high priest to release someone who had accidentally committed homicide from a city of refuge).

Jephthah did sacrifice his daughter to YHWH because he had made a somewhat open-ended vow that he felt bound to fulfil, and he likely believed that the deity had providentially selected her as the victim (Judg 11). However, the text does not express the idea that YHWH commanded or wanted him to do this (see above on redemption of firstborn humans).

In the prophetic writings, Jer 7:31 is a polemic against child sacrifice, which YHWH says he did not command, nor did the idea even come into his mind (cf. 19:5; 32:35). Ezekiel 20 presents an extreme attempt at persuasion by rhetorically depicting divine judgment on those who rebelled against his good laws by giving them up to bad, destructive laws – even including the practice of child sacrifice (vv. 25–26; on which see Greenberg 1983: 368–370; against Tatlock 2011: 38, 'firstborn sacrifice was both permissible and advisable in the preexilic era'), which YHWH abhorred (cf. 16:20–21). Micah 6:6–8 uses hyperbolic

rhetoric to emphasize that YHWH requires justice, loyalty, and humility rather than extreme sacrifices, such as one's firstborn child.

The exceptional passage in which God is explicitly said to actually accept a human sacrifice is the prophetic poem of Isa 52:13–53:12. Here it is YHWH's will that his servant should willingly suffer and die as an *'āšām*, 'reparation (offering)' (Isa 53:10), bearing the culpability of many sinners to make intercession for those who have rebelled against God (Isa 53:11–12). The New Testament identifies this unique servant as the divine-human Jesus Christ (John 12:38; Acts 8:32–35; 1 Pet 2:21–25).

Bibliography

Further reading

- Averbeck, Richard E. 2003. ‘Sacrifices and Offerings’, in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Edited by T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker. Downers Grove: IVP, 706–733.
- Beckwith, Roger T., and Martin J. Selman (eds). 1995. *Sacrifice in the Bible*. Carlisle, UK/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Baker.
- Eberhart, Christian A. (ed.). 2011a. *Ritual and Metaphor: Sacrifice in the Bible*. Resources for Biblical Study 68. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Gane, Roy E. 2005. *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- Gilders, William K. 2004. *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Wiley, Henrietta L., and Christian A. Eberhart (eds). 2017. *Sacrifice, Cult, and Atonement in Early Judaism and Christianity: Constituents and Critique*. Resources for Biblical Study 85. Atlanta: SBL Press.

Works cited

- Alexander, T. Desmond. 1995. ‘The Passover Sacrifice’, in *Sacrifice in the Bible*. Carlisle, UK/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Baker, 1–24.
- Anderson, Gary A. 1991. ‘The Praise of God as a Cultic Event’, in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel*. Edited by Gary A. Anderson and Saul M. Olyan. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 15–33.
- Averbeck, Richard E. 2003. ‘Sacrifices and Offerings’, in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Edited by T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker. Downers Grove: IVP, 706–733.
- Baal, Jan van. 1976. ‘Offering, Sacrifice, Gift’, *Numen* 23: 161–178.
- Balentine, Samuel E. 1999. *The Torah’s Vision of Worship*. Overtures to Biblical Theology Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Barton, John. 2005. ‘The Prophets and the Cult’, in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*. The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 422. Edited by John Day. New York: T & T Clark, 111–122.
- Beckwith, Roger T., and Martin J. Selman (eds). 1995. *Sacrifice in the Bible*. Carlisle, UK/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Baker.
- Bell, Catherine. 2009. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Berman, Joshua A. 2008. *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. 1995. *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel*. Library of Ancient Israel. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox.
- Burkert, Walter. 2004. 'Sacrifices, Offerings, and Votives: Introduction', in *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. Edited by Sarah Iles Johnston. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 325–326.
- Carter, Jeffrey (ed.). 2003. *Understanding Religious Sacrifice: A Reader*. London: Continuum.
- Courtman, Nigel B. 1995. 'Sacrifice in the Psalms', in *Sacrifice in the Bible*. Edited by Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman. Carlisle, UK/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Baker, 41–58.
- Davidson, Richard M. 1981. *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Τύπος Structures*. Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 2. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press.
- Eberhart, Christian A. 2002. *Studien Zur Bedeutung Der Opfer Im Alten Testament: Die Signifikanz von Blut- Und Verbrennungsriten Im Kultischen Rahmen*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien Zum Alten Und Neuen Testament 94. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.
- Eberhart, Christian A. (ed.). 2011a. *Ritual and Metaphor: Sacrifice in the Bible*. Resources for Biblical Study 68. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Eberhart, Christian A. 2011b. 'Sacrifice? Holy Smokes! Reflections on Cult Terminology for Understanding Sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible', in *Ritual and Metaphor: Sacrifice in the Bible*. Edited by Christian A. Eberhart. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 17–32.
- Eidevall, Göran. 2012. *Sacrificial Rhetoric in the Prophetic Literature of the Hebrew Bible*. Lewiston: Mellen.
- Elliott, Mark W. 2012. *Engaging Leviticus: Reading Leviticus Theologically with Its Past Interpreters*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.
- Fabry, Heinz-Josef. 2004. 'Qorbān', in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament XIII*. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 152–158.
- Faust, Avraham. 2019. 'Israelite Temples: Where Was Israelite Cult Not Practiced, and Why', *Religions* 10, no. 2: 106–121. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10020106
- Feder, Yitzhaq. 2011. *Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Ritual: Origins, Context, and Meaning*. Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series 2. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Frevel, Christian. 2016. 'Practicing Rituals in a Textual World: Ritual and Innovation in the Book of Numbers', in *Ritual Innovation in the Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism*. Edited by Nathan MacDonald. Berlin: de Gruyter, 129–150.

- Gane, Roy E. 1992. '"Bread of the Presence" and Creator-in-Residence', *Vetus Testamentum* 42: 179–203.
- Gane, Roy E. 1999. 'Leviticus, Book Of', in *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation II*. Nashville: Abingdon, 54–59.
- Gane, Roy E. 2004a. *Leviticus and Numbers*. NIV Application Commentary Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Gane, Roy E. 2004b. *Ritual Dynamic Structure*. Gorgias Dissertations 14, Religion 2. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias.
- Gane, Roy E. 2005. *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- Gane, Roy E. 2008. 'Privative Preposition Min in Purification Offering Pericopes and the Changing Face of "Dorian Gray"', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127: 209–222.
- Gane, Roy E. 2009. 'Leviticus', in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*. Edited by John H. Walton. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 284–337.
- Gane, Roy E. 2012. 'Sacrifice and Atonement', in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*. Edited by Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 685–692.
- Gane, Roy E. 2015. 'Didactic Logic and the Authorship of Leviticus', in *Current Issues in Priestly and Related Literature: The Legacy of Jacob Milgrom and Beyond*. Edited by Roy E. Gane and Ada Taggar-Cohen. Atlanta: SBL Press, 197–221.
- Gane, Roy E. 2019. 'Purification Offerings and Paradoxical Pollution of the Holy', in *Writing a Commentary on Leviticus: Hermeneutics – Methodology – Themes*. Edited by Christian A. Eberhart and Thomas Hieke. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 115–125.
- Gane, Roy E., and Ada Taggar-Cohen (eds). 2015. *Current Issues in Priestly and Related Literature: The Legacy of Jacob Milgrom and Beyond*. Resources for Biblical Study 82. Atlanta: SBL Press.
- Gennep, Arnold van. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gilders, William K. 2004. *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Gilders, William K. 2008. 'Blood As Purificant in Priestly Torah: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?', in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible*. Edited by Baruch J. Schwartz, David P. Wright, Jeffrey Stackert, and Naphtali S. Meshel. New York: T & T Clark, 77–83.
- Girard, René. 1977. *Violence and the Sacred*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Gitin, Seymour. 2002. ‘The Four-Horned Altar and Sacred Space: An Archaeological Perspective’, in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*. Edited by Barry M. Gittlen. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 95–123.
- Glaim, Aaron. 2017. ‘"I Will Not Accept Them": Sacrifice and Reciprocity in the Prophetic Literature’, in *Sacrifice, Cult, and Atonement in Early Judaism and Christianity: Constituents and Critique*. Resources for Biblical Study 85. Edited by Henrietta L. Wiley and Christian A. Eberhart. Atlanta: SBL Press, 125–149.
- Gorman, Frank H. 1990. *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 91. Sheffield: JSOT Press.
- Gorman, Frank H. 1993. ‘Priestly Rituals of Founding: Time, Space, and Status’, in *History and Interpretation: Essays in Honour of John H. Hayes*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 173. Edited by M. Patrick Graham, William P. Brown, and Jeffrey K. Kuan. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 47–64.
- Gorman, Frank H. 2008. ‘Pagans and Priests: Critical Reflections on Method’, in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible*. Edited by Baruch J. Schwartz, David P. Wright, Jeffrey Stackert, and Naphtali S. Meshel. New York: T & T Clark, 96–110.
- Gray, George Buchanan. 1903. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Green, Alberto R. W. 1975. *The Role of Human Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East*. American Schools of Oriental Research Dissertation Series 1. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press.
- Greenberg, Moshe. 1983. *Ezekiel 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible XXII. New York: Doubleday.
- Greer, Jonathan. 2013. *Dinner at Dan: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sacred Feasts at Iron Age II Tel Dan and Their Significance*. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 66. Leiden: Brill.
- Gruber, Mayer. 1987. ‘Women in the Cult According to the Priestly Code’, in *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel*. Edited by Jacob Neusner, Baruch A. Levine, and Ernest S. Frerichs. Philadelphia: Fortress, 35–48.
- Gruenwald, Ithamar. 2003. *Rituals and Ritual Theory in Ancient Israel*. Brill Reference Library of Judaism 10. Leiden: Brill.
- Hendel, Ronald S. 1995. ‘Prophets, Priests, and the Efficacy of Ritual’, in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*. Edited by David P. Wright, David N. Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 185–198.
- Hieke, Thomas. 2014. *Levitikus 1-15*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar Zum Alten Testament. Freiburg: Herder.

- Hubert, Henri, and Marcel Mauss. 1964. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*. Translated by W. D. Halls. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hundley, Michael B. 2011. *Keeping Heaven on Earth*. Forschungen Zum Alten Testament 2 10. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Hundley, Michael B. 2013. *God in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East*. Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series 3. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Insoll, Timothy (ed.). 2011. *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Janzen, David. 2004. *The Social Meanings of Sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible: A Study of Four Writings*. Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 344. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Jay, Nancy. 1992. *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion, and Paternity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kasher, Rimmon. 1998. 'Anthropomorphism, Holiness and Cult: A New Look at Ezekiel 40–48', *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 110: 192–208.
- Klawans, Jonathan. 2006. *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Klawans, Jonathan. 2008. 'Methodology and Ideology in the Study of Priestly Ritual', in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible*. Edited by Baruch J. Schwartz, David P. Wright, Jeffrey Stackert, and Naphtali S. Meshel. New York: T & T Clark, 84–95.
- Klingbeil, Gerald A. 2007. *Bridging the Gap: Ritual and Ritual Texts in the Bible*. Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements 1. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- Knohl, Israel. 1995. *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Koehler, Walter, Ludwig Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. 1994. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated by Mervin E. J. Richardson. Leiden: Brill.
- Levine, Baruch A. 1989. *Leviticus: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*. JPS Torah Commentary. Edited by Nahum M. Sarna. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.
- Levine, Baruch A. 2002. 'Ritual as Symbol: Modes of Sacrifice in Israelite Religion', in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*. Edited by Barry M. Gittlen. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 125–135.
- Lucas, Earnest C. 1995. 'Sacrifice in the Prophets', in *Sacrifice in the Bible*. Edited by Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman. Carlisle, UK/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Baker, 59–74.

- Maccoby, Hyam. 1999. *Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and Its Place in Judaism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marx, Alfred. 2003. 'The Theology of the Sacrifice According to Leviticus 1-7', in *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 93. Edited by Rolf Rendtorff and Robert A. Kugler. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 103–120.
- Marx, Alfred. 2005. *Les systèmes sacrificiels de l'Ancien Testament: Formes et fonctions du culte sacrificiel à Yhwh*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 105. Leiden: Brill.
- Meshel, Naphtali S. 2014. *The 'Grammar' of Sacrifice: A Generativist Study of the Israelite Sacrificial System in the Priestly Writings with a 'Grammar' of Σ*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Meshel, Naphtali S. 2015. 'What Is a Zoeme? The Priestly Inventory of Sacrificial Animals', in *Current Issues in Priestly and Related Literature: The Legacy of Jacob Milgrom and Beyond*. Edited by Roy E. Gane and Ada Taggar-Cohen. Atlanta: SBL Press, 19–45.
- Milgrom, Jacob. 1971. 'A Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17:11', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90: 149–156.
- Milgrom, Jacob. 1990. *Numbers: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*. JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.
- Milgrom, Jacob. 1991. *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible 3. New York: Doubleday.
- Milgrom, Jacob. 2004. *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*. Continental Commentaries. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Nihan, Christophe. 2007. *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus*. Forschungen Zum Alten Testament 2, 25. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Nihan, Christophe. 2015. 'The Templization of Israel in Leviticus: Some Remarks on Blood Disposal and Kipper in Leviticus 4', in *Text, Time, and Temple: Literary, Historical and Ritual Studies in Leviticus*. Edited by Francis Landy, Leigh M. Trevaskis, and Bryan D. Bibb. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 94–130.
- Olyan, Saul M. 2000. *Rites and Rank: Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Olyan, Saul M. 2004. 'Sacrifices, Offerings, and Votives: Israel', in *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. Edited by Sarah Iles Johnston. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 333–336.
- Rappaport, Roy A. 1999. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 10. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Rendtorff, Rolf. 1995. ‘Another Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17:11’, in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*. Edited by David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 23–28.
- Renfrew, Colin, and Paul Bahn. 2016. *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice*. London: Thames & Hudson. 7th edition.
- Selman, Martin J. 1995. ‘Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East’, in *Sacrifice in the Bible*. Edited by Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman. Carlisle, UK/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Baker, 88–104.
- Sklar, Jay. 2005. *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 2. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix.
- Sklar, Jay. 2008. ‘Sin and Impurity: Atoned or Purified? Yes!’, in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible*. Edited by Baruch J. Schwartz, David P. Wright, Jeffrey Stackert, and Naphtali S. Meshel. New York/London: T & T Clark, 18–31.
- Smith, Jonathan Z. 1982. *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*. Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, Jonathan Z. 2003. ‘The Domestication of Sacrifice’, in *Understanding Religious Sacrifice: A Reader*. Edited by Jeffrey Carter. London/New York: Continuum, 328–341.
- Snoek, Jan A. M. 2008. ‘Defining "Rituals"’, in *Theorizing Rituals: Classical Topics, Theoretical Approaches and Analytical Concepts*. Edited by Jens Kreinath, Jan A. M. Snoek, and Michael Stausberg. Leiden: Brill, 1–14.
- Sommer, Benjamin D. 2011. ‘Dating Pentateuchal Texts and the Perils of Pseudo-Historicism’, in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research*. Edited by Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid, and Baruch J. Schwartz. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 85–108.
- Tatlock, Jason. 2011. ‘The Place of Human Sacrifice in the Israelite Cult’, in *Ritual and Metaphor: Sacrifice in the Bible*. Edited by Christian A. Eberhart. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 33–48.
- Thompson, John A. 1980. *The Book of Jeremiah*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Trevaskis, Leigh M. 2011. *Holiness, Ethics and Ritual in Leviticus*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 29. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix.
- Turner, Victor. 1977. ‘Sacrifice as Quintessential Process: Prophylaxis or Abandonment?’, *History of Religions* 16, no. 3: 208–215.
- Watts, James W. 2007. *Ritual and Rhetoric in Leviticus: From Sacrifice to Scripture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Watts, James W. 2011. ‘The Rhetoric of Sacrifice’, in *Ritual and Metaphor: Sacrifice in the Bible*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 3–16.

◦ Watts, James W. 2013. *Leviticus 1-10*. Historical Commentary on the Old Testament. Leuven: Peeters.
◦ Wellhausen, Julius. 1885. *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*. Edinburgh: A & C Black. Reprint.
◦ Wells, Bruce. 2004. *The Law of Testimony in the Pentateuchal Codes*. Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Altorientalische Und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte 4. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
◦ Wenham, Gordon J. 1995a. 'The Akedah: A Paradigm of Sacrifice', in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*. Edited by David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 93–102.
◦ Wenham, Gordon J. 1995b. 'The Theology of Old Testament Sacrifice', in *Sacrifice in the Bible*. Edited by Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman. Carlisle, UK/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Baker, 75–87.
◦ Wiley, Henrietta L., and Christian A. Eberhart (eds). 2017. *Sacrifice, Cult, and Atonement in Early Judaism and Christianity: Constituents and Critique*. Resources for Biblical Study 85. Atlanta: SBL Press.
◦ Wright, David P. 1986. 'The Gesture of Hand Placement in the Hebrew Bible and in Hittite Literature', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106: 433–446.
◦ Wright, David P. 1987a. 'Deuteronomy 21:1-9 as a Rite of Elimination', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49: 387–403.
◦ Wright, David P. 1987b. *The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 101. Atlanta: Scholars.
◦ Zevit, Ziony. 2001. *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches*. London: Continuum.